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## Title

**The American Dream in Selected American Fiction of the  
Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Meanings, Revision  
and Displacement**

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## **Dedications**

I dedicate this work to :

- My mother.
- My Husband.
- My brothers and sisters.
- My nephews and nieces.
- My family in law.
- My friends.

In the memory of my father.

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## **Abstract**

The present research studies the revisionary aspect of the American Dream in selected fiction of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It shows how the concept takes on a revisionary dimension in American fiction, either at national or international levels, by negotiating a previous literature. The process of revision, at its heart, carries within it the displacement of the concept, either in history or in geography. In the nineteenth century, the American Dream was given a nationwide vision in the fiction of the antebellum writers, who dreamed of unifying the American culture, economy and government to form one single nation distinct from Europe. In the postbellum period, regional writers revise the antebellum literature, claiming the specificity of their regions and the impossibility of unifying culture, economy and government, because of the diversity of ethnicity and geography in the American vast land. The American Dream is, thus, given a regional vision in their fiction. In the turn of the twentieth century, American literature revises the English thought in relation to some issues that characterized the era, such as urbanization, education, woman and marriage. The American Dream in this period takes on an international dimension by misreading universal issues and giving them an American understanding. During the inter-war period, the American Dream is negotiated between urban and rural visions in the literature of the 1920s and the 1930s. This is apparent in the fiction of the 1930s, which gives the concept a rural vision, revising the literature of the 1920s, which gives it an urban vision. The revisionary meanings of the American Dream are the result of its mythical, psychological, historical and geographical aspects, which make it subject to change at each time the conditions of life change. The psychological aspect of the American Dream is treated in the light of Harold Bloom's theory of Revision explained in his books *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) and *The Map of Misreading* (1975). In these two books, Bloom draws a relationship between writers and their precursors, and explains the process of influence and revision in Freudian psychological terms of son/father relationship. Revision is associated in this thesis with T.S. Eliot's "sense of tradition" developed in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919). The geographical and historical aspects of the American Dream are studied in relation to the process of Displacement, as explained in Northrop Frye's book *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), and consolidated by what Edward Said would call in his *Orientalism* (1978) the author's "Strategic Location". The reason is that the revisionary aspect of the American Dream carries within it geographical and historical displacements, due to the author's geographical and historical locations and his relation with his literary tradition.

## **Key Concepts:**

American Dream, Meanings, Revision, Displacement, Parricide, American Literature, Nineteenth Century, Twentieth Century.

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## **General Introduction**

The concept of the American Dream is widely circulated in American culture, especially after the industrial and technological revolutions that characterized the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As a matter of fact, many people during the latter century relate it to economic prosperity and material success. Yet, considering the significance and the origin of the concept, it is assumed that it has a deeper meaning which goes back to the early English settlement on the American land in the seventeenth century. This meaning is rather abstract, since it started as an expression of faith in a millennial prophecy yet to come, when the first English Puritan settlers left Europe to settle on this land. At those early beginnings, the Puritans had in the mind a dream of creating a new nation, “a city upon a hill”, which would be different from the “corrupt” countries of Europe, a nation based on the reinterpretation of the Biblical myth of “New Jerusalem”.

The idea of the American Dream, if we go to the early beginnings of the idea of America, seems to have emerged basically as a radical revision of an ancient political regime, and the establishment of a new one. The phrase is brought into being in relation to two intertwined meanings entangled with Puritan mythology: that of revision and that of renewal; revising an established order, and creating a new one. Since then, many social classes, groups and individuals used it in different contexts and for various reasons. Yet, the abstractness of the concept makes it subject to as many interpretations, taking thus several definitions and understandings, according to the social, political or economic conditions as well as the period of history in which it is addressed.

At the very beginning of the English settlement in America, the idea came as a revision of the European, especially English, political order, based on the domination of the Anglican Church, which restricted the Puritans’ freedom of worship and their religious practices that went against the principles of the state religion. Indeed, the first English settlers



in America were an “extremist” religious group, Puritan Separatists, who felt oppressed in their homeland, deciding thus to cross the Atlantic on board the “May Flower” and settle in the New World. While in the sea, this group had in mind the idea of establishing in America a religious and political order different from the English one. Their political program was clearly expressed in a document they drafted while they were on the ship, called “the May Flower Compact”.

The political program of the Puritans was only partially fulfilled, though. Despite the enjoyed religious freedom, they remained politically bound to the British government. All along the seventeenth century, they were joined by other British fellows, who formed the thirteen colonies, considered as the British property. Britain imposed on these colonies its political and economic orders, and used them as a source of wealth to sustain its trade. In the second half of the eighteenth century, when the Industrial Revolution in Britain started to take roots, the greediness of its government grew, claiming all American colonies without distinction to be its economic property and restricting their trade by a number of laws and acts. As a result, the idea of revision, which had already characterized the early Puritan Dream, was supplied with an economic dimension to cope with the impoverishment and dependency of New England on the mother country.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the American colonies launched a revolution against Britain to claim independence. The idea of revising the British thought of the time was voiced by many intellectuals, recognized today as America’s “Founding Fathers”. One of these intellectuals was Thomas Jefferson, who drafted the Declaration of Independence to claim “biological rights”, i.e. the rights of “life”, “liberty” and the “pursuit of happiness”. Jefferson, acting as the intellectual as well as the ethical voice of the revolution, expressed the dream and right to live in liberty, and to be given the opportunity to seek happiness wherever it is found. In addition to these rights, he underscored equality among

people, stating that “... All men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.” (The Declaration of Independence, 1776).

Thanks to this declaration, Americans succeeded to articulate ethical and philosophical fundamentals, which would then give meaning to their political separation from Britain in 1783, and shape their sense of identity and the constitution drafted a few years later. Thus, the initial political program developed into a dream that endows the Americans with a sense of purpose and identity and distinguishes them from the rest of the World. Indeed, when people used to identify themselves in terms of blood, history, language and/or culture, the Americans, having no single origins, identify themselves by the principles of the Declaration of Independence, the other blueprint of the modern American Dream beside the Puritan legacy. However, the principles shored in this document are interpreted differently by the different social groups constituting the American nation in history. The meaning of “liberty”, for instance, changed several times to take on religious, economic, social and racial interpretations, inflecting as many times the meaning of the American Dream as a democratic concept belonging to all the people.

Starting from the second half of the nineteenth century, when the United States’ economy started to move from agriculture to industry and their economic system became capitalist and liberal, the meaning of the American Dream became mainly related to the philosophy of Liberalism, either on economic, moral, social or political grounds. The American people, starting from that period, singled themselves out of the other peoples of the Western world, and started to develop a liberal mindset by their economy, which was aggressively capitalist. This period of American history is called “the age of interior Imperialism”; it was characterized by the emergence of new wealth and businessmen with poor social ethics, popularly called “the Robber Barons”.

Within the change that affected America in relation to economy and ideology, its literature started to distinguish itself from the European one by endorsing some specificities that characterized the country's culture. American writers started to discuss some issues that are peculiar to their country, and to show how national issues, such as race, slavery, family, gender, and social class had significance in this vast land. Above all, starting from the mid-nineteenth century, authors such as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville, began to defend the country, a nation in formation, as one single bloc with shared economic and political structures and a distinctive cultural heritage and past legacies.

The traits of the American Dream that the mid-nineteenth century writers defended started to be subject to revision by the writers of the coming generations, each according to the historical, geographical, economic and cultural circumstances in which he/she is brought up. The process of revision to which the meanings of the concept are submitted in American writings reinforces the idea that the American Dream can never function in the same way for all the Americans in all its geographical parts, historical periods and mainly from different social and ethnic groups. It is, thus, always subject to change and revision.

The "the American Dream" was used for the first time in the terminology of the American political and cultural history in the early 1930s with the publication of James Truslow Adams' *The Epic of America* (1931). The date of its first use coincides with the first years of the American Great Depression caused by the financial crash of 1929. The economic difficulties that characterized the period engendered political instability, as the Federal government failed to address adequately the crisis. Within this situation, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the then governor of New York and the democratic candidate for the coming presidential elections, launched a "relief system", which would become a model for his "New Deal" program when he was elected the United States' thirty second president in 1932. The program is based on public works employment, unemployment compensation, banking reform

and agricultural relief. Many people, impoverished by the depression, showed their leaning towards this program, which seeks mainly to alleviate the harsh capitalist system by adopting some traits of Socialism, such as the public control of employment and the government's regulation of finance.

Considering the time when the concept of the American Dream was first launched, it seems ironic that this ideal, representing the foundations on which the American nation is built, came in a period of crisis and sufferings at all levels. However, while reading the book, one can notice that when Adams coined the term, he was naming something wider than the Great Depression period. For him, its connotation should not be limited to a certain period in history or to a specific group of people. It is a standard concept that relates to all the periods of American history from the first settlement in the New World until the end of life on it. Adams argues that the American dream is a dream for "a better, richer, and happier life for all our citizens of every rank which is the greatest contribution we have made to the thought and welfare of the world. That dream or hope has been present from the start." (Adams, 1931: 4). Since the concept was born with the birth of the American nation, Adams argues, it has become original and specific to it. What makes its originality and specificity is the fact that it is open to everyone, whatever his/her origins, gender or social rank; it is a thought, in Adams's view, that a European cannot understand or bear. Adams defines the American Dream as:

that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position (Ibid., p. 404).

Inherent in this definition is Freud's son/father relationship, known as the family romance.

Adams expresses clearly his detachment from the countries of Europe, as the land of origin of

most Americans, by questioning the European thought exemplified in their political, economic and social orders, which have always been conditioned by individuals' pedigrees and their social and economic positions. He considers that Europe has not yet reached that degree of thought that permits people to test their opportunities of success and wealth without considering their ethnic origins and social positions. As a matter of fact, success in Europe is limited to one single category of people, which is not the case in America where all individuals are allowed to invest their capacities, as they are valued by their achievements rather than ethnic or class backgrounds.

Adams's definition of the American Dream articulated through a comparison between the American and European thoughts in terms of family relationships reinforces the psychological aspect of the concept, and reveals the author's intention to give European principles distinctive interpretations specific to America. Here, the son/father relationship is highly visible, expressed as they are in the terms conceptualized by Harold Bloom in his theory of influence, manifested in the belated poet's misreading of the parent poet. In fact, Adams's anxiety about the European influence is apparent, when he revises the Europeans' understanding of social and economic principles. His definition of the American Dream is, then, a revisionary principle whereby America stands as Europe's rebellious child.

Adams extends his definition of the American Dream to consider it a standard and flexible concept, with changing meanings according to the circumstances and the hopes of the people in specific periods of the country's history. In other words, each group of people defines the American Dream according to their hopes and expectations, and according to the economic, political and social conditions in which they are living. Adams argues, "ever since we became an independent nation, each generation has seen an uprising of ordinary Americans to save that dream from the forces which appeared to be overwhelming it." (Adams, 1931: 4).

In the first sentence of this quotation, Adams uses the phrase “independent nation”, which implies a relation to Europe. In stressing independence, he means that America would never follow the European thought. In the last sentence of the same quotation, he refers to an “uprising” to save that dream from the forces that came against it. This reference makes it clear that his aim through the book is, in fact, to save this dream from disappearance. In fact, he is afraid that Americans, in those moments of despair, would come to forget their ancestors’ ideals, which emphasized that the three basic principles of the American Dream can only come true with hard work and Individualism.

Furthermore, the ideals of hard work and other ideals, so cherished by the Puritan mind, have another significance if, this time, they are put in Adams’ national context. In fact, in arguing for the liberal values of Individualism, Adams comes head-on against Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s socialist program of the New Deal, because he feels that the latter betrays the American tradition based on autonomy and government’s detachment from economy. He views that Roosevelt’s political planning based on the government’s regulation of the banking system and intervention in employment would lead the nation away from the liberal system of free market and free enterprise. Here, one feels Adams’s individualist and liberal tendencies and his anxiety about the socialist influence of Roosevelt’s program, which threatens the American myth of success.

In the light of Adams’s anxiety towards Roosevelt’s recovery program, it can be argued that the connotation given to the American Dream in his book seems to be more psychological than social and economic. This book, bearing the title of an epic, is written to remind Americans that the myth of the American Dream never dies thanks to people’s struggle to make it come true. It is, therefore, time for them to revolt against Roosevelt’s New Deal and save their nation from depression through hard work and the spirit of Individualism rather

than that of Socialism. In so arguing, Adams revises Roosevelt's understanding of the American Dream embodied in his program of the New Deal.

In his review of *The Epic of America*, Jim Cullen argues that since Truslow Adams used the concept, it became a national motto used in sport by athletes to claim their identity, in politics by political leaders to lead their campaigns and mainly in economy by businessmen as the ultimate goal of their enterprise. The term became a component of the American identity more meaningful than terms like democracy, constitution, or the United States itself (Cullen, 2003: 4). Its vitality stems from the fact that it is part of the American tradition of thought. In this sense, Jim Cullen assumes that even though the Pilgrim Fathers, when they settled in the New World, did not make reference to the concept of "the American Dream", they understood its idea and lived it, in the sense that they imagined their destiny in a positive way and traced their future optimistically. So also did the Founding Fathers when they drafted the American constitution, and so did the businessmen of the nineteenth century when they invested and speculated their wealth in different projects, and even the different waves of immigrants who joined the North American continent to overcome their homelands' problems (Ibid., p. 5). For this reason, Cullen maintains, the different definitions given to the American Dream "have not only been available at any given time; they have also changed over time and competed for the status of common sense." (Ibid., p. 9).

### **The Issue and Working theses**

For Cullen, just as for many other commentators like him or as for the general public of readers whose mind and imagination were fired by Adams' *The Epic of America*, the American Dream is the simple reassertion of faith in the first ideals inspired by the Puritan mythology of a millennial liberation and the Founding Fathers' "inalienable rights". These ideals take on several forms but remain fundamentally the same because their basic components are elements of faith and fulfillment. However, the assertion and reassertion of

the American Dream in the literature since Adams as a monolithic Puritan myth, almost a historical in its formulation, poses a problem in order to understand its extraordinary capacity for change and renewal without ever losing the power of inspiring action, faith, and identification even from the various non-puritan American ethnicities with different faith, culture and sense of ethics. Indeed, the definitions of the American Dream addressed in the works of most American historians and social commentators deal most often with a mythologized and romanticized concept embedded in the Puritan past of the nation, removed from the working of the human consciousness/unconsciousness and the contingencies of history and geography.

In the 1930s, America was in crisis, and it was all natural that James Truslow Adams would return to history and draw lines of continuity between the different generations of Americans in order to ‘invent a tradition’ that extols the “epic” achievements of the country’s statesmen and intellectuals. It was also no wonder that other commentators after Adams would follow suit. However, the continuities in American thought and cultural history did not imply any form of a conscious endeavor whereby American authors set to construct what T.S. Eliot would call “a sense of tradition”, based on a monolithic dream called American, since after all, dreams are basically Dionysian rather than Apollonian in nature. In fact, the American sense of the past is traversed by a deeply-seated anxiety towards all types of legacies, whether local or international, religious or secular. These legacies bear most of the time the symbolic name of “father”: the “Pilgrims Fathers”, the “Founding Fathers” , the “Fathers of the Nation” i.e. the Presidents, etc. The anxieties towards these symbolic fathers’ legacies are most often hidden and cancelled, rather than openly expressed. Their ubiquity in important fiction and non-fiction American texts invites a diachronic investigation that studies how the American Dream is each time interpreted and reinterpreted with relation to the father image.



This thesis, therefore, problematizes the concept of “the Father” at the heart of the various mythical constructs, such as “Pilgrims Fathers” and “Founding Fathers”, and brings it to bear on the son-father relationship in Freudian psychoanalysis. In the latter, for the son to achieve manhood and a personal sense of identity, he/she has to imaginatively struggle with the legacy of the father, a struggle which involves a symbolic parricide. In literary terms, literary critic Harold Bloom takes up Freudian defense mechanisms into six ratios whereby the young poet revises the work of his predecessor in order to achieve artistic identity. In this thesis, it is my intention to return to the American past in order to reread the concept of the American Dream through Bloom’s perspective, applied to a number of literary works studied from comparative perspectives.

Besides the psychoanalytical concept of the father, geography is the other contingency which shaped the various perspectives of the American Dream, and without which any discussion of the latter would certainly be partial. Frederick Jackson Turner’s “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” had already documented and demonstrated how the moving Western frontier of the U.S.A. defined the American character and personality for many centuries. This thesis borrows Turner’s premise, which postulates, roughly, that “American geography has shaped the people’s destiny”, and reads it in terms of what literary critic Northrop Frye calls “displacement”. In *Anatomy of Criticism*, the Canadian critic tells us that Western literary history devolved through five modes, beginning with the mythical and ending with the ironic. This process involves the historicization of literature and is called “displacement”. In this research, I would take up Frye’s concept to mean two inter-related aspects of the American Dream: The influence of geography, or what Edward Said would call the author’s “strategic location” and the ensuing revisions that the American author would bring to the fiction of his predecessor in order to embed it each time within contemporaneous actuality, i.e. history.

## **Method, Scope and Aims of the Study**

The issue of the “father” at the heart of the various conceptions of the American Dream implies the notion of ‘patrimony’, or legacy, and, in a wider sense, the relations of the Americans to historical time. Similarly, the issue of location bears a strong connotation of place, and the sense the latter conveys. Therefore, in conjoining these two cardinal issues within an inter-disciplinary paradigm comprising history, psychoanalysis, literature and geography, this study would operate at two levels of analysis, the diachronic and the synchronic. It is, following the two perspectives, a longitudinal study dwelling on three historical periods of post-bellum America, and addressing a selection of imaginative works by major American authors, whose fiction ranks today among the country’s classics.

The reason behind the choice of fiction as a corpus for the study of the variations in the American Dream is motivated by Bloom’s assertion that a theory of literature is a theory of life, and what is applicable to fiction is applicable to all matters of life. The reason, in his view, is that fiction is reflective of the daily life of the author with the majority of its aspects. It is, therefore, reflective of the author’s historical and geographical locations as well as his expectations and anxieties. It is also motivated by his view that literature is a reflection of civilization. So, literary texts represent the civilization of the period in which they are produced and become what Bloom calls “family history”. Each family history is, in fact, a misreading of the previous generation’s family history. Since the American Dream represents the civilization of each generation of Americans, reflected in their way of life and expectations, literature is a good platform for its study.

The study of the revisionary aspect of the American Dream in American fiction aims to show that the concept is part of American cultural tradition and history, with fixed principles but changing meanings. The latter, as they are expressed in the different periods under study, are the result of the authors’ unending misreading of their predecessors, aiming to give their

own reading of American history. In doing so, the belated authors always express their anxiety to be influenced by a predecessor, who dealt with the same subject. So, Eliot's sense of ancestry and tradition is found in the works of all American authors, as each one tries to perpetuate the same tradition by adapting it to his/her own historical period or geographical location, and continually remodeling history and culture.

The revisionary tradition of the American Dream and its mythical aspect are reflected in American literature in what Northrop Frye labels in his *Anatomy of Criticism* displacement. The latter considers that myth is a product of culture, so it keeps changing with it, leading to its displacement in history and geography. This is apparent in the meanings given to the American Dream by authors of different historical periods and geographical locations, who kept the concept alive but adapted it to their cultural environments. The displaced meanings are expressed in a form of revision addressed by the belated author toward his precursor.

Revision in literature, as explained by Harold Bloom, is rather psychological than historical or cultural. It is expressed in a form of an anxiety that the belated author feels towards the legacy of his precursor, urging him to reread and revise the latter's thoughts in relation to specific subjects. It is inspired from Freud's psychoanalysis, which stipulates that the son is in perpetual struggle with his father trying to kill him imaginatively to assert his existence. The theory of revision applies to the American Dream as it is used in American literature, in which the father is always symbolically killed. The authors always link the concept to their visions, which come to revise another author's view about a specific issue that concerns American daily life.

The revisionary process of the American Dream carries with it Edward Said's notion of "strategic locations", which stipulates that authors always identify themselves as a group belonging to the same geographical location or historical period. Each author, according to Said, asserts his identity by adhering to a group of writers, who develop the same literary

genre and the same vision about a particular subject. This process is called “strategic formation”, and it is achieved by positioning oneself against another group of writers. Dealing with the subject of the American Dream, American authors developed the same process by locating themselves against each other, such as Northern authors against Southern ones, Eastern authors against Western ones, Postbellum authors against Antebellum ones, etc.

In the American writings of the nineteenth century, when American writers excelled in expressing their dream of founding a solid national identity after their independence from Britain, postbellum writers misread the antebellum ones in their understanding of the national aspect of the American Dream. While the antebellum authors gave their dream a nationwide meaning aiming to unify Americans under the same culture and government, Postbellum authors narrowed down their vision about the American nation to give it a regional meaning. Regionalism in American literature aims to show that the American Dream can never take on a unified meaning for all the Americans, whose fate is determined by their different ethnic origins, their economic systems and their geographical locations in this vast land. The perceptions of the dream at that time were expressed in relation to some important themes that characterized the period, such as racism and the dream of equality, slavery and the dream of liberty, social class and the dream of justice, etc.

In the turn of the twentieth century, the national aspect of the American Dream started to take on another meaning by revising the English thought expressed in their writings to show to which extent the American nation is different from the English one at the socio-economic level. American writers, then, revised the English ones in relation to their understanding of some socio-economic issues that constitute their dreams, such as the Industrial Revolution, urbanization, religion, woman and marriage. In this period of transition from tradition to modernity in both countries, American literature portrays an American society that perceived these issues in a modern way if compared to the English one, which

was still lost between tradition and modernity. The American Dream in this period is extended to take on an international dimension.

During the inter-wars period, the U.S.A. asserted itself as the world leading nation thanks to its economic and technological development in the 1920s. Unfortunately, the economic crash of 1929 led the country to the worst period of its economic history, which lasted all along the decade of the 1930s. The American Dream expressed in the American literature of the period portrayed life during the two decades respectively. In their portrayal of American life during the 1930s, American writers revised the writings of the generation of the 1920s, by proposing an alternative view for the way of life displayed in their predecessors' fiction. Writers of the 1930s presented an American Dream centered on the rural space to revise the one presented by the writers of the 1920s centered on the city. Their revisionism is apparent in some parallel issues, such as people's dream of material success, gender roles, social class and especially the impossibility of the American Dream in the inter-war period.

#### **- Thesis Outline**

The revisionary aspect of the American Dream is studied in American literature starting from the mid nineteenth century, when American authors started to identify themselves as "American" and the American Dream started to be the main subject of their writings, until the inter-wars period, when the theme of the American Dream became prominent in American fiction in the works of authors, such as Francis Scott Fitzgerald and John Steinbeck. The analysis of some fiction produced in different eras contained in this historical period shows how in each era revision takes on a special dimension.

Dealing with nineteenth-century literature, the American Dream is analyzed in the fiction of Mark Twain, who gives the American Dream a regional meaning and revises the fiction of Herman Melville, who gives the dream a nationwide meaning. The novels selected for analysis are respectively Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) and *The Adventures of*

*Huckleberry Finn* (1885), and Melville's *White Jacket* (1850) and *Moby Dick* (1851). Handling the turn of the twentieth century literature, some fiction by Theodore Dreiser, as an American writer, is analyzed in the context of the American Dream and compared with another fiction by Thomas Hardy, an English writer, to show how Dreiser revised the English thought in relation to parallel issues. The novels selected for analysis are respectively Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) and *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911), and Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). As for the inter-war period, novels of Francis Scott Fitzgerald, as a representative of the generation of writers of the 1920s, are selected for analysis and compared with novels of John Steinbeck, as a representative of the writers of the 1930s. The novels are respectively Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922) and *The Great Gatsby* (1925), and Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939).

To achieve the purpose of this research, the thesis is divided into three main parts, comprising three chapters each. The first part deals with the American Dream in selected fiction by Herman Melville and Mark Twain, between regional and national visions. The first chapter of it studies the allegory of the American Dream in selected fiction by the two authors. The second chapter analyzes slavery and the dream of liberty in Herman Melville and Mark Twain's respective fiction. The third chapter is a study of Melville's and Twain's fiction in relation to race and the discourse of racism and the dream of equality.

The second part deals with the American Dream in selected fiction by Theodore Dreiser and Thomas Hardy, between national and international visions. Its first chapter analyzes the dream and the feminine factor in selected fiction by Dreiser and Hardy, and the second chapter studies the issues of education, labor and social class in selected fiction by Dreiser and Hardy. The third chapter deals with issues of love, marriage and social class always in selected fiction by Dreiser and Hardy.

The third part tackles the urban versus the agrarian aspects of the American Dream in selected fiction by Francis Scott Fitzgerald and John Steinbeck. The first chapter studies the American Dream between allegory and history in Fitzgerald's and Steinbeck's fiction. The second chapter analyzes ethics of work, companionship and the American Dream in Fitzgerald's and Steinbeck's fiction. The third chapter deals with the institution of marriage, gender roles and the American Dream in Fitzgerald's and Steinbeck's fiction.

The authors selected for study in the above mentioned parts show how the concept of the American Dream is always subject of revision and displacement in the period that goes from the mid nineteenth century to the inter-war period of American history. The idea of revision and displacement is explained in detail in the different issues discussed in each chapter of the three parts. The chapters show how the authors selected for analysis deal with parallel issues, giving them different meanings, according to the historical, geographical and cultural circumstances of each author.

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## **Chapter I: Foregrounding the Thesis' Theoretical Concepts**

The study of the constant change and redefinition to which the concept of the American Dream is submitted in American literature along its history will be dealt with in the light of Harold Bloom's theory of revision, which tows with it a number of some other theoretical concepts, including Northrop Frye's theory of displacement, T.S. Eliot's "A Sense of Tradition" as well as Edward Said's "the author's strategic location". In fact, the reviewed definitions of the American Dream show that at its heart is the idea of revision, and what Bloom calls the anxiety of influence is felt by all those who used the concept. Since the American Dream is linked to the Founding Fathers of the American people, Freud's father/son anxiety is present in all the meanings given to it. Yet, the relation between the belated author and his predecessor cannot be realized outside Eliot's theory of literary tradition, which subsumes both Bloom's idea of revision and Frye's theory of displacement. The latter, which is interrelated with the author's revision of his predecessors of the same literary tradition, contains what Edward Said would call "the author's strategic location".

### **- The Sense of the Past Within the Present: T.S. Eliot's Literary Tradition**

Reading the American Dream in different American literary works in the light of Bloom's theory of revision will be supplemented with T.S. Eliot's theory of tradition, developed in his essay "Tradition and Individual Talent" (1919). This essay examines the notion of "tradition" in literature and explains how the "individual talent" is always impersonal and related to his predecessors. Eliot considers that the examination of the literature of the new age needs always the observation of the classical one, because the valorization of the aesthetics of a literary work can only be asserted when it is juxtaposed with other literary works. Thus, what he labels traditional or ancestral texts play an important role in shaping the individual talent of a particular author.

Eliot's theory is developed through the conception of tradition in English writing and the definition of poet and poetry in relation to it. He is against the fact that "in English writing we seldom speak of tradition, though we occasionally apply its name in deploring its absence." (Eliot, 1919: 1). According to him, the term "tradition" is characterized by complexity, because it represents at the same time a fusion of the past and the present, or what he calls historical timelessness or "simultaneous order" and a sense of present temporality. Within the meaning he gives to tradition, he rises against the idea that the poet must depart from his predecessors to assert his individuality and greatness. He argues that "the most individual parts of his [the poet's] work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously." (Ibid., p. 14). Eliot gives poetry a "historical sense", which goes beyond the resemblance between the poet's work and his precursors' ones, and transgresses it to his awareness and understanding of the relation between his poetry and the traditional one.

As a classicist, Eliot considers that a poet must incarnate in his poetry "the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer," (Ibid.) and at the same time represent his contemporary environment. In fact, remaining faithful to his tradition, a poet must not fall in repetition; he has rather to assert his individuality and novelty. Eliot's conception of the process of tradition is not regressive and static but rather progressive and dynamic. Yet, novelty, for him, is achieved only through the connection of the poet with tradition. Indeed, when a poet engages in the realization of his new poem, he is aware of a certain aesthetic "ideal order" established by the literary tradition that came before him. As such, his novelty does not come from without; his new poem comes just to alter the existing old traditional literary order and readjust it with the new one. The new work alters the way in which the past is seen, yet it alters only the elements of the past that are realized. Eliot argues that "what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art

that preceded it.” (Eliot, 1919: 4). He refers to this developing tradition as the “mind of Europe”.

Poetic tradition, according to Eliot, leads to what he calls “Impersonal Theory” of poetry, which means that the poet, while producing his new poem, engages in a “continual surrender of himself” to the order of tradition; the thing which leads him to depersonalization. So, the poet is seen by Eliot as a medium or channel through which tradition is transmitted, elaborated and survived. In this process, the mind of the poet is not affected by tradition, because it is the part that produces novelty. What is affected instead are his feelings and emotions, which are combined to give the work its artistic nature. The greatness of a work of art is, in fact, realized by the artistic process in which feelings and emotions are synthesized or fused. Great works, for Eliot, do not reveal the unique emotions of the poet, but they draw on ordinary ones and channel them through poetry altogether with the poet’s feelings that surpass experienced emotions. This is what Eliot calls “an escape from emotion”, because for him great poetry is impersonal, timeless and can incorporate the living literary tradition. A good poem abdicates the seal of its producer, and gives a more objective image that loses his singular identity, like a work of science. He calls this aspect “depersonalization”.

Depersonalization leads Eliot to redefine talent in a way that revises its conventional definition. For him, the individual talent is not that genius with which one is born, as it conceived by its conventional definition, but it is acquired through a careful study of poetry. He argues that “it [tradition] cannot be inherited, and if you want it, you must obtain it by great labor.” (Ibid., p. 14). So, it is necessary for the poet to study the poets who came before him to understand “the mind of Europe” and incorporate it into his poetry.

The imprint of ancestry and tradition, according to Eliot, provides us with the power of making a thorough evaluation of any poet’s works by juxtaposing and comparing them with the works of another poet of distinct historical period or geographical location. It helps us also

to avoid the errors of isolation, as every new work comes to disturb and impact the early established lineage of earlier works. He considers that every contemporary artist perpetuates the old tradition and turns it to his own path of progress, giving up authorial independence. The work of art is, then, a continual trade of two distinct processes: the past influencing the present and the present altering the past. A great artist is not submitted to a passive inheritance but engages in a process of absorbing and rereading the ancient texts. As such, history, according to him, is constantly remodeled and continually reimagined by the present.

My study of the concept of the American Dream in selected American fiction falls in Eliot's understanding of tradition and individual talent. In fact, in their interpretations of the concept, American authors could not escape the reading of the works of their predecessors and revising their earlier interpretations of the same concept. Through their works of art, the authors always used their present to alter the past, remodeling and reimagining history. Their individual talent is asserted through keeping their sense of tradition alive by misreading their predecessors. This resulted in what Bloom calls "revision" and what Frye considers as "Displacement".

#### **- Northrop Frye's Theory of "Displacement": From Myth to History**

The dialectic of the past and the present in the American Dream, as used in American literature, goes hand in hand with the process of displacement that happened to the concept along its history. The displacement of the American Dream is mainly apparent in its uses in literature, which gives it a mythical aspect that has kept it alive in different periods of American history and in different geographical locations in the vast American continent. The idea that the dream, as a myth, survives through literature is borrowed from and finds its justification in Northrop Frye's theory *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), in which the author considers that myth is the product of society and the natural world, and keeps changing with it. Being a human product based on the assimilation of nature to human, myth becomes the

main outline occupied by literature. The latter, according to Frye, keeps the myth “alive” and “credible”, “plausible” or “logical”, a technique called “displacement”.

In his theoretical explanation of the process of displacement, Frye considers that any literary shape comes from the literary tradition that is myth. This theory is the result of his criticism of the Western fiction, which is, according to him, mythical made in the sense that its origins go back to the Greek mythology. Through ages, the same fiction moved from one literary shape to another, developing from its mythical origins to romance, becoming high mimetic then low mimetic and finishing as ironic in modern times. Along its movement from one shape to another, it kept with it its mythic tradition alive, but submitted it to different understandings in different periods of history. The reason behind this process is that fiction is always related to its historical and geographical context, but keeps with it the structural principle of literature based on “analogy” and “identity”, which are, indeed, the principles of myth through which it assimilates “nature” to the “human”.

It is, in fact, the assimilation of “nature” to “human” that makes of the American Dream, as used in literature, a myth that never dies. Its traditional aspect assimilates natural rights as life, liberty and happiness, to human conditions of life that change from one period to another. “Nature” in it is represented by the natural rights of the human being, and the “human” is represented by the social, political, religious and mainly psychological aspects of life of the different people who adopt the concept to express their hopes and feelings. Moreover, its mythical aspect finds its justification in Carle Gustav Jung’s theory on myth, in which he considers the latter as the collective aspect of the dream. Since the American Dream is, in the majority of cases, used collectively to claim collective hopes or “dreams”, it becomes a myth.

In his definition of myth, Frye is influenced by Jung’s theories, mainly in giving it a cultural understanding and position. The cultural position of myth, according to Frye, is

drawn from the assimilation of the “natural” into the “human”. This is explained through what he labels the Cycle of the Mythoi. Mythos is a word he borrowed from the Greek Aristotle, who gives it the meaning of “story” or “plot”. Frye divides the story or mythos into four categories or natural cycles he names archetypal genres, which are: comedy which he calls the mythos of spring, romance which is the mythos of summer, tragedy which is the mythos of autumn and irony/satire which is the mythos of winter. Here, it is noticeable that the hero, who moves from a satire to a comedy, moves progressively from a state of being cold into that of warmth, reaching the high degree of warmth when he moves to romance. The movement goes in the opposite side, when the hero moves from being romantic to tragic. The hero is, then, experiencing a displacement from one state to another. Frye’s analogies are, in fact, a way to explain the states of the human being, when they are expressed in plots, or in literature using language. The process is drawn from nature, so any work of literature is a myth, which assimilates nature to the human, and nature, for him, is the mother of the metaphor or the story. The analogies are also a way to show that each literary work is unique, but it is at the same time part of a category of other literary works.

Frye furthers his theory of myth by considering all the works of literature as being in contact with one another, since they are all assimilated from nature. This gives literature an archetypal aspect. The term archetype that he borrowed from Jung refers to the typical or recurring images that connect each literary text to all the other ones. It is an image, like the sea or the rose that one can find recurring in all literary texts but with different meanings. He says that archetype “is a typical or recurring image [...] a symbol which connects one poem with another and thereby helps to unify and integrate our literary experience” (Frye, 1957: 99). The difference between the literary texts is, then, related to their difference in the understanding of nature, which is in constant movement or displacement from one state to another. This led to the displacement in the stories, which moved, according to him, from the

holistic world of spirits to the atomic scientific world we live now. Following this logic, Frye is convinced that literature, as myth, is strongly connected with the cultural, which is mainly manifested through religion, philosophy, political theory and mainly history. This led him to give displacement in literature a historical dimension, having different meanings in different periods of history.

The process of displacement is illustrated in the first essay of the *Anatomy of Criticism* entitled “Historical Criticism: Theory of Modes”, which is mainly based on the staircase metaphor. It is illustrated through the western literature, which has undergone a process of displacement, moving through five modes of fiction: mythic, romantic, high mimetic, low mimetic and ironic. The modes are partly realized in relation to the proximity of the hero to the reader. At the top of the staircase, there is the mythic hero, who is described with godly character. Just downstairs comes the romantic hero, described as being exceptional if compared to the ordinary people or the reader and above nature. Then, comes the high mimetic hero, who is above ordinary humans but subject to natural and social laws. The low mimetic hero is in the same level as the ordinary humans, which means that he has ordinary qualities. In the inferior position comes the ironic hero, who is lower than the ordinary man in terms of qualities.

The process of displacement, as explained through the theory of modes, is not only staircase based but also dialectic. Frye says, “there is a tendency in romance to displace myth in a human direction, and yet, in contrast realism, to conventionalize content in an idealized direction” (Frye, 1957: 137). This means that romance contains mythical patterns close to the human experience, while realism has rather low mimetic patterns. Contrasting Realism to romance, Frye makes it clear that within the process of displacement, there is always a dialogue, which makes the works of literature reading each other in a dialectic way. This

process of contrast displaced the western literature from divine comedy to ironic tragedy due to an increase in mimesis.

Frye's theory of myth leads us to the conclusion that within the process of displacement, there is always revision. The latter is expressed through cycles of literary modes, which contrast each other. This is the result of the appropriation and understanding of the natural world, which differs from one generation of writers to another, leading to the creation of different cultures. Literature, as a reconstructed mythology, originated from myth, and the importance of myth criticism is to understand the place of a work of literature within the context of literature as a whole.

The relevance of Frye's theory of Displacement in my study of the American Dream in selected American literature that goes from the mid-nineteenth century to the inter-war period lies in the displacement to which the concept was submitted, as a myth, throughout this period, in which literature moved from one literary mode to another. The meaning of the concept changed following the development of American literature, which had known different literary modes, as Romanticism in the mid-nineteenth century, Realism after the Civil War, naturalism in the turn of the twentieth century and Modernism after the First World War. It also changed with the evolution of the American history and life with all its aspects. The change that happened to the concept reflects different dialectic meanings, which are the result of the difference in the association of the natural world with the human throughout in a given period of history comparing to the preceding ones on the one hand, and the revision of each generation of writers of the previous one on the other hand. The change that happened to the American Dream, as a myth or an image in literature, gives it an archetypal meaning, having different interpretations in different periods of American history. The theory of Displacement, then, goes hand in hand with Bloom's theory of Revision.



- **Harold Bloom's Theory of Influence: Literature as Endless Revision Process**

Bloom's ideas about revision, as expressed in his two theoretical works *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) and *A Map of Misreading* (1975), are borrowed from Freud's psychoanalysis. At the heart of the theory is the father or precursor poet. The theory stipulates that the belated author feels anxiety towards the legacy of the father/precursor; an anxiety which is relieved by reinterpreting the precursor through the process of revision and misreading. This idea is not only limited to literature, but applies to other genres, as social sciences, intellectual disciplines and even history. The case of the founding fathers and the later users of the American Dream throughout the American history is analogous to the son/father relationships between belated and father poets. They are, in fact, relations of borrowings and revisions, as the belated authors are constantly borrowing their fathers' traditions of thought, cultural traditions, cultural politics and traditions of government to be read differently from them. This process labeled by Bloom "misreading" is, according to him, the result of a certain "anxiety of influence" inherent in the mind of each poet, resulting in the revision of his predecessor. The American Dream, being the cultural and political tradition of the American people follows the same process of misreading and revision, and the father for American authors can be internal or external, since an American usually identifies himself in relation to the American previous generations and/or to his European counterparts. In both cases, the father is always symbolically killed and resuscitated.

Harold Bloom explains the process of influence and its manifestation through misreading or revision in writing, by drawing a relationship between writers and their precursors. *A Map of Misreading* is, in fact, an extension of the ideas he developed in *The Anxiety of Influence*. *A Map of Misreading* clarifies how Bloom's theoretical insights are applicable to poetry, by presenting his map and using it on a number of poems to show how each poet is influenced by another, a predecessor, whom he/she misreads; expressing thus

his/her anxiety to be influenced by him. In the preface to *The Anxiety of Influence*, Harold Bloom expresses his aim through this work, which is to expound the process of influence and enlarge it to the majority of areas; especially the high arts, the intellectual disciplines and even to the public sphere.

Defining influence, Bloom starts by showing his own influence by Shakespeare's words that there is no end to "influence", and he acknowledges that Shakespeare inspires him when writing his work. In fact, Shakespeare uses the word "influence" in his sonnets and plays to mean "inspiration". The latter, according to Bloom, comes from "swerving" and "misprision" or what he labels, in *A Map of Misreading*, "misreading"; two terms which depend, according to him, upon "mistaking" as an "ironical over-esteeming or over-estimation". "Misprision", according to Shakespeare, means a "misunderstanding", "unjust imprisonment" as well as "a scornful underestimation". "Swerving", for him, primarily indicates "an unhappy freedom" (Bloom, 1973: xii, xiii).

According to Bloom, the best ground on which the question of influence can be explained and understood is that of literature and authorship, as all authors are influenced and influential. As Shakespeare is considered by Bloom the most influential of all authors, he qualifies him as being unique in what concerns literary creation and executive faculty. Commenting on his authorial talents, he claims that

He was the farthest reach of subtlety compatible with an individual self, -the subtlest of authors, and only just within the possibility of authorship. [...] He is wise without emphasis or assertion; he is strong as nature is strong. [...] Real multiculturalists, all over the globe, accept Shakespeare as the one indispensable author, different from all others in degree, and by so much that he becomes different in kind. Shakespeare [...] quite simply not only is the Western canon; he is also the world canon. [...] Shakespeare invented us, and continues to contain us. (Ibid., PP. xiv, xv, xvi).

For Bloom, then, Shakespeare is present in the majority, if not all Western literature; especially the modern one, which came as a succession of misreading of previous literature. Even though Shakespeare himself perhaps experienced the process of influence and

misreading more or less than the others, he remains the greatest of all authors, in Bloom's eyes, since he produced what he labeled "high literature", "an aesthetic achievement" not "State of propaganda" (Bloom, 1973: xvii).

Modern literature, for Bloom, is that of "cultural criticism, which devalues all imaginative literature, and which particularly demotes and debases Shakespeare." (Ibid., p. xvi). This cultural criticism came as a result of politicizing literature, which became a state of propaganda; the thing which destroyed literary study, in his view. Modern literature, then, is used as it has been used and will be used to serve the interests of state or any social order or any religion; reflecting dialectical visions and misreading or criticism among authors, as men against women, whites against blacks, Westerners against Easterners, engendering thus revisionary understandings of similar issues. He argues, "Like Criticism, which is either part of literature or nothing at all, great writing is always at work strongly (or weakly) misreading previous writing." (Ibid., p. xix).

Bloom argues that Shakespeare's literature, if compared to the modern one, takes on a historical dimension, as a great part of Renaissance history is read through it. He argues that "Shakespeare makes history far more than history makes Shakespeare." (Ibid., P. xxvi). As he was widely studied, he has greatly influenced the Western authors who came after him, leading to the creation of what Bloom labeled "literary history" or "social history". The latter is explained in the light of Nietzsche's philosophy of Perspectivism, which means that each writer brings his own perspective or "entrapment" about history, leading to "the use and abuse of history for life." To clarify more this point, Bloom makes reference to Emerson who, in his essay "History", asserts that history is biography, meaning that "we are always coming up with the emphatic facts of history in our private experience, and verifying them here. All history becomes subjective; in other words, there is properly no history; only biography." (Emerson, in Ibid., p. xxvi).

Bloom, as Emerson, makes it clear that to understand history, one must live it himself as part of his biography; otherwise he will get different subjective versions of it transmitted by different authors; each according to his own subjective understanding of history that fits his biography. Starting from this point, Bloom's anxiety of influence began to be clearer, as each author tries to create his own understanding of history, fearing to be influenced by another. This leads them to coin some ideas, concepts, phrases, or even sentences and paragraphs from other authors to give them their own meaning; falling unconsciously in the trap of influence.

To clarify more this process of influence and revision, Harold Bloom adopted a theory of poetry, arguing that the latter is a theory of life, and what is applicable to poetry is applicable to all matters of life, reflected mainly in arts and human sciences. In the prologue to this theory, entitled "It Was A Great Marvel That They Were in the Father Without Knowing Him," he argues that "poetic history, in this book's argument, is held to be indistinguishable from poetic influence, since strong poets make that history by misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves." (Bloom, 1973: 5). The history of poetry, in his view then, is made of influence expressed through misreading, as each poet constructs his poem by misreading another poet on a specific view or subject.

The majority of poets, however, deny this influence, and express vehemence by treading each other. Stevens, for instance, expresses this denial by saying,

While, of course, I come down from the past, the past is my own and not something marked Coleridge, Wordsworth, etc. I know of no one who has been particularly important to me. My reality-imagination complex is entirely my own even though I see it in others. [...] I am not conscious of having been influenced by anybody and have purposely held off from reading highly mannered people like Eliot and Pound so that I should not absorb anything, even unconsciously (Ibid, p. 7).

Answering Stevens, Bloom explains that influence is not only, as Stevens understands it, embodied in one's source study or history of ideas; it is mainly the study of the life-cycle of the poet-as-poet, meaning that each poet's life-cycle is the continuation of the life-cycle of another poet, what Freud calls the family of romance. For instance, "modern", in modern

revisionism means “post-enlightenment”, which means that it is linked and related to enlightenment in a way or in another. (Bloom, 1943: 8).

To deepen the meaning of the life-cycle of a poet, Bloom makes appeal to psychology and philosophy, and introduces six revisionary ratios, which are inspired from Nietzsche and Freud, whom Bloom considers the sources of influence upon his theory of influence. Nietzsche is considered by him the prophet of the antithetical, as his *Genealogy of Morals* is the profoundest study he found about “the revisionary and ascetic strains of aesthetic temperament”. Freud’s investigations about the mechanisms of defense are very analogous with his revisionary ratios that govern “intra-poetic relations.” (Ibid.). The six revisionary ratios are Clinamen, Tessera, Kenosis, Daemonisation, Askesis and Apophrades.

Clinamen is defined by Bloom as being the poetic “misreading” or “misprision proper”. The word is taken by him from Lucretius, where it means “to swerve of the atoms so as to make change possible in the universe.” (Ibid., p. 14). In poetry, the word means that the poet swerves away from his precursor to execute a clinamen or change in relation to him. Within the process of clinamen, change is achieved through poetic influence, which is, according to Blake, explained in relation to the distinction between States and Individuals. The latter (Individuals) passed through a number of the former (States); the individual remains the same, but his state changes with time, just like a poet or poem; a poet remains poet and the poem remains poem but its state changes with time. This change occurs thanks to the generosity of each poet or poem that influences another. By this definition he has given to Clinamen, Bloom arrives at his argument, which he considers true enough, that

Poetic influence –when it involves two strong authentic poets, -always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation. The history of fruitful poetic influence, which is to say the main tradition of Western poetry since the Renaissance, is a history of anxiety and self-saving caricature, of distortion, of perverse, willful revisionism without which modern poetry as such could not exist (Ibid., p. 30).

Tessera, according to him, is completion and antithesis. The word is taken by him from the ancient mystery cults, where it means “a token of recognition”. In poetry, a poet completes his precursor antithetically, by retaining the words of a parent poem to give them another sense, as if the parent poem failed in going far enough in their true sense. It is a revision of the meaning given to them by the parent poem (Bloom, 1973: 14). It is, then an anxiety of influence on the part of the poet, expressed in revising the meaning given to concepts by his predecessor. In detailing his definition of Tessera, Bloom quotes Nietzsche, who defines it “as survival, as a treading in footprints already made! The bond with the father, and the imitation of the father, the game of being the father, and the transference to father-substitute pictures of a higher and more developed type.” (Nietzsche, in *Ibid.* p. 54).

In Freud’s terms, it is “‘a certain anxiety on the part of the infant’, separation from the mother, analogous to later castration anxiety, brings on ‘an increase of tension arising from nongratification of needs’, ‘the needs’ here being vital to the economy of self-preservation.” (Freud, in *Ibid.*, p. 58). It is through this separation that poets come to impose and love themselves as poets. In this context, Rousseau argues that “no man can enjoy fully his own selfhood without the aid of others, and an antithetical criticism must found itself upon this realization as being each strong poet’s largest motive for metaphor. ‘Every invention,’ Malraux says, ‘is an answer’...” (Rousseau, in *Ibid.*, p. 69). Freud compares poetry to dream-work, since it is regressive and archaic; it is, like the dream-work, a message or a translation communicated indirectly in dream-work but deliberately in poetry. In poetry, it is rather a mistranslation or misinterpretation. (*Op. Cit.* Bloom, 1973: 71).

As for Kenosis, it is, in Bloom’s view, a breaking device that is similar to the defense mechanisms that our psyche uses against repetition compulsions. It is, then, discontinuity with the precursor. The word is taken from St. Paul, where it means “the humbling or emptying out of Jesus by himself, when he accepts reduction from divine to human status.” Like Jesus, the

later poet is apparently humbling or emptying himself of his own afflatus or imaginative godhood, by ebbing to a precursor's poem to express his discontinuity with him. What the later poet seeks in this case is to stand with the precursor, not as his creation, but as the best part; the uncreated substance. Consequently, he falls in repetition raised dialectically fearing to be a copy of replica. Repetition in this case, then, is a kind of struggle; or in Freud's words, a mode of compulsion with a reversal of unconscious meaning (Bloom, 1973:14, 80, 81). Explaining "repetition" in the context of Kenosis, Bloom makes reference to Kierkland, whose definition of repetition is considered by him "a grand introduction to the dialectic of misprision." For Kierkland,

Repetition and recollection are the same movement, only in opposite directions; for what is recollected has been, is repeated backwards whereas repetition properly so called is recollected forwards. Therefore, repetition, if it is possible, makes a man happy, whereas recollection makes him unhappy –provided he gives himself time to live and does not at once, in the very moment of birth, try to find a pretext for stealing out of life, alleging, for example, that he has forgotten something (Kierkland, in *Ibid.*, p. 82).

Daemonisation is the fourth ratio presented by Bloom to explain the anxiety of influence. It is "a movement towards a personalized counter-sublime, in relation to the precursor's sublime." (*Op. Cit.* Bloom, 1973:15). The term is taken by him from general Neo-Platonic usage, where "an intermediary being neither divine nor human enters into the adept to help him." (*Ibid.*). By this, the adept poet opens himself to the earlier or parent poem to take from it what he considers as being general truth to personalize it, and show his own interpretation or understanding of it as being different from his precursor. In this way, he preserves the uniqueness of his poem and that of the parent poem. The adept, then, does not defend himself or resist against society, but against poetry. Bloom argues that the dialectic is not between art and society, but between art and art. Rank calls it "the artist struggle against art," (*Ibid.*, P. 99) through which the artist or poet tries to rise to divinity and show his power of understanding general truth. The power that makes a person a poet is the "daemon", which

distributes and divides, and which shows his greatness of mind which comes near Gods.

Bloom says that

The strong poet is never “possessed” by a daemon. When he grows strong, he becomes, and is, a daemon, unless and until he weakens again. [...] Turning against the precursor’s sublime, the newly strong poet undergoes daemonization, a Counter-Sublime whose function suggests *the Precursor’s relative weakness*. [...] But this “description” is a revisionary ratio, a daemonic vision in which the Great Original remains great but loses his originality. [...] Daemonization or the Counter-Sublime is a war between Pride and Pride, and momentarily the power of newness wins.” (Bloom, 1973: 100, 101).

The fifth revisionary ratio, which is Askesis, is defined by Bloom as “a movement of self-purgation which intends the attainment of a state of solitude.” (Ibid., P. 15). The term has been taken from the practice of pre-Socratic shamans like Empidocles. Askesis means that the later poet does his best to separate himself from others, especially his precursor, by yielding up part of his own human and imaginative endowment. The aim is to assert his sublimation. In his detailed explanation of the ratio of Askesis, Bloom makes reference to Freud, who speculated that sublimation is closely related to identification; the latter relying on distortion of aim or object, which goes into its transformation into the opposite. Sublimation or Askesis is, according to Freud, “a self-curtailment which seeks transformation at the expense of narrowing the creative circumference of precursor and ephebe alike.” (Freud, in Ibid., p. 119).

Lou Andreas-Salomé, Freud’s disciple, observes that sublimation is self-realization or elaboration, which leads the person elaborating himself to be Prometheus or Narcissus. A strong poet, in her view, builds himself in this way, making his culture and contemplating his place in it, by producing a poem that is an evasion of not only another poem, but also of itself as it is a misinterpretation of what it might have been. (Ibid., pp. 119-120). As such, Bloom argues that “to revise the precursor is to lie, not against being, but against time, and Askesis is peculiarly a lie against the truth of time, the time in which the ephebe hoped to attain an autonomy already tainted by time, ravaged by otherness.” (Bloom, 1973: 130).



Apophrades, the sixth and last revisionary ratio, is defined by Bloom as a return to the dead. The word is taken from “the Athenian dismal or unlucky days upon which the dead returned to reinhabit the houses in which they had lived.” Through this ratio, we feel that the later poet’s poem is open to that of his precursor as when the wheel makes its full circle. “The new poem’s achievement makes it seem to us, not as though the precursor were writing it, but as though the later poet himself had written the precursor’s characteristic work. (Bloom, 1973: 15, 16). So, we feel as if the new poet is imitated by his ancestors. Detailing his explanation of Apophrades, Bloom argues that

It may be that one strong poet’s work expiates for the work of a precursor. It seems more likely that later visions cleanse themselves at the expense of earlier ones. But the strong dead return, in poems as in our lives, and they do not come back without darkening the living. The wholly mature strong poet is peculiarly vulnerable to this last phase of his revisionary relationship to the dead (Ibid., pp. 139-140).

Yet, when this mighty dead returns, he returns in the later poet’s colors; speaking in his voice in parts and in moments that testify to his persistence, not to the dead poet’s one, because if the dead returns wholly, then the triumph is his (Ibid., p. 141).

In 1974, Harold Bloom published *A Map of Misreading*, intended as an antithetical completion of *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973). It is a summary of his vision of “influence” that he explained in detail through the afore-mentioned six revisionary ratios. The latter are summarized in the preface of the second edition of *A Map of Misreading* (1975) in the following issue, discussed and answered all along the book: How does meaning get started anyway? To clarify this issue, Bloom builds his hypotheses on Milton’s *Lycidas*; speculating if it is “an ironic repetition of the pastoral elegy of Theocritus, Moschus, Vergil, Sannazaro and Spenser?” Or “a cascade of newness –synechdochal, metonymic, hyperbolic, metaphoric, metaleptic?” (Bloom, 1975: xiv). To answer his issue, these major tropes are discussed all along the book. The latter is, then, a practical criticism of poetry; teaching how to read a poem in the light of his theory discussed in *The Anxiety of Influence*.

Reading, as the book's title indicates, is always a misreading; as such, "literary meaning" tends to be undetermined, and reading is criticism. The latter is conceived by Bloom not as "an act of judging", but "an act of deciding", and "what it tries to decide is meaning." Criticism, then, leads to influence, which does not mean in this case "the passing-on of images and ideas from earlier to later poets," but the fact that

there are no texts, but only relationships between texts. These relationships depend upon a critical act, a misreading or misprision, that one poet performs upon another, and that does not differ in kind from the necessary critical acts performed by every strong reader upon every text he encounters. (Bloom, 1975: 3).

The influence relation governs both reading and writing, as reading is miswriting and writing is misreading. As such, all poetry is verse criticism, and criticism becomes prose poetry. A good critical reader, then, is a revisionist, "who wishes to find his own original relation to truth, whether in texts or in reality (which he treats as texts anyway)." (Ibid., pp. 3, 4).

Revisionism in this book is defined as a "re-aiming" or "a looking over again", which leads to "a re-esteeming" or "a re-estimating", which means reading "correctively". Re-seeing is what is considered by Bloom in *The Anxiety of Influence* as "limitation", re-esteeming is "substitution" and re-aiming is "representation". In poetry, a poet, in Bloom's view, becomes only powerful when he revises a strong or great poet. As such, there is a strong relationship between poetic influence and poetic strength. Strong poets are born thanks to the their love to a precursor strong poet; a love which turns into a strife against him, and finishes in producing a poetry that revises his precursor's one. "At one time they are all brought together into one order by Love; at another, they are carried each in different directions by the repulsion of strife." (Ibid., pp. 10). This kind of strife is labeled by Bloom "the dialectics of poetic tradition".

The dialectic tradition is not only limited to poetry, but extended to all kinds of literature, as each author gossips with another. The gossip finishes by becoming a dogma, as each author tries to dogmatize his ideas. All authors, then, are bound to this dialectic tradition

of literature, which is reflected in the interplay of repetition and discontinuity. As literature is reflective of civilization, literary tradition, when entered academies, becomes “family history”, and each family history is a misreading of “the civilization of all previous generations” from whom it has inherited. (Bloom, 1975: 31). To explain how literary tradition is reflective of civilization, and how it is a misreading of previous civilizations, Bloom makes reference to Gershom Scholem’s essay on “Tradition and New Creation in the Ritual of the Kabbalists”, which asserts that “everything not only is in everything else but also acts upon everything else.” (Ibid.).

Bloom adds that “Kabbalah literally means ‘tradition’”; for this a clear definition of literary tradition is needed. Yet, to define literary tradition, a number of questions need to be answered: do we choose a tradition or does it choose us, and why is it necessary that a choosing takes place, or a being chosen? What happens if one tries to write, or to teach, or to think, or even to read without the sense of a tradition? The answer he presents is that no one can write, teach or think or even read without imitation, and we imitate what another person has produced; i.e. what he has written taught or thought or read. This relation of imitation is what we call “tradition”. The latter is then

influence that extends past one generation, a carrying-over of influence. Tradition, the Latin tradition, is etymologically a handing-over or a giving-over, a delivery, a giving-up and so even a surrender or a betrayal. [...] Tradition is good teaching, where “good” means pragmatic, instrumental, fecund (Ibid., p. 32).

Writing, then, which reflects literary tradition, is the result of teaching; and poetry, which is a type of writing is pedagogical in its origins. From this Bloom implies that literature, in general, is connected to education “by a continuity of twenty five years, a continuity that began in the sixth century B.C. when Homer became a schoolbook for the Greeks.” (Ibid., pp. 33-4). Literature comes from the word “litteratura”, a translation of the Greek “Grammatike”, which is the art of reading and writing, taken as a “dual enterprise”. As such, literature and the study of literature are in their origins one single concept, as each piece

of literature is the result of the reading (misreading) of another piece of literature, which is taught to its producer through tradition. This misreading is reflected in a combat led by the younger producer against the father, leading him to produce a separate piece of literature.

To detail the explanation of this process of misreading that functions through literary tradition, Bloom presents in the second part of his book his map of misreading. He opens this part by asserting that the New Testament came to “fulfill” the Old Testament, and Blake came to correct Milton. His aim through these examples is to show that revisionism started with the start of religion, but extended later on to non religious texts. He asserts, however, that “all revisionists [...] are anagogists, though frequently shallow in their anagogy. Spiritual uplift too frequently is exposed as the drive towards power over the precursors, a drive fixed in its origins and wholly arbitrary in its aims.” (Bloom, 1975: 83). So, the aim of any revisionist, religious or irreligious, is to get power over his precursor.

The principle of revisionism is summed up by Bloom in the triad of limitation, substitution and representation, which are expanded into a map of misprision, a charting of “how meaning is produced in Post-Enlightenment strong poetry by the substitutive interplay of figures and of images, by the language strong poets use in defense against, and response to, the language of prior strong poets.” (Ibid., p. 87). The defenses of limitation are considered by him as “a reaction formation”, which is manifested in the triad of undoing, isolating, and sublimation. The defenses of representation, in its part, is composed of “a duo of turning against the self and reversal,” next to “repression” and lastly “the duo of introjection and projection”. (Ibid., p. 88)

In this volume, Bloom uses these defenses or tropes as a substitution to what he considers in *The Anxiety of Influence* revisionary ratios, as he considers that the meaning of antithetical is twofold; “there is the antithetical as the counter-placing of rival ideas in balanced or parallel structures, phrases, words, and there is also the antithetical as the anti-

natural.” (Bloom, 1975: 88). The first is the Freudian approach to the antithetical, and the second is the Nietzschean understanding of it. The former (Freudian) is the transposition of tropes to mechanisms of defense, and the latter (Nietzschean) is the transposition of defenses to tropes. As such, tropes and defenses, for Bloom, are interchangeable, when they appear in poems, as after all both of them appear as images. He asserts:

What I called ‘revisionary ratios’ are tropes and psychic defenses, both and either, and are manifested in poetic imagery. A rhetorical critic can regard a defense as a concealed trope. A psychoanalytic interpreter can regard a trope as a concealed defense. An antithetical critic will learn to use both in turn, relying upon the substitution of analogues as being one with the poetic process itself (Ibid., P. 89).

Bloom justifies his assimilation of Freud’s analogical approach to defenses to apply on poetry by the fact that Freud himself has taken from poetry, when he laid his approach, what he calls “Bedeutungswandel”, which Hartman translates as “tropism of meaning” or “wandering signification”. “Deutung” means “interpretation” of latent meaning; and this implies that this interpretation is defensive against contrary tropes, uncovering “the world of the wish.” The “interpretation” meant by Freud here is the interpretation of dreams that he finds analogous with the interpretation of texts (poems), as both of them follow the same process of interpretation. In fact, Freud revises himself by asserting that not all dreams are wish-fulfillment. He tells us that “these dreams are endeavoring to master the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis.” (Freud, in Ibid., p. 90). As such, Bloom asserts that “Repetition-compulsions, whether in dreams, desires, or acts, are defenses against anteriority, and are quite close, rhetorically, to metonymic reductions.” (Op. Cit., Bloom, 1975: 90-91). The defense, then, in its psychological terms, finishes by developing into internal movements that appear as “representations” in the form of desires, fantasies, wishes and memories. These representations are, in fact, defenses against another defense developed earlier by the ego, just as a trope is a defense against another trope. (Bloom, 1975: 92).

A trope is defined by Bloom as an interpretation and thus mistaking, because each trope, like a defense, is a falsification. Vico says that all tropes are expressed in four figures of speech, which are irony, metonymy, metaphor and synecdoche, which authors use as means of defense. These figures are open to different interpretations, as the meaning expressed in figurative language is indirect. Vico sees figures as “defenses against any ‘given’”. To these four figures, Bloom adds two other figures, which are hyperbole and metalepsis. In this sense, he follows Burke, who associates “irony” with “dialectic”, “metonymy” with “reduction”, “metaphor” with “perspective”, and “synecdoche” with “representation”. “Hyperbole” and “metalepsis” that Bloom adds are associated by him with “substitution”; all of them synthesized in the triad of limitation/substitution/representation. As such, he comes to the conclusion that the revisionary ratios work in pairs; Clinamen/tessera that work for limitation, Kenosis/daemonisation that work for substitution and askesis/apophrades that work for representation.

Throughout my thesis, I will appropriate Bloom’s approach to the process of revisionism to study the representation of the American Dream in selected nineteenth and twentieth century American fiction to show how each author revises or misreads his precursor’s interpretation of the same concept. My appropriation of this theory is justified by Bloom’s assertion that the principle of revisionism that he explained through poetry is not limited to one genre of literature, but extended to all literary texts, as all writing is misreading and texts are the prose version of poetry in his view. It is also extended to all human sciences and civilizations as a whole, as literary texts are reflective of the anxiety that each writer experiences in relation to his precursor, and reflective of the age in which the text is produced as the author always develops meanings of concepts in relation to the historical context in which he lives. My appropriation of this theory is also justified by Bloom’s reliance on Freud’s psychoanalytic study of anxiety and influence that manifest in misreading; a study in

which he makes an analogy between the dream work and text analysis. In Freud's view, dreams are interpreted in the same way as meanings are interpreted in texts; as dreams read as texts in the mind of the dreamer.

It is of no doubt, then, that the American Dream is reflected in the fiction of the American writers in a dialectic way, as each author finds no escape in living the dream in his writing that is reflective of his socio-historical context. At the same time, each author gives the American Dream a meaning and a function that seem to be revisionary if compared to another writer, a precursor. American writers of all generations could not escape Bloom's theoretical views on influence and revision.

- **Edward Said's "Strategic Location": Authors between Culture and Geography**

The process of displacement and revision to which the American Dream is submitted in American fiction carries with it what Edward Said calls in his *Orientalism* (1978) the author's "strategic location". The latter is a methodological device that describes the historical and personal authorities of the author in relation to the subject he writes about. Through this concept, Said describes the author's position in the text he writes and his location within a group of other texts that he calls type or genre. To clarify the meaning of "strategic location", he associates it with the concept of "strategic formation", which means a way of analyzing the relationship between texts and a way in which a group of texts acquire a referential power between each other to form one type or genre of literature. Said relates this power to the influence of the historical and geographical location of the authors on the fiction they produce.

Said considers that the historical circumstances and the geographical location of an author positions his produced texts within a certain genre of literature that is created by authors of the same historical and geographical location as him. The literary genre is based, according to him, on some fields of struggle with an established thought of another group of

writers of another strategic location. It is a kind of thought that comes to replace a previous or simultaneous established thought in an antagonistic debate based rather on the goal of creating a sense of identity than intellectual exchange. This implies that every domain of thought is linked to another one, and no text is created in isolation from others that influence it at the internal or external levels. The influence is based on a certain sense of place on the part of the author, who rejects a way of thought to identify with another that would reflect his position. The two ways of thought which are antagonized are covered, according to Said, by the culture of the group of writers who represent them. The antagonism is, then, culturally based, like “Islam versus Christianity”, but it is at the same time influenced by territorial polarizations, like “the East versus the West” (Said, 1978: xvii).

In his theory of “Orientalism”, Said illustrates the concept of strategic location through the relationship between some Western texts and their views about Islam and Orient, or the East. He considers that Western writers have a strategic location, which is a location of power if compared to the Eastern one. This location of power is the result of some historical and geographical circumstances that become a “strategic formation” or a “discourse” called “Orientalism” or “oriental studies”. The latter is the representation of the East in the Western writings through language. Cultural discourse is, then, based on representation not truth (Ibid., p. 50). To justify their orientalist discourse, Western writers consider that the Easterners have not the ability to represent themselves in literature; it is up to them to perform the task. Yet, in their “representation”, the East is given a static image fixed in time and place, regardless of the time period in which the literary work is produced. The western writers created a collective image about the East, an image that does not change in their minds and give them a certain power in a form of discourse known as “Orientalism”, in Said’s words. Orientalism is, then, a “strategic formation” obtained thanks to the “strategic location” of the western authors.



Said believes that the Orient, as known starting from the mid seventeenth century, is the invention of the western authors. The real East is, since antiquity, a place of romance, haunting memories, landscapes and exotic beings (Said, 1978: 42). To seal their view about the East, western authors created a style of thought “Orientalism”, based on a geographical distinction between the “Orient” and the “Occident”. This style of thought developed into a discourse starting from the eighteenth century based on dominating, restructuring and exerting authority over the Orient. So, the Western culture gained strength and identity by placing itself against the oriental one as a sort of surrogate self (Ibid., pp. 43-4). Each author who writes about the subject of Orientalism must locate himself/herself in his/her text vis-à-vis the Orient. This “location” includes “the kind of narrative voice adopted, the type of structure built, the kinds of images, themes, motifs circulated in the text.” (Ibid., p. 49). To do so, the author must get a certain knowledge about the Orient by reading an orientalist antecedent. “Every writer on the Orient (and this is true even of Homer) assumes some Oriental precedent, some previous knowledge of the Orient, to which he refers and on which he relies” (Ibid., p. 28). The relation between the author’s work and that of his antecedent is thus that of a strategic formation, which creates a genre of literature.

Said’s notions of “Strategic location” and “strategic formation” are a kind of historical and mainly geographical inquiry into the literary experience of the Western writers in relation to the subject of “Orientalism”. Through this enquiry, he explains how an author is always identified with a group of other authors, who write about the same subject, getting knowledge or formation from his precedent about the subject. After getting this knowledge, he places himself in antagonism with other authors of another historical period or geographical location to show his/her power over them, a power he/she acquires from a strategic formation transmitted to him/her by a group of other authors of the same historical period or geographical location as him/her.

In their dealing with the subject of the American Dream in their writings, American authors are submitted to Said's notions of "strategic location" and "strategic formation". Authors of any region or historical period always identify themselves as a group and produce the same genre of literature, developing the same ideas about the American Dream. To develop their literary identity or what Said calls strategic formation, they position themselves against another group of writers of another geographical location or historical period. From this antagonism raised the "strategic location" of each author dealing with the subject of American Dream. Southern authors in the late nineteenth century positioned themselves against the Northerners, either in terms of location or history by giving the concept a regional image instead of a national one. In the turn of the twentieth century American authors positioned themselves against the English ones to show the specificity of their American Dream, by giving their own understanding about parallel issues, developed in English literature. In the inter war period, the Western authors positioned themselves against the Easterners, by turning the urban image of the American Dream into a rural one.

The meanings given to the American Dream in American fiction are reflective of the strategic formation of each author, who stands within a specific strategic location to revise another one from another strategic location. The revisionary process, which is apparent in the works of all authors, is psychological, bearing within it Freud's theory of parricide, which stipulates that the son is in need to kill his father to assert his existence. Representing the American Dream in their fiction, all authors try to give it an image that displaces a previous one. In doing so, the authors keep the mythical origin of the concept, but locate it in different historical periods and geographical areas. The dream is constantly redefined, bearing with it mythical, historical, geographical and mainly psychological meanings.

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## **Part I: The Displacement of the American Dream in Nineteenth Century American Fiction: From National to Regional Visions**

This part argues that the American writers of the second half of the nineteenth century displaced the national ideal of their precursors in order to better account for the ethnic and cultural varieties of the American nation. The displacement was motivated by the expanding geography of the country and the increasing discrepancies between its various regional cultures. One author who best illustrates the revisionary trend of the period is Mark Twain, a Southern writer, who started writing fiction in the postbellum period. His writings record the life in the South, with great attention to cultural and geographical details, to the extent that he is named a local color writer. As such, his fiction can be read in contradistinction to that of another major American writer, whose antebellum novels exhibit keen interest into the American Dream; this writer is Herman Melville.

Melville belongs to the generation of the American Renaissance writers, who wrote under the current of Romanticism and defended national unity, dreaming of an America guided by a unified economic system and ruled by the one single government. Twain, on the other hand, is influenced by regional realism, demonstrating that aspects of economy, religion and race cannot function in the same way in all the American regions. This, according to him, is due to differences in the geography, in the ethnicity and thus in the traditions prevailing in each region. He believes that people in the South experienced socio-economic issues such as racism, slavery, freedom, religion and Capitalism differently from the Northerners. Their dreams are specific if compared to those of other American ethnicities. Therefore, the American Dream that Twain defends in his fiction reinterprets the same categories in Melville's fiction but is specific to his region.

This part puts Twain and Melville in perspective, as the former narrows the visions of the latter to the South and contends against him and his generation. Twain's revisionary

process reveals that sensitive issues pertaining to the American Dream are tackled differently by Southern writers. The American Dream in itself would have a different meaning if seen from the perspective of the South. Twain's writings indicate that Melville, who adopted a critical view of the American Dream, did not succeed to account for the regional varieties of America; since he seems to overlook the social organization of the country. He elaborated on the issues of slavery, freedom and race from a national perspective, trying to reach a universal conceptualization, and thus denying the everyday concerns of American ethnicities and classes in a moment when the country was in need of unity rather than separation.

The fact that both Melville and Twain express the same anxieties and concerns in their writings in different ways proves that the latter misread the former in relation to his understanding of some issues that characterize American culture. Despite the fact that American literary and historical archives do not provide us with documents that substantiate Twain's influence by Melville, their writings give us much evidence that the former had read the latter. Hilton Obenzinger argues that "whether popular or unreal, both [authors'] texts engage in religious, cultural, racial, and nationalist discourses in unique ways, starkly revealing certain dark, anxious preoccupations of American culture." (Obenzinger, 1999: x).

Furthermore, there are some passages in Twain's writings that urge us to hypothesize that Twain had read Melville's fiction. Having reached his young age when Melville accomplished most of his novels, we suggest that Twain could not have escaped reading at least some of these works. In fact, we find some paragraphs in Twain's writings that mirror the way Melville writes. For instance, if we consider the following two passages taken respectively from Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener" (1853), we find that Twain's style is parallel to Melville's: "TOM!" No answer. "TOM!" No answer. "What's gone with that boy, I wonder? You TOM!" No answer (Twain, 1876: 5). "Bartleby!" No answer. "Bartleby!", in a louder tone. No answer.

“Bartleby,” I roared. (Melville, 1853:11). In the passages, one can feel intertextuality between Twain and Melville.

This part probes into the regional aspects of the American Dream in Mark Twain’s works *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885) contained in the setting and characters of the two novels, which focus on religion, slavery, freedom, racism and equality, as their main issues. The analysis divulges that Twain focuses in his writings on life in his region, the Southern part of the Mississippi. At the same time, a comparison is drawn between the life aspects he portrays and those presented by Melville in his works *White Jacket* (1850) and *Moby Dick* (1851) to show that the two authors cover nearly the same issues in their novels, but defend them differently. Unlike Twain, who tackles the issues of racism, slavery and religion, at a regional level, Melville treats them at a national level by using allegorical settings that represent the American nation and allegorical characters that stand for the American people in general. The difference in settings and characters demonstrate that Twain revises Melville in his perception of Nationalism and the American Dream.

This part is divided into three chapters; with each chapter treating the revisionary aspect of the American Dream in relation to specific issues developed in Twain’s and Melville’s novels. The first chapter deals with the American Dream as an allegory in Twain’s and Melville’s selected fiction to reveal their regional and national visions of the American Dream respectively in relation to the selection of settings and characters, and the representation of their religious values. The second chapter analyzes the same novels in relation to the issue of slavery and the dream of freedom to demonstrate how Melville gives them a national dimension, and how Twain deals with them at a regional level. The third chapter discusses the issue of racism and the dream of equality in the works of the two authors to reveal Melville’s national tendencies and Twain’s regional ones in relation to these issues.

### **-Background: Nineteenth Century American Fiction: From Romanticism to Realism**

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the idea of revision started to take root in American literature, especially with the emergence of the American writers, who started to claim a national literature, distinct from the European one. In the mid-nineteenth century, a group of American writers, namely Nathaniel Hawthorne, Noah Webster, Herman Melville and others endeavored to give American literature a national aspect by introducing the reader into American themes, settings and characters, and by treating subjects specific to the American way of life. As such, they presented an image of America that is different from Europe and the rest of the world with an Anglo-Saxon culture, Puritan traditions and an economic system based on slavery merged with the growing industrialization that dominated the Northern part.

This group of writers, who wrote under Romanticism, provided a view of America as a land of Americans and expressed their vision to the future of this land with its multiracial aspect. With the birth of American Nationalism in American literature in the mid-nineteenth century, many American writers of the second half of this century celebrated it in their writings in different ways. While the pre-Civil War Romantic writers extolled American Nationalism at a wider level, by defining their American land as one single bloc of merged traditions and a unified economic system based on slavery and developing Capitalism, the post-civil war writers viewed the subject at a narrower level by pointing out the differences that existed between the different American regions and producing a literature, which is regional and realist.

The regional writers, who wrote under another current which is Realism, presented the real life in their regions to show that America can never be a unified land, since the geographical situation and the living conditions of the people differed from one region to another. According to them, even the two economic systems of slavery and industrialization

were experienced differently in the American regions, and the proof was the Civil War of the 1860s, in which the North opted for industrialization and the South for slavery, for economic and environmental reasons. According to the post-Civil War writers, the idea of a unified American land under the same traditions and way of life remains in the imagination of the romantic writers of the 1840s and 1850s.

Writers, such as Mark Twain in the South-West, Pauline Hopkins in the South and many others in the other parts of America expressed their Nationalism according to the region in which they were brought up, revising thus the pre-Civil War writers' idea of America as a unified bloc. Their ideas gave birth to what is known as regional literature, under the literary movement of Realism, expressing how each region interpreted the religious traditions according to their economic and cultural heritage and their ethnic and racial belongings, and how they experienced the new currents of industry and modernity according to their social and economic preferences. The realistic aspect they gave to their writings came to revise the romantic imaginative one provided by the writers of the 1840s and 1850s. Here, Frye's theory of Displacement from one literary mode, namely Romanticism, to another which is Realism is apparent. This displacement vehicles two aspects of the American Dream: that of geography or location and that of revision brought by the regional realist authors towards their precursors, who are mainly national and romantic.

Indeed, during the period that preceded the Civil War, the writers' aim through their literature was mainly to preserve the national unity of their land and to avoid an eventual Civil War between the North and the South, having seen its premises in the different parts of their country. As such, they always tried to revive the ancient revolutionary Nationalism and identify themselves as Americans, distinguishable from and better than the British people. The nationalism they expressed in their writings, a post revolutionary nationalism, just like the revolutionary one, called for nation building. Through it, they endeavored to identify the



United States as a new nation with modern political, religious, economic and social principles different from the monarchy based system of Britain. As Eve Kornfeld argues, American literary nationalism of that period “hoped to create a vital national culture to unify a heterogeneous society, to heal political divisions and quiet political contentiousness, to foster republican citizenship, and to achieve respect for the new state in the eyes of the world.” (Kornfeld, 2001: 8).

The American writings of the 1840s and 1850s were known as “the American Renaissance”, a term associated with the works of American literary nationalists, who formed New York’s Young America Literary Circle. Within the latter, American writers moved from the romantic imaginative works of authors as Philip Freneau and Dwight to romantic but more authentic works of others as Emerson, Whitman, Hawthorne and Melville, who were viewed as the first generation of U.S. Literary Nationalists; especially after the publication of F.O. Matthiessen’s *American Renaissance* in 1941 (Levine, 2008: 3). In their literary works, this generation of mid-nineteenth century writers expressed their dreams and desires to establish an American literature and nation, based especially on Anglo-Saxon whiteness. By this, they sought to differentiate themselves from the French, Spanish, Blacks and Native Americans, and to link their origins to the white British or Germanic blood. Thus, their Nationalist dream is mainly built on racial and ethnic bases. (Ibid., P. 6). The writers who wrote under this current

ignored southern and minority perspectives, taking it as a given that the North would triumph in the Civil War [...] As a result, literary-nationalist imaginings from the South or West –or from Afro Americans , Native Americans, and other racial or ethnic minorities- have generally been looked at in subordinate relation to or apart from the literary-historical arc of the U.S. literary nationalism (Ibid., p. 5).

The problem with these writers is that their vision of Nationalism was not accepted by all Americans. “White” literary Nationalism was rejected not only by the other races living in America but even by some white Americans themselves. Due to this antagonism which is

manifested mainly in American writings, each group of Americans sought to define Nationalism according to their own vision to America and Americans, revising other views of it. Thus, the idea of revision and misreading came into existence in American literature in relation to the subject of Nationalism, especially in the post-Civil War period, when regional literature came into being. In this context, Benjamin Spencer, in his *The Quest for Nationality: An American Literary Campaign* (1957), notes that after the birth of American Nationalism, American Nationalists of the last half of the nineteenth century “sought to define the nature of nationality in American literature by presenting the full play of conflicting doctrines and, indeed, of counternationalistic currents.” (Spencer, 1957: viii).

American writers at that time had two tasks in their literature; they had to identify themselves as Americans different from the rest of the world, and to identify themselves in America according to their region or race. Differences emerged between Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western nationalisms and between white and black American nationalisms, and debates between writers became apparent in their writings. David Waldstreicher argues that within this struggle, “local, regional, and national identities existed simultaneously, completing or contesting one another.” (Waldstreicher, 1997: 6).

The controversy between American writers about their identity put American Nationalism in continuous transformation and reinterpretation. Before the Civil War, most American writers interpreted Nationalism in terms of its industrial aspect and Northern whiteness; taking it as granted that the white race was and would be the one that would govern the land, and that the industrial current that was developing in the North and that was brought there by the whites themselves would be uncontrollable, and would propagate to other parts in the land. So, their aim was to unify the land in the eyes of the world and to avoid an eventual Civil War, and if the latter would happen they took it as granted that the

North would triumph; ignoring thus Southern minority perspectives and defending whiteness and industry (Levine, 2008: 5).

When the Civil War ended by the victory of the North, writers found no necessity to defend their view of Nationalism, and the other minority groups emerged with their writings to defend their cases in front of a giant white industrial hegemony and expansion. In addition to this, the emergence of what is known as hemispheric nationalism and the movement to the West influenced writers, who reflected in their writings the way of life in their regions; ignoring the other parts of the land. Thus, American Nationalism was tainted by geographical and regional colors. Accordingly, American literature, like the American nation itself “is continually being reinterpreted, reinvented, and reimagined in response to internal and external pressures” (ibid), the thing which led to its displacement from one literary mode to another and from one geographical location to another, with each literary text revising a previous one. The American Dream, which represents the American nation in literature, followed its displacement and revisionary aspect.

## **Chapter I: American Dream as an Allegory of the Nation in Selected Fiction by Mark Twain and Herman Melville**

Both Twain and Melville refer in their fiction to an American Dream that symbolizes the American nation, emphasizing the specificity of some of its life aspects, such as economy, politics, religion and culture. However, in their dealing with these aspects, Melville gives them a national dimension, dreaming of an American nation unified under one socio-economic and political system, and Twain presents them at a regional level, by focusing on life in the South. The difference between Twain's and Melville's visions toward the American nation is apparent in the characters and the settings of their novels, as well as the dominating religious tendencies and myths of the nineteenth century America. By the use of the technique of symbolism in his works, Melville introduces the reader to settings and characters that stand for the American nation and the American people as a whole. Twain, under the literary current of Realism, introduces the reader to settings and characters that stand for real people and places to show at which point life in his region is specific and different from other regions. The two authors tackle the subject of nationhood under two different strategic formations and locations. While Twain's strategic formation is regional and realist, Melville's one is national and symbolic, and while Twain's strategic location is southern and postbellum, Melville's one is Northern and antebellum.

By relating their characters to their settings and religious beliefs, the two authors focus on some symbols and events that express their dreams about America. While Melville expresses the dream of creating a unified nation, Twain focuses on the impossibility of making such a dream come true, by putting emphasis on the specificity of his region at the geographical, socioeconomic and religious levels. In his emphasis on the difference of his region from others, Twain underscores the specificity of the dreams of its inhabitants, who are brought up within specific life conditions, comparing to other people in this vast country.

Since religion played an important role in people's life in the nineteenth century, Twain and Melville cannot overlook it while dealing with the characters' dreams, behaviors and reactions to different events. Both authors introduce the reader to an American society characterized by religious hypocrisy, as the socio-economic conditions and dreams of people at that time fascinated their religious behavior, and both of them make appeal to the myth of the Noble Savage to highlight this hypocrisy. So, the allegory of the American Dream in the selected novels takes the form of a discourse on religion, because both fictions are produced in a period marked by the dominance of Puritanism tainted by hypocrisy.

#### **I- Melville's National Dream Versus Twain's Great South and Regional Vision of the American Dream**

Twain's vision to the future of America seems to be revisionary to that of Melville, especially as far as the economy and politics of the country are concerned. Twain's standpoint is perhaps stimulated by the events that characterized the period in which his works are published. In fact, after the Civil War, the Northern carpetbaggers moved to the South for financial and political gains. These Republican men went to the South to democratize and modernize the population, spreading the civil rights legislation and founding economic development through Capitalism. Their aim was to establish themselves as leaders there by gaining the population's aid. Historian Eric Foner argues that "...carpetbaggers generally supported measures aimed at democratizing and modernizing the South." (Foner, 1988: 296). In the same period, Robber Barons occupied the Southern land with their industries, especially the railroad industry. Twain lived these events and saw the impossibility to impose on the Southerners the economic and cultural practices of the North because of the distinctiveness of their region at the cultural, economic and political levels. Putting his ideas into writing, Twain revised the Renaissance writers, as Melville, who dreamed of establishing the same economic and political standards in all the American land.

Melville, in his works, gives economy, politics and society a national understanding. In *Moby Dick*, the *Pequod* with its crew members symbolize America, which is a multiracial continent. Patrick McGrath, in an Introduction to *Moby Dick*, argues that Melville's choice of the characters, who make the crew members of the *Pequod* as representative of the different races composing the American population, is very symbolic. For him, the close relationship between Ishmael and Queequeg represents the brotherhood between the American races, "an idea of America as the place where such desperate men as Ishmael and Queequeg –and Daggoo, and Tashtego, and Fedallah the Parsee- brown, black, red, and yellow skins, as well as white- might live in democratic harmony, 'federated along one keel.'" (McGrath, in Bloom, 2007: 23). In the same context, McGrath argues that the destruction of the *Pequod* by the white whale at the end symbolizes America's leading to destruction by the white obsession. He argues that

[...] In this view, the *Pequod* stands as a symbol of America herself; but an America bent on self-destruction, and why? Because under the sway of an obsession with whiteness. At which point we remember that in the early 1850s, when Melville was writing *Moby Dick*, it was already clear to many that the argument between the states over the question of slavery must end in a bloody civil war, and that America would tear herself apart precisely because of her obsession with whiteness (Ibid.).

When Melville presents the crew members of the *Pequod*, he distinguishes them according to their races, their skin color, and their religions and cultures. Doing so, he identifies Indians: Tashtego; black negroes: Queequeg and Daggo; Quakers: Starbuck; and others from foreign and local origins. All these races are gathered under the command and tyranny of one single captain "Ahab" from the white race, obsessed by the whaling industry in general and the pursuit of *Moby Dick*, the white whale, in particular. This presentation symbolizes life in the U.S.A. as it is dreamed to be by the Renaissance writers of the mid-nineteenth century. Indeed, the crew members, despite their different belongings, find themselves in obligation to co-exist with each other, since their fate gathered them in one single whaling ship. They stand for the American people at that time, who belonged to

different races and origins, but for the same reasons, mainly for the quest of material wealth, they were guided by their fates to the same land. So, they found themselves in obligation to co-exist with each other by accepting and respecting each other's culture and beliefs, forming thus a melting pot.

Captain Ahab, who guides the Pequod and obliges its crew members to follow his instructions, symbolizes the American rulers, who guided their nation according to their dreams and obsessions. Ahab's obsession with the whaling industry and determination to kill Moby Dick refers to the American presidents' obsession with industry and their competition and determination to triumph whatever the consequences would be. This obsession is justified in Ahab's mind. For him, Moby Dick is an enemy that has taken from him his ability to lead his whaling industry and to live a normal life. It is, then, a competitor that put an end to his dreams and paralyzed his willingness to practice the whaling industry. For this reason, it must be killed to be an example for any creature that tries to make an obstacle for Ahab's industry. This "must" is shown in many passages of the novel. For instance, when Starbuck claims that such an obsession to take revenge of an animal, which is not capable of hatred and cruelty, is illogical, Ahab answers:

If man will strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me. [...] Sometimes I think there's naught beyond. But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. [...] That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him. Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me. ( pp. 36,38,39).

Here also, an analogy is drawn between Captain Ahab and the pre-Civil War rulers who, as radical Democrats, were ready to fight any creature on earth that would thwart the development of the American industry. Indeed, these rulers were at the point of leading the whole American nation towards an eventual war against the Southern part of this country that constituted a threat to their industry by remaining agricultural without caring about the

consequences. After the American-Mexican war in 1848, and the gaining of new territories, the presidents were in urgency to stop the spread of agriculture and slavery to these new parts, which are closer to the South and West. Moreover, after the death of James Monroe, the last president from the Virginia Dynasty, all the presidents that followed opted for Capitalism and free commerce and sought to modernize the American economy.

Like the American presidents, Ahab leads a ship of a large number of people from different races and origins to satisfy his obsession to kill the white whale, without considering their will through this adventure at sea. Those men are there to sustain Ahab to fulfill his objective with or without their will. Starbuck is an example of those who are not convinced by this mission. For Ahab, the purpose is traced in his mind and no one can contest it:

Oh, hard! That to fire others, the match itself must [needs] be wasted! What I've dared, I've willed; and what I've willed, I'll do! They think me mad—Starbuck does; but I'm demoniac, I am madness maddened! That wild madness that's only calm to comprehend itself! . . . The path to my fixed purpose is laid with iron rails, whereupon my soul is grooved to run" (pp. 37, 165, 66).

Here also, the radical democracy of the American rulers is symbolized. For them, the decision was taken as far as the American economy and politics was concerned. America would be led to a nation of free trade and industry, and any force that would come against this would be met by another force above it. This decision, like that of Ahab, is monocentric, in the sense that the will of American people, who, like Ahab's crew members, were from different origins and who viewed success from different perspectives was not taken into consideration. They had to submit to the general will of the whole nation, represented by their governors, to make of the American nation a one unified bloc different and distinguished from the rest of the world by its own industry and Capitalism.

Through the character of Ahab, Melville represents the evil of American rulers, who ruled under a fusion of justified criminality and oxymoronic oppression. He is described as a "swearing good man", 'a grand, ungodly, god-like man" (p.79); an immoral reformer and



sympathetic criminal, merging in his character goodness and evil and representing a humanized version of the oxymoronic oppressor and justified criminal (Bloom, 2007: 105).

The popular characters' haphazard aims are answered by his [Ahab's] unprecedented singleness of purpose; their horrid willingness to murder human beings contrasts with his intent to hunt down a whale; their unmitigated inhumanity differs from his capacity to display occasional "humanities," as when he tearfully recalls his wife and child or when he befriends the hapless cabin-boy Pip.(Ibid., p. 104).

In the novel, Ahab is given a godly character; he is presented as a master. He is the master of the Pequod, and his crew members are the slaves. His obsession with the whale's chase, which is transmitted to his crew members, symbolizes the madness of American industrialists and their Capitalist thirst to control all the American sectors. Yet, Ahab's madness and thirst to kill Moby Dick cannot be achieved without the crew members, his slaves, in the same way as the American rulers need their people to achieve their aim of fighting the agricultural South.

Melville, through the technique of symbolism, succeeds in *Moby Dick* to give an idea about the American economy and politics in the pre-civil war period, which were in the road of nationalization. This idea is grasped initially from the novel's setting and characters, especially Captain Ahab. Being set in the Pequod, which symbolizes the American nation, the novel is in need of characters that symbolize American people. Indeed, the Pequod and Ahab are bound to each other; the former, symbolizing America, is in need of a captain having the qualities of the latter: a fused Captain like the American rulers, who were radical democrats and tyrannical.

In addition to the Pequod, the novel is set in the ocean, and this setting is also symbolic; it is a symbol of width and breadth. Indeed, Ahab's obsession to kill Moby Dick is mixed with an obsession to control the ocean, which stands for the western hemisphere. For him, if the greatest animal of the ocean is defeated, the ocean in itself is possessed. In their search for Moby Dick, Ahab and his crew members explore all the oceans. He considers that

fishing the whale is a principal actor of the transformation of the Pacific into an American lake (Olson, 1997: 34). This symbolizes the American supremacy over all the nations, embodied in Ahab's Godly character, which provides him with the will to be not only the master of his soul and fate, but the master of all the universe.

Here also an analogy between Ahab and the American rulers is apparent. Their obsession to control industry was driven by their will to control the whole American continent and the world. For such presidents as John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, James Polk and others, the Industrial Revolution was the key that would open for them the door of being "a city upon a hill". Their ultimate dream was to conquer the huge British textile industry, the first economic force at that time.

Yet, to make this dream come true, they were in need, if not in necessary obligation, to nationalize their Industrial Revolution by converting the whole American economy into industry. However, this could not be achieved without fighting the powerful wealthy land-owners of the South by abolishing slavery, the first and the last source of their wealth. Doing so, an eventual Civil War was unavoidable to make an end to the Agrarian South by mechanizing agriculture, and to unify the whole country under one single economic and political system, based on industry and Capitalism.

The characters and the setting in Melville's novel indicate that the dream expressed through the technique of symbolism has a national dimension. The setting of the story symbolizes national unity. The latter is expressed by urging Americans to understand that industrialization is unavoidable. Thus, accepting it as the best economic system that will make their country better, richer and fuller than the rest of the world is the wise idea that will keep them out of an eventual Civil War, because the rulers' obsession had no limits.

*White Jacket* is another work in which Melville genuinely represents the American nation with its society, economic practices, religious and political laws in a world of a man of

war, via the techniques of symbolism and allegory. He even extends the practice of slavery to the whole American nation through his description of life onboard the warship to unify the dreams of all Americans. Making reference to real facts that hindered the history of American navy in the pre-Civil War period to express national dreams makes of the novel a realistic, but also fictional and romantic work. It tells about real events that are very symbolic of global issues. The same issues that characterized the American society in Melville's time, including racism, slavery, religious hypocrisy and political tyranny are present on this ship. "There are parallels, too, between the social arrangements on a man-of-war and the state of society itself, and though 'we the people', like the common seamen in the Navy, suffer many abuses, the worst of our evils we blindly inflict on ourselves." (Chase, 1962: 33).

The warship *Neversink* in itself is allegorical. It is a miniature of the American nation as it includes all the races as a melting pot. Its name also is symbolic in the sense that it refers to America that would never sink in the eyes of its people. And while launching his criticism to the functioning of laws and tyrannical practices of captains, Melville alludes the functioning of the American constitution with its legislation as well as the tyranny of its governors in a nation considered as a democracy. By the description he gives to the different events and practices onboard the ship, he is, in fact, addressing the American political institutions to remind them that the U.S.A. has not yet grown into a democracy as they pretend it to be; its political laws indicate that it is still like the different traditional monarchies in the world, especially the European one from which they recently got independence to free themselves from their tyrannies.

For Melville, The United States is one of the nations in which the primitive and tyrannical practices of government are severely manifested. According to him, this nation that considers itself a democracy is worse than the old world's tyrannical monarchies. Many events and expressions in *White Jacket* are symbolic of this fact. For instance, his

consideration of the British Captain Jack Chase, who joined their ship, as being kinder than the American ones alludes to the fact that British rulers are more comprehensive than the American ones. Moreover, when he says:

As a man of war that sails through the sea, so this earth that sails through the air. The port we sail from is forever astern. And though far out of sight of land, for ages and ages we continue to sail with sealed orders, and our last destination remains a secret to ourselves and our officers; yet our final haven was predestined ere we slipped from the stocks at Creation. (p. 93),

he means that their frigate, which represents the U.S.A., is characterized by fixed orders that are more severe than the other warships. Another expression that indicates that life under the laws of the *Neversink* is harsher than the other warships is when he says, “So long as a man-of-war exists, it must ever remain a picture of much that is tyrannical and repelling in human nature.” (p. 49).

The novel, then, has a double dimension. It can be considered as a realistic work as it launches a bitter attack on the cruelties onboard the American battleships, making an indirect appeal to the authorities to establish a certain order and justice on these frigates, and grant the sailors, who spent the greatest part of their lives on it to serve their nation, some rights and dignified life. For Melville, the American seaman must be dignified more than any seaman in the world, because he is the most devoted to his service. In this regard, an article in the *London Atlas* makes it clear that

the American seaman appears to have little *esprit de corps* –and no sentiment. His services are rendered for so many dollars. He loves the ship with no final love, the connexion being merely mercantile; and if he is mulcted in his pay, or short-allowanced in his grog, thinks himself cheated abominably. (*London Atlas*, 9 February 1850, in Higgings and Parker, 1995: 302, 303).

At the same time, the novel is allegorical in the sense that it extends the cruelties and injustices practiced on the ships to the American nation in general. It expresses a dream of change and reform in the American constitution that will make of the United States a true democracy. For Melville, as long as such tyrannical laws as flogging and exploitation remain

in Americans' lives, America will not be a democracy. Melville, then, in *White Jacket*, extends the life conditions of the sailors onboard the warship to the ordinary civil life on the whole American land, and gives them a national dimension.

While Melville provides a national dimension to his novels, dreaming to unify the American people under one national culture and just laws, Twain, in his fiction, introduces the reader to a local, regional setting, being the Southwestern region of the U.S.A. As a matter of fact, his fiction narrates real events in his life under the two literary techniques of Realism and Regionalism. These two ways of writing provided the late nineteenth century authors with helpful techniques to portray the real life of American people in a specific region of this large country. The regional realist writers remind the former Romantic ones of the mid-nineteenth century that American life is not and can never be as they dreamed it because of the diversity of cultures and the specificity of each region. Realism, indeed, focuses on the description of the minute and authentic details of specific settings and characters' behaviors.

Being brought up in the Southwestern region of the U.S.A. and being very familiar with its culture and traditions, Twain does not rely on his imagination to write novels as *Huckleberry Finn*. The majority of the characters and the events of the latter have their background in real events lived by Twain in Hannibal, a small town in the Missouri region, where most of his boyhood was spent. Throughout his work, he is reminding the reader how truly American he is and how truly Southwestern he is. Anyone who knows the South-west can realize at which point Twain is realist in his representation of this region. William Dean Howells, in his *My Mark Twain: Reminiscences and Criticisms*, comments on the setting of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*:

It is not so much the West in the presence of the mystery. It is not so much the race-effect as the region-effect; it is not the Anglo-American finding expression, it is the Westerner, who is not more thoroughly the creature of circumstances, of conditions, but far more dramatically their creature than any prior man. He found himself placed in them and under them, so near to a world in which the natural and primitive was obsolete, that while he could not escape them, neither could he help challenging them. The inventions, the appliances, the improvements of the modern world invaded the

hoary old of his rivers and forests and prairies, and, while he is still a pioneer, a hunter, a trapper, he found himself confronted with the financier, the scholar, the gentlemen. They seemed to him, with the world they represented, at first very droll, and he laughed (Howells, in Gibson and Smith, 1967: 148).

The new culture brought to Twain's land by the modern Eastern newcomers urged him to think and think to find answers to some questions, such as what they mean by such notions as equality, humanity, and representative government. When he failed to find the answers, he asked people around him, but he found them without answers too and even not ready to accept this modern world, so he laughed. It was in this way that Twain developed his genius to understand the world around him, and to write his works. (Ibid., p. 149).

Pam McAllister, in his *The Bedside, Bathtub & Armchair Companion to Mark Twain*, argues that Missouri is not only Western; it is Southern too. So, traits of Southern civilization, as the institution of slavery, are found in it as they are found in all the Southern states. Indeed, Hannibal is described with the Mississippi River welcoming boats carrying goods and all kinds of men: Peddlers, healers, con men, gamblers, trappers and Politicians. In addition, they carried slaves, like Jennie, who was sold down the river (McAllister, 2008: 6). This provided Twain with a background for his character Jim in *Huckleberry Finn*, through whom he introduced to us the institution of slavery in this region.

Moreover, during Twain's boyhood, the frontier America, where he lived "was a violent place. Hannibal was a place of rough language, rude humor, blood sports, drunken brawls, outlaw bands, infant death, and slavery. Before Sam was twenty, he encountered his share of corpses and witnessed a number of murders." (Ibid., p. 7). This atmosphere inspired most of the events and characters in *Huckleberry Finn*, such as the violent feud between the Grangerfords and Shepherdsons, Huck's father, a drunkard who beats him until death, the two conmen who find their way to the raft and call themselves a king and duke, and mainly the humorist language of the text.

Hannibal, Missouri and the Mississippi, then, provided Twain with an adequate setting for his regional work, which represents the American Southwest. This setting is one of the distinctive features of the novel. It presents the prejudices of the Southern whites towards the blacks that laid the ground to slavery and that are still present even in Twain's time. This setting is a kind of reminding to the other Americans, especially the Northerners, that the legacy of slavery is planted in the minds of the white Southerners, despite their efforts and eagerness to forget it by embracing the modern world of industry.

Twain's use of verisimilitude in his work, then, helped him to give a realistic image of the region of the South-west; this region in which he is brought up and which he knows more than any other American region. Verisimilitude in writing is a technique used by realist writers, by presenting actual settings and through the introduction of real, or type, characters, speaking existing languages or dialects within a story based on occurring backgrounds and events. At the international level, this authenticity indicates how American Twain is, and at the national level it indicates how Western he is.

In fact, Realism is not a technique of Regionalism; it is, but, what created Regionalism. Mark Twain, as his contemporaries who wrote under the same literary current, had not chosen the West to write about it relying on Realism. It is this Realism that put him in the West. Twain could not present real facts about a region in which he had not lived. He could only present real facts about a region where he lived and give authenticity to events and languages with which he had interacted; he was, in fact, conditioned to write about them. "He found himself placed in them (Westerners) and under them, so near to a world in which the natural and primitive was obsolete, that while he could not escape them, neither could he help challenging them." (Howells, 1967: 148).

With the introduction of Realism to American literature in the late nineteenth century, writers became rather regional than national in their writings. This Regionalism was, in fact, a

new form of Nationalism. Unlike the Romantic writings of the mid-nineteenth century, Realism gave another image of the American continent which was completely different from the one presented by the mid- nineteenth century writers in their nationalistic literature. Each piece of writing, under Realism, gives an image of one region that is different from another in many aspects of life. It is under this realistic current that Twain revises almost all the issues presented by Melville at a national level, and gives them a regional dimension.

In *Life on the Mississippi*, Twain focuses mainly on the slave community and the effects of the introduction of the steamboating industry to the Southern region on their life. Many slaves, especially the young ones, are freed in order to work as free blacks on the steamboats, and many others remain slaves serving new white masters onboard the boats, but an opportunity is still open to them to leave the South and be open to other regions and other people, especially the Northern abolitionists, who used to help them to escape bondage. Moreover, on steamboats they are not attributed heavy duties and they are paid better than in plantations, the thing that permits them to have time and necessary material to consider their situation.

Via the black characters he introduces in the novel, as the character of Brown, Twain “highlights the work and experience of African American river workers, their pan-Mississippi world, and the actions they took to better their condition.” (Buchanan, 1967: 17). The Mississippi River in the novel stands for two opposing phenomena. On the one hand, it is presented as a place of bondage, since it encourages the practice of slavery through its steamboating industry. On the other hand, it is presented as an open door to freedom for the slaves, since it provides them with the opportunity to leave the Southern plantations and taste a new life. In this context, Thomas Buchanan argues that

Western rivers provided slaves and free blacks with opportunities to forge local, regional, national and even international communities. Beneath the pilothouse, slave and free black steamboat workers worked to construct their own world beyond the sight of masters, captains, and plantation owners. Working in conjunction with riverside communities, they made steamboats an important site of contestation in both



the eras of slavery and freedom. [...] The romanticism of *Life on the Mississippi* is just one manifestation of how most white nineteenth-century Americans embraced the steamboat without considering the struggles that took place on their decks. Slaves and free blacks, and then their postemancipation sons and daughters, countered this myth and sought to make steamboats their own (Buchanan, 1967: 17, 18).

Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* relates how steamboat industry helped so many black slaves to make their dream of freedom come true. What is noticeable is that the image given by Twain in this novel about his region is specific. Unlike Melville's extension of bondage to the whole American nation and all the races living in it, Twain limits this phenomenon to the Black race that experienced slavery from the very beginning of its arrival to the Southern region. Even the poor people of the white "race" has never experienced slavery. Since this community is considered the feeding vein of the region, one cannot describe any aspect of life on it without making reference to slavery. Slaves in this region are marginalized and despised as a race, but they are as important as machinery in the new industry of the Northern region.

Moreover, in the Southern colonies, circumstances are different as far as the description of labor roles is concerned. White southerners cannot accept the idea that white men can labor to produce cotton, tobacco, rice and other agricultural commodities. This urged the Southern states to maintain slavery after the revolution of 1812. In 1850, they introduced the Fugitive Slave Law, which says that if a slave run away to the North, he would have to be returned to his owner, and slaves who broke this law should be punished (Memmi, in Marinot, 2000). The Northerners were against this law; they made places for the fugitives, who completed escaping routes, and moved runaway slaves by night from one secret hiding place to another via a loose network of safe houses. This practice was known as the underground railroads (Ibid.), which helped many slaves to get freedom. When the Northerners helped the blacks to escape slavery, their aim was to submit them to a new form of bondage in their industrial factories, because of their need of cheap labor to develop their industry. As a result, the southern blacks were submitted to a modern slavery, which was less difficult than the

traditional southern one, along with white mates and other people belonging to different races (Hartman, 2013: 569).

In his *Life on the Mississippi* and other works he published about his region, Twain makes it clear that this new form of bondage represents a freedom for the slaves, who find it preferable to occupy humble jobs in the North than being under Southern slave-owners, who make of them their material property. In the South, they are reduced into the state of animals; they have no access to learning, and their behavior and movement are restricted. In their work, they suffer from extreme physical violence, as killing and punishment by breaking their legs. They are, also, forced to work seven days a week without being paid. Even their private liberty is violated, as they are also obliged to be married and raise large families to complete the work required, and their marriages had no legal bases (Memmi, 2013: 185).

Since these phenomena are common features of life in the Mississippi, Twain cannot overlook them while describing life in this part of America. Via the theme of change and growth, he affirms that the change that happened in the history of the Mississippi River affected the life of the Black community, which constituted one third of the population of the whole region at that time. He reminds the reader about the importance of this river for the economy of the South and the lives of both the White and Black races. He mainly focuses on the socio-economic circumstances that conditioned slavery in this region, as the growth of economy and its shift from agriculture to commerce, the thing that affected positively this institution, which moved from plantation to steam boating, and finally to freedom. In *Life on the Mississippi*, the reader feels a movement similar to the movement of water and steamboats on the Mississippi river as well as change and development.

As a matter of fact, the issues of racism, slavery, religion, freedom and culture in general prove to be functioning in a different way from the static dimension given to them by Melville in his novels. The latter, as aforementioned, extends these issues to the whole

American nation and all the races living in it. To do so, he relies on the technique of symbolism through which he shows how every individual can be subject to racism and enslavement, and how such important aspects of life, like religion are functioning in the same way under the laws of the U. S. government.

## II- **Melville, Twain and the Myth of the Noble Savage**

The myth of the Noble Savage is introduced in both Twain's and Melville's fiction within the context of religious hypocrisy and American Dream. Since religious practices are modeled by the settings and characters of the works of each author, the Noble Savage is given a regional dimension by Twain, revising Melville's national vision of it. The importance of setting and characters' behavior in dealing with the myth of the Noble Savage as an allegory of the American Dream is, in fact, present in all of Melville's and Twain's novels, but is mainly manifested in *Moby Dick* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, in which the two authors show how religious hypocrisy is used to mislead the dreams of the characters, who find refuge in the noble savage to alleviate their societies' corruptive way of life and express their religious dreams.

Dealing with the American Dream in their novels, Melville and Twain cannot escape the issue of religion, since the latter dominated the American mind at that time. The religious aspect of life is, in fact, an important issue through which the two writers express the dreams of their characters, who make always reference to religion to justify their deeds and express their dreams. Through his exposure of the Southwestern understanding of the Christian religion, Twain revises the mid-nineteenth century American Romantic writers, who give a unified image of American religion, aiming to establish a unified religious system different from the European one. In his fiction, Twain presents Southern people practicing Puritanism in a way that fits their socio-economic dreams, which are specific to their region. The issue of religion in Melville's fiction, however, shows how Puritanism is imposed on all the races as

the best way of worship despite the hypocrisy of its believers. Both writers use the myth of the Noble Savage to discuss religious hypocrisy either at a national or regional levels.

Herman Melville, in *Moby Dick*, exposes the religious aspect of the American life in a symbolic way via his characters of different races sailing together in the whaling ship, the Pequod. He associates these races with the religions they represent to explain how Americans linked civilization to the Christian characters and savageness to the non-Christian ones. Doing so, Melville attracts his reader's attention to the superiority of Christianity, which is the religion of the white race, among the faiths of the other characters. In fact, the Christianity is given dominance over the other religions and is used as a means by the white Anglo-Saxon race to dominate the other races. At the same time, he shows the hypocrisy of the Christians in comparison to the sincerity and transparency of those considered as being primitive and pagan.

In the novel, the ship owners Peleg and Bildad were Quakers, and the first men of the Pequod, such as Sturbeck, Stubb and Flask are presented as Christians or close to Christianity in their thinking. Yet, the harpooners, such as Queequeg, Tashtego and Daggoo, are described as savage, pagan and without knowledge about the Christian religion. This presentation is, in fact, very symbolic; the white Christian characters are there, as in America, to govern and give orders, because they are wise, splendid and admirable, while the black pagan characters are there to submit and execute their orders, because they are savage, big, powerful and even cannibal.

The way Melville presents his characters reveals the white race's will to globalize their religion and impose it as a governing one by associating it with civilization and reducing the importance of the other religions. At the same time, he foreshadows the hypocrisy and dishonesty of the believers in this religion, referring to events in which the characters

presented as being savage are brave, honest and helpful, and those presented as Christian are awkward, hypocrite and egoistic. By contrasting Christianity to Cannibalism, Melville aims to reveal the artificial values of white Christians and the natural positive qualities of the so-called negro pagans.

To contrast between the artificial values of the Christians and the natural sincere character of the so-called pagans, Melville incorporates in his story the concept of the Noble Savage, a mythic characteristic attributed in literature to the so-called uncivilized man, revealing his innate goodness, which is due to his being far from the corrupting world of civilization. The origins of the concept goes back to the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations, but it is adopted by authors of different periods in their writings. The modern myth of the Noble Savage is attributed to Jean Jack Rousseau, who believes that the original man is freer from sin, appetite or the concepts of right and wrong, and emerges as noble not savage. In his *Social Contract*, he summarizes his contrast between natural and social worlds by glorifying the Noble Savage, considering that

Although, in this state [civil society], he deprives himself of some advantages which he got from nature, he gains in return others so great, his faculties are so stimulated and developed, his ideas so extended, his feelings so ennobled, and his whole soul so uplifted, that, did not the abuses of this new condition often degrade him below that which he left, he would be bound to bless continually the happy moment which took him from it forever, and, instead of a stupid and unimaginative animal, made him an intelligent being and a man” (Rousseau, 1762: 195-196).

The glorification of the Noble Savage became among the dominating themes of the romantic writings of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Melville draws the comparison between the civil and natural existence of man by contrasting Christianity and Cannibalism. This is done by revealing the high moral values and the humane nature of Queequeg, the negro cannibal preferred by Ishmael than his fellow Christians. The character of Queequeg is incorporated in the story to represent the Noble

Savage. Ishmael, in the novel, expresses deliberately his inclination to Queequeg's rather than the Christian Cannibalism. For him, "Queequeg's cannibalism [...] is not a savage taking of life, but a reverence for life." (Petty, in Bloom, 2007: 32). He adopts Queequeg's pagan traditions as a rebellion against his Christian prejudices. When he arrives at the Spouter-inn in New Bedford, Massachusetts, and shares a bed with such a heavily tattooed Polynesian harpooner, he gets a feeling of strangeness and fear, but later he discovers his good nature and they become good friends. For him, it is "better sleep with a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian." (p. 31). In fact, he prefers a humane black cannibal than a white enslaving drunkard Southerner.

To illustrate the good deep nature of Queequeg, Melville includes in the novel the event, when he is aboard the little *Moss*, and he is mocked by a white Christian. When the latter falls overboard, no Christian takes the initiative to save him; the cannibal Queequeg is the only one who risks his life and saves him without caring about the insolent words he addressed to him before. Ishmael appreciates this act, and argues by narrating Queequeg's thoughts after the rescue:

Was there ever such unconsciousness? He did not seem to think that he at all deserved a medal from the Humane and Magnanimous Societies... and mildly eyeing those around him, seemed to be saying to himself –'It's mutual, joint stock world, in all meridians. We cannibals must help these Christians' (p. 61).

Here, Queequeg emerges as being indifferent towards racial and religious differences and reverent for life. His racial and religious inclusion as well as his humanism are, in fact, signs of democracy and civilization (Petty, in Bloom, 2007: 32). Ishmael, thus, shows a reversion in value between Christianity and Cannibalism. While sermons and religious teachings show that Christians are taught to be humane and civilized, and are thus those who are supposed to govern their fellow men, reality shows that those teachings are found in those who have not

notions of religion in their minds, thanks to their innocence and honesty. Queequeg's goodness distracts Ishmael from his culture to embrace the pagan one.

To emphasize the hypocrisy of the Christian community, Melville draws a relation between Ishmael and Queequeg. The two go in opposite directions but meet in one point of agreement and become friends. In fact, Queequeg, according to Ishmael, sets out from his own culture in Kokovoko in order "to learn among the Christians, the arts whereby to make his people still happier." (p. 57). He goes to the North to embrace the Christian religion and culture, which are described to him as being illuminating and civilizing; he does so to civilize his community. Unfortunately for him, he discovers "that even Christians could be both miserable and wicked; infinitely more so, than all his father's heathens." (Petty in Bloom, 2007: 29). As for Ishmael, when he meets Queequeg for the first time, he rejects his strange culture. But, being fed up with his own hypocrite community, he finds in him a best friend and embraces his pagan religion.

At the moment Ishmael turns into a Pagan, he gets feelings of pity and feels himself a bad religious person. So, to keep his status of a good Christian, he relies on the Christian religion itself to justify his decision. At the end, he convinces himself that it is better for him to convert to Queequeg's culture, and that these pagans are, in fact, good Christians in their depth. He argues:

I was a good Christian, born and bred in the bosom of the infallible Presbyterian Church. How then could I unite with the idolater in worshipping his piece of wood? But what is worship? –to do the will of God –that is worship. And what is the will of God? –to do to my fellow man what I would have my fellow man to do to me –that is the will of God. Now Queequeg is my fellow man. And what do I wish that this Queequeg would do to me? Why, unite with me in my particular Presbyterian form of worship. Consequently, I must then unite with him in his; ergo, I must turn idolator (p. 54).

It seems that his logic urges him to go in the direction of this so called pagan cannibal not to attract him to his own one. Ishmael's leaning to paganism starts in the novel when he feels

fear in his lonely room in New Bedford and finds redemption in Queequeg, who clasps him tightly in his arms. At this moment, he forgets about his hypocrite civilization, and he starts to smoke with him, and their friendship is sealed when Ishmael offers Queequeg's little idol Gogo sacrifice. Melville narrates this incident in Ishmael's words:

As I sat there in that lonely room, [...] the evening shades and phantoms gathering round the casements, and peering in upon us solitary twain: I began to be sensible of strange feelings. [...] This soothing savage had redeemed it. There he sat, his very indifference speaking a nature in which there lurked no civilized hypocrisies and blend deceits. Wild he was; a very sight of sights to see; yet I began to feel myself mysteriously drawn toward him. [...] So I kindled the shavings; helped prop up the innocent little idol; offered him burnt biscuit with Queequeg; salaamed before him twice or thrice; kissed his nose; and that done, we undressed and went to bed, at peace with our consciences and all the world (p. 54).

By his leaning toward the Black culture, Ishmael is judged by many critics as a betrayer of his white one. Yet, Melville's intention in linking the religious aspect of the American life to that of race is rather a revelation of the dominance of the white race in all aspects of life. In fact, the white race imposes itself in the U.S.A. as a dominating one by nationalizing its culture –religion included – and by doing its best to put all the other races under its command. This can only be achieved by acting hypocritically; revealing only the good side of their culture.

While Melville, in *Moby Dick*, treats the issue of religion as a national aspect of American life by linking it to the white culture and race, Mark Twain, in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, gives a detailed image of the religious way of life in one region of this vast land; namely the Southwest, explaining how religion and paganism have their specificity and understanding in this region. Like Melville, Twain exposes the hypocrisy of the Christian believers by introducing the myth of the Noble Savage, but unlike him, he does this by exposing the inhumanity and ridiculous way of life of the South westerners instead of generalizing it to the whole American society. In fact, Melville treats the theme of religion in the context of industry and exploitation of man to man; using it as a means to justify one's



deeds and keeping religious teachings theoretical and abstract. Twain, however, gives a more concrete image of religious life in his region by linking it to its manifesting customs and traditions, especially slavery. Twain shows how religious people in the South have the habit to corrupt religious texts to keep their socio-economic system of slavery well functioning at a regional level. He, thus, revises Melville's use of Christian characters, who utilize their religion to impose their superiority at a national level.

The whole story of *Huckleberry Finn* is narrated within a religious context, and all its events have religious aspects too. The novel is opened by introducing the reader to religious teachings given by Widow Douglas and Miss Watson to Huck, which the latter describes as being boring and ridiculous. When he leaves these teachings, he is exposed to the darker side of the Christian religion in this region. A judge ironically attributes Huck's custody to his drunkard father, who has no notion of religious education. Huck's Father, in fact, denies him the right to any kind of education, and uses to beat him and treat him savagely. The judge's act exposes another image of religious hypocrisy in the Southern society. To escape his father's barbaric treatment, Huck prefers fleeing with a runaway slave, and living a primitive and superstitious life with him at the first opportunity opened to him than going back to the civilized world he lived in before.

In his journey with the runaway slave, Huck experiences religious confusion in his mind. Sometimes he feels remorse because of his help for a slave to run away from his master; which is judged to be immoral and anti religious in his community. Some other times, he questions Widow Douglas's religious teachings, considering that a good religious person has not to enslave people. In this context, William Dean Howells argues:

No American of Northern birth or breeding could have imagined the spiritual struggle of Huck Finn in deciding to help the negro Jim to his freedom, even though he should be forever despised as a negro thief in his native town and perhaps eternally lost through the blackness of his sin (Howells, in Gibson and Smith, 1967: 149).

Huck's questioning of the institution of slavery in his region and of the hypocrisy of his community distracts him from correcting his sin. At each time he is given the opportunity to go back to his community, he finds himself disappointed, and prefers his natural world with Jim. In the river, he is displeased by the tricks and lies of the so-called duke and king, and when he finds shelter with the Bourgeois family of the Shepherdsons, he is once again felt disagreeable to their bloody feud with the Grangerfords. He is also dissatisfied by Mr. Phelps, who seems good but enslaving and racist. Being disappointed by all the white men's religious practices, Huck creates for himself a new religious world far from his hypocrite community and the rigid barbaric institution of slavery.

In the novel, Twain introduces the reader to two systems of belief, Christianity and superstition, with Huck in between trying to find adequate moral values. Before being exposed to superstition, he has first embraced Christianity, which is taught to him by Miss Watson. With this religion, Huck is not comfortable at all; he finds it rather a religion of a dead not of a living being, since Miss Watson is always teaching him how to be a good individual to reach heaven and avoid hell after death. Doing so, she is always referring to dead persons. Huck is always questioning her reference to the life of dead people, and for him religion is rather a matter of daily living business. In the novel, he argues:

After supper she got out her book and learned me about Moses and the Bulrushers, and I was in a sweat to find out all about him; but by and by she let it out that Moses had been dead a considerable long time; so then I didn't care no more about him, because I don't take no stock in dead people (p. 4).

When he befriends Jim, he starts to question Miss Watson's religion from another perspective, finding it strange and ironic to be such a good Christian but supportive for the institution of slavery at the same time. Simultaneously, he mocks Jim's superstitious way of thinking, wondering how he can be so stupid and naïve to believe in such imaginative thoughts. His mockery of Jim's beliefs is shown several times in the novel, as when he laughs

at his belief that a magic hairball can change something in his life, or that a spider burnt in a candle or Huck's touch of a snakeskin can be bad signs.

It is, then, noticeable that Huck is not satisfied by both beliefs; he despises the hypocrite practices of Christianity and mocks the stupidity of superstition. Yet, from one moment to another he finds himself unconsciously leaned to one of them. For instance, several times in the novel, he feels remorse, because of his help for a runaway slave, and he believes that this fact will drive him to hell after death. This kind of belief is planted in his mind by Miss Watson and other white Southerners, who teach him that slaves are the property of their masters, and that they are conditioned by their destiny to be so. Thus, someone who frees a slave or brings him under his protection is considered as a thief who steals someone else property. As such, at several occasions, he decides to tell about Jim, and give him back to Miss Watson. Yet, at each time he tries to do it, his consciousness tells him that what he is doing is not a sin, since Jim is looking for his freedom from oppression. For him, a human being cannot be a property of another human being. He argues:

It hadn't ever come to me before, what this thing was I was doing. But now it did; and it staid with me, and scorched me more and more. I tried to make out to myself that I warn't to blame, because I didn't run Jim off from his rightful owner; but it warn's no use, conscience up and says, every time, "But you knowed he was running for his freedom, and you could a paddled ashore and told somebody" (p. 92).

At the same time, his befriending of Jim helps him to discover the natural goodness of his soul, his naivety and the sincerity of his thoughts. He finds in him the tenderness and protection of a father and the faithfulness of a good friend. As a result, at each time he decides to tell about him, he feels that he is betraying him and changes his mind. Jim's goodness attracts Huck to the point that sometimes he believes in his superstitions, despite his certainty that they are about nothing, betraying thus his Christian values. At last, he favors Jim's superstitions over the White men's hypocrisy, and he takes the decision to free Jim and continue his life far from the civilizing world of the Southern community. "All right, then, I'll

go to hell...”(p. 214), he says, preferring to free Jim than being stuck to his religion, glorifying thus the Noble Savage.

Dealing with the theme of religion, Twain creates a conflict between civilization and the natural life. For him, the civilized world in which he is brought up is artificial and built on lies, hypocrisy and self-interests. Even the deeds that seem to be good in this world are based on hypocrisy and some interest behind. In *Huck Finn*, he illustrates this idea of self-interest by the religious practices of the white Christians, especially Miss Watson. Christopher Luse illustrates the latter’s hypocrisy, considering that when she uses to invite the slaves to pray with her in her religious ceremonies, her behavior seems an act of modesty and philanthropy. Yet, in its heart, it is rather an act of possession and control over this institution. Indeed, once there, they are taught that it is their destiny to be slaves and a property of their master, so they are not to be against the will of God, meaning that they have not to deceive their master by trying to steal him or run away from his farm (Luse, 2007: 379, 412). Titus 2:9-10 is one of the verses used to fit the purpose:

Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our savior attractive (Bible, Titus 2:9-10).

It is, then, this hypocrisy and emptiness of the Southern white men’s civilization that kicked Mark Twain and his character Huck out of his community to embrace the natural world, which is characterized by its honesty and clarity. This world is represented in the novel by the run-away slave Jim, the Noble Savage, who has no idea about this civilized world. Jim, by his stupidity, innocence, honesty, naturalness and transparency, attracts Huck, who takes the decision to continue his life far from the civilized world of the South at the end of the novel.

Huck's religious tendencies in the novel are, in fact, representative of Mark Twain's religious experience in his native region Hannibal, where civilization and superstition coexisted within a slaveholding community. The latter is governed by the religion of Calvinism, which is marked by the aristocracy of saints and hopelessness of sinners. Within this community, his father, like many slaveholders, abhorred slavery silently; the thing which created in Twain's mind a kind of dilemma vis-à-vis the institution of slavery, becoming lost between what is right and what is wrong, what is just and what is cruel (Howells in Gibson and Smith, 1967: 114). In this region of the Southwest, religion and savagery seem to be compatible. Howells argues that "at any rate, there are no more vital passages in his fiction than those which embody character as it is affected for good as well as for evil by the severity of the local Sunday-schooling and church-going." (Ibid., p. 150).

Analyzing religion in Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, one can notice that the author is exposing the socio-economic as well as the political aspects of Southwestern American life, especially in his region Hannibal governed by the religious tendencies of its white race. The latter uses religion as a means to justify their daily deeds, and impose the socio-economic system that serves their class. According to Twain, slavery, as it functions in this small Missouri River town, is not characterized by the same dignified patriarchy of the Southern Virginia slavery of the past. As such, he has shown in his writings an attack towards the traditions and superstitions of the Southwest as well as its aristocratic arrogant and absurd democratic realities. His writings, thus, show a Southwestern life that is detached from any older world outside of it, but characterized by the same passions, hypocrisies and prejudices (Ibid., pp. 154, 155).

Through his writings, especially *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Twain expresses his American Dream of building a community based on religious teachings that will

make better living social and economic conditions. His American Dream is centered in his region, which he describes as being specific if compared to the other regions of the U.S.A. as far as its socio-economic standing is concerned. Revision is apparent in Twain's writings if compared to those of Melville, who gives the American Dream a national vision by expressing national religious dreams. Melville dreams in his works of correcting the Christian religious practices that will represent the whole nation in the future. He points out what is wrong in the practice of this religion by glorifying a Noble Savage, because, according to him, a corrupt religious system will lead to the destruction of the whole nation.

From the analysis of Melville's and Twain's characters in relation to their settings and their religious tendencies, we come to the conclusion that the two authors give different dimensions to their characters' dreams. Melville, in his works, gives a national dimension to the dreams of his characters of different races and backgrounds by gathering them in one single national setting that symbolizes the American nation. He uses characters that stand for American rulers and others that represent American ordinary people. The latter's dreams are predestined and shaped by the unlimited ambitions of their governors, who seek to impose their political and religious tendencies by all means.

Twain, in his novels however, presents local dreams of South-western characters, through the presentation of some details that emphasize the specificity of the geographical location in this part of America. He considers that the geographical specificity of his region engenders dreams that are different from other regions. He also emphasizes the fact that even the religious practices in his region are shaped by its socio-economic conditions, making it clear that the American people cannot have one single religious dream. Characters' dreams in Twain's works are, then, embedded in their local communities, while in Melville's works are given a national dimension.

## **Chapter II: Slavery and the Dream of Liberty in Selected Fiction by Mark Twain and Herman Melville**

Slavery in Twain's novels is presented in the context of the American Dream at a regional level, revising the writings of Melville in which the same issue is given a national dimension. Throughout *Life on the Mississippi* and *Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain presents Missouri inhabitants' culture and beliefs vis-à-vis the institution of slavery, which had been the subject of controversy between the North and the South in the nineteenth century. He emphasizes the specificity of this institution's life in the southern part of the USA, where economy is centered around it. Slavery is also presented in Herman Melville's *White Jacket* and *Moby Dick*, but under another perspective, which aims to unify the American vision towards this issue by extending it to the northern part of America, and dealing with it in the context of industry and Capitalism. So, the issue of slavery in Twain's and Melville's fiction is tackled under two strategic formations. While Twain gives it a regional southern dimension, Melville gives it a national and northern vision.

### **I- Melville, Twain and Slavery**

In *Moby Dick*, Melville tackles the issue of slavery under the technique of parallelism to show that this phenomenon is present all over the American soil in different forms. In this sense, he draws an analogy between the slave owners and the captains of industry. Via this analogy, he compares the system of slavery to that of Capitalism, presenting the latter as a new form of the former. Through the voice of Ishmael, the narrator of the novel, Melville refers to the savage and barbaric side of Capitalism. Homer B. Pettey argues that "from the outset of the Pequod's voyage, Melville draws our attention to associations between types of cannibalism and slave labor in order to show the corrupt economic foundation of nineteenth-century American capitalism" (Pettey in Bloom, 2007: 31).

Throughout the novel, Melville presents the American system of Capitalism as an exploitative one. The whaling industry, which is the main subject of the novel, is the prototype of this system, and the relationship between Captain Ahab, who stands for a captain of industry, and his crew members, who represent the proletariat, is considered as that relation between a slave and a master. As it is aforementioned, Ahab is given a godly character. All the men within the Pequod, with or without their will, are there to execute his instructions; they are even driven to satisfy his foolish obsession of chasing Moby Dick.

Describing his adventure on the Pequod, Ishmael does not find any difference between his and his mates' state and that of slaves. He (Ishmael) and all the other men on the Pequod come there with the spirit of adventure and the ambition of making a good living from the whaling industry. While there, they are ill paid by the ship owners, and they are driven to greatest dangers, which lead to their death at the end. Ishmael argues:

Herein it is the same with the American whale fishery as with the American army and military and merchant navies, and as with the engineering forces employed in the construction of the American Canals and Railroads. The same, I say, because in all these cases the native American liberally provides the brains, the rest of the world as generously the muscles (p. 108).

Ishmael's ideas about slavery start to develop after the segregation he and Queequeg experience aboard the Nantucket ferry in their way to New Bedford. The segregation they suffered from is inspired by Melville from the *Liberator*, in which David Ruggles "attacked this ferry for denying him equal rights. [...] Captain Lot Phinney refused Ruggles a first-class ticket" (Bernard in Bloom, 2007: 52). On the same ferry, Frederick Douglas and forty other abolitionists (black and white) experienced segregation. As a matter of fact, Douglas and Garrison attacked it deliberately (Ibid.).

Ishmael and his friend's experience onboard the Nantucket ferry is similar to that of Douglas and his friends; both of them travel to New Bedford looking for work onboard a whaling ship and both of them experience segregation. Although he is a white man, Ishmael is



reduced into a slave in his social position and his wage because of his companionship of Queequeg, who is considered as a runaway slave due to his physical appearance. This gives an image of the conditions of the suspected runaway and freed slaves in the Northern part of the U.S.A., which are not much different from their state in the South. In this context, Pettey argues that “since the 1930s the abolitionist cause had met with some resistance from capitalists in Massachusetts.” (Pettey in Bloom, 2007: 42).

Always via the voice of Ishmael, Melville, in *Moby Dick*, associates between slavery and Cannibalism, alluding that in the nineteenth century, a new form of slavery appeared in a form of industrial Capitalism to coexist with the plantation slavery of the South. In the first chapter of the novel, he considers that bondage is a matter that concerns not only one race or one part of America, but all mankind. This is expressed by Ishmael, when he says: “Who aint a slave?” and “who is not a Cannibal?” (p.15), conjoining the two concepts of “slave” and “cannibal” together, and meaning that the two of them form one new social system in nineteenth century America. (Op. Cit. Pettey in Bloom, 2007: 37, 38).

Melville’s association between Slavery and Cannibalism reveals the exploitative aspect of American Capitalism. For him and for many of his contemporaries, all the capitalists are cannibals, because they are fed with the flesh and blood of the working classes. This Cannibalism is considered by Melville as a new form of bondage, which is as exploitative as the traditional one, and the slaves themselves are Cannibals, since they are ready at any moment to rebel against their masters.

Melville’s dealing with this phenomenon originates from the master-slave dialectic that “permeates the psychological pathology of all oppressive systems” (p. 188). For him, there is no North against South as far as the issue of Slavery is concerned; the difference lies only in the economic systems that prevail in the two regions. The American spirit of exploitation remains the same in all its land. In this context, Homer B. Petty argues that

abolitionism is resisted by some capitalists in Massachusetts since the 1830s (Pettey, in Bloom, 2007: 42), meaning that an American can never be against slavery. He adds that

For Melville, slavery like Cannibalism, is an inevitable consequence of capitalism and expansionism, nowhere more evident than in the whaling industry. Just as the Duke of Wellington took possession of the labor of his whalers, so too does Stubb, although comically, exploit the labors of the whalers aboard the *Rose-Bud* by appropriating a fast whale. Melville's point is that human nature lends itself readily to be exploiter and exploited, cannibal and slave (Ibid., p. 43).

Melville's *Moby Dick* can be considered as an attack against the American economic system based on a modern form of bondage; it is an attack against the hypocrisy of its rulers and its legislation. The book reduces the American modern notions of civilization, industry and technology to the primitive system of Cannibalism. It is also an attempt to avoid controversy between the North and the South over the issue of slavery, since there is no difference between the land owners of the South and the entrepreneurs of the North; there is but one American system based on exploitation. Melville maintains that beyond the enslavement of the Blacks and indigenous people in the Southern plantations, there exists equal harsh conditions in the Northern factories exercised upon the workers.

He explains all these ideas via symbolism, using the whaling industry as a symbol of Capitalism, exploitation and expansionism. The whaling industry is also cannibalistic in its nature being based on "hunting, killing, possessing, dismembering and consuming." (Ibid., p. 26). This Cannibalism led Ahab and his crew members in *Moby Dick* to self-destruction at the end of the novel. All this symbolizes the self-destruction, which will meet the American nation due to its exploitative capitalist system, according to Melville.

The author, then, gives the issue of slavery a national dimension by drawing parallelism between the Northern industrial exploitation of the workers and the Southern traditional slavery and segregation towards the black race. Through characteristics of Romanticism, such as symbolism and parallelism, Melville draws his reader's attention to the fact that American economy cannot prosper without bondage. The industrious man, like the

plantation owners, are fed with the flesh and blood of the working class. They are, thus, brought back to their primitive state of Cannibalism, which is considered by him the original nature of the human race.

In *White Jacket*, Melville develops the issue of slavery in relation to the practice of flogging onboard the *Neversink*. In his description of the phenomenon, Melville makes an analogy between it and that of slavery, and compares the relation between the seamen and their captain onboard the warship to the relation between slaves and their master on a Southern plantation. In fact, an ordinary seaman, like a slave, deals with all the work on the ship, starting from daily chores in peace time, as cooking and cleaning, ending with participation in wars. At the same time, he endures all kinds of oppression and limited liberty. He has to obey the captain's orders, which are established as laws on the ship, and serve his wills and obsessions, otherwise he will be flogged sometimes to death.

Flogging is a law of punishment allowed by the American constitution to manage the naval corporations. Under this law, captains on the battleships submit the sailors to all kinds of dehumanization, as beating and imprisonment for unimportant reasons, transforming them from sailors to slaves. Its system is mainly based on limited liberty and sentence, either in peacetime or at war. In his description of flogging, Melville in *White Jacket* makes reference to many instances of different cases in which seamen, from different races, are flogged for unimportant reasons. His aim is to condemn the cruelty of this system and vindicate the establishment of justice onboard the warships.

In his portrayal of life on a man-of-war, he takes the role of an abolitionist and revolutionary man, and reveals the cruelty of the people of the upper class onboard the warships towards the ordinary sailors. The captain's bad treatment of the latter is justified by the Articles of War, which legalized flogging as a law inscribed in the American constitution

starting from 1800. This is apparent in the novel, when Melville says in chapter thirty five entitled “Flogging not Lawful”:

All crimes committed by persons belonging to the Navy, which are not specified in the foregoing articles, shall be punished according to the laws and customs in such cases at sea. This is the article that, above all others, puts the scourge into the hands of the Captain, calls him to no account for its exercise, and furnishes him with an ample warrant for inflictions of cruelty upon the common sailor, hardly credible to landmen (p. 225).

Melville, in *White Jacket*, defines flogging as a public physical punishment, in which the body is “the major target of penal repression”. As such, he asserts that it can never be an aspect of civilization and democracy; it is rather a ritual of a monarchical system, in which the citizen is considered as the property of his monarch. On a man-of-war, authority is centered in the hands of the captain, who is described by Melville as a despot and an unlimited monarch, whose power is based on the monopoly of authorized violence. (Bellis, in Bloom, 2008: 250). Describing Captain Claret’s despotism, *White Jacket* reports his words by saying: “I allow no man to fight on board here but myself. I do the fighting” (pp. 136,134). Claret’s words come as a result of the first flogging practiced against a man, who takes part in a fight. The exception that the captain makes for himself here by saying “but myself” indicates the unlimited power that the captains grant themselves with and the subjection of all the other sailors to their will by force.

A common sailor is viewed by the captain as his own property, as it is the case of a slave for his master. Melville argues that Claret regards the sailors as “disintegrated parts of himself” (p. 217), which means that they are considered as additional organs to his body, which help him to do whatever he wants in a controlled way. The captain supervises everything related to his sailors: their space, time, work, and even religion; the thing which leads to the reshaping of their character through place and function. Control is mainly manifested on the mast, which is the only place on the ship, where the sailors are put in contact with their captain. The latter dominates this space through the different decisions he

takes in regard to seamen, who have no right to defend their case or contest his judgment (Bellis, in Bloom, 2008: 256). Melville describes the place of the mast as

The main Police-office, Court-house, and yard of execution, where all cases are lodged, causes tried, and punishment administered. ... The main-mast, moreover, is the only place where the sailor can hold formal communication with the captain and officers. ... He stands there –generally –waiting the pleasure of the officer of the deck, to advance and communicate with him (p. 131).

As for the control of time, it is for the captain to organize time for everything on the ship; including the sailors' moments of sleeping, getting up, eating, working and any activity.

In this respect, Peter Bellis argues that

Within the system of four-hour watches, meals are served according to an arbitrary schedule, with the sequence determined strictly according to rank (NN WJ, 30), and it is not twelve o'clock until the captain orders "Make it so" (23). The ship even has a calendar of its own, as the days of the week are renamed by the sailors, according to the meals served on each. Smoking among the men is limited to thirty minutes after meals –a "sumptuary law" that leads White-Jacket to give up his pipe entirely "rather than enslave it to a time and place" (387). Nothing, in short, is allowed to "mar the uniformity of daily events" (48) (OP. Cit., Bellis, in Bloom, 2008: 256).

Within this atmosphere of strict control of space and time, every sailor is attributed a specific function that he has to accomplish in its due moment. And since the majority of, if not all, the sailors are unskilled, their personality is shaped by the place and function they occupy. In his description of the sailors' life, White Jacket notes that every man of a frigate's five-hundred-strong members knows his own special place, and is infallibly found there. He sees nothing else, attends to nothing else, and will stay there till grim death or an epaulette orders him away (p. 8). Place and function are the only things that distinguish the sailors from each other; in other matters, they are all submitted to the same pace and conditions of work.

To keep this order functioning, the captain establishes a certain kind of surveillance onboard the ship that controls every moment of the sailor's life. White Jacket says: "No privacy can you have; hardly a moment's seclusion. It is almost a physical impossibility, that you can ever be alone" (p. 35), and he adds: "almost every inch is occupied; almost every inch is in plain sight; and almost every inch is continually being visited and explored" (p. 41).

Through his visits, the captain puts the sailors under terror, since if the work is ill done or if the regulations he makes are broken, they will be subject to the extreme violence of flogging, which is made legal by the Articles of War. Describing these articles, Melville asserts:

“Shall suffer death!” This was the burden of nearly every Article read by the Captain’s clerk... “Shall suffer death!” The repeated announcement falls on your ear like the unrelenting discharge of artillery... [like a ] minute gun... and it is a tougher morsel, believe White-Jacket when he says it, than a forty-two-pound cannon-ball. (p. 293).

As White-Jacket is placed among the common sailors in the *Neversink*, he can observe all the evil of the ship. As a result, he reveals the savageness of the so-called civilized people by describing the way the sailors are treated in the navy. He, thus, provides the reader with examples of cases in which sailors are flogged. For instance, in chapter thirty three entitled “The Flogging”, he portrays the case of four sailors named John, Peter, Mark and Antone, who are flogged to death; he says:

Among the many who were exceedingly diverted with the scene between the *Down Easter* and the Lieutenant, none laughed more heartily than John, Peter, Mark, and Antone –four sailors of the starboard –watch. The same evening these four found themselves prisoners in the “brig,” with a sentry standing over them. They were charged with violating a well-known law of the ship having been engaged in one of those tangled, general fight sometimes occurring among sailors. They had nothing to anticipate but a flogging, at the captain’s pleasure (p. 148).

Here, he depicts the inhumanity of the upper class on the ship, by reporting in detail how these four sailors are chastised and beaten for a humble reason. In addition to flogging in moments of peace, Melville provides us with examples in which the sailors are flogged in moments of war. This is illustrated by the case of the character of Tawney, an African American, who is forced to fight with the sailors in the war between America and England. In chapter seventy four entitled “the Main Top at Night”, Melville reports how Tawney and other sailors are treated by the captain in the war by saying:

They conjured him to release them for their guns, and allows them to remain neutral during the conflict, but when the ship of any nation is running into action, it is no time for argument, small time for justice, and not much time for humanity. Snatching a pistol from the belt of a boarder standing by, the captain leveled it at the head of the three sailors, and command them instantly to their quarters, under the penalty of being shot on the spot. (p. 312).

This quotation shows how sailors are treated terribly by the captains in the war while fighting for a national cause. Captains, in fact, do not take part in the fighting; they are just there to commend, and when the glory is achieved, it is their name which is glorified not the sailors'. As Melville puts it, those captains are crowned by the glory of the sailors, who are enslaved onboard the American frigate.

Melville's reference to slavery in his portrayal of life onboard a man-of-war is a bitter attack to the high officers' cruelty against the sailor. The analogy he draws between the practice of flogging and that of slavery does not mean that he has taken black servitude as a matter in his work nor does it mean that he is its abolitionist. Melville believes in the superiority of the white race, and when he calls to the abolition of flogging, he does not mean the abolition of slavery in general. He recognizes the cruelty of this system, but what matters to him, in fact, is the reduction of a white man to a status of a slave. Describing the sailors' conditions in chapter ninety, entitled "the Manning of Navies", he says: "To them there is an insolence in his manly freedom, contempt in his very carriage. He is an unendurable, as an erect, lofty-minded African would be to some slave-driving planter." (p. 423).

Although he does not express it deliberately, we feel while reading *White Jacket* that the justice that Melville is advocating through his portrayal of the practice of flogging is a justice between people of the same race, the white race, not between blacks and whites. In the novel, he refers to black characters just to show how the white ones are treated in the same way as them. His reference to Rose-Water and Guinea, for instance, is indicative of this fact. He has first mentioned "poor Rose-Water", the free black character, who was flogged, then he moves to White-Jacket, the white character, who is called to the mast to be flogged for not having been in his right place, to show that the two characters are scourged in the same way.

Simultaneously, he refers to Guinea, the slave who refuses to attend Rose-Water's flogging, because this reminds him of the cruelty of the masters toward their slaves, and

White-Jacket's contemplation of a white man's suicide in order to avoid the lash. This shows the blacks' acceptance of flogging as part of their lives, and the whites' revolt against it and their preference of death than it. In this context, Priscilla Allen Zirker argues:

If we look at Melville's predecessors in the man-of-war narrative or at his colleagues in the flogging debates of the 1840s, we find some hint of a recognition of the relationship between the issues of slavery and flogging, especially in seamen narratives, which enlarge upon the distinction which should be made between seamen and slaves. Actual practices, the seamen protest, made no such distinction. The same sort of hint was supplied by the congressional debaters on the abolition of flogging. (Zirker, 1966: 480).

This means that white men, when they raise against flogging, have never put their cause in the same stream as that of slavery, i.e. the slave owner is always given the self-interest of preserving his property. They do not give the slaves an equal status as a white man; they always believe in the superiority of the white race.

In the analogy that Melville makes between life in a man-of-war and civilian society, he evokes only the liberty of the white race, neglecting all the other races that make life possible on a warship. The sailor's identity, for him, is always linked to "an American-born citizen, whose grandsire may have ennobled him by pouring out his blood at Bunker Hill" (p. 146). Moreover, his words about the American Revolution and the Declaration of Independence, when he says that naval codes "should conform to the spirit of the political institutions of the country" otherwise for a sailor "our Revolution was in vain; to him our declaration of Independence is a lie" (p. 143), are meant only for white sailors. (Bellis in Bloom, 2008: 252, 253).

While Melville, in his works, considers slavery a national phenomenon, Twain, in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Life in the Mississippi*, gives the same issue a regional dimension by describing, under the literary current of Realism, the real image of bondage and the real conditions of slaves and their masters in the Southern part of the U.S.A. Twain brings his reader to the very heart of slavery; he introduces him to a region, where this system is a



tradition, and where a black can never be treated as a free or white man. This tradition is not only social but moral and legal as well.

In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the whole story turns around the relation between the main character Huck, a white character, and a runaway slave Jim, a black character. It is about the friendship that developed between these two characters, from the very first reason that led to its birth to the events that helped its growth. Through this friendship, Twain presents the southern perspectives towards the institution of slavery, which is given social, political and mainly moral dimensions. It is presented by the author to emphasize that in his community, friendly relations between blacks and whites are still forbidden by society, law and religion. In fact, many events that hindered the two characters' journey together show that Huck finds difficulties to maintain his friendship with Jim, since in his society a black equals a slave. Unlike Melville, who presents an American society, in which all the races are merged together under one economic system, Twain presents a Southern community in which a slave has no access to the white community.

Friendship between Huck and Jim is brought into being when they discover that both of them are in the state of running away from the cruelty of life under the moral and social laws of the Southern white society. When the two characters have seen each other for the first time on the shores of the Ohio river, each of them is afraid of the other. However, at the moment they discover that they share the same dream, which is to move far from their society, they plan their future together. They decide to start their journey on the Mississippi onboard a salvaged raft that will take them far from Jackson's Island, going through Cairo, where they will catch a steamboat up the Ohio River. The latter will lead them to the free states of the North to secure freedom for both of them.

When the journey starts, Huck and Jim's friendship is challenged by many factors. Being fled from two different kinds of oppression, the two friends find themselves in

situations in which they are obliged to face the same dangers differently, because of the difference in the nature of freedom they are looking for. In fact, Huck is fleeing Miss Watson's aristocratic teachings and her religious and academic educations, looking for a more natural, less sophisticated world in wilderness. Jim, however, is looking for freedom from bondage, dreaming to get access to the social class Huck is fleeing from.

Moreover, the moral education that Huck got, and that becomes a norm in the Southern society, puts him in a state of dilemma. On the one hand, he believes that helping Jim to regain his freedom is a moral obligation, despite slavery is endorsed by the state and the church. It is, for him, a reward for that man, who has much done for him, by protecting him from dangers and providing him with the affection of a lost father. On the other hand, his mind is always telling him that he has committed a sin by betraying his society and helping a slave to get free from his owner. Huck does not arrive to make a difference between what is right and what is wrong in a society dominated by established social and moral prejudices. Huck's dilemma gives an image of a Southern society, in which the abolition of slavery becomes a sin and freedom is restricted to white men.

In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Twain introduces his reader to an American society of the pre-civil war period, in which slavery is a legal fact. This legality is attributed by a combination of political, economic, social and even religious laws imposed by the state and the church, which reduce a black person to a status of property. No one, white or black, can overcome these laws, which are part of the Southern civilization.

As an innocent boy, Huck decides not to tell about Jim. In fact, when he sees that it is time to leave the Jackson's Island, he is more protecting his friend than himself, because, for him, it is Jim who is in the greatest danger. The decision to put their plan of escape into effect is taken when Huck goes to the Illinois shore disguised in a calico dress and a bonnet to satisfy his curiosity about his and Jim's disappearance. Arriving to the house of a talkative

woman, he hears that people along the river's coast are looking for whoever murdered him, and he hears that they suspected his father and a run-away slave. "Some think old Finn done it himself... But before night they changed around and judged it was done by a runaway nigger named Jim." (p. 83.). In this quotation, Twain shows that at that time, when a crime is committed, a black is more suspected than a white.

When Huck gets back to the island, he warns Jim that they have not a minute to waste, because they are after them and they have seen the smoke of the fire they have made, so they can arrive to them from one moment to another. In fact, they are not after Huck; they are after Jim, who is suspected for his murder. Thus, he thinks that he has to help him. "We could sell the raft and get on a steamboat and go way up the Ohio amongst the free states, and then be out of trouble." (p. 85), Huck tells Jim. His decision to protect a runaway slave than going back to Miss Watson illustrates this small boy's rebellion against his society, which is characterized by cruelty and injustice (McAllister, 2008: 78).

Starting from this moment, Huck and Jim share the same objective until they face the first danger, which leads them to lose each other in Cairo's fog. Returning back to the raft, Jim realizes that Huck tricked him, and Huck hangs his head in shame. Surprisingly, a white child apologizes to a black man, and it takes fifteen minutes for the latter to accept his apology. The two come to restore their friendship and decide to carry their way on, but they do not know that they lost Cairo and they are leading farther to the deep South. At this moment, Jim informs Huck that his urgent objective is to get enough money in the industrial North to buy his wife and children. As a result, Huck starts to have remorse because of his help to a slave and his family, who are considered Miss Watson's property, to flee. For him, he has stolen another one's property, and according to the laws of the state and Church, it is wrong and illegal to steal the property of someone else. As a matter of fact, he decides to do his best to give Miss Watson her property back (Ibid., p. 79). Jim, in his side, starts to show

Huck feelings of reward, respect and love for his help, calling him his best and only friend. So, he gets a feeling of regret toward Jim and protects him once again in front of the two slave hunters.

In addition to this, the two friends become aware that they missed Cairo, and their raft is destroyed when it collided with a steamboat. As a result of this accident, Jim disappears and Huck finds shelter with an aristocratic Southern family, the Grangerfords to whom he introduces himself as George Jackson. Jim, however, is hidden by slaves in a swamp. After a moment, Huck discovers that the Grangerfords entered in a long feud with another aristocratic family, the Shepherdsons. This feud ended with a bloodshed, and at a moment of slaughter, he decides to flee with Jim once again, preferring life with a slave than the hypocrisy of the aristocratic class. (MacAllister, 2008: 79).

Once again, Huck is offered the opportunity to live the comfortable life of the aristocracy, but he favors free living. Describing life within this class, he says in chapter nineteen: "...we was always naked, day and night, whenever the mosquitoes would let us-the new clothes Buck's folks made for me was too good to be comfortable, and besides I didn't go much on clothes, nohow." (p. 121), meaning that the atmosphere within this class does not fit his character. He prefers the honesty and friendship of a nigger than the hypocrisy and corruption of the class that enslaves him. Huck's disillusionment with the Southern world and his attitude toward a nigger certify for many readers Twain's hopeful sight toward the future of slaves in this land. As a child, with natural feelings, Huck recognizes Jim at the end "as a fellow being, more decent and honest than most of the white people who hold him and his kind of slavery." (Leary, 1960: 30).

Starting from this point, Huck takes a final decision to find a way to secure for Jim the freedom he is looking for. Meeting his old friend Tom Sawyer, they plan together to free him.

At the end of the novel, when Jim secures his freedom, Huck learns that Miss Watson has already freed him. This is another hopeful point that Twain gives in relation to the future of slavery in the South. By this hopeful ending, Mark Twain corrects the harsh references and descriptions he addressed to Jim all along the novel.

Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* carries a message and an image of the Southern community, which is not ready to end slavery and discrimination that are part of its civilization. The book describes how it is difficult for the white southerners to adopt the emancipation proclamation and put themselves in the same position as their slaves. It opens a debate among scholars about the nature of bondage in this part of America and gives them real facts on which they can make logical judgments and provide serious solutions to this problem. It, also, demonstrates at which point the life of a slave is harsh and restrained, and how only those who survive in the South can make sense of it.

As in *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain, in *Life on the Mississippi*, introduces the issue of slavery as part of the American South's civilization and as a phenomenon specific to it. The reason is that the slave community is the foundation of society and economy in this part of America, as the southern vast fertile lands are exploited on its basis. With the development of steamboating on the Mississippi River, bondage in this region had grown more than before, since slaves became needed even on the boats to take in charge all the hard and demeaning tasks that are related to commerce and boating.

The introduction of steamboating to this region increases slavery. In fact, slaves become more needed than before on plantations, in which more crops are produced to be sold in the North. Moreover, they are employed to transport the harvest from the farms to boats and from boats to the Northern markets. In this respect, Thomas C. Buchanan argues that

the connections between piloting and slavery were not hard to see. The *Pennsylvania* and the other boats Twain piloted along the lower Mississippi were strewn with slave-

produced products. The intimate relationship of steamboats and slavery was evident each time roustabouts walked down the gang way to carry hemp, sugar, tobacco, and especially cotton from Southern levees [...] Fifty-five percent of the South's cotton crop [...] came down the Mississippi in 1860, bound for the textile mills of Liverpool and New York. (Buchanan, 1967: 5, 6).

Within the same context, in a letter published in Debow's review, a Missouri politician named Edward Bates pronounces, "We say the Missouri is our river, and New Orleans is our storehouse. And we will bestow upon both whatever amount of labor and expense may be necessary to produce the greatest sum of goods to the proprietors" (Ibid., p. 6). The labor that Bates means here is that of the slaves. The latter's tasks on plantations and boats, however, were not restricted to the production and transportation of goods, but extended to serving their white mates as they were considered their superiors.

In his depiction of life on plantations and steamboats in the Mississippi region, Mark Twain, in *Life on the Mississippi*, portrays in detail the life of the black community, since the latter represents the essential part of life there. He gives a real image of slavery with its hostility and evils. Moreover, he highlights the different changes that affect the black community, starting from the introduction of the steamboat industry to this region until the post bellum period. He presents the institution of slavery as a changing phenomenon that develops positively in the favor of the blacks, who progress slowly from bondage to freedom with the development of commerce in this region. Steamboating, despite its maintaining of the practice of slavery, introduces the slaves for the first time in their history to new people, new regions and new civilizations that open for them ways for freedom that were unknown for them while on plantations. So, slavery on steamboats is more beneficial for slaves than on plantations. In this context, Twain, in *Life on the Mississippi*, says:

We were getting down now into the migrating negro region. These poor people could never travel when they were slaves; so they make up for the privation now. They stay on a plantation till the desire to travel seizes them; then they pack up, hail a steamboat, and clear out. Not for any particular place; no, nearly any place will answer; they only want to be moving. The amount of money on hand will answer the rest of the conundrum for them. If it will take them fifty miles, very well; let it be fifty. If not a shorter flight will do (p. 99).

Within the mixed economic system of agriculture and commerce, Twain pictures slaves' life conditions on plantations and steamboats. He shows how they become articles of commerce sold from one holder to another in order to make wealth. In the majority of cases, the holder uses the slave as an investment by loaning him to another slave owner to serve in his plantation or in one of his boats, "and then the negro becomes a property in trust, when, they sold the negro, it only becomes a breach of trust" (p. 200), Twain argues in chapter twenty entitled "Uncle Mumford Unloads". This illustrates how these human beings are reduced into material properties used to make wealth and improve the whites' social position.

Some white men have even the habit to steal slaves to make wealth by selling them to a new slave holder. they take profit of their desire to leave the plantation and their lack of knowledge to easily manipulate them. In chapter twenty nine entitled "A Few Specimen Bricks", Twain explains the plan made by these people to make money from slave theft. He says:

But the stealing of horses and in one state, and selling them in another, was but a small portion of their business; the most lucrative was the enticing slaves to run away from their masters that they might sell them in another quarter. This was arranged as follows: they would tell a Negro that if he would run away from his master and allow them to sell him, he should receive a portion of the money paid for him, and that upon his return to them a second time they would send him to a free state, where he would be safe. The poor wretches complied with this request, hoping to obtain money and freedom; they would be sold to another master, and run away again to their employers; sometimes they would be sold in this manner three or four times, until they had realized three or four thousand dollars by them; but as, after this, there was fear of detection, the usual custom was to get rid of the only witness that could be produced against them, which was the negro himself, by murdering him and throwing his body into the Mississippi (p. 95).

This passage reveals the method by which slaves are exchanged as articles of commerce and become subjects of moral and physical aggression. It explains how they are put in trivial situations due to the false promises of the thieves, who mislead and kill them.

In addition to the denigration of the negroes and their reduction to a state of animals and material commodities, they experience chastisement, otherness, hard work and bad treatment, especially on the boats. Twain says:

The gang was composed of two classes: the heads or the council, as they were called, who planned and converted, but seldom acted; they amounted to about four hundred. The other class were the active agents, and were termed strikers, and amounted to about six hundred and fifty. These were the tools in the hands of the others; they ran all the risk, and received but a small portion of the money; they were in the power of the leaders of the gang, who would sacrifice them at any time by hanging them over to justice, or sinking their bodies in the Mississippi (p. 201).

The above passage demonstrates that the status of the negroes remains the same even on the boats. They are not more important than animals, since they are deprived of all the human rights and submitted to all kinds of oppression and violence. In chapter twenty nine entitled “A Few Specimen Bricks”, Twain adds that they are also submitted to lynching, which is one of the unjust laws inflicted upon them, referring to Murel, a black character, who is supposed to receive such a punishment as he breaks laws and work. Twain inquires, “how it was that Murel escaped Lynch Law under such circumstances?” (p. 200). From this, we understand that the blacks in the South are not only denigrated by society but even by the law which deprives them of all their rights and submits them to inescapable punishments .

In addition to the Lynch Law to which they are submitted, the slaves are deprived of the right to vote. To illustrate this fact, the writer, in chapter thirty four entitled “Tough Yarns”, notes:

He told many remarkable things about those lawless insects. Among others, said he had seen them try to vote. Noticing that this statement seemed to be a good deal of a strain on us, he modified it a little said he might have mistaken, as to that particular, but knew he had seen them around the polls’ canvassing (p. 241).

In this quotation, the Blacks are compared to insects. They are also excluded from law and political rights. They are denied the right to vote, which means that they do not participate in any decision concerning their life.



Slavery on steamboats, as it is described by Twain, is not much different from that on plantations. Despite the difference in the tasks the slaves are attributed, their social and political status remains the same, as they are exposed to violence and racism in both locations. To detail the situation of this community on steamboats, Twain makes reference to an important black figure in the history of slavery during the antebellum period, who travels and works on the boat on which Twain apprentices piloting. This man is William Wells Brown, who serves passengers and officers in the cabin, and becomes subject to the pilot's threats and watch. While working on the boat, Brown is threatened several times by beating and experiences racism, as he is overseen by the wealthy cabin passengers, who do not miss an occasion to kick, push and beat him.

William Wells Brown is just an example among many other Afro-Americans on steamboats, who are submitted to the same abuse and mistreatment. Thomas C. Buchanan, in his *Black Life on the Mississippi*, provides many other examples of other blacks, who experienced the same fate as Brown. In the collection he makes about the life of the black community in this region, he reports the words of some passengers on steamboats about the white's inhuman treatment of these people. One traveler, for example, notes that "overseers, with 'whip in hand,' drove slaves to exhaustion when loading and unloading at New Orleans." (Lakier: 232, in Buchanan, 1967: 56). Another notes that one captain, following the instructions of one slave holder, ordered his engineer to "beat him [the slave] as the other boys and flog him if he refuses to do his duty." (Ibid.). A master tells to boat officers that "he hoped the mate would give Preston [one of his slaves] a good flogging; that he was always getting drunk and that he wanted to break him of it." (Ibid.).

From the examples above, we notice that the Afro-Americans, when they are released by their masters to a steamboat officer, are treated in the same way as before. The trust by which a slave is sold or loaned carried within it the manner in which he will be treated.

Despite the conditions to which they are submitted, the majority of slaves prefer leaving the plantations to work on steamboats, as the latter provides them with an opportunity to move with the movement of the Mississippi River so as to free themselves from the static state and the routine of the plantations, which they perceive as a kind of imprisonment.

Steamboating, then, provides them with a kind of liberty, and puts them in contact with different cities, unfamiliar people and easier working tasks and thus with new mindsets and mode of life. The latter helps them eventually in getting many rights from which they were deprived before. More than this, many slaves get their freedom thanks to their work on boats. As such, work on the Mississippi River became a dream of freedom for many Afro-Americans in the Antebellum period.

On the steamboats, unlike on plantations, the slaves are put in contact with the world of luxury. Indeed, many of them are employed as barbers, waiters and chambermaids (for women). William Wells Brown states: “My employment on board was to wait on gentlemen.” (Osofsky, 1969: 187). In the same context, Buchanan details the tasks attributed to the waiters, arguing that

Waiters [...] prepared the dining table, served food and drinks, filled the coal stoves that heated the cabin, erected cots for cabin passengers when staterooms were overbooked, ran errands for provisions or other goods, helped cooks with dishes or slaughtering game, and cleaned the cabin –the task that included scrubbing the massive cabin floor (Buchanan, 1967: 62).

From Buchanan’s above illustrations, we notice that slaves’ work on steamboats is less painful than on plantations. Josiah Henson, when he remembers his work on the Mississippi River, describes it as “a sunny spot” in his life and as “one of his most treasured recollections.” His job is perceived by him as “the most pleasant time he had ever experienced.” (Edwards, in *Ibid.*, P. 8).

The luxurious life to which the slaves are introduced on steamboats is not what matters them more, in fact. They find in their work an opportunity to release themselves from long years of bondage. Realizing their importance as controllers of the white men’s commerce,

they start to think of the possibility to get freedom. Indeed, many Afro-Americans start to organize escaping networks, and many others start to learn reading and writing, which will help them to know their rights. Buchanan argues that

The western river world shaped African American steamboat workers' mentality and [...] allowed black workers to create a pan-Mississippi community that nourished collective challenges to authority, as well as opportunities for individual gain. [...] These were places where hidden communication networks sustained the slave community (Buchanan, 1967: 20).

As it is argued by Buchanan, work on the Mississippi River puts the Southern Afro-Americans in contact with other blacks of other regions and also with some Northern abolitionists, who help them to escape slavery and work in Northern factories.

William Wells Brown, for example, is one of the slaves, who got their freedom thanks to steamboating. While travelling along the Mississippi River, Brown's dreams are not centered around the technological development introduced to the Southern region, but mainly around the free states of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. Indeed, after huge efforts, he succeeds to flee bondage and live as a free man. Brown's service on the steamboat is rather an act of resistance against white man's hostility, and an assertion of his and his mates' right of freedom and dignified life. Such figures as Brown played an important role in the slaves' struggle for liberty, especially during the Civil War, and eventually their emancipation later.

In addition to the escaping networks, the released situation of work on steamboats provide the slaves with moments of rest that they fill in with learning to read and write. As a result, learning networks are created on the boats, making the Afro-Americans in contact with each other, opening thus the ground for further communication among them, and turning their learning sessions into a site of cultural development and solidarity (Ibid., p. 69). As a writer, Brown, in his later books, describes in detail the life of these Afro-Americans, who sowed the seeds of their freedom via his own experiences as a former slave.

## **II- Melville, Twain and the Dream of Liberty**

The dream of liberty is present in both of Melville and Twain's fiction, but dealt with under different perspectives and in relation to different social groups. Melville, in his fiction, gives the issue of liberty a national dimension, by linking it to the American civil society and its law. In his *White Jacket*, the limited liberty of the American citizen is inferred through an analogy between the American man-of-war and civil society. Twain, in his literature, however, gives the same issue a regional dimension by limiting it to the institution of slavery, as the latter is the only social class, which suffers from an explicit limited liberty in the South. Unlike Melville's pessimistic visions about his nation's perception of the issue of liberty, Twain's dream about the slave's liberty in his region is optimistic. Dealing with liberty within the American Dream, we find that Melville's American Dream is conditioned by the political laws of the American civil society, which limits the freedom of many of its citizens. His works are, then, a kind of vindication of the rights of those oppressed citizens to make a better society in the future. Twain's American Dream, however, seems to be a correction of Melville's one in the context of the Southern society, which started to grant the Black community some civil rights by revising laws.

In *White Jacket*, Melville presents many incidents that manifest the limited liberty of the seamen on a man-of-war. As long as they are on the latter, they are controlled even in matters that concern their private lives; they have to submit to the will of the captain in everything linked to their life. Flogging, as an act of enslavement, is indicative of limited freedom, as the seamen have no right to control their actions. As a matter of fact, they experience limited economic, political, religious and even physical liberty.

As an example, Melville describes an incident in which the seamen are deprived of the freedom of worship. In chapter thirty eight, entitled "The Chaplain and Chapel in a Man of War", a sailor asks the captain: "May I be allowed, sir, not to attend service on the half

deck?... you will be allowed, sir! Said the captain, haughtily to obey the laws of the ship. If you absent yourself from prayers on Sunday morning, you know the penalty.” (p. 158). So, a seaman cannot miss a prayer without the consent of his captain, and if he is allowed, it is always under the ship’s regulations. We understand from this that the chaplain himself is under the command of the captain.

In chapter thirty eight, Melville says about the chaplain that “he had drank at the mystic fountain of Plato... Concerning drunkenness, fighting, flogging and oppression, things expressly or impliedly prohibited by Christianity –he never said ought.” (p. 172). This means that religion on a man-of-war is shaped by the captain’s personality. A captain on a man-of-war is, then, given a divine power. Here, Melville mourns the religious laws of his society, which are rather based on oppression and political control than human rights and God’s satisfaction.

Limited liberty is overly expressed at the end of the novel, when the sailors are ordered to cut their beards to be stick to the ship’s regulations, an incident which led to what White-Jacket calls “the great Massacre of the Beards.” (p. 355). This happens when the sailors start to cultivate their beards as signs of masculinity and individuality, as the ship war heads home and approaches Cape Horn. The captain, however, orders all the beards to be cut short to be stick to “the Navy regulations” (p. 357), reminding the sailors that they are under his orders and control until they reach land. The sailors respond by a mutiny which ends by their submission to the ship’s law, except for Ushant who insists, “my beard is my own.” (p. 365). At this moment, the captain tries to force him to comply by having him publicly flogged, and demoting him to the brig; reducing, thus, his rank and spatial mobility. (Bellis, in Bloom, 2008: 258). This means that in addition to his being a despot, the captain is also a patriarch, who controls the masculinity of his sailors.

In chapter twenty one entitled “One Reason why Men of War –Men are Generally Short Lived”, White Jacket describes the working conditions of the sailors as follows: “The sailors are on and off duty four hours,” and in each twenty four hours, “they have but three hours sleep.” (pp. 92, 93). It is noticeable that they are confined by their work, which leaves no free time for any other matter that concerns their private life. He adds: “I have listed to be imprisoned in a cell, with its walls papered from floor to ceiling with printed copies, in italics, of the articles of war.” (p. 82). So, their imprisonment is made legal by the Articles of War, which are put everywhere to remind them about their situation. Furthermore, in chapter seventy two, the narrator White-Jacket describes the sailors as prisoners, whose liberty is limited on the ship. He himself is portrayed as a prisoner because of his white jacket, which resembles a “uniform”. Moreover, he, as the other sailors, is imprisoned by the tights of the men of power on the ship.

To emphasize the issue of limited liberty on the warship and extend it to the whole American nation, the author makes reference to Shakings, a sailor at the fore hold in the Neversink, who tells White Jacket a story which is very significant. He says that once he was imprisoned in New York, and when he was released, he wished to return to prison, because for him, life outside was not different from that in a prison (p. 35). According to Melville, “he narrated this anecdote because he thought it is applicable to a man-of-war, which he scandalously asserted to be a sort of State Prison afloat.” (p. 193). The state of imprisonment on the Neversink symbolizes limited liberty in the whole American nation, since the seaman’s life represents American citizens’ civil life.

Melville, in *White Jacket*, describes the world in a man-of-war as a place of all kinds of evil and inhumanity that reduce the American citizen, who is promised all kinds of liberty and decent life by his Constitution, Declaration of Independence as well as his Church, to a state of an imprisoned slave. For him, the American nation, after its independence, had not made a

path toward democracy if compared to the old world; it, however, came back to the evils of the ancient monarchical regimes based on despotism. Instead of looking forward to a more democratic future, American government in the nineteenth century projects an image worse than the ancient European regimes.

In Twain's fiction, the issue of liberty is mainly related to the abolition of slavery and freedom from bondage. The issue is chiefly discussed in *Life on the Mississippi*, in which Twain presents the circumstances that can lead to the freedom of slaves in the nineteenth century. In this novel, he focuses on commerce and steamboating as the main factors that affected the Southern culture and corrected its vision towards the blacks, who started to understand its importance for the development of economy in this region.

In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the South has not yet been open to steamboating and is still governed by its culture, which endorses Slavery as a law and morality. In his ending of *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain infers to those who want to defer slaves' emancipation to a later time through Huck and Tom's game to free an already freed slave. Jim, at this moment, is struggling to get a right which is already his. This fact is a kind of criticism addressed to the American society's hypocrisy towards its people. In fact, even the whites are in need of freedom from their minds and hearts which imprison their deeds. Yet, this could only be achieved by distancing themselves from the Southern community. This is also inferred by Twain, in *Huckleberry Finn*, by putting both Huck, the white, and Jim, the black, on the same raft, seeking to liberate themselves from the Southern pre-civil war society; Jim is looking for freedom from bondage and Huck from Widow Douglass's education and teachings.

Even on the raft, the two friends are not really free, because they are threatened by white dangers at each time they are sighted; the thing which obliges them to sail at night and

hide from the whites' civilization at day. In this context, David L. Smith, an African American educator and scholar, argues that

Ultimately, *Huckleberry Finn* renders a harsh judgment on American society ... Indeed, the novel suggests that real individual freedom, in this land of the free, cannot be found. 'American civilization' enslaves and exploits rather than liberates. It is hardly an appealing message (Smith in McAllister, 2008: 87).

*Huckleberry Finn*, then, emphasizes the idea that the Southern community is in need of some opening to other cultures to change its attitude towards the freedom of slaves. An introduction of another economic system to the region is perhaps necessary to liberate slaves from bondage.

Twain finds steamboats places of bitter liberty for the slaves. In his *Life on the Mississippi*, he describes the nineteenth century in his region as a path towards economic development, freedom and decent life, especially for the black community, which is submitted to all kinds of evil in the past. The economic development, which reaches this region via the introduction of commerce and steam engine, promotes the blacks to a more humane mode of life, and introduces them to new opportunities of freedom from bondage. Moreover, it loosens the racist tendencies that the white race has towards the black one, as both of them started to realize the importance of the latter in the economic development of the country.

Despite their inferior position and continued bondage on the steamboats, Afro-Americans are considered somehow more important than the other slaves who work on the grasslands. In *Life on the Mississippi*, Mark Twain says, "I will remark, in passing that Mississippi steamboat men were important in landmen's eyes." (p. 219). The importance that Twain means here concerns, in fact, their social position, which is bettered thanks to the tasks they are attributed on the steamboats. In this respect, Thomas C. Buchanan argues that

Cabin labor was considered respectable both within the African American community and among steamboat slave leasers. Slave leaser Gustavus Henry, for example, assured his wife that their slave's 'morals would be protected' in the refined environment of a steamboat cabin. Free black cabin workers were often members of the small antebellum African American middle class (Buchanan, 1967: 66).



In addition to the refined environment offered to the blacks on steamboats, some of them are freed by their holders to work as free workers on the boat. The freedom they obtain promotes them to a higher class among their fellows. It also helps them in leading the rest of their community towards emancipation thanks to their constant contact with abolitionists.

In addition to this, their participation in the learning networks on the boats opened their minds into their importance in American economy and society. As a result, they start to react via acts of resistance against racism on the boats. They start to stick to the job attributed to them, ignoring the rest of the orders and racist language they receive from the white passengers. In August 1852, the English traveler Henry Arthur Bright narrated an incident of a free black, who refused to answer a white passenger who called him “boy”, since the term was used to refer to a slave in the southern plantations. He added that when the passenger complained this to the boat’s pilot, he was not given much importance, since the black worker was more important for him than this passenger (Buchanan, 1967: 68, 69). By the mid-nineteenth century, even the physical violence exercised over the blacks on the boats started to be challenged, especially when the American government abolished flogging in the American navy. Jurisdiction was introduced in river boating outlawing all kinds of violence against the sailors (Ibid., p. 56). Thus, the Afro-Americans, who worked on the boats, got some rights and privileges comparing to the slaves on plantations.

The socio-economic privileges got by the blacks on steamboats were used by them to help many of the slaves on plantations to reach freedom by organizing escaping networks, which were sustained by the abolitionists in the Northern free states. William Wells Brown, for instance, reached freedom via these networks. The latter served well during the Civil War, which led to the complete emancipation of the blacks. The Mississippi River, as it is described by Twain represents an open way to freedom for the black community.

From the study of the issues of slavery and freedom in Herman Melville and Mark Twain's respective works, we come to the conclusion that the two writers perceive the American history in relation to these concepts from different angles. While Melville regards the American navy, which symbolizes the American nation, as a place of limited liberty, Mark Twain regards the steamboats, which represent the South-Western American civilization, as a place of freedom, especially for the slaves.

In his novels, Twain gives an image of slavery, which is different from the one given by Melville in his fiction. Slavery in the South is not a matter of exploitation and low wages, and is not exercised over all the races. It is rather a matter of discrimination and possession towards the blacks. In the industrial North, a worker in an industrial company is not the property of his employer, he can get rid of him at any moment. In the agricultural South, however, slaves are the property of their masters; they are put under their laws, and cannot get free of them unless they escape the whole community. As such, they are sold from one owner to another like animals, without caring about their feelings. Moreover, slavery in this part of America is not linked to social class but a race; for Southerners a slave equals a black and vice versa.

For Twain, bondage can never take on the same form in all the parts of the U.S.A. The harshness of this system in the South makes the enslaved people, like Jim in *Huckleberry Finn*, looking for the Northern form of exploitation, which at least can give them the freedom to decide upon their future. Twain's treatment of the issue of slavery seems to be a revision of some misunderstandings of the real meaning of this phenomenon on the part of some Northerners, who did not survive it. Perhaps, if Melville experienced this system as the Southerners did, he would not consider the Northern form of exploitation a new form of slavery.

### **Chapter III: Melville, Twain and the Discourses of Race and Racism**

Along with slavery, Melville and Twain discuss in their works the issues of race and racism, which are, according to them, closely linked to each other. Dealing with this subject, Melville, in his fiction, presents characters of different races exploited by one single race, the Anglo-Saxons, who are there to govern, dominate and impose their laws, orders and culture. He gives this matter a national dimension by linking it to the different races living on the American soil in his time, and he focuses on the different ways used by the Anglo-Saxons to dominate and exploit the other races. He also expresses the dream of this white race to maintain its superiority and the dreams of the other races to liberate themselves from the consequences of racism. Twain, however, focuses only on two different races in his region, the whites who enslave and dominate the blacks. He mainly emphasizes the dream of the latter to liberate themselves from the former's enslavement. Racism in Twain's fiction is, then, based on skin color, while in Melville's one is more linked to ethnicity and social position. As such, the American Dream is discussed in the context of race and racism at a national level in Melville's fiction and at a regional level in Twain's one.

#### **I- The Discourse of Race and the Dream of Equality**

Melville, in his novels, exposes the tradition of American culture, which puts the white Anglo-Saxon race in the position of a master and the other races in the position of slaves. The description he gives to the relation between the Anglo-Saxons and the other races is similar to Hegel's dialectic of the slave and the master, which he describes as two self-consciousnesses; each recognizing its and the other's positions. This recognition develops into a struggle to death, through which one seeks to master the other. When one consciousness reaches its desire, the recognition it is seeking for becomes impossible, because the one in the state of bondage is not free to offer it. Moreover, the slave comes later to recognize himself and his

labor as the source of his master's existence (Hegel, 1807, trans. by Miller, 1977: 111). In Melville's fiction the Anglo-Saxon race is always in a struggle to reach this recognition, which is made impossible by the other enslaved races, being also in strife to raise to the state of power, because of their realization of their importance for the development of the economy and existence of their exploiters.

In Melville's view, those in the position of a master are born to use their brains, which provide them with extraordinary ideas that can never come in the brains of those in the position of slaves. This is why the latter, presented as savage and ignorant, are always there to execute their superiors' ideas using their strong muscles. Strong brains are attributed to the white Anglo-Saxon race that enslaves the other races. In their turn, the enslaved ones are always in the position of rebellion to reach equality with their masters. Pettey Homer argues that this situation brings both of the slave and the master back to their savage state of Cannibalism. This condition is, in fact, the result of the masters' going far from and against God's establishment of the natural order of life and earth. Indeed, their strong ambitions always drive them to challenge the natural laws of the universe, and to go against the religious laws established by God. Moreover, their slaves' state is worse than theirs, since they always execute their wills, but they are at the same time in the position of readiness to challenge their laws and to rebel against their oppression (Pettey in Bloom, 2007: 34, 35).

In *Moby Dick*, Ahab, the representative of the Anglo-Saxon race, is the master. His commands and obsession to kill Moby Dick exemplify the American obsession to challenge the natural order of the world. His crew members represent the slaves, who are always ready to serve their master and execute his orders, despite their being against his will, and despite their readiness to rebel against him at any moment. Both of them are relegated to the state of savageness and Cannibalism, according to Melville. In the novel, Ishmael, Melville's voice, expresses this idea by saying: "Your true whale-hunter is as much a savage as an Iroquois. I

myself am a savage, owing no allegiance but to the king of the Cannibals; and ready at any moment to rebel against him.” (p. 232). Here, Ishmael puts Ahab in the same position as an Iroquois and reduces both of them to the state of Cannibalism. He continues by putting himself in the same position as he is there to execute the orders of a Cannibal, and he is at any moment ready to rebel against him.

In relation to Ishmael’s words, Homer B. Pettey argues that

Ishmael vows both to serve and to rebel against the king of Cannibals, or the king of kings, since tyranny, especially the master and slave relationship, is the primary form of political Cannibalism for Ishmael. Aboard the Pequod, Ahab commands supreme authority over his crew. Ishmael regards Ahab’s tyranny as “sultanism that became incarnate in an irresistible dictatorship” (129) and he links him to “Belchazzar, king of Babylone,” ruler of the old testament’s most profligate enslaving state (131). His allegorical name recalls the most tyrannical king of ancient Israel. As king over Israel, ruling over his “ivory” house (1kings 22:39), Ahab conducted unspeakable acts of violence and apostasy (Ibid., p. 35) (Pettley in Bloom, 2007: 34).

To accomplish his tyrannical goals, Ahab is in need to develop a specific character and a strange personality to seem different from his crew members. He is in need to adopt a political plan that can help him to put his subjects under his control. His aim is to keep them attracted by his objectives, because without them he cannot manifest his dominance. As such, he nails a golden doublet on the great mast as a promise of reward for the one who will be the first to see the white whale. He does this, because he knows that if the goal of this voyage is revealed, the majority of the crew members will refuse to continue their way under his command, and can even react violently, dismissing him as a captain.

It is, then, by using the dominating force of his mind that Ahab succeeds to keep these men of different races, cultures and religions as his subjects. His long experience as a sailor permits him to know that a seaman is in need of a fixed goal and a reward to get the needed courage and force to continue his voyage. Waiting this goal, Ahab permits the crew members to harpoon other whales to take benefit of their oil. (Richir, 1996: 22, 23). It is, then, clear that

the new form of bondage adopted by captains of industry in the nineteenth century is based on indirect ways of buying their slaves by promising opportunities of wealth and success.

The slave-master relationship of Ahab with his crew members is manifested in two ways. The first is that Ahab is presented as being independent from the rest of men on the Pequod; he is different in his character, objectives and even his view of life and the world in general. He imposes himself as the master of not only his men but of all the ocean, and everyone who goes against his desire will meet the same fate as the white whale, which becomes his first and last target in this voyage. The second is that Ahab manifests different relationships with each member of his crew: The races described by Melville as being savage; such as Queequeg, Tashtego and Dagoos are considered Ahab's physical force used to meet any danger at sea. The races described by the author as having a sense of religion and civilization, such as Fedallah, are considered his spiritual force used to provide him with the right way to conduct his scheme and predict any danger in the future.

Ahab enslaves not only one race but mixed races, and he gives each race its adequate role. Slavery on the Pequod, then, expands from its traditional exploitation of the Black race to include even the white race. It coincides with the age of expansionism to enslave as many races as possible. As a traditional master, Ahab is always in need of his slaves to exist and accomplish his goals, and as a modern industrial master, he requires more than one type of slavery to satisfy his mixed and complicated ambitions.

Through the character of Ahab and his crew members, Melville portrays different races living together on the American soil as a melting pot. All these races are dominated by one single race, the Anglo-Saxon, which declares itself as the only one that is able to govern and enslave the other races, because of its high level of education and intelligence. This race establishes its religion and culture as a norm to which all the other races have to seek access in order to be civilized. Realizing the hypocrisy and the tyranny of the Anglo-Saxons, all the

other races are in constant readiness for rebellion in order to achieve emancipation. Melville presents the other characters of *Moby Dick* in constant struggle to claim equality and dismiss Ahab, the representative of the Anglo-Saxon race.

Dealing with the issue of race and the dream of equality in Twain's novels, we find that, unlike Melville, Twain identifies only two races in his region: the whites and the blacks. The former is the supposedly civilized and superior race, and the latter is arguably the ignorant and inferior one. Twain, himself, as a member of the Southern society, is convinced that the two races are naturally different. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is harshly criticized in relation to its reference to Jim several times as a "Nigger", "ignorant", "superstitious" and "property". Later, it is argued that this is due to Twain's bringing out in the Southern society, wherein these terms are frequent and legitimate references to the blacks. Here, Twain's revision of Melville is mainly built upon the former's focus on local color and realist mode of writing as opposed to the latter's allegorical one.

In the second chapter of *Huck Finn*, Twain details his description of Jim as a superstitious person, when the latter says that he is bewitched by hanging his hat on a tree and taking him in a trip across the state. He is proud about this act, while Huck and Tom know that it is done by them. At this point, Huck thinks that Jim is ruined as a slave by being proud of seeing the devil and witches. In chapter ten, once again, Twain presents Jim's superstitious way of thinking, when he is bitten by a snake and he links this to the fact that Huck touched a snakeskin with his bare hands, while Huck recognizes that he has committed a mistake when he has joked by putting a dead rattlesnake in Jim's blanket. It is too late when he apprehends that the snake's mate will come to curl around it.

Ignorance is ascribed to Niggers in chapter fourteen, as Huck believes, like all the Southern community, that the blacks are less intelligent than whites, being astonished when

Jim judges: “it was all up with him anyway it could be fixed; for if he didn’t get saved he would get drowned; and if he did get saved, whoever saved him would send him back home so as to get the reward, and then Miss Watson would sell him South, sure.” (p. 81). Huck perceives that he is right in thinking so, and being raised in the Southern community, he believes that a black cannot reach such a level of reasoning, and this is strange for him.

The ignorance and superstition attributed to Jim is repeated all along the novel and becomes part of his identity. A black is referred to as a nigger and a property. For instance, in chapter 18, Huck argues: “Each person had their own nigger to wait on them-Buck too. My nigger had a monstrous easy time, because I warn’t used to having anybody do anything for me, but Buck’s was on the jump most of the time” (p. 109). In this quotation, the pronouns “their” and “my” are indicative of how the blacks are considered as a property possessed by their masters.

Because of Twain’s negative description of the black community, many critics consider his *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* a racist novel. It is precisely the word “nigger” that offends readers, especially the Afro-Americans who grapple with American racism and feel humiliation while reading this book. In 1982, John H. Wallace recalls in the editorial *Washington Post* his embarrassment, as a colored student, forced to study the book:

I maintain that it constitutes mental cruelty, harassment and outright racial intimidation to force black students to sit in a classroom to read this kind of literature about themselves [...] For years, black families have trekked to school in just about every district in America to say that “this book is bad for our children,” only to be turned away by insensitive and often unwittingly racist teachers and administrators responding that “this is classic.” Classic or not, it should not be allowed to continue to make our children feel bad about themselves (Wallace in McAllister, 2008: 85).

Yet, some other critics argue that the novel is not so cruel to the black community. The language used by Twain to refer to it is the result of his bringing out in the South, in which this language and beliefs are part of their daily life. Instead, the principle of the novel in



general goes against the enslavement and the denigration of the blacks, and Twain is considered the first American Southern author to challenge the phenomenon of slavery and the hypocrisy of the white race.

Twain himself contends, “in my school boy days, I had no aversion to slavery. I was not aware that there was anything wrong about it. No one arraigned it in my hearing...” (McAllister, 2008: 84). It is until his adulthood, when he married into an abolitionist family and befriended people who loathed slavery and worked against it, that Twain became conscious of the white racism and its cruelty towards the Blacks. (Ibid., p. 85). In the same context, William Dean Howells, in *My Mark Twain: Reminiscences and Criticisms*, maintains that

The part of him that was Western in his Southwestern origin Clemens kept to the end, but he was the most desouthernized Southerner I ever knew. No man more perfectly sensed and more entirely abhorred slavery, and no one has ever poured such scorn upon the second-hand, Walter Scotticized, pseudo-chivalry of the Southern ideal. He held himself responsible for the wrong which the white race had done the black race in slavery, and he explained, in paying the way of a negro student through Yale, that he was doing it as his part or the reparation due from every white to every black man. He said he had never seen this student, nor ever wished to see him or know his name; it was quite enough that he was a negro (Howells, 1967: 30, 31).

Howells means that Twain (Clemens), in *Huckleberry Finn*, cannot get rid of his Southern jargon, which is part of his traditions. Yet, this does not mean that he is pleased by the injustices exercised over Afro-Americans at that time. Instead, he is ashamed by his belonging to that white race that imposes on their fellow blacks such a kind of life. Indeed, he identifies himself, like his character Huck, as an independent person from this Southern community. Twain's emphasis on the relation between the white and black races in his region reinforces his revision of Melville, who treats the subject of race at a national level. Twain, in fact, reveals the specificity of race relations in his region, emphasizing the harshness of the black community's life conditions.

Around this time, Howells adds, a colored cadet was not allowed to become “an officer and gentleman”; he was “expelled from the West Point for some point of conduct” and the press carried a usual philosophy which claimed that a “negro could never feel the claim of honor”. On this act of segregation, Clemens argues with bitter irony: “ Oh yes, it was that one part black that undid him.” This is a blame addressed by Twain to the whole white community that qualifies a person as being incapable to be a gentleman because of his color. Being sensitive toward the issue of slavery and discrimination, Twain is satisfied with the result of the Civil War, and “he [is] eager to have its facts and meanings brought out at once in history.” (Howells, 1967:31). As such, he challenges the held belief that it is too early to philosophize its events; and for him it is high time to put its effects into a philosophy through writings, because deferring this into a later time means maintaining the blacks in their situation of bondage and taking profit from the fact (Ibid.).

## **II- The Discourse of Racism**

The discourse of Racism in Melville’s novels is developed in twofold: It is related to the social class to which the sailors belong, and through the ethnic origins of each sailor. Indeed, racism is exercised by the higher officers of the ships over the simple sailors whatever their race, and exists among the sailors themselves in relation to their skin color. As in the American social order, the whites, who are poor, as well as the blacks and native Americans, are always relegated to the lower ranks of society. Within this inferior class, the whites always express prejudice about the colored people, considering them as savage and primitive and thus less important than them.

In *White Jacket*, Melville presents the warship Neversink as a microcosm of the American nation with all the races living in it. He focuses on the racist attitudes of the Anglo-Saxons towards all the other ethnic groups and the discrimination that exists between the rest of the characters of different races. Before referring to the different events that illustrate these

practices, Melville starts by giving a vivid image about life on the ship by making an analogy between it and the American civilian society with its capitalist system. Sharon Talley argues that Melville portrays through *White Jacket* a fully organized and structured community so as to characterize the American society (Talley, 2007: 45). Doing so, he compares work on the ship to labor in an industrial factory, with its division of labor and to a market place with its competition, class antagonism, smuggling among the sailors, as well as entertainment when it is needed. Peter Bellis, in his critical view about the novel, argues:

There may or may not be a legal continuity between the ship and civilian society, but there seems a clear parallel with the emerging disciplinary orders of prison and factory: If Melville compares the ship to Sing-Sing and Newgate prisons (174-176), he also likens it to a “market” or “manufactory” (35). The frigate’s meticulous division of labor, along with strict supervision to ensure speed, efficiency, and the maximum use of space, resembles what Sean Wilentz has termed the “bastard artisan system” of antebellum manufacturing unskilled younger force –a situation not unlike that in the navy (Scott, 141). The Neversink may be a largely proto-industrial order, but at those moments when the entire crew is mobilized (at “general quarters,” for example), the ship does seem almost a single mechanism –“a machineless factory” or “manufactory.” (Bellis in Bloom, 2008: 257).

As a matter of fact, labor on the warship is divided among the crewmembers as it is divided in a factory; each member has an attributed piece of work that he has to perform daily. The officer’s role on the ship is like the role of a captain of industry; he has to supervise the work of the sailors in order to make it effective and organized. In chapter three entitled “A Glance at the Principal Divisions into which a Man of War’s Crew is Divided”, Melville describes labor division on the warship; he says:

There are the waisters ... Inveterate “sons of farmers” with the hay-seed yet in their hair, they are consigned to the congenial superintendence of the chicken-coops, pig-pens, and potato-lockers. There are generally placed amidships, on the gun-deck of a frigate, between the fore and main hatches; and comprise so extensive an area, that it much resembles the market-place of a small town (P. 06).

In Chapter eighteen, he adds:

In truth, a man-of-war is a city afloat, with long avenues set out with guns instead of trees, and numerous shady lanes, courts, and by-ways. The quarter-deck is a grand square, park, or parade ground, with a great Pittsfield elm, in the shape of the main-mast, at one end, and fronted at the other by the palace of the Commodore’s cabin (P. 40).

The two quotations show how Melville compares the ship into a civilized nation with all its institutions, including skilled and unskilled workers occupying different jobs. He even makes reference to the existence of law on the ship by his use of the word “court”. The architecture of the ship also resembles that of an urban space with its parks, parades, avenues and palaces. The frigate’s deck is compared to a city market because of its vastness and its resembling of many people of different races and activities. There is even competition between the different warships in relation to the speed and efficiency of their work, as it happens between the different industrial companies in a capitalist state.

In his comparison of the man-of-war to a civilized nation, Melville perceives that all that makes it seem civilized is not functioning in a true civilized way. This is evident in the description he gives to life on the ship, by which he suggests that it is a place of injustice, savageness and racism manifested mainly through class antagonism. In Melville’s words, “the social state in a man-of-war is a system of cruel cogs and wheels” (pp. 373, 4, 5). In this context, Peter Bellis in “Discipline and the Lash in Melville’s *White-Jacket*”, argues that

the class divisions upheld by the *articles* of the old order are not done away with in the new; instead, the class antagonism between officers and men becomes “incurable” (208), a structural conflict that is both managed and reinforced by the disciplinary order of the ship (Bellis in Bloom, 2008: 257).

This reinforces the idea that the ship, which stands for America in the novel, is not a true civilization. Melville makes reference to the existence of two social classes on it: The upper class represented by the officers who belong to the white race, and the lower one represented by sailors of different races. The former is given the image of the aggressor with absolute power over the others, and the latter is the aggressed and marginalized group.

Melville’s reference to the malfunction of the different social and political institutions onboard the *Neversink* is an allusion to the U.S.A. that considers itself a new civilization with a modern political order and constitution, but its legislation is worse than those of the old monarchies. Indeed, his use of the word “republic” is symbolic. When he says: “from the

dock-yards of a republic, absolute monarchies are launched.” (p. 297), he means that the world in a man-of-war is far from being a republic; it is rather an absolute monarchy. The absolutism of the officers is mainly manifested in the discrimination, manipulation and aggression they exercise over the sailors.

A wide gap between the officers and the sailors is manifested in many aspects, including political power, social position, assigned duties and even the localization of the two groups on the ship. Politically speaking, the higher officers are claimed to be the power enforcing the rules. They are the only ones, who have the right to interpret and execute the law or what they call “the articles of war”. Indeed, the author condemns the captain, who wants to “crown himself with the glory of the shambles” (p. 166). The word “crown” here is symbolic in two ways; it alludes to the American nation, which is compared into a monarchy, and represents the supremacy of the captains, who govern, order and penalize the sailors. More than this, the captains make laws through which they justify their cruelty and hostility over this oppressed class that achieves glory for the American navy by fighting the wars. In chapter five entitled “Flogging not Lawful”, Melville emphasizes that by the articles of war, “the captain is made a legislator, as well as a judge and an executive” (p. 77) and “the captain of American sloop of war, from undoubted motives of personal pique, kept a seaman confined in the brig for upward of a month.” (Ibid.). The quotations above reveal the abuse of power by the captains, who use the harsh articles of war even for personal reasons.

White Jacket, in his description of the captains and the commodores, compares them to the kings of the old European absolute monarchies of England and the Ottomans. He calls the captain of the *Neversink* “a Harry the Eighth afloat”(p. 23), and he describes his command on the ship as follows:

It is no limited monarchy, where the sturdy Commons have a right to petition, and snarl if they please; but almost a despotism, like the Grand Turk’s. The captain’s word is law; he never speaks but in the imperative mood. When he stands on his Quarter-deck at sea, he absolutely commands as far as eye can reach. Only the moon and stars are beyond his jurisdiction. He is lord and master of the sun (Ibid.).

Besides, the captains, being placed in the upper position, are not subject to these laws, which are only applied on the sailors. Always in chapter five, the author says: “But we have seen that the laws involving flogging in the Navy do *not* render to every man his due, since in some cases protect them from scourge, which is inflicted upon the sailors” (p. 23). This indicates that the higher officers on the ship are protected by the law, so they are never flogged, even when they break the articles of war. They are just there to supervise the common seamen. In chapter seventy two, White Jacket illustrates the absolutism of Captain Claret by quoting XV of the articles of war: “No person in the Navy shall quarrel with any other person in the Navy, nor use provoking or reproachful words, gestures, or menaces, on pain of such punishment as a court-martial shall adjudge”, and he continues his criticism by saying, “Captain Claret, of the Neversink, repeatedly violated this law in his own proper person.” (p. 300).

The gap between the officers and the common seamen is also shown by Melville in terms of their social status and the duties assigned to each of them. The position of the captains is mainly shown through their localization on the warship and their belonging. At the beginning of the novel, the author refers to the captain’s localization by saying: “on the poop, the captain was looking to windward” (p. 12), and in chapter eighteen, he refers to his cabin as “the palace of the Commodore’s cabin” (p. 121). By this, Melville makes it clear that the captain’s place on the ship is not accessed by the ordinary seamen, who are relegated into humble and public places, such as the deck on which they work and live. He is, then, highly positioned and claimed to be the superior race on the ship. So, his place is private and luxurious as a king’s palace. When he or the commodore visits the sailors’ space, it is no longer theirs; they have to leave it for him in order to preserve the gap between their two ranks. White Jacket says:

As in the case of the Commodore, when the captain visits the deck, his subordinate officers generally beat a retreat to the other side; and as a general rule, would no more

think of addressing him, except concerning the ship, than a lackey would think of hailing the Czar of Russia on his throne, and inviting him to tea (p. 23).

Melville's portrayal of the issue of racism is not only determined by ethnicity; it is also displayed through class antagonism between the captains and the sailors. According to him, colored people are not the only ones who are relegated to the lower and dirty jobs; a white man also is demoted to the latter class when he comes from humble origins. So, even the whites can be subject to racism. White Jacket, for instance, is othered by the higher officers because of his social class. His look which is bizarre gives him the image of a barbarian. So, he does not feel the sense of belonging. Moreover, the color of his jacket causes him plight and places him in the position of common sailors despite his white face, the fact that indicates that racism is broad in *White Jacket* and includes all the races.

Despite White Jacket's lower position and his sympathy with the ordinary seamen of all the races, he cannot escape the racial prejudices that every white American has in his mind about the colored races. Throughout his descriptions and observations as a narrator, he refers to the other characters through their races. This is mainly shown in chapter sixty four entitled "Man of War Trophies", when he blames a "Native American Sioux warrior" showing the back of his blanket which is drawn in a mass of human hands, by saying:

Poor savage! Thought I; and is this the cause of your lofty gait? Do you straighten yourself to think that you have committed a Murder, when the chance-falling stone has often done the same? Is it a proud thing to a topple down six feet perpendicular of It Manhood, though that lofty living tower needed perhaps thirty good Growing summer to bring it to maturity? Poor savage! And You Account it so glorious (p. 141).

In the above quotation, White Jacket, Melville's voice in the novel, refers twice to the native American by a "poor savage" and considers what he has done as barbarian, which means that he looks down to him as an uncivilized race. Another instance in which Melville shows White Jacket's racist attitudes is when, in chapter twenty eight, he describes a Polynesian small servant named Wooloo as follows:

In our man-of-war, this semi-savage, wandering about the gun-deck in his barbaric robe, seemed a being from some other sphere. His tastes were our abominations: ours

his. Our creed he rejected: his we. We thought him aloof: he fancied us fools. Had the case been reversed; had we been Polynesians and he an American, our mutual opinion of each other would still have remained the same. A fact proving that neither was wrong, but both right (p. 64).

Here also White Jacket refers to this Polynesian as “semi-savage”, reinforcing his racial prejudice as a white man. Moreover, he asks himself the question if he is Polynesian or American, as if the only true Americans are the white men.

As a matter of fact, we feel in the novel a double racial prejudice. One is based on social position and material possession, and the other is based on ethnic belonging. The former is exercised by the officers over the common sailors, who are othered as a class, and the latter is a value judgment by the white race about the other colored races despite their belonging to the same social class. Indeed, in *White Jacket*, Melville manifests his views against the American navy’s relegation of white people into the class of the other races that are destined to be slaves.

Unlike Melville’s fiction, in which the issue of racism is extended to all the races living in America, Mark Twain’s works focus on the meaning and functioning of Racism as an aspect of life in the American South. In his *Life on the Mississippi*, Twain does not intend to defend any race or social class against another. Yet, his realistic account of the history of the Mississippi River, as part of the Missouri region and specifically Hannibal, makes it inevitable for him to overlook such issues, as they constitute the basic norms of life there. Since his work is rather historical, it gives an evolutionary and moving image of these issues, which is not the case in Melville’s novels, in which the issue of racism is static. In fact, Melville does not show any change in the situation of the othered races.

The evolutionary image that Twain gives to the issue of Racism in *Life on the Mississippi* follows the evolution that occurs to the history of the South, starting from life on plantations, moving to the development of commerce and the introduction of steam boating to the Mississippi River, ending with the Civil War of 1861 and its impact on the economic and



social life in the region. Following these changes, racial and social antagonism evolved to be loosened and work better for the oppressed race; the Blacks. In his portrayal of life in this part of America, Twain makes reference to cultural, political and mainly social antagonism between two races, which results in a class division that seems out of control and becomes a norm. Through this division, the black community is relegated to the lower class of society to serve the white community, their superiors, under the institution of slavery, which justifies the latter class's cruelty over the former.

Following the historical development of the southern region, the social badge of the black community which was linked to servitude moved from plantations to river boating, leading to the freedom of some slaves, who became free workers on boats, and finishing by the freedom of the whole community after the Civil War. Then, despite the maintenance of racist and enslaving attitudes towards Afro-Americans, river boating opened the way for them to better their social status, by introducing them to the world of commerce and urbanization, in which segregation and servitude were less severe comparing to plantations. Moreover, this new form of servitude opened the way to many slaves to escape from their masters through many fugitive lines formed with the help of some Northern abolitionist whites. All this prepared the ground for the emancipation of slaves after the Civil War.

In his *Life on the Mississippi*, Mark Twain reports in detail the change that affected all the aspects of life of both the black and the white communities, emphasizing the agricultural aspect of the South, which makes it specific comparing to the other regions of America. This specificity lies especially in its rich soil and the existence of slaves in the plantations, which gives way to agricultural activity. In chapter forty, entitled "Castle and Culture", he writes, "we were certainly in the South at last; for better the sugar region begins, and plantations – vast green levels, with sugar-mill and negro quarters clustered together in the middle distance – were in view." (p. 270). In this quotation, he indicates that the south is a vast agricultural land,

worked and cultivated by the black slaves imported from Africa since the arrival of the whites to this land. His use of the phrase “negro quarters” indicates that the blacks are segregated as a race and separated from the whites in terms of their dwelling and submitted to oppression and miserable life conditions.

The segregation to which the blacks are submitted is in reality the result of the ideology of the superiority of the white race and the legitimacy of the institution of slavery, which is seen as part of the agricultural development of southern states. Ruth. B. Hawes, in her “Slavery in Mississippi” (1913), argues that racism against the black Africans has been born along with the beginning of slavery in the United States (Hawes, 1913: 225). We may say, then, that black segregation is not only due to their skin color, but also the division of labor in the South, which reduces them into the status of material properties in the hands of their masters. These attitudes are justified by their association with “mental inferiority”. As such, they are submitted to racism wherever they live and work.

*Life on the Mississippi* reflects the exploitation of Afro-Americans by the authoritative whites, and their exclusion from society either on plantations or steamboats. Their inferiority is shown especially through the formation of classes, which are racialized into the superior whites and inferior blacks. Racial division onboard the ship is reflected in many aspects of life on it. We find mainly the distribution of labor, which excludes colored people from the high and noble offices, such as piloting positions (Adams, 2006: 215). Describing the working environment on the steamboats, Thomas Buchanan, in his *The Black Life on the Mississippi*, argues that

The history of the slave Mississippi is an urban history, but it is also a story of work in a racialized industry. William Wells Brown’s exclusion from Twain’s pilothouse was typical of other African American steamboat workers. African Americans were nearly entirely excluded from officer positions (captains, clerks, mates, engineers, and pilots) (Buchanan, 1967: 12).

In his description of piloting and apprenticeship, Twain has never referred to negroes who interfere in the pilot house. They are only attributed such tasks as deckhands and cabin-crew servants, like cooks, porters and chambermaids. Dealing with these chores, they are exposed to humiliation, illnesses and all types of danger. In chapter fourteen entitled “Rank and Dignity of Piloting”, the author describes their working conditions by saying:

Sometimes the beacon lights stood in water three feet deep. In the edge of dense forests which extended for miles without farm, wood-yard, clearing, or break of any kind; which meant that the keeper of the light must come in a skiff a great distance to discharge his trust, and often in a desperate weather. Yet I was told that the work is faithfully performed, in all weathers, and not always by men, sometimes by women, if the man is sick or absent (p. 99).

This quotation enumerates some of the hard tasks, which the blacks are bound to accomplish in the due time. Even their women are involved in the work if necessary. It also relates their exposure to bad weather, illness and danger; conditions that a white man cannot bear. This introduces the reader to a new form of slavery centered in water. Buchanan reports some testimonies of African Americans and white people, who described the black’s working conditions on steamboats. Former slave Henry Clay, for instance, recalled, “us negro boys worked as roustabouts to load and unload and [to] keep the fire going” (Buchanan, 1967: 13). The traveler Charles Mackay noticed that “the crew and stockers were all negro slaves” (Mackay, in Ibid.).

The high work positions on the boat, however, are occupied by people from the white race. During Twain’s years of apprenticeship, all the high officers, steersmen and pilots, are white men, who got their positions through heredity or nepotism. In *Life on the Mississippi*, Twain argues that the hierarchy in the labor roles on the boats is established by the first higher officers, the pilots who are former masters on plantations, and who are responsible of the recruiting of other workers. Indeed, all the other positions which come below theirs, as captains and apprentices as well as white collar jobs as doctors, engineers and clerks, are occupied by their friends and the sons of their relatives, who, in their part, bring their friends

and relatives as apprentices to become future pilots, monopolizing thus the higher offices on the boat forever. He writes, “The doctor’s and the postmaster’s sons became ‘mud clerks’; the wholesale liquor dealer’s son became the barkeeper on a boat; four sons of the chief merchant, and two sons of the country judge, became pilots.” (p. 37). This testifies how the hiring practices on the boats are characterized by nepotism and racial prejudices, which exclude the blacks from such offices because they are judged to be mentally inferior.

In his description to the higher officers on the ship, Twain does not show any intellectual superiority comparing to the Afro-Americans. He argues that the prestige they have is not the result of any intellectualism or civilized manners on their part, but rather a result of despotism and material privilege, which raised them into the higher ranks of society and provided them with social titles. In his reference to the Captains and pilots, Twain uses the title of Mister, as Mr. Bixby, Mr. Brown, etc. to show that they are masters on the boat. Just like a captain on a frigate, the pilot on a steamboat has an authoritative character, which is secured through the dimension of power and the “false aristocracy” held by white Americans. He says:

a pilot, in those [pre-war] days, was the only unfettered and entirely independent human being that lived in the earth. . . . [E]very man and woman and child has a master, and worries and frets in servitude; but in the day I write of, the Mississippi pilot had *none*. . . . So here was the novelty of a king without a keeper, an absolute monarch who was absolute in sober truth and not by a fiction of words (pp. 166, 617).

Mr. Bixby, for instance, plays the role of a superior and manager on the boat despite his ignorance and lack of nobility (p. 135). Twain shows evidence about this in chapter eighteen entitled “I Take a Few Extra Lessons”, in which he says:

The figure that comes before me oftenest, out of the shadows of that vanished time, is that of Brown, of the steamer ‘Pennsylvania’ the man referred to in a former chapter, whose memory was so good and tiresome. He was a middle aged, long, slim, bony, smooth-shaven, horse faced, ignorant, stingy . . . mote-magnifying tyrant (p. 347).

Here, Twain protests against the oppressive and tyrannical character of Bixby, who maintains his autocracy over others and over him especially. This protest is repeated several times in the novel. For instance, in chapter eight entitled “Perplexing Lessons”, he is against his submission to Bixby’s orders and rules to get a license as a steamboat pilot. He describes him as a dictator, and he is annoyed when he tells him, “My boy, you’ve got to know the shape of the river perfectly” (p. 63), because the word “boy” is used to refer to a slave. While expressing his attitude toward Bixby’s character, Twain shows racism against the Blacks. In fact, he does not accept to be called by a title attributed to them and refuses to be treated as a slave by a white man like him. We understand that racism in Twain’s community is part of its culture. i.e. all the whites have racist attitudes toward all the blacks, and all the blacks are considered inferior comparing to all the whites.

The blacks’ inferiority and distance from the white race is not only shown in their labor roles, but even in their dressing and standard arrangements of sleeping and eating. Negroes, especially slaves, are neither allowed to be dressed in the same manner as a white man nor to share the same food or location with him. In chapter twenty, Twain describes their dressing by saying “ragged nigger clothes” (p. 207), which means that they are dressed in a ragged way, which gives them special fit outs of identification. Negroes’ style of clothing is, in fact, standard to fit the roles they are attributed. One Mississippi traveler notices that “African American waiters and stewards wore suits, often with white coats, and were ‘the best dressed working-class’. Servants are even known by wearing badges to be identified among the other workers.” (Foster, in Buchanan, 1967: 62).

Moreover, segregation in eating is demonstrated, when the author says that the blacks have no access to the eating rooms meant for the pilots and captains (Bassett, 1986: 40). The discrimination onboard the boat that Twain boarded is, in fact, the standard of all the steamboats. On June 9, 1839, the *New Orleans Picayune* reports that “a colored man casually

employed on board the *Maid of Orleans*, was wounded with a knife and much beaten on Friday night. The cause, we learn, was his attempting to eat supper with the white ‘hands’ on board.” (Hunter, in Buchanan, 1967: 57).

On the steamboats of the Western rivers, white people, even when they occupy lower positions, refuse to be placed in the same locations as the blacks or be in touch with them. In this region, a white man is born to be served by a black one; there is no place for friendship, mixture or equality between the two races whatever the domain is, because for them, a white man is superior by heredity, and whiteness is a privilege. The fact that Afro-Americans are employed on steamboats does not change the view of the whites about their social roles. In fact, the luxurious places on the boats are not accessed by them. In his description of the steamboats of the lower Mississippi, Frederick Piercy argues that they are made as “floating palaces, open to, and for the use of, all who can pay, negroes excepted.” He adds that “A colored man [...] dare not show his nose in the saloon, he must confine to the deck, with the deck hands and deck passengers.” (Ibid., p. 61).

Contrarily, the white officers on the huge boats are offered all kind of comfort and leisure, the thing that attracts other passengers to board the boats just for relaxation, and to enjoy the beautiful landscapes of the Mississippi. As a matter of fact, the steamboats added to their commercial role that of tourism which enriches more their captains, but burdens the blacks with more duties and services. Indeed, elite passengers are all along the voyage served with leisure activities, such as “drinking in the cabin bar, walking along the guards, or casually socializing in the comfortable chairs that lined the cabin walls.” ( Hall and Latrobe, in Ibid.).

From the analysis of the issue of race in Mark Twain’s works, we come to understand that racism in the American South is shaped by the ethnic and cultural traits of the area as well as its economic system based on slavery. In this part of America, racism is exercised

over the Black race represented by the African Americans or Negro population as they are labeled. This group of people is submitted to several forms of discrimination, which are mainly economic, social and cultural, relegating them to the lower ranks of society and condemns them in the institution of slavery, which is justified by their mental inferiority. This makes it clear for us that the image given by Mark Twain, in his works, about racism is different from the one given to it by Herman Melville in his fiction.

From the analysis of the works of Herman Melville and Mark Twain in the context of the American Dream, it is noticed that both writers discuss issues that characterized the American nation during the second half of the nineteenth century. Religion, racism, slavery and freedom, as the main socio-economic matters at that time, dominate their narratives. Both of them celebrate the American identity as being distinguished from the rest of the world, especially the Old World. Yet, their portrayal of the American life at that time has taken different dimensions. While Melville gives the above mentioned issues a national aspect by extending them to all the American people, Twain emphasizes their specificity in his region, the Southwest. For Twain, aspects of life cannot function in the same way in all the American territory, as culture, geography and mainly economy differ from one region to another.

Both of Melville and Twain portray life on warships and steamboats respectively as being similar to life inland with its social classes, hierarchy, racism, cruelty and the enslavement of the weak by the strong. Melville describes the warships with higher officers, who commend but do not work, and lower sailors who perform all the work but suffer from limited liberty and flogging. Twain describes the commercial steamboats with pilots and other higher officers who have all the power, and the slaves who are brought there to serve them. Yet, the functioning of the aspects of life on warships and steamboats respectively are not based on the same social, political or economic structures nor do they follow the same historical development.

Melville, in his *White Jacket*, bases the issues of race and slavery on social lineage and material success. He presents characters of bourgeois origins, high degree of education and great material possessions with both social and political power and cast them in the superior race on the warship. His portrayal of the division of labor and exercise of power on an American man-of-war is rather revolutionary as he is pessimistic about these matters. The ending of the novel with the massacre of the beards is indicative of the unlimited power of the higher officers. His pessimism is not limited to the man-of-war, but is extended to the whole American nation. The Neversink is, in fact, allegorical of the American nation in general.

Twain, in his *Life on the Mississippi*, however, displaces the functioning of race and slavery to his region by linking them to ethnicity and skin color. On the steamboats, all the characters of the high ranks of society and who possess political and economic power belong to the white race. The characters, who serve them as free workers or slaves and on which all kinds of violence are exercised, belong to the black race. Yet, his portrayal of the situation of Afro-Americans on the steamboats seems to be hopeful of a better future, as on the boats they are provided with jobs, which are more important than the tasks they perform on plantations. Moreover, racism is loosened on the boats with the introduction of some laws and regulations that protect their rights. The steamboating industry, according to Twain, provides the Blacks with an opened door to their freedom, which culminated in their complete emancipation after the Civil War of the 1860s.

We can argue that while Melville expresses the failure of the American Dream at the national level, Twain expresses its well functioning in his region, especially for the Afro-American race which constitutes a large part of its population. The national vision that Melville gives to the American Dream is rather pessimistic and linked to exploitation, with the opening of America to worldwide conflicts and wars. Twain, however, celebrates his regional vision of the American Dream with the introduction of industry and commerce to the



South-west, paving the way to further developments and changes at the social, economic and political levels. So, he succeeds to revise the Romantic literature's idea that American life is the same in all the parts of this vast land.

Twain's Nationalism, is rather local and realistic. It is different from that of Melville, which is ideological. Mid-nineteenth century writers were, in fact, aware of the fact that the American people do not possess the same standards of life; and nationalism, for them, was just a vision, a hope or a dream for a future nation. It was a means to avoid an eventual Civil War. Melville's symbolism in his *Moby Dick* predicts a tragic end for an America obsessed by whiteness and the superiority of one race over the others.

The Civil War between the industrial North and the agricultural South came to prove that the American people cannot be unified under the supremacy of one race over others or one culture over others. This gave birth to another color of nationalism, which came into being after the Civil War known as Confederate Nationalism to replace the Republican Nationalism which focused mainly on state building and language of citizenship. Confederate Nationalism focuses "on how various individuals and organizations worked to create a new national fabric that functioned on several levels and was capable of transcending and subsuming antebellum local, state, and regional loyalties." (Doyle and Pamplona, eds., 2006: 83). This new form of nationalism emphasizes the respect of the different social and cultural as well as political groups, which are loyal to the American flag.

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## **Part II: The American Dream in the Turn of the Twentieth Century: Theodore Dreiser's Sense of Place and Morality Between National and International Visions**

The last part has handled the displacement of the American Dream from its national ideal to a more regional one. The displacement has been studied in the writings of the postbellum southern writer Mark Twain, who revised his antebellum precursor Herman Melville and narrowed his national dream to the South. The analysis of the two writers' works has shown Melville's national visions about the United States and Twain's focus on the cultural and geographical traits of his region. The American Dream in Twain's fiction reinterpreted the same categories as Melville's, but displaced them to the agricultural South.

In the turn of the twentieth century, American people believed that happy life is no longer the one based on the Jeffersonian community and agriculture, but the one based on industry, centered in the city. As a matter of fact, they started to leave the countryside and invest in whatever field they found interesting for them in the urban centers. Thus, the urban aspect of the American Dream displaced its rural one. The new American mode of life is depicted by the authors of that period, who portrayed in their literature an American Dream based in the city.

The American Dream expressed in the fiction of the period shows intriguing similarities with many aspects of the English novel published in the same period. Indeed, as England and the United States went on a large scale policy of urbanization brought about by the Industrial Revolution, people in the two countries started to feel the same hopes and the same frustrations. However, the excesses of materialism that dominated the other values in the American society and morality that characterized the British one led the socio-economic conditions of the period to be perceived differently by Americans and English. The differences in perception led American writers to portray urban life as a factor of self-fulfillment instead of the social vortex expressed in the fiction of their English counterparts.

This part argues that the American writers of the turn of the twentieth century displace the American Dream from the regional and rural setting presented by the post-Civil War local-color writers to urban places, such as Chicago and New York. In doing so, they also revise traditional social norms in order to fit them with the city. They give an image of the American city of the Progressive Era that is different from the Victorian one, expressing a distinctive American perception of the modern urban life. A comparative study between selected literary works of the American author Theodore Dreiser and his European contemporary Thomas Hardy illustrates how the American Dream in this period worked as a revisionary defense mechanism against the crisis in English social institutions, such as the family, the school, etc.

There is much evidence that a literary encounter happened between Dreiser and Hardy. Both of them lived through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and reacted to the literary current of Romanticism by adopting Realism and Naturalism as ways to show the real life of people, whose behaviors are determined by their environments. Being influenced by the same philosophies and movements, these writers produced similar aesthetics. Hardy advocates modernity in the prevailing traditional Victorian society, and Dreiser upholds the same tendency, by depicting characters that repudiate their traditions and embrace modernity. The similarities between the two authors lead us to deduce that one of them had influenced the other, but it is evident that the English author influenced the American one, since the former ceased writing fiction before the appearance of the latter's first novel *Sister Carrie* (1900).

A number of American critics confirm Dreiser's contact with Hardy's fiction and his influence. For example, Donald Pizer asserts that in a newspaper interview in 1911, Dreiser evokes his discovery of Balzac, Hardy and Tolstoy, in the 1890s by saying: "Balzac lasted me a year or two, then came Hardy, and after him Tolstoy. From them, I learned what, in my judgment, really great books are" (Anon, in Pizer, 1977: 186). William White maintains that

in a letter to Richard Duffy in 1902, Dreiser calls Hardy “the greatest figure in all English literature” (White, 1968: 122).

More importantly, in the holograph of *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser evokes Thomas Hardy in a conversation between Carrie and Bob Ames, before finally removing it in the published version. In the conversation, Ames expresses his preference for European literature, which helped him to feel “improved”. When Carrie informs him that she has been reading the books he has recommended, Balzac’s *The Great Man from the Provinces* and Hardy’s *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Ames advises her to focus on Hardy’s novels, because she shares with them a “gloomy” mood. But, he quickly corrects himself: “ ‘Not exactly gloomy’, he added. ‘There is another word –melancholia, sad. I should judge you were rather lonely in your disposition’” (p. 481). The conversation reveals Dreiser’s respect for the European novelists’ greatness, the thing which proves their influence upon him. At the same time, it points out the difference between the American mode of life and the European one, emphasizing Americans’ detachment from the English thought.

Ames considers European literature as a way of self-improvement, to point out the anti-intellectualism of the Americans, who used to adopt a superficial way of life. Moreover, when he uses the gloomy atmosphere of Hardy’s novels to describe Carrie’s disposition, he revises himself by saying that the moods of melancholia, sadness or loneliness fit better her case. This means that the American way of life determined by the modern materialistic atmosphere of the era, is less gloomy than the British one characterized as it was by a crisis of modernity leading to tragedy. Therefore, we feel that when he was writing *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser was responding to Hardy by revising the gloomy atmosphere of his novels.

Dreiser’s fiction reveals his stance towards important issues, such as marriage, education and materialism, that dominated the American society and fascinated the dreams of people in the turn of the twentieth century. The analysis of his works evokes an American

Dream that unveils a misreading of the English understanding of city life. The comparison of Dreiser's and Hardy's respective fiction shows that the two authors deal with the same aspects of life in American and British societies respectively; yet the dreams of their characters are determined by modernity in the American context and by tradition in the British one.

Hardy and Dreiser are a relevant instance of Freud's "family romance", since England is considered to be the "mother country" of the United States of America, and because Americans have always felt anxiety towards their English ancestors. In fact, the Americans have developed the Oedipus complex towards the English, repudiating them as a family, by revising any current that comes from them. The Oedipus complex created in the American mind what Harold Bloom calls "Anxiety of Influence", which engendered their misreading of some issues, such as education and marriage that are the milestones of their societies to show their break with their culture. The American Dream in Dreiser's fiction is studied through two perspectives. The first is based on displacement in geography from the rural setting to the urban one; the second is based on revision, negotiating the English understanding of some universal issues and demonstrating their specific functioning in America. Bloom's theory of revision is, then, used in this part to demonstrate the American writers' anxiety towards their English counterparts.

The works which illustrate Dreiser's revision of Hardy are *Sister Carrie* (1900) and *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911). The two novels are brought into a comparative relationship with Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). In these novels, the image that Dreiser gives about the American city seems to be revisionary if compared to the gloomy one given by Thomas Hardy about the Victorian city. In fact, every aspect of life presented by Dreiser revises Hardy's presentation of it. Revision is apparent in what pertains to women's dreams and their social and economic positions in society, the

dream of success in the urban space, as well as the institution of marriage and its relation with moral traditions.

This part investigates these issues in three main chapters by depicting how they are considered by Hardy, and how they are revised by Dreiser within the context of the American Dream. The first chapter deals with the urban space, the woman and the dream in Dreiser's and Hardy's fictions. The second chapter analyzes the issues of education, art and the dream of success within the English and American urban spaces in the two works. The third chapter underscores the issues of sex, love and marriage and their relation to morality in the same authors' writings.

- **Background : The Turn of the Twentieth Century American Fiction: From Realism to Naturalism and Determinism**

In the turn of the twentieth century, the American Dream started to take on a new meaning, defined especially by the effects of the industrial development on American people. After the triumph of the industrial North over the agricultural South in the Civil War, the whole American economy turned to business investment, leading the American people to get their own experience with the Industrial Revolution that started in Europe. Starting from the turn of the twentieth century, their dream turned to be individual and pragmatic, being mainly based on material success reached not through handy work and moral beliefs, but through business investment in different fields.

Due to the radical changes that marked the socio-economic standing of the American people at that time, immigration increased and population doubled. (Gibson and Jung, 2006: 26). Moreover, industrialization and increase of population created a great movement of urbanization, which resulted in tenements, warehouses, sweetshops and skyscrapers. This gave the American city a new image related to wealth and success. Indeed, urban spheres, at that time, were viewed by the majority of Americans, mainly the youth, as the basic center of the promised land of their ancestors. By 1900, about three quarters of the population of many



large cities as New York, Chicago, Boston, Cleveland and Detroit were immigrants. (Carpenter, 1927: 27).

The idea of success in industrial centers brought many people, mainly the young generations, from countryside to cities to fulfill their dream of good life. Once there, they were confronted by another reality, which was different from the one they dreamed of. Indeed, the industrial and urban development affected negatively the social order and the moral outstanding of the American society, in the sense that few people became rich, whereas the majority plunged in poverty, since the city couldn't feed and house all the people. Thus, many Americans, including the lower and middle classes, became pessimistic toward their lives. They found the shift ruthless, since they became victims of a severe exploitation from the upper classes of society.

Under these harsh conditions, many people used different means –legal or illegal, moral or immoral- to make one single dream come true, that of material success. Indeed, they recognized that hard work was not sufficient to succeed, because they felt as if they were living in “a jungle”, where the strong eats the weak. Thus, American society knew the emergence of different amoral behaviors, such as the spread of speculation, alcohol, prostitution, fraud and other easy ways to get wealth and fame rapidly.

The socio-economic standing of the period affected American literature, which moved from Realism to Naturalism that depicted the real life conditions of people, of whom destinies are determined by their environment. Many naturalist writers portrayed the different realities that the American people witnessed at that time. They wrote about the dreams of many of the young people, and their struggle to make success by all means. The majority of the writings of that period narrated stories of young people leaving their homes in the countryside to get rid of their poverty and fulfill their dreams of success and wealth in the American cities that were characterized by investments and capital, and eventually opportunities of work and money.

Since the American people are always eager to show their specificity comparing to other Western countries, especially Britain, and since the American Dream, as the emblem of the country's Nationalism, has to preserve the specificity of America as a land of material success opened to any person -whatever his/her origins, Americans have always to revise the characteristics of any current –economic, political or cultural- that reaches their land. They redefine European tendencies according to the basic principles of their dream, which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. As such, American writers of the turn of the twentieth century depicted in their literature an American society that has its own perception of universal matters of industrialization, Capitalism and urbanization to emphasize that the Americans have their own understanding of life that is specific to them.

Writers, such as Theodore Dreiser, Stephen Crane, Frank Norris and others, who were also journalists, perceived the reactions that people developed towards their environment as being natural in front of the effects of the industrialization and excess of materialism that characterized it. They developed themes inspired from reality, such as poverty, misery, corruption, vice, disease and prostitution, and analyzed the natural forces and political laws that influenced and shaped people's behaviors and dreams. The latter were determined, according to them, by their umbworld.

Dreiser, in his fiction, gives the American Dream a new understanding if compared to the Post-Civil War perception of it. Unlike Twain and most of other American writers of the Post-Civil War period, he displaces the concept from regional, rural America to the urban "jungle". Yet, in his displacing of it to the urban setting, he follows the heed of his European contemporaries. One of them is Thomas Hardy, who has explored in his fiction the transformations happened to the English society in the end of the nineteenth century.

In one of his novels, namely *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), Hardy portrays the tragic fate of the English woman in the countryside, which was the result of the difficulty of life for

a woman in the Victorian society, which closed all the doors of success in the face of women. The novel shows how the latter are besieged within the fences of the countryside with its traditional social and economic systems. Then, in his last novel *Jude the Obscure* (1895), Hardy presents the decline of the English society, as the country's institutions of the church, the school and the family were shaken by urban modernity, resulting in personal and social tragedies. Through the tragic end of the character of Jude, Hardy alludes to the tragedy of the whole Victorian society, either at the moral, educational or familial levels. He emphasizes the impossibility of individuals of the lower classes of society to fulfill their dreams in the urban space. Exploring the themes of education, labor, love, sex, marriage and the position of woman in society, Hardy gives, in his fiction, an image of an English city, which is a place of confusion and obscurity at all levels, where people of humble origins, as Jude, cannot find their identities.

Dreiser expands on the same themes as those tackled by Hardy; however, he gives them a different orientation thanks to the variation he brings to the American Dream. Definitely, in his fiction, the woman is not a helpless victim, as is the case of Tess in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. She is rather a powerful agent, conscious of her agency and able to embrace the American Dream, thanks to the latter's relevance to urban America. Furthermore, American urban institutions show remarkable vitality, and they offer new opportunities of success for Americans. In the case of Jude in *Jude the Obscure*, these opportunities are denied, because the English society is seen as growing old, declining and vanishing.

## **Chapter I: The Urban Space, the Woman and the Dream in Theodore Dreiser's and Thomas Hardy's Selected Fiction**

Considering the female characters in both Hardy's and Dreiser's fiction, we find that Dreiser has given more vitality to women than Hardy. In Dreiser's novels, the female characters are presented as main protagonists, who put their moral codes aside, and succeeded to reach their goals of economic and material success. Moreover, all the aspects of city life in his fiction are revealed through the female characters, who put an end to the male supremacy thanks to their artistic talents. The character of Carrie Meeber in *Sister Carrie*, for instance, is presented as an artist at the age when this domain was not open to women in Europe. Thomas Hardy, however, presents in his fiction the lives of his female protagonists in the Victorian society in England, which is characterized by a shift in the majority of aspects, especially economy that moved from agriculture to industry, but still conditioned by rigid morality and traditional life. The latter keeps women far from following this development, as the case of Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure* and Tess in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

Both Dreiser and Hardy portray the life of people in an age of transition from tradition to modernity, being the turn of the twentieth century. Yet, the presentation given by the former to the American woman seems to be a revision to the one given by the latter to the English one. This is apparent in the development of the events and the moral attitudes of the American and English societies towards the lives of the heroines of Dreiser's and Hardy's novels respectively. It is also apparent in the social and economic dreams of the female characters of both fictions, and their families' and societies' reactions to them.

### **I- The Woman and the Dream of Social Mobility**

The gap between the English and American women's lives in the urban centers and the manifestation of their dreams at a social level is mainly apparent in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*. The two authors portray the impact of

urbanization on the social lives of the female characters of the two novels. While Hardy shows the English woman's incapacity to live beyond the conventions of her Victorian society, Dreiser depicts an image of the American woman, who succeeds to break the fences of tradition and embrace a mode of modernity that promotes her to the high ranks of society, enjoying her independence from men, self-fulfillment and social mobility.

In Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, the author presents his female characters in a traditional way. The main female protagonists in the novel are Sue and Arabella, who are introduced as the wives of Jude. They are described as the ones, who cannot survive without the presence of men around them. Moreover, they cannot live their lives as they want, because they are dominated by religion and traditions that restrict their liberties as women and as persons. Even the urban environment to which they moved does not make a change in their lives, since the English city is still traditional.

Arabella Donn is presented by Hardy as Jude's wife, whom he marries without love. She is a beautiful but an uneducated woman, who provokes Jude's attention when she struck him by a piece of pig's meat. She does everything to keep him for herself; she offers him her body, and later on she informs him that she is pregnant, and thus they get married quickly. Arabella's pregnancy is just a lie to keep Jude with her, when she hears that he intends to go to the city of Christminster to study. Indeed, Arabella cannot live her life without a man. Jude's marriage with Arabella is also governed by traditions and morals. Indeed, he does not believe that she is the ideal wife he is looking for, but he knows that he must marry her because of her pregnancy. When he discovers her lie, he feels depressed and trapped by the marriage and even considers killing himself.

After a period of time, Arabella leaves Jude and goes to Australia with her parents without offering him divorce. Once in Australia, she marries another man without informing him that she is married to Jude. And when she comes back to England, she decides to join the

latter once again in the city of Christminster. This emphasizes the idea that Arabella cannot live without a man in her life. She is described by Hardy as that type of women that plays sex in an animal way in order to please men and satisfy them. She is the prototype of the traditional English woman.

In addition to Arabella Donn, Hardy introduces another image of the English woman that is different from her but is still traditional, through the character of Sue Bridehead. The latter is presented as Jude's beloved. She represents the modern liberal urban English woman in the Victorian Era. Indeed, she is portrayed as being educated, intellectual and powerful, but still religious and traditional. She is liberal in the sense that she lives with Jude without marriage, and she helps him as a breadwinner of the family. Yet, the social conventions of her society prevent her from fulfilling her potential as a worker and intellectual. Hardy, in his novel, criticizes these conventions by portraying Sue as being an alien person, who is rejected by her society. He also presents her as hysterical and anxious to show that woman's life in the Victorian Era does not fit her character as an intellectual and liberal woman.

The strangeness of Sue within her society is also apparent when she obliges her lawful husband Phillotson, Jude's school teacher, to live with her without having sex, because of the lack of love between them. For her, sex must only exist where love exists. Hardy, however, continues to inform his reader that she even refuses any physical contact with Jude, whom she considers as her first and last love. Men around her, then, start to consider her as being sexually cold. The problem with her, however, is that she cannot live fully her love with Jude, because the moral conventions of her society, which are still planted in her mind, do not permit her to offer her body to a man outside the institution of marriage. This evidence is shown at the end of the novel, when she considers the death of her children as a curse from God for accepting to have sex with a man without marriage.

Hardy considers that women's liberalism at that time did not detach them completely from her traditions and religion. Indeed, in *Jude the Obscure*, he emphasizes the theme of religion, and he describes all his educated characters as being partly religious in their thinking. This is the case of his female heroine Sue, who is engaged several times in religious subjects with Jude or Philotson. At the end, the religious aspect of her life dominates the liberal one, as she decides to give up her love and ambitions, and return to her husband Philotson to serve him as an obedient traditional wife. This proves that the English woman in Hardy's time was still far from being liberal. Despite the fact that the Victorian society saw the spread of political and cultural movements, such as Liberalism and organized Feminism, she was still unable to manifest her personal liberty as an individual. Even the urban space in which Sue lives does change her social status. The rapid transformation that shaped the English society at that time could not overcome the religious and social taboos of ancient Europe. The English city at that time saw a mixture of new and old social values. This made the definition of their new ideologies, as Liberalism, subject to many interpretations.

Unlike the English urban space, the American one welcomed the industrial current and made a clear definitions to the ideologies of Capitalism and Liberalism that reshaped the social order, giving women the possibility to improve their lives as men did. As a harbinger of the modernist era, Dreiser, in *Sister Carrie*, presents Carrie as being modern, free and ambitious. She is courageous when she leaves the countryside and moves from one city to another to make her American Dream come true. Her behavior in each city is determined by the conditions in which she lives there.

At the beginning, she heads the train to reach Chicago seeking a better life. At her arrival, she views the first image of the city in relation to her sister's living conditions. In the novel, Dreiser describes it as follows:

The city is just like a gambling house in which a few people succeed by accident, while many are always struggling at the bottom of society. In addition, the beauty of

the city is an illusion and a trip which like music too often relax, weakens, then perverts the simple human perceptions (p. 2).

At first glance, then, Carrie recognizes two images concerning city life, and then she starts to fantasize things. She is fascinated by the gigantic city and attracted by the economic boom she sees but she cannot reach. The city is full of enticing objects, which created in her soul ambition and desire for luxury. Describing the city to which Carrie enters, Lee argues:

Turn of the century Chicago surged with clamour and colour, diners and theatres, billboards and saloons, auctioneers and confidence men. Yet, the city of Carrie's dreams, as the American author called it, deceived as much as it dazzled. It seemed marble and serene upon first impression, so a casual observer might believe that the entire world was inordinately prosperous and exclusive and happy (Lee, 2010).

Being attracted by everything she sees around her all the time, Carrie's ambition to be wealthy becomes greater than before. When she discovers the two faces of city life, her dream starts to be materialistic. Thus, the city shapes her being, and makes of her a materialistic modern woman rather than a traditional religious girl. Dreiser argues that in the Progressive Era, the human deeds were guided by money, capital and desire for material wealth instead of principles and values. This desire, according to him, was biological and genetic. He notes:

A man's fortune or material progress is very much the same as his bodily growth. Either he is growing stronger, healthier, wiser, as the youth approaching manhood, or he is growing weaker, older, and less incisive mentally, as the man approaching old age. There are no other states (p. 259).

The materialistic desire that fascinated the individuals' personalities in the Progressive Era constituted the nuance of the American Dream, and women had their share in it. The female dream was conceived outside any social or religious institution that could make limits for it.

It is this kind of dream that changes Carrie's personality and urges her to move from one city to another. Her view about money is expressed as follows: "Money, something everybody else has and I must get." (p.77). Her words attest her being determined by the socio-economic conditions of her age that turned her dream to be materialistic. Because of



this desire, her relation with the other characters of the novel is materialized too. Her relation with her sister's family is based on material concerns, as they are always anxious over a share of the rent by Carrie, leading to the absence of feelings of intimacy and sympathy among them. Carrie's relation with Drouet and Hurstwood is also materialistic, as she uses them as means to satisfy her desires of luxury and material things. She enjoys the comfort and predictability of her relationship with Drouet, and she desires a more exciting affair with Hurstwood. (Rong J., 2007).

The American theatrical manager and playwright Augustine Daly states that Carrie and her two admirers Drouet and Hurstwood are characterized by hypocrisy. Drouet is the first to introduce Carrie to the world of luxury and help her at the beginning of her theatrical career in return for a love affair with her, which he tries always to hide. Hurstwood too seems to be hypocrite, when he explains his wife's absence with a lie, by saying "she couldn't come tonight. She is not well. (p. 179)" (Daly in Rong, 2007). Carrie, in her side, accepts these lies and hypocrisy on the part of the male characters just to help herself to enter the world of money and wealth she dreams of. What matters Carrie is her social mobility from the lower to the higher classes of society, whatever the means.

Indeed, Carrie seems to be highly attracted by the luxurious way of life of the high class of her society, and she does not accept herself as she is. She enjoys herself only when she buys new and luxurious things: "She goes to Carson Pirie's and buys a skirt, a shirt waist and some cosmetics until she looks quite another maiden and in her apartment, the mirror assures her that she is pretty." (p. 82). She believes that being successful means having enough money to build an appearance to get the appreciation of others, because for her and for Dreiser, the Progressive Era is no longer the age of values, but that of guise. Carrie thinks that shopping without self control is an indication of elegance and high class belonging. Wald Priscilla asserts that "Carrie consciously emulates the traits that will please those whom she

believes she needs to please.” (Priscilla, 1991: in Eby and Cassuto, 2004:189). We understand from this that Carrie accepts to commercialize herself to get an important social position.

It is noticeable that Carrie has not developed any feeling of love towards her two lovers; she just uses them as means to reach her dream of being wealthy. Indeed, when she enters the world of art as an actress, she gets rid of Drouet, and decides to go with a stronger and wealthier man, Hurstwood, whom she uses to obtain more money and fame. Simultaneously, she leaves one city, Chicago, when she feels that she has the possibility to enter a larger and more important one, New York. When Hurstwood introduces her to this city of wealth and celebrity, she gets rid of him too as she feels that she reached what she is looking for.

Dreiser presents Carrie, the prototype of the American woman during the Progressive Era, as being different from the European one. He gives her the image of an active element in society, who has the ability to manipulate men and use them as means to reach her ambition. He portrays her also as a modern woman, who rebelled against morals and traditions, and who succeeded to use her talents in an intelligent way to obtain a social status that permits her to live her life abundantly without need to man’s support. Under the philosophy of Determinism, he succeeds to portray the reversal of male and female roles within the American society at that time. The image he gives about the American woman seems to be a revision to the image of the European woman that is traditional.

## **II- The Woman and the Dream of Economic Mobility**

The female dream of economic mobility and woman’s economic position in the English and American societies are discussed in relation to Hardy’s and Dreiser’s novels *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* and *Jennie Gerhardt* respectively. In these two novels, the subject of the presence of woman in the field of work is prominent, and the gap between the American and English societies is apparent. While Dreiser’s female characters are introduced to new and

modern fields of work, Hardy's ones are not yet prepared to perform even ordinary jobs. It is only in cases of urgent necessities that the English woman is involved in economic activities, and the labor she performs is traditional in its nature.

In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Hardy focuses on the difficulty of life for women, especially in the countryside, where they suffer from poverty and rigid morality. The novel is mainly set in Dorset, Wessex, a village situated in Southern England, where people suffer from poverty because of the decline of traditional farming and the emergence of the farming industry. It is from this village that "Tess wends her way, walking some 10 miles Southeast to Alec's family home of the Stoke D'Urbervilles, at Trantridge, on the edge of the Chase" (Morgan, 2007: 105) in order to bring money and name for her family. Tess, in her way, wants to make a shift from country to urban life; from D'Urberfield to D'urberville, following the shift that affected the whole British society at that time.

Despite the poverty of the D'Urberfields and Tess's feeling of pity and guilt towards her family's situation, mainly after the death of their horse "Prince" of which she feels responsible, she does not think or take the initiative of working to help her family by her own will. She is, instead, sent by her parents to claim kin in the D'Urbervilles to benefit from their name and wealth. This is due to the fact that she is brought up in a society, which is still traditional to introduce a woman into the field of work. During the Victorian Age, women were still besieged within the walls of their houses, performing their roles as domestic agents and servants for their parental families when they were single, and for their husbands and children when they were married. Working outside home was still a shame for them, and was performed only by destitute women. The latter were assigned traditional jobs, as working in agricultural fields, farms or dairies.

Many feminist writers describe the situation of English women within their parental families and in their husbands' homes, and they explain how they could not have a share in

the economic aspect of their lives. John Stuart Mill, for instance, in his *The Subjection of Women* (1869), describes the female standing in the Victorian period. He says that women at that time were not given a status of a human being, especially when they were married. He considers the married woman's situation as being worse than that of a slave. He asserts: "I am far from pretending that wives are no better than slaves; but no slave is a slave at the same length and in full a sense the word is, as a wife is." (Mill, 1869: chapter 2). Indeed, in the Victorian Era, the institution of marriage assigned certain roles to men and women: man was the protector of the family. As such, he was in the most of cases educated, authoritative and the financier of all the projects of the family. Woman, however, was assigned the role of bearing and educating children, pleasing her husband, and other domestic services; such as doing laundry, cleaning, cooking,... etc. Accordingly, she was not in need to be educated or to perform paid jobs outside home and have access to the financial field, because she had her husband to cover her needs, which were identified by him. Briefly, Mill refers to women's life as "domestic slavery".

Men and women's roles in the Victorian society are also defined by Alfred Tennyson, in his poem "The Princess" (1847), as follows:

Man for the field and woman for the heart  
Man for the sword, and for the needle she  
Man with the head and woman with the heart  
Man to command and woman to obey (Quoted in Mitchell, 1996: 267).

Tradition, then, gave man the role of protecting the family and confronting danger, and gave woman the role of serving her husband and obeying him inside her sphere, which was the house. The latter was described by John Ruskin as " a place of peace, the shelter, not only from injury, but from all terror, doubt and division." (Quoted by Fleischmann, 1999: 59).

In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Hardy confirms the above mentioned writers' views about the Victorian woman. In the case of Tess, she does not intend to enter the domain of work i.e.

that the different jobs she performs are not desired by her. When she leaves home for the first time, her aim is to claim kin in a famous rich family “the D’Urbervilles”. She is encouraged by her mother to seduce the eldest son of this family in order to marry him and end their poverty. From this, we understand that women at that time, are, as Gilman argues in her theory *The Man Made World, or our Andocentric Culture* (1911), “ ... not more than object whose purpose is to provide male pleasure.” (quoted in Donovan, 1992: 47).

Once in the D’Urbervilles, a job is offered to Tess by Alec to keep her nearer to him, since he is attracted by her beauty. This confirms Gilman’s above statement. “At the practical level, he gave Tess employment when asked and treats her well enough to induce her to stay on at Trantridge for three months.” (Morgan, 2007: 98). Even the job offered to her is traditional; she is taking care of Mrs. D’Urbervilles birds, which means that Victorian women are not yet allowed other jobs than farming. While working, she endures Mrs. D’Urbervilles bad treatment and bad temper, as she is not considered a worker but rather a slave.

When Alec rapes her, she feels an inward suffering. Hardy argues: “she looked upon herself as a figure of guilt” (p. 125). Despite this feeling, she allows herself to obey his desires in return for help to her family, which is in a state of disaster. The work he provides her with is, in fact, not the one which can change something in the situation of her family. It is just a means to attract her to something more interesting, which is getting help in return for her chastity. Tess, then, is not provided with a job; she is rather exploited by a man of a higher social class, who takes profit from her ignorance about the outside world, and plays with her sentiments. The majority of Victorian women in the field of work lived Tess’s experience, because men were not yet accustomed to seeing women outside home.

When Tess recognizes that she lost her chastity, she falls in the hands of Alec, and she answers all his greedy desires in return for help. Yet, Alec does not give up until he makes her pregnant. When he knows about her pregnancy, he leaves her in a more difficult situation than

her first one. Accordingly, she finds herself obliged to work not only to sustain her family, but also to feed a fatherless child. After the death of her child, she leaves her village to Talbothays to flee her shame and leave her past; she wants to start her life as a new person. In this context, Rosemary Morgan argues:

When Tess then leaves home again, she heads for Talbothays, situated in the fertile Vale of Great Diaries and separated from the valley of her birth by “the intervening uplands and lowlands of Egdon” (III.xvi.102). [...] The crossing is significant at two levels, topographically and psychologically. Having spent her childhood in the Vale of Blackmoore, where the clays soil is heavy and the rivers run “slow, silent, often turbid; flowing over beds of mud into which the incautious wader might sink and vanish unawares” (103), she gazes with wonder upon the Vale of the Great Diaries. [...] It is at this point that she shrugs off her burdensome past –the heaviness of her Blackmoor days now being replaced by the lightness of the new valley and the verdant lands of Talbothays, where she would meet her true love (Morgan, 2007: 106).

Once in Talbothays, she is obliged to get another job to assure for herself a living. It is in this way that Tess moves from one job to another, and this is not the last for her. In this valley, Tess works as a milk-maid in a Dairy. We notice here that despite Tess’s movement to another place, she performs a traditional work in agriculture as if it is the only domain she masters. Paradoxically, the author describes her as being an intelligent girl, with philosophical and artistic talents, and a half educated girl with the mastery of standard language and dialect. “From the beginning, Tess speaks with the mastery of metaphor and symbol.” (Barbara Hardy, 2000: 44). She is also described with the capacity “to transform familiar objects, like apples, in cosmic figuration.” (Ibid.).

Her intelligence merged with her physical and moral beauty contributed to influence men around her. Indeed, in Talbothays, she succeeds once again to attract the attention of Angel Clare, another man from the higher classes of society. Unlike Alec, Angel aims for a serious relation with Tess, and he promises her that when they will be together she will not be in need to work to live a respectable life. Angel falls in her love, and finds her the ideal wife that will help him in managing his farming activities. “He put her in a pedestal, naming her variously goddess and virginal daughter of nature.” (Op. Cit. Morgan, 2007: 96). Tess is

happy with Angel. She accepts his proposals, and starts to dream of a new life for herself and for her family that she wants to save from poverty. Here, we understand that the Victorian society was not ready to accept women in the field of work. Angel, as a representative of the Victorian man, wants Tess to stop working when she becomes his wife, because he considers that her labor denigrates him as a man. Tess, as a representative of the Victorian woman, accepts happily his proposal, because she is fed up with the difficult works she performs, and she prefers founding a family and serving her husband than working outside home.

Unfortunately for her, Angel leaves her without pity in their bridal night because of her past, which was tainted by her relation with Alec. As a result, she finds herself obliged to perform a new job, which is worse than the previous ones. In winter, she is driven to a starve-acre upland farm, where she engages in backbreaking work. The harshness of the conditions in which she is left by Angel drives her once again to the hands of Alec, who proposes her his help in return for an illegal relation with him. Her acceptance to be with him this time is due to her incapacity to bear the poverty and destitution of her family and to endure the harshness of her work. Her second relation with Alec leads her to become a criminal by murdering him, and thus committing suicide after the return of her husband Angel, because she recognizes that she lost all her chances in life. Her suicide symbolizes the tragedy of the Victorian woman, who was unable to lead a normal economic and social life under the rigid morality and the harsh economic conditions of her society.

From the analysis of Tess's experience in the field of work, we deduce that in Victorian England, job opportunities were not open in plenty to women. The fewer jobs available for them centered mainly in farming activities, which were seen as the only jobs that women could master. Their movement from one place to another did not provide them with new chances, because work conditions were the same in all the country. The harsh low-paid

activities that they performed did not give them a new sight. Indeed, this kind of activity was done by women even in their domestic life.

Comparing the English woman in the economic field, as it is presented by Hardy through the Character of Tess in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, to the American one, as it is presented by Dreiser through the character of Jennie in *Jennie Gerhardt*, we notice a certain disparity in their conditions in the field of work. The difference is apparent in the jobs they performed and the two societies' perception of the presence of women in the field of work. From the synopses of the two novels, we notice that both Dreiser and Hardy treat the subject of working class women in a period marked by a transition from tradition to modernity. This period is the time when women, in both English and American societies started to leave home in order to help their families to overcome their bad living conditions.

In fact, in this age of industrialization and harsh Capitalism, many girls of poor families, like Tess and Jennie, left the countryside and moved to cities and other larger estates to contribute to the financial support of their families that endured all kinds of expenses. Yet, Hardy and Dreiser picture in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jennie Gerhardt* respectively the lives of these women differently. Thomas Hardy presents the life of his protagonist, as in the majority of his novels, in the Victorian society, which was characterized by a rigid morality and a shift in the majority of aspects of life, especially economy that moved from agriculture to industry. Theodore Dreiser presents his protagonist Jennie as a poor country girl, who moved with her mother to work in a hotel in Columbus. As in the majority of his works, Dreiser sets his novel in the modern American city. He always writes about the age of modernizing in the U.S.A; he "wrote the history of the urbanizing United States between the Civil War and World War I." (Cassuto, 2004: 63). He presents Jennie, like the majority of his characters, as the one moving from tradition to modernity, and the one enduring the harsh realities of industry and capitalism that shaped the American environment at that time.



As a harbinger of Modernism, Theodore Dreiser, in his novels, tackles the subject of women, through his characters, in a modern way. This is shown in the way that women are viewed and treated in their home life and at work. His female characters are, in fact, placed outside home to work and sustain their families' needs. By this, Dreiser shows how women shifted from their traditional roles as angels at home to the field of work. Indeed, the economic conditions of the American families in the turn of the twentieth century obliged them to put their female members in the domain of work in order to be able to endure the harshness of Capitalism and to face the ghost of poverty.

Women, at that time, as it is the case of Jennie in *Jennie Gerhardt*, followed the wave of the movement from countryside to cities, seeking job opportunities in the field of finance, as the farm no longer provided their families with sufficient jobs and interesting wages. In this context, John C. Teaford, in *The Twentieth Century American City*, argues:

In 1900 America's cities housed a diverse body of persons drawn to the metropolis by the promise of profit, excitement, and success. Lithuanians and Poles gravitated to Chicago's stockyards and Pittsburgh's steel mills, expecting to find work and money; daughters of native-born Midwestern farmers migrated to Kansas City and Indianapolis to make a living from typing and shorthand and to experience freedom denied them in the country town [...] The economic nucleus of the city was the central business district, or "downtown" (Teaford, 1986: 7, 8).

In *Jennie Gerhardt*, Jennie, living in poverty, decides to leave home at her teens, to try her chance in the field of work. Dreiser describes her as a powerful woman, who dreams of helping her family by providing them with a home. She is ready to do anything to satisfy her mother's "keen desire for a nice home. Solid furniture, upholstered and trimmed, a thick, soft carpet of some warm, pleasing color, plenty of chairs, settees, pictures, a lounge and a piano" (p. 106), despite her difference from her mother in her understanding of the notion of home. (Cassuto, 2004: 149, 150). Indeed, for her,

life was made up of those mystic chords of sympathy and memory, which bind up the transient elements of nature into a harmonious and enduring scene. This home was one such chord, united, and made beautiful by her affection and consideration, extended to each person and to every object. (p. 364).

In addition to Jennie's power, she is full of affection; she works to satisfy her family in the first position. Her excess of fondness is perhaps the reason behind the reshaping of her life. Indeed, when she realizes that the work she performs cannot satisfy her family's needs, she accepts the help offered to her by senator Brander, who has other intentions behind his proposal. She comes to understand that work in the field of business is not as easy as she expected it, so, she finds in Senator Brander an opportunity to improve her family's life conditions. When she accepts to go to bed with him before marriage, it is to thank him for his help to her family. "The selfless Jennie sacrifices her virginity to well-connected Senator Brander in exchange for financial help for her impoverished family." (Eby, 2004: 150).

Modernity is mainly shown by Dreiser when Jennie's family becomes aware of her pregnancy. Instead of being rejected, as a fallen woman, all the members of her family, except of her father, accept her pregnancy as a natural matter. In traditional societies, giving birth to an illegitimate child is considered as a sin and a shame. In the case of Jennie, her family perceives her mistake with tolerance. Starting by her, as the main source of the mistake, she realizes after few months of her pregnancy that it is a great thing to have a baby and become a mother even without marriage: "These thoughts did not come to her all at once, but through the months during which she watched and waited. It was a wonderful thing to be a mother." (p. 61). Dreiser portrays her as a good mother, equipped with a power of house and motherhood. He personifies her as the "all mother" (pp. 92, 97), meaning that she is the mother of everybody in the novel.

In addition to Jennie, we can mention her brother Bass's attitude toward her case. Unlike his father, Bass takes care of her; he is looking for a new house for her, where she will recover her mind and feel safe. At last, he finds a house in the city of Cleveland, believing that life in this city will solve their financial as well as familial problems. Dreiser says:

Here was no evidence of any of their recent troubles, no acquaintances who could suggest by their mere presence the troubles of the past. All was business, all activity.

The very turning of the corner seemed to rid one of old times and crimes. It was as if a new world existed in every block (p. 63).

In this quotation, modernity is apparent. Bass speaks of a new beginning in a new world, which means a break with the past. In this modern city, he dreams of a reinvigorated life for his family, especially his sister, who is in need of a refreshed environment to carry on her life. As in all of Dreiser's novels, the characters move from one city to another, a larger one, running behind wealth and success. Even Jennie's mother shares with her son the view that the departure to this city is something good, which can provide new chances for her family, especially her daughter. In this city, Jennie lives peacefully and works in the house of Mrs. Bracebridge as a maid-servant.

Woman's modern way of living in Dreiser's novels is always linked to the American cities. At that time, the city was the only place, where woman could be free from the restraints of society. Its heterogeneous aspect permitted women to express their working and artistic talents through their contact with individuals of different social and ethnic belongings, the thing which helped them to emerge as modern women. Teaford describes the American urban space, in his *The Twentieth-Century American City* (1986), by saying that the downtown

was the common center of those diverse masses thrown together in pursuit of an income. Many urban neighborhoods had a distinct ethnic identity [...] In the downtown area the diverse ethnic, economic, and social strains of urban life were bound together, working, spending, speculating, and investing [...] In the socially and culturally fragmented city, the central business district was the one bit of turf common to all (Teaford, 1986: 8).

The city environment described by Teaford seems to be suitable for women, especially those who had good reasons to leave home and work outside. The multiplicity of ethnic, social and cultural groups, which characterized it, created various traditions. It became, then, easier for an individual in such an environment to break his social restraints than in a countryside, where all the individuals shared the same culture. In the case of Jennie, she can

find peace of mind in the city of Cleveland, because she left behind her all the traditions and morals of her community and starts a new life with foreign people.

Later, even Jennie's father, who is very harsh toward her case, becomes flexible, and understands her mistake. His reaction, at the beginning, is due to his devotion to Christianity. Dreiser describes him as a convinced and very pious German Lutheran. He is a man, who practices his religious duties and does his prayers regularly. As such, when he is within the German community, he remains close to his religious beliefs. Yet, when he makes journeys from one place to another, he becomes clever, and practices his religion reasonably. In the following passage, Dreiser says that "Gerhardt had received a light since he had been away. Certain inexplicable thoughts and feelings had come to his mind in his religious meditations. In his prayers he had admitted to the All-seeing that he might have done differently by his daughter." (p. 70). This quotation explains why Mr. Gerhardt forgives his daughter. After living with Jennie, he does not only forgive her, but he also accepts her daughter Vesta, whom he decides to baptize in the Lutheran Church. He says: "It should be baptized." (p. 72). This shows the power of the urban environment over people's way of thinking.

Along with the presentation of Jennie's status in her family by reporting her family members' views towards her, Dreiser portrays her position in the field of work. By this, he displays the modern American view about women in relation to labor, expressing female and male views towards the subject. Indeed, the age about which Dreiser writes is the one in which women started to compete with men in domains which were restricted to the latter in the past. As such, this subject was perceived differently by different people. Dreiser, in his novel, provides us with some of these views.

Starting by Jennie herself, when she leaves home to embrace the field of work, she perceives her act as a moral duty to sustain her family, especially her mother whom she wants to provide with the least necessities in life. Being the eldest daughter of her family, she feels

that she is adult before time; she is about nineteen when she wants to be useful for her family, and every day, she is thinking how to change the humble house where her mother is watching and waiting (p. 68). Jennie, then, is described by Dreiser with female beauty and emotions and with male braveness and ambitions. He says that “she felt as though she must help her mother as well as help herself” (p. 50). Her emotions are manifested in her love to her mother, and her braveness is manifested in her hope to reach “a new and fascinating existence.” (p. 49).

When Jennie performs the work in the hotel with her mother, the fact has been perceived by her family, especially her parents, as a brave act on her part. Mr. Gerhardt, being sick at that time, sees no wrong in sending his daughter to work for the sake of her family. Mrs. Gerhardt too is proud of taking her to help her in doing laundry in the hotel she is working for. Her brother Bass owes gratitude to his sister, who sacrifices her youth and beauty to give them better living conditions, and this is apparent when he is the first to forgive her mistake, and help her to find a new job when needed.

When Jennie makes acquaintance with Senator Brander, the wealthy man for whom she is doing laundry, he recognizes her courage, but he thinks that a woman of her beauty and charm has not to harm her body with hard work. For him, a girl like Jennie deserves better life conditions. Thus, he proposes his help for the Gerhardts in return for a love affair with her. Brander’s reaction towards Jennie’s implication in the field of work indicates that female labor in the turn of the twentieth century was not yet fully perceived in its positive sense, especially by the men of the Bourgeois class of society. For them, female labor was a sign of poverty, and a woman had to work only when she was in obligation.

When Jennie moves to Cleveland to work as a maid-servant for a rich family, she is acquainted with a similar view about work with that of Brander. There, when Lester Kane, a friend of this family meets her, he has the same reaction towards her case. On the first sight, he is attracted by her beauty, and proposes his help in return for a love relation with her.

When Jennie accepts to live with him without marriage, he sees no wrong if she works as a maiden, but he is ashamed to live with a girl of this social position. We feel here that the rich male protagonists in the novel are anxious of their social positions, and consider that female labor is made only for poor women. When the woman is linked to a husband or a man that covers all her necessities, there is no reason for her to work.

The female protagonists, however, manifest views which are distinct from the male ones. Taking the case of Mrs. Bracebridge, we notice that despite her belonging to the same class as Brander and Lester Kane, she has a view about female labor which differs from theirs. For her, a woman has to work to cover her necessities by herself, and she estimates Jennie for having the will to work honestly. She helps and advises her most of the time. She once tells her: “Life is a battle, my dear. If you gain everything you will have to fight for it” (p. 69).

From the different views of Dreiser’s protagonists towards Jennie’s involvement in the domain of work, we notice that the American society’s perception of the fact is modern if compared to the English one. Indeed, in *Jennie Gerhardt*, as in the majority of his works, Dreiser does not assign to women traditional roles as mothers and housekeepers, but presents them as active agents in several domains. These roles, according to some critics, are adapted from his own life as an American citizen. Most of his works are autobiographical, and the women he presents in them represent real women in his own life, as his mother and sisters (Eby, 2004: 143). Jennie Gerhardt, for instance, represents one of his sisters, namely Mary Frances (Maria Franziska) Dreiser, called Mame within her family, and Mrs. Gerhardt represents Dreiser’s mother Sarah Schanab Dreiser, who died early being “worn out by childbearing, hard work, and poverty.” (Newlin, 2003: 163, 164). Dreiser’s depiction of the American woman, then, is based on a closer contact with real women from his environment,

who lived an age of transition from tradition to modernity, bearing, thus, aspects of traditional women and aspects of modern ones. In this context, Clare Virginia Eby argues that

Conventional views of gender roles assign power to women only in restricted areas, such as the capacity to compel male sexual desire or reverence for motherhood. Dreiser was fascinated by such traditionally feminine attributes –powers that may be actively utilized by those who manifest them, but often are not- and his works often depict this more passive aspect of women's strength, especially through the perspective of male characters and narrators. Yet he was also fascinated by a second aspect of feminine power which he traces through economic, social, or artistic accomplishment, and in emotional or psychological authority. As Dreiser presents this last sort of power, women [...] deliberately use their power to achieve their desires (Eby, 2004: 143).

Dreiser's portrayal of real events and characters in his fiction and his view about women proves the beginning of the movement of the American society from tradition to modernity in his time. The fact is due to the over domination of the harsh economic system of Capitalism, which determined the lives of individuals more than any religious or social system. The traditional roles assigned to women by Dreiser are just means used by them to achieve an end. This end is mainly economic and pragmatic. According to Dreiser, women, in the turn of the twentieth century, just like Jennie, used their female beauty as well as their biological powers, such as motherhood and emotions, to reach male powers i.e wealth and interesting jobs. They found the use of their traditional roles to realize modern ones necessary, since they were not yet completely welcome in the domain of work. So, economically speaking, the turn of the twentieth century marked a turning point in the lives of American women.

Dealing with the subject of woman in Dreiser's and Hardy's novels, we notice that the latter portray the incapacity of the English woman to survive the harsh economic, social and moral conditions of the Victorian Era, while the former managed to integrate the American woman in the socio-economic dreams of the Progressive Era. Dreiser gives an image of an American woman, who was able to live the American Dream of her age, which was mainly displaced to the city and guided by Capitalism and industry. The woman he presents succeeded to break the chains of tradition and morality that make barriers for her dreams of

economic and social mobility. The difference between her and the English woman is apparent in many aspects of the two authors' novels, but can be summarized in the fact that the American woman is presented as a modern one, who succeeded to convince the rest of her society to accept her as an active social and economic agent. The English woman, however, is presented as the one struggling to reach this modernity, but fails at the end, and submits herself to the codes of her society. Indeed, reading the two authors' works, we can clearly notice many aspects of traditional societies in Hardy's novels that are absent or revised in Dreiser's ones.

Thanks to the movements led by different feminists, such as Susan B. Antony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, many American women began to free themselves from home pressure. They started to feel useful in their society, since they started to gain money by which they could cover their needs and even the needs of their families. Of course, their jobs differed from educated to non-educated women. The educated ones worked in factories and different industries, and the non-educated ones were only assigned domestic services as home servants, in restaurants, hotels and so on.

The English women, however, had not the opportunity to embrace such a kind of jobs. Despite their high level of education, women from the Bourgeois class had not access to the world of business and investment. It's up to their parents or husbands to manage their properties and cover their daily needs. Women from the lower classes of society performed some jobs that permitted them to sustain their families, but these jobs were traditional, harsh and ill-paid. They were, in the most of cases, exploited by their employers, and were subject to sexual aggression and rape from their male colleagues, taking into consideration that at that time a woman, who lost her chastity out of marriage, lost everything in her life and was looked upon as a fallen woman.



## **-Chapter II: Education, art, Culture and the Dream of Success in Theodore Dreiser's and Thomas Hardy's Selected Fiction**

Dreiser, in his novels, revises Hardy's presentation of the English city in his fiction in relation to the fields of education and material success, which are perceived differently by the American and English people. The American author shows that education is not the only way that can lead an individual to success and serve him in his professional life. Instead, he can train himself in several other domains that respond to his innate and perceived talents. In *Sister Carrie*, the main protagonist, an uneducated person, succeeds to reach fame, stardom and wealth through art. The type of art Dreiser portrays is also different from the English one. At the moment when the English people were still considering art as pieces of painting and writing, Dreiser presents his main protagonist in *Sister Carrie* as an actress, a performing art that propagated more in the course of the twentieth century.

His reliance on theatre as a means to express the artistic talents of his female character is perhaps related to melodrama and musical theatre that dominated the American popular stage at that time. Indeed, from 1850 to 1920, the American people claimed melodrama and its creators as their own, regardless of where they were born. American theatre emerged in a new shape, which was no longer the imitation and reproduction of European (Shakespearian) one. Melodrama in the turn of the twentieth century provided Americans with a medium through which they could examine their social framework. In this context, the American author Robert Toll argues that

... Audiences credited melodrama with being more real than reality, a higher truth that transcended everyday experience. An ideal statement of the way life ought to be, melodrama made evil and corruption easy to identify and solutions easy to find; it made heroes of common, simple people, and it made virtue and the virtuous triumph (Toll, 1976: 147).

In addition to this, musical theatre became familiar in the turn of the twentieth century. Mark Lubbok, an American writer, asserts that the father of American musicals is George M.

Cohan, a librettist, lyricist and composer. Cohan succeeded to create an indigenous musical production. The latter's setting and characters were purely American and its dialogue, lyrics and melody were colloquial and native. (Lubbock, 1962: 54).

The development of such a kind of artistic creativity during the Progressive Era attracted the attention of many talented young people, who used it to achieve fame and material prosperity. Indeed, art was relegated to the market place and became a kind of investment, just like fashion and commercial products. Producers, claimed as businessmen, usually had a star or a group of stars under contract, then invent some artistic plays, which would highlight the special gifts of performer or performers (Ibid.). This allowed many young Americans to raise from rags to riches, and gave them the opportunity to be trained in this kind of art that made them famous and important figures in society.

Carrie Meeber, in *Sister Carrie*, is the prototype of this generation of Americans, who raised from simple life to stardom and prosperity thanks to her skills in theater. Dreiser's description of her as a successful artist seems to be a claim that America in the turn of the twentieth century reached a developed stage of art and labor comparing to England, where these domains were still governed by tradition. In fact, dealing with the dream of success in Victorian England, Hardy refers, in his fiction, to people training themselves and working in domains related to tradition and morality. Moreover, he presents a society, in which women had not yet been open to these domains that would permit them to be independent from men. The dream of success is expressed through his male characters, who fail to fulfill it, because of being conditioned by their social class and family backgrounds. Moreover, learning in Hardy's fiction is restricted to academic and religious educations, which are the only ways to get a dignified and well paid labor.

Academic and religious education are, however, overlooked by Dreiser, who focuses in his fiction on art as a modern way to get money and fame by both men and women of all

social classes. Moreover, comparing Dreiser's and Hardy's treatment of the themes of education and art in their fictions, we notice that the way Dreiser's characters are presented shows that the American society at that time, unlike the English one, detached itself from tradition and morality, and focused on money and investment as means to achieve prosperity. The dreams of education and art are well presented by Hardy and Dreiser in their novels *Jude the Obscure* and *Sister Carrie* respectively.

### **I- Education, Art and the Dream of Success**

The disparity between Dreiser's and Hardy's presentation of education in American and English cities, respectively, is reflected in their consideration of academic learning, the types of education they portray as well as the fates and the environments of their characters. While Carrie, who has no religious or educational notions in her mind, succeeds to reach a higher degree of success in the domain of art that she has not intended to embrace when she moves to the urban space, Jude Fawley, who is armed with educational, religious and artistic talents, experiences a failure in all the aspects of his life, especially in education, which is the principal dream that led him to the city. While Carrie is given the chance to succeed despite her humble origins, there is no such an opportunity for those of her social class in England. Indeed, Jude comes to forget completely about his dream of entering the university, since he realizes that this is not open to people of his class.

The theme of education is more prominent in Hardy's works than in Dreiser's. In *Sister Carrie*, Carrie is the only character who receives training in a specific domain, and this is not intended by her. When she comes to the city, she has the dream of working to reach wealth. Yet, her fate leads her to the domain of art with the help of the environment she finds there. In other words, even her interesting in art is guided by the philosophy of Determinism. In *Jude the Obscure*, however, the idea of education is innate in Jude's character. It is manifested even when he is leading a rural life. When he is in Wessex, he studies Latin while driving the

horse-drawn cart to deliver bread. Jude, who is an autodidact, has the dream of studying architecture at the city of Christminster. Moreover, Hardy refers to him as a religious boy, who devotes himself to the study of biblical texts at the age of sixteen. “And then he continued to dream, and thought he might become even a bishop by leading a pure, energetic, wise Christian life” (p. 32). He also apprentices himself to a stonecutter for extra money. “Here Jude had the opportunity of learning at least the rudiments of freestone-worker.” (Ibid.).

Through the character of Jude Fawley, Hardy highlights two kinds of education: One is moral and the other is academic. His moral education is shown through his kindness, which is manifested in many of his actions. For instance, at the beginning of his work in the cornfield of the farmer Troutham, he uses a clacker to scare cows away, but later, he stops using it, because he believes that the birds in the field deserve to eat, then he has to give them peace. In fact, Jude always remembers the words of his schoolmaster Philotson, who tells him: “Be a good boy, remember; and be kind to animals and birds, and read all you can.” (p. 4).

Jude’s intellectual or academic education is shown by his being an autodidact, who succeeds to learn Latin and Greek by himself, aiming to get a university degree and become an academic. “The singularity aforesaid lay, after all, less in the conveyance itself than in Jude’s manner of conducting it along its route. Its interior was the scene of most Jude’s education by private study.” (p. 28). It is also shown through his dream to be a university graduate. It is this second kind of education merged with the feeling of love that drive him from the countryside to the city. For him, it is only through education that he will be able to make his dream of a true marriage come true.

Indeed, *Jude the Obscure* opens as Jude Fawley watches his school teacher Mr. Richard Philotson leaving the small village of Marygreen to reach the University of Christminster. This opening indicates that the true and higher education is found in the city, and the one who

desires it has to leave the countryside. It is at this moment that Jude starts to dream of departing his village to join Philotson, since he shares with him the same dream of getting a degree: "My scheme, or dream, is to be a university graduate, and then to be ordained. By going to live at Christminster, or near it, I shall be at headquarters." (p. 5). Hoping to follow the path of his teacher, Jude studies intently. He says: "Hence I must next concentrate all my energies on settling in Christminster. Once there I shall so advance, with the assistance I shall there get, that my present knowledge will appear to me as a childish ignorance." (p. 34).

Unfortunately, Jude's obscurity begins with his dreams. Long before hearing about life in the city, he built an idea about it: "It is a city of light he said to himself." (p. 21). Despite the fact that he is endowed with other talents, he is obsessed with the idea of following his teacher's path. To satisfy this obsession, he performs several jobs to be materially ready to lead an urban life: as a child, he worked in Troutham's cornfield, and as a young man, he is apprenticed and worked as a stone-cutter. It is at this age that Jude develops an artistic talent as a craftsman.

It is, then, noticeable that even Hardy gives art its part in his novel. However, the type of art he portrays is not as modern as that performed by Carrie Meeber in *Sister Carrie*. Stone-cutting is an art that goes back to the ancient times of the Roman and Greek civilizations and even to the stone age of the world's history. In addition to this, the author does not use it as an end in itself; Jude's obsession by academic education urges him to neglect his artistic talents and use them just as means to achieve his dream of living and studying in the city. For him, the kind of art he masters is restricted to the rural life, and the latter is synonymous to poverty and misery.

Hardy presents Jude as a confused individual, attracted by his artistic talents, but at the same time lured by his teacher's academic place. It is the latter obsession, according to the author, which makes Jude an unbalanced person, who cannot confirm his individuality and

uniqueness, and leads to his obscurity as a person. Margaret Stonyk argues, “Hardy is aware, as Jude is not, that the life of a skilled craftsman who understands every branch of his art is a noble thing. He sees Jude’s obsession with Christminster as a form of ‘the modern vice of unrest’” (Stonyk, 1980: 64). In the novel, Hardy notes:

For a moment there fell on Jude a true illumination; that there in the stone yard was a centre of effort as worthy as that dignified by the name of scholarly study within the noblest of the colleges. But he lost it under stress of his old idea. He would accept any employment which might be offered him on the strength of his late employer’s recommendation; but he would accept it as a provisional thing only. That was his form of the modern vice of unrest (p. 96).

The description of Jude’s dream of life in the city and academic education as a vice is indicative of the fact that life in the city in the Victorian age was not of great benefit for an individual. Unlike Dreiser, who describes the American city as that of material success and moral decadence, Hardy presents the English one as that of failure at both moral, educational and material levels. Indeed, the traditional image Hardy draws about the English city does not prevent its inhabitants from neglecting their religious and moral values. This is what happens to all his characters in the urban space, especially Jude who loses his talents and his religious teachings, and fails in fulfilling his dream of higher education.

In the first chapter of the second part of *Jude the Obscure* labeled “At Christminster”, Hardy puts Jude’s dream into effect. He describes Jude’s first night and first impression about the city. Ironically, he describes it as an unreal world with its ancient streets. Jude’s bearing of Sue’s picture and his imagination of the ancient dead philosophers indicate that his infant dreams were also unreal. Margaret Stonyk comments that “Hardy stresses the unreal quality of Christminster as Jude perceives it in this feverish and fanciful chapter which is full of ghosts, from the ‘haunting’ photograph of Sue to the phantoms that throng the streets.” (Op. Cit. Stonyk, 1980: 17).

On the second day of Jude’s presence in Christminster, he starts to look for his cousin Sue and his school teacher Phillotson, who promised him his help once in the city. At the

same time, he gets his first idea about the colleges and universities there. His disillusionment begins when he finds that the doors of these colleges are all closed in his face. When he meets Sue and Phillotson, he restores some of his hope. Yet, the meeting of the three characters complicates Jude's life; a few days later, Sue decides to marry Phillotson, and Jude loses hope, and starts to forget about his dream of marriage and education. At this moment, he finds himself obliged to keep himself far from Sue and Phillotson, and to concentrate on his performed job as a stone-mason in order to keep a living.

During his work as a stone-mason, Jude resumes his study of Greek and starts to dream of regaining his cousin Sue. We notice here that he resumes the rural life he lived in the past but this time in the city. He comes to understand that education in the city is just a dream; especially for people of his social position. Being disappointed in all his ambitions, he starts to drink excessively, losing thus even his moral education. At this moment, he goes back to Marygreen, where he finds a young curate, who listens to his story and advises him to enter the church as a clergyman's assistant. As a result, Jude forgets completely his dream of being a university graduate and decides to be educated in religion; another type of education portrayed by Hardy in his novel via the character of Jude Fawley.

Meanwhile, Jude receives a letter from his cousin Sue, inviting him to join her in Melchester, where she is working at a teachers' training college. He decides to get a job in this city to be closer to her, but once there he is confronted with the reality that she has engaged herself to marry Phillotson. As a result, he devotes himself to the study of theology. It is noticeable that Jude's devotion to studies is guided by his feeling of love towards his cousin Sue. When he left Marygreen for the first time, he decided to get a university degree to get her, and when she rejects him to marry Phillotson, the educated man, he finds refuge in religion. Despite his devotion to theology and church work, his feelings like Sue's are still fused. Indeed, they continue to see each other despite her engagement.

Hardy, in *Jude the Obscure*, gives religion an important part. He describes his characters' attachment to Christianity and their belief in God, and at the same time their inability to keep themselves far from sin and blasphemy. They are fused and lost between faith and bodily desires. Sue runs to Jude despite her engagement to Phillotson, and Jude, like her, expresses his love and bodily attachment to her despite his former marriage with Arabella. Hardy presents his characters as complex modern theologians, who want to get the two sides of life; religion and life pleasures. This complexity and fusion continue until the end of the novel.

Indeed, when Sue discovers Jude's marriage with Arabella, she decides to leave him and devote herself to Phillotson, allowing Jude to devote himself once again to the study of theology and church music. Meanwhile, her feeling of jealousy towards Jude's wife urges her to look after him once again, and thus they restore their love relation, giving priority to their bodily desires and neglecting the religious principles once again. In chapter three of *Jude the Obscure*, Jude burns his theological books and appears as a sinner, having kissed Sue deeply; starting thus an adulterous life with her. Jude's feeling of love towards Sue destroys his educational career once again.

Despite Jude's knowledge in religion, he is driven by his feelings that he finds uncontrollable. Here, we notice Sue's responsibility in his failure in his religious education. Indeed, Jude comes to lose both kinds of education that Hardy presents in him. His academic education is lost because of his social position, and his religious one is lost because of his feeling of love towards Sue, and the two kinds of education contributed to the loss of his artistic talents as a stone-cutter. Jude, then, experiences a failure in all kinds of education in the city, as economic and social conditions there prevent him from fulfilling his dreams.

Jude's failure is a means used by Hardy to give an image about the educational restrictions of the Victorian Era. In this period, higher studies are restricted to the elite of



society, and people of the working class are assigned specific types of education that are related to their social class. Indeed, the young curate's advice to Jude to devote himself to theology is a way to tell him that academic education is not his field. As Mary Poovey writes:

Even though literacy was increasingly available to members of the lower classes, access to the world of professional letters was still determined in the first instance by one's ability to write in a certain way, with an acceptable breadth of allusion, and according to recognized paradigms, genres and modes of address (Poovey, 1984: 107).

Later, even his religious education is abandoned by him because of his love relation with Sue, who finishes by leaving him after the death of their children. At the end of the novel, Jude commits suicide, after losing all hope. When he laid dead in the final chapter, Hardy refers to a group of students cheering a Duke for the honorary degree he bought for himself despite the fact that he has not the knowledge Jude had in Greek and Latin. In the sixth chapter of the novel, Jude states:

It was my poverty and not my will that consented to be beaten. It takes two or three generations to do what I tried to do in one; and my impulses –affection –vices perhaps they should be called –were too strong not to hamper a man without advantages; who should be as cold blooded as a fish and as selfish as a pig to have a good chance of being one of his country's worthies. You may ridicule me –I m quite willing that you should –I am a fit subject , no doubt. But I think that if you knew what I have gone through these last few years you should rather pity me (p. 422).

Here, Jude expresses his pity towards himself, and tries to justify his suicide. For him, his life in the city betrays his past as a rural man. All his efforts to become an educated man are made in vain, since he devotes himself to evil.

Through Hardy's exploration of the themes of education and art in *Jude the Obscure*, one can get an idea about the Victorian conservative attitudes towards these issues. Despite the fact that England as well as the majority of European countries at that time were moving towards modernity in all the fields, education remained traditional. It was until this period that the British government came to realize that its position as the world economic leader requires its people to be highly educated, starting thus to organize this field to be opened to every

individual. Yet, this idea was not put into effect until the second half of the twentieth century with Margaret Thatcher's Education Reform Act of 1988, which revolutionized the Victorian Traditions in education.

Fabien Fichaux, Anita Higgie and others, in *Fiches de civilization Américaine et Britannique* (2007), argue that during the Victorian Era, the British government came to realize that the British education was similar to that of the Middle Ages, and it was time to reform it to form an educated workforce that would sustain their industry. They state:

The previously-existing schools educated the sons of the aristocracy, upper, and upper-middle classes and were relieved to be left outside the new state system. These schools were either privately-owned (by an individual or family) or "endowed" (that is, they derived at least part of their income from a capital provision), and were run by a Governing Body. In both cases fees were charged (Fichaux et.al., 2007: 193).

We understand from this that education, at that time, was restricted to the members of higher social ranks, and the working class had not the financial ability to attend it. Fichaux and others add that Victorian education emphasized character building and team spirit over academic achievement. i.e. that schools at that time were not selective on academic grounds, but on the learner's background, since groups within schools had to develop a team spirit, and it was not evident to develop this spirit among people of different social backgrounds.

Considering Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, we notice that, unlike Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, education is overlooked by the author and replaced by training in art. The case of Carrie Meeber, who succeeded to raise from poverty to stardom and success illustrates the fact that in an American city, opportunities are always open for those who have talents in a specific domain. For Dreiser, the study of classical Greek and Roman scholarship are not the only ways that can make a person successful. Modern fields, such as art, can end the misery of many talented people. Indeed, he relies completely on melodrama as a narrative function of his story.

The novel relates how Carrie Meeber, who leaves Columbia to reach Chicago looking for low-class jobs and then left Chicago to reach New York, succeeds to get a full blossoming as an artist and to fulfill her dreams of wealth in this city. When she leaves her parent's home to look for material success, she is not aware that she is endowed with such talents. But, once in the city, opportunity is opened for her to discover her artistic skills, making thus her dreams greater and her ambition more powerful.

...yet she was interested in her charms, quick to understand the keener pleasures of life, ambitious to gain in material things. A half-equipped little knight she was, venturing to reconnoiter the mysterious city and dreaming wild dreams of vague, far-off supremacy which should make it prey and subject, the proper penitent, groveling at a woman's slipper (p. 4).

Acting is adopted by Carrie to overcome her status as a low wage earner and prostitute, and also as a means to play the role of an attractive woman in society. Through her experience in acting, she trains herself to imitate the superior modes of behavior that she sees around her. This is beneficial for her, as she is treated with greater respect. Acting, then, rewards her twice; as an actress on the stage and as a respected woman in society. So, the type of art she performs helps to form an individual with two faces, played together in a successful way that is not open to every person without Carrie's ambition and power.

The reason, which helped Carrie to succeed in this domain is, perhaps, her contact with people, who are strangers to her, and who are not from her social class and environment. The first stranger to introduce Carrie to this field of art is Drouet, who is presented by Dreiser as Carrie's first friend and lover. The support he offers to her provides her with self-esteem and courage, thus she decides to carry on her way as an actress to reach stardom and fame. Later, she decides to abandon him and rely on another stranger, Hurstwood, from an upper class than that of Drouet to support her financially and introduce her to the world of stardom and money in New York. Here, we notice Carrie's complete detachment from her biological family, her social class and her original environment.

Through Carrie's relation with these two men, Dreiser gives an image of the American city of the Progressive Era, which was characterized by the diversity of its citizens and the flexibility of their relations with strangers. He portrays the American city as a place where success is offered not looked for. Barbara Hochman, in her essay "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Actress: The Rewards of Representation in *Sister Carrie*", argues that

The entire *Under the Gas Light* sequence is informed by Carrie's need for encouragement, support, praise, feedback-now from Drouet, now from Hurstwood. Both men contribute significantly to Carrie's success. Her triumph is a result of a genuinely collaborative effort of the three (Hochman in Pizer, 1991: 50).

This collaboration culminates in Carrie's success as an artist. This illustrates, according to Hochman, Dreiser's belief that the artist, as any other learner, is always in need of his surrounding to confirm his success or failure:

Drouet's role in this sequence [*Under the Gas Light*] is crucial, not only in helping Carrie to realize her dramatic potential, but also in enabling her to recognize –and thus delight in- her achievement. It is as if collaborating presence were indispensable not only for eliciting creative energy, but also for reflecting the pleasure of success back to the uncertain artist (Ibid.).

*Under the Gas Light* is the most important sequence in Carrie's career as an actress. While playing the role of Laura on the stage, she feels her importance as a person and as an artist. She is proud of herself, the thing which creates in her hope and delight as well as emotional intensity. The reason is not that Carrie can never perform again as how she does in it, but that it is the first time she gives up her life as a buyer and seller, and detaches herself from the world of exploiter-exploited. Carrie's performance in *Under the Gas Light* constitutes a moment of reproduction in her life. She leaves behind her all the signs of her past as a person and reproduces herself as an actress, as Laura. It is "the outworking of desire to reproduce life" (p.117). Theatre, then, in Dreiser's work emerges as a means of reproduction and bridge between the performer and the audience (Op. Cit. Hochman in Pizer, 1991: 52).

Despite Carrie's need of the her friends to prove her existence as an artist, she exercises a certain degree of individuality and self-reliance in her career. This is apparent, when she takes the risk to perform the role of Laura without having any experience in the domain of theatre. Indeed, Dreiser describes her with some talents that are not found in any other person. This illustrates his belief in Individualism. Throughout the novel, he stresses the fact that Carrie is endowed with artistic talents and individual capacities. Yet, like many other people in her case, she cannot express them without an opportunity. In the novel, Robert Ames tells Carrie:

Most people are not capable of voicing their feelings. They depend upon others. That is what genius is for. One man expresses their desires for them in music; another one in poetry; another one in a play. Sometimes nature does it in a face-it makes the face representative of all desire. That's what has happened in your case (p. 356).

This saying indicates of Carrie's uniqueness as an individual. Her skills are innate in her, and she manipulate them as she wants to satisfy others. Carrie's talent is a capital that she cannot keep for herself; she must invest it to be valuable. Here also, we notice the influence of the urban materialistic environment on her. Acting is considered by her as an opportunity of investment, and she has to seize it by training herself and making efforts to succeed in it. The success she is looking for, in fact, is not restricted to the domain of art merely; it is extended to material wealth and independence.

The domain in which Carrie is involved is more complicated than the classical form of education. In the latter, the learner has to get a knowledge in the discipline that attracts him as an individual to be satisfied. In the former, however, the learner has to be provided with a talent and knowledge that satisfies him as an individual and that meet the needs of his spectators while on the stage. A learner in art should be a representative not only of himself but of all his community. When an actor performs his role on a stage, each individual from the audience must feel that he/she is talking to him/her or about him/her.

The power of stating others' cases creates reciprocity and intimacy between the actor and the spectator, the thing which leads to his/her fame. When Carrie played the role of Laura, she did it successfully to the point that every individual in the audience "could almost feel that she was talking to him" (p. 137). As Dreiser himself puts it, reciprocity creates and sustains interaction with others, thus it is necessary in the act of representation, either in narrative, in theatre or in some other form (Dreiser in Pizer, 1991: 56). We understand from this that he himself, as a writer, endeavors to represent the whole American society in the Progressive Era through his *Sister Carrie*. Through the character of Carrie Meeber, he represents the American woman and art in the city during that period.

Guided by this idea of representation, Dreiser makes his character Carrie moving from one city to a larger one to represent as many people as possible. Although Carrie's career in theatre started in Chicago, her fame and success are reached in New York. In Chicago, she discovers her talents as an actress, and in New York she attains her dream of money, respect, celebrity and comfort: "The doors of fine places seemed to open quite without the asking. These palatial chambers-how marvelously they came to her. The elegant apartments of Mrs. Vance in the Chelsea- these were hers. Men sent flowers, love notes, offers of fortune." (p. 456).

Carrie's success in New York, then, represents the beginning of the development of art in the American city. Being the largest and the most overcrowded metropolis at that time, it represents the American city life in general. Moreover, Carrie's success as an artist there indicates that the turn of the twentieth century marks the beginning of the flourishing of art in the U.S.A. It is also representative of the beginning of cultural modernity in this period, when American people were opened to diverse fields of training and labor, which were specific to them.

Dreiser's portrayal of Carrie as an actress seems to be a revolution against the English art and education at that time, which were still classical and traditional. The modern art of acting he portrays is open to all the people, who are endowed with such talents, regardless of their origins or social class. Art, of course, is just an example taken by Dreiser to show that American people at that time were open to new and modern ways of success in life. This modern way of labor can help a person to get the classical education, if the latter is desired. This is the case of Carrie Meeber, who is involved in literature at the end of the novel.

From the analysis of the dream of success in relation to education and art in Hardy's and Dreiser's novels, we understand that the British fields of education and labor in the Victorian period were restricted by many conservative principles. Moreover, the conditions were the same everywhere in all the country. So, one could not escape them, since the political system was the same in all the districts, unlike the American one which was federal. Contrary to the British political, economic and academic systems, the American ones were not unified; they differed from one state to another, allowing thus each state to select the programs that fitted its citizens. A person, in the U.S.A., had the chance to move from one city to another to select either the educational program and/or the political or economic system that fitted his/her case.

The impact of the differences in the socio-economic conditions of life in Britain and the U.S.A. on the citizens is apparent in Hardy's and Dreiser's works. While *Jude the Obscure*'s main protagonist is disappointed and loses hope in getting any chance to reach his dream of academic education, *Sister Carrie*'s one moves from one city to another and makes her dream of stardom as an artist come true. The reason is that in Jude's case, the system is the same in all the cities of his country, and it is preferable for him to forget about his dream and to concentrate on other fields that are open to people of his social class. the federal system of Carrie's country, however, makes each city different from another and opportunities can be

more open in one city than the others. Thus, she moves from one city to another until she makes her dream in the domain she desires come true.

## II- The Cultural Factor in the Dream of Success

The difference in the types of training and labor adopted to fulfill the dream of success in Hardy's and Dreiser's works is due to the characters' influence by their cultural environments. Carrie's interest in art is determined by the materialistic world around her and people's detachment from religion and morals in the American city. It is also due to the movement of anti-intellectualism, which characterized the U.S.A. at that time. Her life, in fact, is characterized by moral emptiness, as the domain in which she is trained to embrace material success has nothing to do with religion and tradition. Jude's case, however, is more determined by religion, since every sphere of life in the Victorian city, education included, is determined by religion and morality. It is also guided by the philosophies of the period which favor return to the ancient Greek and Roman cultures over the new emerging ones.

An example of the philosophies that could have an influence on Hardy's presentation of Jude as being interested in the study of Greek and Roman Scholarship is Mathew Arnold's philosophy of "culture", developed in his book *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), in which he asserts that

the culture which is supposed to plume itself on a smattering of Greek and Latin is a culture which is begotten by nothing so intellectual as curiosity; it is valued out of sheer vanity and ignorance, or else as an engine of social and class distinction, separating its holder, like a badge or title, from other people who have not got it. (Arnold, 1869: 43).

So, the true culture, according to Arnold, is that pertaining to the past. The one who adopts it is qualified as a member of the high social class, because it makes him different from the one who abandons it. The study of the classical Greek and Roman scholarship is, then, the way that can provide a person with social mobility. To climb to the high ranks of society, a person has to get what Arnold labels a badge or title, an education based on the ancient Greek and



Roman scholarship. This Victorian culture had its influence on people, as Jude, who wants to get a refined social status, through his engaging in the study of classical cultures.

Above this cultural atmosphere, Hardy, in *Jude the Obscure*, presents the Victorian city as being highly religious. Indeed, all his characters are committed to the church in a way or in another. This is what happens especially with Jude, who devoted himself to religion in order to give his life meaning in moments of despair and emptiness. His appeal to religion to fill in his emptiness and give himself an identity is, in fact, stimulated by his environment which is highly religious, especially his teacher Phillotson, whom he considers as his guide in life.

Hardy uses Jude as a prototype of the British people during the Victorian Era. During that period, all the people were influenced by the church, because the latter dominated all the fields of their life. Hardy, in his novel, is critical to this phenomenon, because for him religious power engenders hypocrisy. He believes that people in life have many desires that can go against the laws of religion, such as sex and money that lead to religious hypocrisy. This can happen to one individual or to an institution as a whole. In *Jude the Obscure*, this happened to Jude, Sue and Phillotson among others, and to the whole institution of education. They all identify themselves as religious persons, but they are all confronted with situations in which they act as non religious and liberal characters.

In Jude's case, for instance, religious grains are planted in his mind from his childhood. He receives these grains within family life and outside home. The signs of priesthood start to appear in him when his aunt Drusilla is always telling him that the Fawleys were not born to be married. "The Fawleys were not made for wedlock: it never seemed to sit well upon us." (p. 82). Moreover, his school teacher Phillotson is always giving him moral lessons, by advising him to be kind to animals and to God's teachings.

Being influenced by the moral basis he got in his childhood, Jude in his adulthood devotes himself to religious education and labor. When he is in Marygreen, he studies Greek

and Latin in order to be able to understand the Bible. And at the age of seventeen, he focuses on the reading and understanding of the Bible, and he always remembers his aunt Drusilla, who warns him that any love relation with his cousin Sue will be foolish, by saying “If she’s townish and wanton it med bring’ ee to ruin” (p. 133) . Yet, with his first relation with a woman (Arabella Donn), he starts to forget his religious principles and begins with her in a love affair that costs him his celibacy, being obliged to marry her when he is told by her that she is pregnant. While in Marygreen, he has not completely lost his religious education. Indeed, his marriage with Arabella seems to be a religious obligation.

The problem with his religious faith starts when he reaches the city. When he sees his cousin for the first time in Christminster, he starts to feel a sexual attraction towards her, forgetting the fact that he is married to another woman, and neglecting his aunt’s warning about marriage. Margaret Elvy argues that

after he has seen Sue for the first time, and the erotic fascination has begun, Jude muses on the prohibitions that prevent him from marrying her: First, he’s married; second they’re cousins; third, marriage in the Fawley family ‘meant tragic sadness’ and marrying a cousin would double the tragedy: ‘A tragic madness might be intensified to a tragic horror.’ (II. 2) (Elvy, 2000: 84).

Jude’s attraction to his cousin marks the beginning of his religious fall, as his love of her is uncontrollable. Yet, Sue’s decision to marry Phillotson combined with his failure to get academic education created an emptiness in his soul. So, his religious basis is revived in him, and he decides to devote himself to the work of God, coming thus back to his religious education.

Nevertheless, his devotion to religion does not last for a long time. When Sue decides to build with him an extra-marital relationship, he accepts without hesitation, and he burns all his religious books, marking his break with Christianity. This proves that Jude’s religious education is characterized by hypocrisy; he is, in fact, confused between tradition and modernity. As he can no longer live with this confusion, he is forced to leave the Church.

Jude lives this adultery relation with Sue until she decides to leave him to join her lawful husband. At this moment, he realizes that he is lost both as a religious person and as a modern liberal man, thus he commits suicide.

The hypocrisy that Jude has toward religion is present even within the character of Sue. The latter also shows religious appearances at the beginning, but she seems to be a liberal woman in the course of the plot of the novel, and at the end she comes back to religion. She is, then, switching from a religious to a liberal woman, and she rests at the end on religious principles, being determined by her society. When Jude sees her for the first time, she is at work illuminating the word “Alleluja” on a scroll. This gives him the impression that she is religious. But, when he starts to be familiar with her, their discussions reveal that she is more attracted by the ancient Greek and Roman studies than religion. Indeed, she tells Jude that she is “more ancient than medievalism” (p. 121). Margaret Elvy argues that

There is an element in Sue’s character that goes back to ancient times, to a pre-Christian, pre-Fall era, somewhere paradisaical, before the complications of sex and sin had set in. It is expressed in her penchant for the very ancient, for the Greek statues, for the Corinthian over the Gothic, for the simple pleasures of the roses (Elvy, 2000: 125).

Sue’s sticking to the ancient civilizations is shown when she buys two statues of Pagan gods and meditates on them. It is also shown when she walks with Jude and Phillotson in the exhibition of a model of Jerusalem, and she seems contemptuous of all such Christian devotion. Despite her being more intellectual than religious, she cannot reveal her real tendencies in such a religious community. She prefers to hide them and to seem hypocrite like all the people around her.

In addition to the intellectual nature of Sue, she is presented by Hardy as a liberal woman, having accepted to leave her husband “Phyllotson”, and live with Jude without marriage, as she cannot resist her feeling of love toward him. Moreover, she works alongside him to keep better living conditions. Unfortunately, her liberal behavior costs her so much,

breaking with her social, professional and religious lives. This shows that the Victorian Era was not a time of complete Liberalism in England. It was economically liberal, but religiously conventional and socially static.

In fact, Sue's liberal behavior is not deliberately manifested. While living with Jude, she refuses to have sex with him despite her love to him. When he wonders about that and considers her as "a phantasmal, bodiless creature" (p. 235), she answers that she is not "so exceptional a woman", meaning that she is like all the other women (Ibid.). In chapter four of part three, she asserts that "some of the most passionately erotic poets have been the most self-contained in their daily lives" (p. 136). Being interested in erotic poetry means that she is very sexual, but her feelings are hidden in herself (Elvy, 2000: 130).

Later in the novel, when Sue is afraid of losing Jude with the return of his wife Arabella, she accepts to express her eroticism by having sex with him, the thing which astonishes Jude once again. Yet, when she loses the children she got with him, she believes that it is a curse from God for her adultery relationship with a married man, and she leaves him to join back her lawful husband. All along the novel, she is switching between tradition and modernity. But, at the end her fate leads her to be melted within her religious environment, and she puts aside her liberalism.

Some critics of *Jude the Obscure* argue on Sue that she is a fused character. She is not religious, but she has some faith in Christianity; she is not modern too but she has some aspects of modernity. At the same time, she is stick to the ancient civilizations, but she keeps this hidden in her thoughts and expresses it rarely to Jude. Margaret Elvy argues:

Jude's retort to Sue's attack on the Church's censoring of the *Song of Songs* is that she is being 'Voltairean'. Jude uses the Phrase again when Sue tells him that she doesn't "regard marriage as a sacrament" (III. 5). This is deeply ironic, in view of what occurs later in the novel, and it also seems to contradict Sue's statements on the importance of 'ecstatic, natural, human love' (Ibid., p. 132).

Sue, then, seems to be more obscure than Jude. She believes but she does not apply. Even Jude cannot come to know her. In fact, all along the novel, Jude and Sue are presented as one person, but at the end they go in opposite directions. The death of their children turns Jude against religion and turns Sue to be very religious. "Sue becomes more like Christ than Jude (although Jude is likened to Jesus throughout the novel) [...] She wishes to atone for all sins, and especially her 'fall'." (Elvy, 2000: 119). This proves that she, like Jude and all the other members of her community, is hypocrite towards her religion and her environment.

This hypocrisy is found even in the character of Phillotson, the high symbol of Christian faith in the novel. He is the one who plants the moral education in Jude's soul from his childhood. Even in Christminster, he gives him moral lessons. When he meets Jude and Sue in the exhibition of a model of Jerusalem, he is alarmed by Sue's ideas about Christianity. Yet, after few days he asks her for marriage despite his awareness about her beliefs. It is here that his first signs of hypocrisy towards religion begin to appear in the novel.

Phillotson's hypocrisy towards his religious faith continues to develop when he lives with Sue, as his lawful wife, without having sex, and then allows her to live with Jude an adultery relationship. Indeed, when he discovers his wife's love to Jude, he permits her to have a separate bedroom with him. Later, he gives her freedom and allows her to go to the latter. He declares: "It is wrong to so torture a fellow creature any longer" (p. 212). Margaret Stonyk argues that Phillotson "follows his humane instinct in letting Sue go." (Stonyk, 1980: 28). Behaving so, he, like Jude and Sue, seems to be liberal in thought and action.

Allowing Sue to live with Jude, Phillotson is banished from his work as a teacher, as he is considered as being part of their adultery relationship. This is another example given by Hardy to show the Victorian rigid laws in religious matters. At that time, a person should integrate in his Christian community or he would be rejected by all the institutions. This made

all the people obliged to be hypocrite toward their religion and toward their community. This is what happens with Phillotson as well as all the characters of Hardy's novel.

Indeed, at the end, Phillotson regrets his action, not because he changed his point of view, but because this cost him the loss of his job and status in society. As a result, when he hears about the separation of Jude and Sue, he seizes the opportunity and asks the latter to come back to him, despite his awareness that she still loves Jude. His calling back to Sue is just a way to regain his job as a teacher. Indeed, the Widow Edlin warns him that Sue still loves Jude, but he ignores this and regains Sue once again, promising her that he will not force her to have sex with him. When she returns to him, he tells her that their "half-marriage should be completed" (P. 362), meaning that they should have sex together. Thus, "Phillotson's liberal views are dropped in favor of upholding male-female power relations through sex." (Elvy, 2000: 117).

Phillotson's hypocrisy, as well as that of the other characters in the novel, is the only way to survive as a respected individual in such a harsh community. He uses his wife as a means to regain his social position, just like when Jude uses religion to gain an identity, and like Sue's coming back to her husband to regain God's grace and forgiveness, despite her eternal love to her cousin. All Hardy's characters are switching from being religious to liberal and from liberal to religious, according to their psychological and social conditions. Their religious aspect, according to Hardy, is just a way used to achieve a specific purpose at a certain moment. This purpose is always personal; which means that in addition to being hypocrite, the characters are also pragmatic and selfish.

Considering Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, one can notice that the author does not make reference to religion in it neither does he focus on academic education as a way to reach social mobility. His neglecting of this point is perhaps related to the influence of his environment, which puts apart the religious principles in favor of money and materialism. Indeed, all

Dreiser's characters, male or female, are presented without religious principles; they are like animals in the laboratory, acting according to their instincts and the influence of their environment. The author's naturalist style leaves no place to morality in his work. The fact of being the first work to be produced under the philosophies of Naturalism and Determinism urges the Americans at the beginning to reject his depiction of the real side of their life.

Giving a real image of the American society in the Progressive Era, the cultural and philosophical movements that characterized it are apparent in Dreiser's fiction. One of the most important philosophies that appeared in this period is William James' Philosophy of Pragmatism, which spread from the 1890s until the 1910s. As a psychologist, James explores this philosophy in relation to religious beliefs, human freedom and moral values. According to him, truth is evaluated according to its impact on the human behavior. Thus, religion is justified only if it makes a positive effect on the human behavior. James believes in freewill, and the idea, for him, is true when proven or useful, which means that abstract theories are born from concrete conditions or experiences. In Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, he defines pragmatism as "the doctrine that the whole "meaning" of a concept expresses itself in its practical consequences either in the shape of conduct to be recommended, or in that of experiences to be expected." (James, in Baldwin, 1901: 321).

Evaluating Dreiser's character's in relation to James' philosophy, we can say that they are pragmatic, in the sense that they put their religious faiths apart, when they find them not useful in their life, to adopt beneficial means that can lead them to success. Dreiser's neglect of religion is not the invention of his imagination, but it is the portrayal of the real American city life. Donald Pizer argues that Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* is written in a naturalist style and through a naturalist point of view; explaining how environmental factors influence his hero's (Hurstwood) and heroine's (Carrie) fates. He contends that the story is used "to express an abstract truth, one concerning the nature of life in great American cities, in which

individuals of varying makeups have their nature clarified and their fates shaped by the raw forces of life.” (Pizer, 1991: 6). That is to say that Americans’ lives are shaped by outside forces, which guide their actions, emotions and destiny.

To illustrate this idea, Dreiser opens his novel by describing the city into which Carrie wants entrance, saying that “the beauty of the city is an illusion and a trip which like music too often relax, weakens, then perverts the simple human perceptions.”(p. 2). This is to mean that the city can change the human nature negatively by its false beauty. Its hotels, glittering theatres and sumptuous restaurants together with the wealthy apparel there can influence the individuals’ personalities. Practically, that happened to all Dreiser’s characters.

Carrie, living in the city, manifests this change through her running behind material wealth and good looking appearances. Her view of money is “money, something everybody else has and I (Carrie) must get.” (p. 77). This obsession leads her to lose her family and friends at the beginning and herself later. In fact, at the end, when she gets what she is looking for, she loses all her friends who offered her their help, and loses even herself since she cannot find peace of mind despite her success.

When Carrie is losing her family and friends one after another, she does not feel any regret. This indicates of the fact that she is emotionally cold and morally empty. Her state of mind, in fact, is not innate in her, but is acquired in the urban environment of the city. In the novel, the reader is told that “the metropolis is a cold place socially” (p. 462). Reading the novel, one can notice that all the discourses between characters are colored by Materialism. For instance, Carrie’s relation with her sister’s family is materialized as they are always anxious over a share of the rent by Carrie, and there is no feeling of intimacy among them. While working in the factory shoe, she suffers from bad conditions, and when she becomes ill, she loses her job, and the factory owner does not show any feeling of pity towards her.



Under these conditions, Carrie, determined by the philosophy of social Darwinism, finds that the only solution for her case is to follow the materialistic aspect of the city. This is why she seizes the first opportunity offered to her by Drouet to enter with him in a love affair in return for comfort and celebrity. Here, we notice that even Drouet's intentions are materialistic in their basis. Indeed, when he feels a certain material prosperity, he starts to buy pleasure by his money, by getting sex with beautiful girls as Carrie. Noticing this, the latter does not hesitate to leave him, when he introduces her to a man who is wealthier than him.

Hurstwood's relation with Carrie is also immoral and materialistic. Being a married man, he wants both the social conveniences of a marriage and the pleasures of an extra-marital love affair. Carrie finds this affair more exciting than that of Drouet, and she engages in it with dissimulation, pretending that she loves him. Her hypocrisy becomes greater, when she uses her artistic talents to play a double role of being Hurstwood's wife and homemaker, hiding the reality that she is, in fact, an independent woman. The double role she plays alludes to her success as an actress at the end of the novel. When this success is reached, she leaves Hurstwood and reveals her real face as an independent woman.

Dreiser's use of Carrie as an actress is, in fact, symbolic. He creates the character of Carrie to represent the spirit of the period that is characterized by false perceptions about life, hypocrisy and emptiness left behind by identity dissolution and materialism. Indeed, an actress is a false perception of a real character just as materialism is a false perception of happiness, and consumerism is a false perception of wealth (Ma, Li, 2006: 4-9). Carrie, then, is just like an animal in the laboratory, guided by the conditions of her time. Dreiser presents her as a weak and degenerated person at the end of the novel, despite the success she reached:

Now Carrie, Chicago and New York is the world of fashion and the world of the stage is nothing but disenchanted dreams. What she is longing for is not them, but what they represent, but time has proved that their representative is an illusion and false. Carrie has everything, yet she has nothing (p. 431).

Donald Pizer offers a valid interpretation to Carrie's degeneration from a religious point of view. He says: "Carrie, as Eve, 'falls' not because she is weak or because her human tempters, Drouet and Hurstwood, are evil, but because the apple is beyond resistance in its attraction." (Pizer, 1991: 53). Pizer, in this quotation, does not see Carrie as a weak character, but as the one whose actions are shaped by the power and attraction that the city has on her inhabitants, just like Eve who could not resist the apple on Eden. We notice that Pizer, like Dreiser, justifies Carrie's behavior.

If Carrie takes the road of degeneration to be a two men's love, it is not because she is a bad or weak person, but because many reasons led her to do so. Her actions, as well as the actions of all the other characters of the novel, are not chosen by her, but are imposed on her by her environment. This is why Dreiser does not show any punishment for her, except her feeling of loneliness and dissatisfaction at the end of the novel. Yet, even this loneliness is not presented as a punishment, but just a way to emphasize that the materialistic values that shaped the period are not the true ways that can lead a person to satisfaction and peace of mind.

Carrie's lack of moral education is not only determined by her life conditions in the city, but also by her past. The poverty, in which her parents lived in Wisconsin, prevented them from supplying their daughter with any type of education. The only things they could give her were shelter and food. Despite the fact that Dreiser does not inform his reader about Carrie's past, one can deduce from her behavior that she lived in bad conditions in her parents' home. Indeed, Dreiser says that she left Wisconsin, because she was "dissatisfied at home" (p.15). He notes also that her father worked in a flour mill, and that they were relatively new comers to Columbia; "Carrie is two generations removed from emigrant" (p.4). They were, thus, not well settled economically (Riggiou in Ibid., p. 30).

In addition to all this, Dreiser informs the reader that Carrie is not provided by guidance from a “counselor... to whisper cautious interpretations” (p. 4). “The guiding voice of the family –the counselor, traditionally the father’s voice –is conspicuously absent in Carrie’s life.” (p. 4). He perceives that Carrie has easily fallen in Drouet’s seductive advances, because she “had no excellent home principles fixed upon her. If she had, she would have been more consciously distressed” (p. 78). He adds: “If any habits had ever had time to fix upon her, they would have operated here.” (p. 77). Dreiser, then, links Carrie’s fall in moral education to a lack of guidance in her childhood (p. 31).

It is noticeable that Dreiser, all along the novel, justifies Carrie’s immoral behavior through the philosophy of determinism. Her deeds are determined, on the one hand, by the philosophy of social Darwinism and the spirit of Liberalism as well as the “conspicuous consumption” and “emulation” of the city, and on the other hand, by the lack of religious and moral education in her life with her parents from which she remembers only signs of poverty. She is, then, determined by her past and present. This has an impact on her American Dream and the ways she adopted to make it come true.

From the analysis of education, art and the dream of success in Dreiser’s and Hardy’s fiction, we notice Dreiser’s revision of the latter’s presentation of the British people’s perception of these issues. This revision is based on the philosophy of Determinism, which makes both the British and American people determined by the socio-cultural as well as the economic conditions of their societies. The difference between them is that the Americans abandoned completely their moral values and turned to be materialistic and liberal within a Capitalist environment. The British, however, remained religious yet hypocrite under the pressure of their environment, which was religious and traditional. This exemplifies the differences between the two societies in what concerns their cultural aspects.

The American and English societies were experiencing the same economic conditions and the same ideological values at that time; moving from agriculture to industry, from Mercantilism to Capitalism and Liberalism and from countryside to cities. Yet, the Americans seem to be clearer than the British in this movement; having detached themselves completely from their former way of life to adopt a modern one. The British, however, are lost between modernity and tradition; they do not arrive to situate themselves in a society full of contradictions and obscurity. Moreover, the British attachment to religion and morality influences Hardy, who presents his main protagonists as being highly religious. Yet, the Liberal aspect of the American city influences Dreiser, who presents his main character without any religious notion in her mind. She is presented as a girl conducted by her ambition and the material aspect of life in the city, forgetting the existence of God, which is not the case of Jude, who suffers from regret at the end of the novel, because he lost his religious education.

### **Chapter III: Love, Marriage, Sex and Morality in Selected Fiction by Theodore Dreiser and Thomas Hardy**

Socio-economic environments in Hardy's and Dreiser's novels do not only determine the fate of the characters at the material and moral levels, but influence their emotional and marital lives as well. In Hardy's novels, love relations and the institution of marriage are determined by the traditional environment of the Victorian society, which is characterized by rigid morality and strict social conventions. In Dreiser's novels, however, the materialistic environment into which the American society is plunged changes people's view about these matters, which lose their traditional aspect of family building. While Hardy presents marriage in the Victorian society as a sacred moral and social bond, Dreiser gives a new image about it, considering it as unimportant and complementary in Americans' lives.

#### **I- Love and the Institution of Marriage**

In *Jude the Obscure*, marriage is highly considered and treated from different angles. It plays a major role in all the religious, economic and social events of the novel, and determines the fates of all the characters; either positively or negatively, leading them to success or failure. It is introduced as a sacred element in the life of an individual, and as a religious obligation to be fulfilled to lead a decent life or to correct one's sins. In fact, women are tied to marry, since a woman, at that time, cannot lead a single life. Men also find themselves obliged to fulfill this obligation, either for religious or social reasons. As a result, love is scarce in their marriages. This is apparent in the marriage between Jude and Arabella.

Arabella Donn is a woman that cannot live without the presence of a man in her life. When she meets Jude for the first time, she attracts his attention by a piece of pig's flesh without knowing anything about his life. When he asks if he can see her another time, she accepts without hesitation and she introduces him later on to her family. The next morning, he hears her telling her friends that she wants to marry him, thus their romance begins. Two

months later, when he decides to go to Christminster to study, she informs him that she is pregnant, and thus he marries her quickly without being convinced that she is the ideal wife for him. One day, he asks her when the baby will be born, and Arabella tells him that it is a mistake; and she is not really pregnant. "I am, says Mrs. Fawley quietly. And when do you expect? Ssh! Not at all. What! I was mistaken." ( p. 58).

When Jude hears this, he feels depressed and trapped by the marriage, and even thinks to kill himself. He considers that he is the victim of Arabella's manipulation, which retains him from fulfilling his dream of education and marrying his cousin Sue. Yet, he finds that the decision is irreversible and he has to live with its consequences. Fortunately for him, one day he goes home and finds Arabella gone. He receives a letter saying that she is planning to move with her parents to Australia. Thus, he feels a certain freedom, yet partially liberating; since she gives him independence only in a physical sense. The fact that they are still married forbids him of achieving a legitimate romantic happiness with another woman.

Through the marriage of Jude and Arabella, Thomas Hardy exposes one type of marriage, which is a sacrifice based on moral obligation. Indeed, when Jude learns that Arabella is pregnant, he sacrifices his love to his cousin Sue, and finds that he must marry her to correct their sin, and protect Arabella and their coming child. This marriage is characterized by hypocrisy, since Jude does not love Arabella. Indeed, three years after the latter's leaving to Australia, Jude decides to move to the city to look for his true love.

While in the city of Christminster, his aunt sends him the picture of his cousin with the stipulation that he should not find her, since tradition tells that marriage among the Fawleys will be a catastrophe. Yet, Jude neglects her advice; when he settles completely in the city, he starts to look for Sue until he finds her in the shop his aunt described. When he sees her, he feels a physical attraction towards her, but he thinks that he has not to fall in love with her,

because marriage among cousins is never good. Moreover, he remembers that he is still married to Arabella. Here, we notice that religion and tradition come always before love.

When Sue realizes that Jude's love to her is not irresistible, she prefers Phillotson despite her love for him. Her decision to marry Phillotson is similar to that of Arabella who married Jude, just because she was in need of a man in her life. Moreover, it is based on traditional and religious principles. Indeed, when she knows that Jude is married to Arabella, she is disappointed and believes that she has not to marry a married man, putting him in a situation of bigamy.

When both Jude and Sue come to understand that they cannot live without each other, they decide to live together without marriage despite Sue's marriage to Phillotson and Jude's marriage to Arabella. They are, as Phillotson describes them, but one person. Their relation gives birth to two children in addition to Jude's son with Arabella "Little Father Time", whom Sue loves as her biological son, and who is always mocked, because his parents are not married. Later, Sue gets divorce from Phillotson and Jude from Arabella. When they decide to marry and form a lawful family, Little Father Time implores them not to do it, because when he sees Sue's fatigue and despair, he thinks that marriage and children destroy women. As a result, he prefers to hang himself and his brothers to give his mother her freedom. He leaves a note saying: "Done because we are too menny."(p. 305).

Little Father Time's words and behavior are very symbolic. Hardy uses them to show how marriage, with or without love, in the Victorian Era destroys women and reduces them into machines made for the production of children. Moreover, they take alone the responsibility of the education of their children from their birth until being adult. After marriage, men are generally absent from family life. Sue knows this reality and she repeats it several times to Little Father Time, but she finds that it is her duty to complete this act to protect them.

Her children's death is perceived by her as a curse from God for her adulterous relationship with Jude. As a result, when the latter proposes marriage for her, she declares that she is still Phillotson's wife. When Phillotson hears about this, he seizes the opportunity and asks her to come back to him in order to rescue his status in society, although he knows that she still loves Jude. Hence, Sue's religious conventions oblige her to make a marriage that is founded on hypocrisy. Margaret Stonyk argues that in the day of their marriage, "Sue behaves like a woman going to her execution rather than her wedding; the night before the ceremony she burns an embroidered nightgown she had worn for Jude." (Stonyk, 2000: 37).

When Phillotson and Sue are married, he tells her that he will not force himself upon her, but later on he, like all the Victorian men, obliges her to complete their half marriage by getting sex with her. Sue tells widow Edlin that she still loves Jude, but she has to confess her sin by offering herself to Phillotson as a wife. " 'It is my duty. I will drink my cup to the dregs!'", she tells Mrs. Edlin (p. 359). Here Sue sacrifices her body to her husband.

Through the marriages that occurred in his novel, Hardy gives the reader an image about marriage in the Victorian Era. In the majority of cases, it is not based on love; it is a sacrifice made by an individual to complete or correct something in his life. Sex among couples is an obligation imposed by religion and tradition. Hardy's emphasis on the theme of marriage in his novel is intended to show that this act is very important in the life of an individual, and must be given a correct meaning. He expresses an opposed view about the meaning given to marriage at that time.

In *Jude the Obscure*, marriage is a battleground; all the characters are including marriage in their discussions. When Jude was a child, his aunt always warned him about marriage in their family. At each time Sue meets Arabella without Jude's presence, they talk about marriage. When Arabella meets her friend at the Great Agricultural Show, she tells her that she will soon be married (p. 265). When Phillotson meets his friend, they talk about his



marriage with Sue. When Sue lives with Jude, she talks with Little Father Time about marriage. It seems as if there is no other subject worthy of discussion than it. (Elvy, 2000: 85).

Yet, for Hardy none of them made a true marriage. Jude's marriage with Arabella fails as does that of Sue with Phillotson. Even the organized marriage between Jude and Sue fails before it occurs. The author includes Widow Edlin as a round character in his novel to reinforce his view about marriage. Indeed, Edlin's opinion is of great importance and common sense; she advises Sue of not marrying Phillotson, since she is in love with another person. " 'You are in love wi't' other still! [...] You be t' other man's'", told her (p.332). She even commends Jude and Sue to try to live without marriage and tries to persuade Phillotson to delay the wedding. Margaret Elvy argues that

Thomas Hardy's basic point is that marriage can become a prison which traps people who should part. As he explains in 1912 *Postscript* to the 1895 *Preface*, a marriage should be dissolvable as soon as it becomes a cruelty to either of the parties' (xxxvii). This laudable humane vision forms the centre of the book, but the view is often expressed vehemently (Op. Cit. Elvy, 2000: 87).

Considering the subjects of love and marriage in Dreiser's fiction, we find that all along his novel *Sister Carrie*, the author gives no importance to family life and love. His emphasis on the materialism that shaped the Progressive Era puts aside all signs of sentiments among his characters; the thing which ridicules the importance of marriage and family building. His main character Carrie Meeber is described as a person without the concept of marriage in mind. She is a woman, who wants to live an independent life; using men only to reach her purposes of wealth and fame.

When she moves from the countryside to the city, she has only in mind the dream of getting a good job and working hard to improve her life conditions. Yet, once there, she realizes that the city is not the paradise she is dreaming of; it is not easy for her to get a job, and when she gets it, she experiences exhaustion and monotony in her work. Indeed, her work is so physically tiring that she cannot feel her biological existence.

Her legs began to tire [...] would noon ever come? [...] She was not hungry at all, but weak, and her eyes were tired [...] Her hands began to ache at the wrists and then in the fingers, and towards the last she seemed one mass of dull, complaining muscles, fixed in an eternal position and performing a single mechanical movement which became more and more distasteful, until at last it was absolutely nauseating (p. 41).

As a result of these bad working conditions from which Carrie suffers, she experiences a kind of alienation. She is degraded physically, psychologically, spiritually and emotionally to the point that she does not realize the world around her. This degradation leaves no place for love and marriage in her mind; she is only looking for a way that can save her from her situation, without considering what other people think of her behavior.

As a result, she seizes the first opportunity given to her by Drouet, and she offers him her body without love or marriage. Indeed, she finds in him a door that can lead her to the material success she is looking for, not a future husband that will share with her the difficulties and happiness of life. Despite the fact that he offers her the life she desires, and helps her in the very first stages of her theatrical career, she leaves him when a more interesting opportunity is offered to her with Hurstwood, who is richer and more interesting than Drouet without any feeling of regret.

With Hurstwood, Carrie is once again described as being without feelings of love or respect to family life. She offers him her body, and she accepts to live with him despite her awareness that he is a married man with a family. Here, Carrie neglects Hurstwood's family, which means that she gives no respect to this institution. Later, she detaches him completely from his family and accepts to marry him without any feeling of love towards him. Indeed, her artistic talents are benefic for her in this case as they offered her the possibility of playing the role of being a good wife and homemaker just to satisfy her desire to live in luxury.

In New York, when Carrie is impressed by the gigantic city and its opportunities, she quite forgets Hurstwood. Barbara Hochman, in her article "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Actress: The Rewards of Representation in *Sister Carrie*", argues that

in the early phases of her relationship with Hurstwood, Carrie is said to be 'too full of wonder and desire to be greedy'(91). The implicit polarity between desire and greed here may be curious; but the paradox is typical of Dreiser's rendering of desire throughout *Sister Carrie*. (Hochman, in Pizer ,1991: 53).

This means that the desire for living the life of the upper class that Carrie has at the beginning of her relation with Hurstwood in New York develops into a greed without limits to live a luxurious life. This greediness urges her to work hard as an actress and create a career in theatre, obtaining thus all what she dreams of and more. When she realizes that she has all what she is looking for, she leaves Hurstwood and starts to live as an independent woman. This is another point which shows that Carrie does not give importance to marriage and men. For her, the latter are just a means to achieve an end. This is considered by some critics as selfishness on behalf of Carrie, and by others as ignorance and unawareness in the field of morals and sentiments. Dreiser sympathizes with her behavior, and justifies it by the philosophy of Determinism that prevails all along his work and in the American society in the Progressive Era. For him, Carrie behaves so, because she is determined by the conduct of all the people around her, starting from her sister's family that lodged her, intending that she would share in the rent of their house by her pay, arriving to Drouet and Hurstwood who helped her in return of sexual pleasure with her.

Carrie's neglect of the importance of love and marriage, in fact, is not only specific to her. All Dreiser's characters show no interest in this institution. When Carrie lives in her sister's home, she always notices the non existence of love between her and her husband. Indeed, she does not appreciate the latter. Her feeling of hate towards men, perhaps, starts here. Indeed, he is the reason behind her leaving of her sister's home to join Drouet because of his consideration of her as another source of money through which he can satisfy their basic needs of shelter and food. Dreiser argues that when she left them, "she felt very much like a criminal in the matter." (p. 435). Yet, she does not find another way to satisfy herself.

She prefers to accept Drouet's proposition to live with him without marriage, although she classifies him in the same category as all the men around her.

In fact, when Drouet decides to live a sexual experience with Carrie, it is just to satisfy his bodily instincts of sex; he has not in his mind the intention to marry her. His help for her is also selfish; it is a means to reach his aim of being her lover despite the non existence of love between them. Indeed, when she decides to separate from him, he leaves her without any financial source. Here, Carrie feels that she is still in the world of exploiter/exploited. As a result, she follows Hurstwood, who can offer her more wealth without any feeling of guilt.

With Hurstwood, she lives the same experience as that she lived with Drouet. Indeed, even Hurstwood is described as being without interest in the notions of love and marriage. Despite his being a married man, he gives up his wife, and follows Carrie whom he finds younger and more beautiful, without caring if she loves him or not. Thus, Hurstwood can be considered worse than Drouet. The latter is determined by the feeling of desire; when he gets a higher social status, he desires a beautiful woman, who will bring for him more respect in society. The former, however, is guided by greediness, in the sense that he possesses all what Drouet desires, but he wants more by renewing his sexual life with a more exciting woman.

This, perhaps, justifies Carrie's movement from the feeling of desire to that of greed when she is with Hurstwood. She sees in him a man who has everything, but feels that he has nothing; justifying his attachment to her by his being unhappy with his wife. Carrie notices Hurstwood's greediness, and she imposes on him marriage for continuing with him: "You must marry me" (p. 301), she tells him, and he agrees despite his awareness that she is just in need for him in her professional career. Thomas P. Riggio, in his essay "Carrie's Blues", argues that

Carrie's need for men always includes marriage and reflects her desire for respectability as well as for security. She is in fact rather obsessive on this point. When she does 'marry', it is to a man whose daughter is her age. There is 'no great passion in her' for Hurstwood... (Riggio, in Pizer, 1991: 33).

Marriage and love in Dreiser's work are introduced within the Capitalist system that prevailed in the Progressive Era. They functioned in the same way as the economic system, adopting the same philosophies as social Darwinism and Liberalism. Indeed, all Dreiser's characters seem to be Darwinian in their relations to each other. Drouet takes advantage of Carrie's weakness and proposes to her his help in return for her body, considering her as a property that he bought. Hurstwood proposes to her more wealth and success, taking thus Drouet's property by force, as does Carrie when she takes from Hurstwood's wife her property, her husband, using her physical beauty and youth as a means to get him.

In addition to the Darwinian aspect of the American society, Dreiser, through the materialistic relationships between the characters, gives an image of a society based on exchange of services. The relation between Carrie and her lovers, in fact, finds its justification in Marcel Moss's *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (1950), in which the author advocates the exchange of gifts and the obligation to reciprocate to show the receiver of the gift's liberality, honor and money. The meaning he gives to the gift is taken from the societies that preceded his own. He says:

In the economic and legal systems that preceded our own, one hardly ever finds a simple exchange of goods, wealth and products in transaction concluded by individuals. First, it is not individuals but collectivities that impose obligations of exchange and contract upon each other.[...] In particular, such exchanges are acts of politeness. [...] Finally, these total services and counter-services are committed to in a somewhat voluntary form by presents and gifts, although in the final analysis they are strictly compulsory, on pain of private or public warfare. (Mauss, 1950: 6, 7).

Moss's description of the reciprocity of gifts within society fits Carrie's case, who exchanges her body for her lovers' money, and fits also her lovers' case who exchange their material help of the heroine for her body.

Moreover, all the characters, male and female, seem to be selfish and pragmatic in their thinking. Carrie, for instance, shows her selfishness when she uses her two lovers as

means to reach wealth and success. Both Drouet and Hurstwood help her and encourage her artistic talents to get her interest in them. As Barbara Hochman argues:

Carrie's performance as Laura constitutes a high point of satisfaction –hope, delight, emotional intensity –not only for Carrie but also for Hurstwood and Drouet. It is not merely that Carrie never gain acts as effectively as she does in this performance. It is also that in a world where human relations can almost invariably be reduced to buyer and seller, exploiter and exploited, or where, as Richard Poirier puts it, “sex [is]... almost the only imaginable form of personal interchange,” the collaborative effort that culminates in Carrie's triumph on stage... (Hochman in Pizer, 1991: 49).

Indeed, Drouet's insistence on Carrie to take the role of Laura and his encouragement for her during her performance of the role is just an easy way to get her and keep her for himself. Similarly, Hurstwood's support for her and the chance he gives to her are also ways to impress his qualities upon her. In the same way, Carrie seizes this opportunity and uses both of them to reach her dreams. It is, then, noticeable that all of the three characters are driven by the philosophies and the economic conditions of the period, putting aside the moral values of life, namely religion and the true sense of love and marriage.

Dreiser is, in fact, naturalist, and the philosophy of Determinism is present in all his works. For him, an individual is always determined by some natural and environmental phenomena that lead him to commit errors in his life. In the age in which he has written his work, the natural and imposing phenomena that controlled all individuals' actions were business and capital. Dreiser incurred the capitalistic system and businessmen all the responsibility of what happened in the American society at that time. In this context, Louis J. Budd argues that American Naturalism means to recognize that Naturalism in itself is the consequence of urbanization and industrialism, and that Naturalism pushes further to Determinism (Budd in Pizer, 1991: 43). Within this philosophy, as the individual remains objective towards what happens to him, the taboos are broken (Ibid., pp. 42, 3). In the same context, Lehan Richard argues that naturalism is based on empiricism and attempts to be scientific, believing that history should be written and known. (Lehan in Ibid., pp. 65,66).

From these definitions and from the story of *Sister Carrie*, one can notice that Dreiser, as a naturalist, dares to break the taboos and write the history of the American society as it was in his time, setting his novels in urban spaces and presenting his characters as being guided by Industrialism and Capitalism. Moreover, he takes as his subject matter modernity, women as well as the daring subject of sex. Indeed, it is argued that Dreiser's naturalism is "often crude and formless and [...] appeared to be confined to the depiction of man as victim, it is an apt expression of late-nineteenth century American social reality." (Pizer, 1991: 10).

## **II- Sex and Morality**

The disparity between Dreiser's and Hardy's discussions of the subjects of sex in relation to morality is more apparent in their novels *Jennie Gerhardt* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* respectively. While Hardy gives sex a religious interpretation, and discusses it within the conventions of the Victorian morality, which restricts it to the institution of marriage, Dreiser tackles it out of moral conventions, and discusses it under the philosophy of Determinism. Dreiser's characters, then, have a modern conception about sex if compared to Hardy's ones, whose views are still traditional.

Considering Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, we find that the social views about sex and marriage are still discussed within moral contexts. Indeed, sex for Victorians must only exist within the institution of marriage, which is a serious and sacred bond between man and woman. If the latter lives a sexual relation outside marriage, she will be banished from society forever. As result of this, woman is only respected when she is subordinated to a husband to whom she must be faithful and respectable. As such, in the majority of cases parents sell their daughters to the first suitors who propose marriage with them with or without their will.

In this respect, John Stuart Mill, in his *The Subjection of Women* (1869), argues that "they were taken by force or regularly sold by their father to husband" (Chapter 2). He adds: "the father has the power to dispose of his daughter in marriage at his own will and pleasure

without any regard to hers” (Chapter 2). In the marriage ceremony, the bride vows to serve and respect (the vow of obedience) her husband all along her life, being thus bound to him forever. Even if the woman hates her husband, she cannot divorce, since law prevents her from any right over her children or property. In addition to all that, woman has to honor herself and her family in the bridal night by proving her chastity. In the opposite case, she will be left by her husband to look for another wife. As such, an unmarried woman has to preserve her chastity until the day of her marriage.

All these aspects of Victorian life are presented by Hardy in his *Tess of The D'Urbervilles*. Indeed, Tess has fallen in mistakes in relation to sex and marriage. These mistakes are harshly perceived by her society, which gives her the image of a fallen woman all along her life wherever she lives and whatever she does to correct them. Tess's struggle with Victorian morality begins when she goes to claim kin to the D'Urbervilles, and their eldest son Alec is attracted by her beauty. It is, in fact, her family who is behind her mistake; her parents throw her to the hands of Alec, who is waiting the adequate moment to get her. Hardy says that Alec “watched her pretty and unconscious munching through the skeins of smoke... Tess D'Urberfield did not divine, that there behind the blue narcotic haze was potentially the ‘Tragic mischief’ of her drama” (p. 47).

Tess's relation with Alec, then, comes as a result of a combination of many factors, among which we can cite her parents' will to raise to the high ranks of society, her young age and lack of awareness, as well as the greedy male desire of a Victorian man. When Alec reaches his desire with her and she becomes pregnant, he flees his shame and abandons her. Her family, especially her father, banishes her from home. So, her love affair with Alec changes the peaceful flow of her life, and entails her collapse and fall. All those who contributed to her fall left her to endure alone the consequence of her deed. Hardy says: “she looked upon herself as a figure of guilt.” (p.125).



Through the reactions of the different characters of the novel towards Tess's relation with Alec, Hardy exposes the Victorian view of morality in general. Starting by Tess, she always endures inward suffering, and feels that she is forever a fallen woman. She knows that her society will be without mercy toward her, since it glorifies chastity and purity. As she is not virgin, her society regards her as an evil that brought shame to her family and threatens the virtues of the other girls. At first, she returns home, but as her father is disturbing her all the time by referring to her shame, she decides to leave and look for another job elsewhere.

After her pregnancy, Tess finds herself obliged to change her behavior from an innocent country girl to a courageous woman, who will become a mother within few months. She is, in fact, in need of this courage to face the humiliation of her society. The strength she got distinguishes her from the other girls in her society. Instead, she decides to face the obstacles and continue her life and bear her shame alone; she considers what happened to her as a lesson that will strengthen her forever.

Tess's father, being the first cause of her mistake, is the first to banish her from his family. Moreover, Alec D'Urbervilles, the father of her coming child, leaves her and escaped his responsibility. For him, Tess is just an object, and what happened between them was just an economic exchange; Alec exchanged his help for the D'Urberfields for Tess's chastity. This exemplifies the patriarchal capitalist domination of the Victorian society. Indeed, he considers Tess as an object he bought for entertainment and he can throw when it is not needed. Gilman, in *The Man Made World, or our Andocentric Culture*, argues that, when Victorian women were married they were "not more than object whose purpose is to provide male pleasure." (Quoted in Donovan, 1992: 47). In the case of Tess, she becomes an object of male pleasure even outside the institution of marriage. She bears the weight of both single and married women in her state of economic deprivation.

When Tess gives birth to her baby, she dares to bring him with her to the field of work with a raised head. Moreover, “as she works in the fields, her infant is brought to her for nursing by others in the group who, evidently, provide nurture and care” (Morgan, 2007: 102), but at the same time, she feels ashamed of the views of people towards her. This demonstrates that her attempt to be ordinary is just a struggle in such a harsh society. After the death of her baby, she managed to rebuild her life by engaging actively in the world of work and community, and she even dares to make a serious relation with a respectable Middle Class man (Ibid.). Morgan compares such a kind of controversy to “the racially mixed marriages of the early twentieth century and, more recently, same-sex marriage.” (Ibid).

Unfortunately for her, her struggle has not brought fruits; especially in relation to marriage, as the Victorian moral principles dominates the minds of individuals; educated or not. Indeed, when she starts work at the Talbothays, she engages in a love relation with Angel Clare, who becomes foolish of her beauty of heart and body as well as her force of mind. Hardy describes this relation as being beautiful in its nature, and claims Tess and Angel as a happy and compatible couple. Angel goes further in his emotions to consider Tess as a supernatural human being, and claims her as a goddess placing her in a pedestal: “ ‘O my love, my love, why do I love you so?’ she whispered there alone; ‘for she you love is not my real self, but one in my image; the one I might have been’ ” (p. 239).

Yet, a Victorian man like Angel expects a virgin woman for his marriage as a reward for his deep love for her. Since he will give her his love and name and change her life conditions, he sees himself as her savior. Unfortunately for him, in their bridal night he comes to discover that Tess is not the woman he expects when she confesses him her mistake. Even though he comes just to confess to her his commitment of the same mistake, his patriarchal Victorian mind cannot assimilate Tess’s case; he perceives this as a trickery, and he condemns her for it. Despite her pleas to forgive her and her claim that she comes to forgive him for the

same, he answers her with attack by saying: “Forgiveness does not apply to the case... How can forgiveness meet such a grotesque prestidigitation as that?” (p. 228). From his words, she understands that she lost him forever as a man and as a lover. As such, she comes to understand that her mistake has broken her life forever; wherever she goes and whatever she does, it will not be erased, because simply she is a woman.

Angel’s reaction to her case is due to his patriarchal and religious traditional beliefs. Despite his efforts to seem modern in his behavior by separating himself from his father and trying to build himself as a free farmer, and by allowing himself to love a girl from humble origins, his mind cannot get rid of his traditions. Hardy argues that he is still “the slave to custom and conventionality.” (p. 265). In this context, Morgan claims that

Angel is himself caught, in a way, in a crisis of manliness. Unlike his female counterparts, he cannot allow his weakness to show, and he cannot be indecisive or allow himself diminished authority. He comes from a family of men. [...] His conflicts have roots in his manly pride and rigorous self-importance (in women, the equivalent ego is designated “vanity”) as also in his lack of self-awareness and self-knowledge to which he, the Victorian male, does not accord much importance. He only knows he must appear in control at all times and thus lards his talk with intellectual theory (Morgan, 2007: 108).

Angel’s sticking to his society’s traditions destroys his life unconsciously. He leaves Tess, his love, in harsh tiresome conditions, which throw her once again to the hands of Alec, who takes advantage from her need for help in destitute moments. When Angel comes back to Tess, it is too late for him, since she has offered herself another time to Alec, who lied on her by informing her that Angel will never come back. As a result, in a moment of despair, Tess hysterically murders Alec, and commits suicide at the end of the novel; turning thus from a fallen woman to a criminal.

Hardy’s portrayal of Tess is a kind of attack on the Victorian society’s understanding of the “fallen woman” and purity. Tess, according to his description, is not fallen; instead she is pure in the sense that she is naïve, faithful to her lover, not manipulative to her abuser, and she has never cheated or lied. Even in her bridal night, she has not used her sexual charms to

seduce Angel. Her commitment of murder and suicide at the end are not presented as a crime but as a sign of martyrdom, in the sense that it is committed not against Alec or herself, but against years of social suffering and oppression exercised on her by a society which is lost between tradition and modernity, using the both against women (Morgan: 2007: 103).

Hardy's characters' fall is due to the fact that they are still stick to their European moral traditions, despite their will to change. Tess is described by Hardy as having a religious education, which she applies blindly mixing it with pagan traditions. First, she has the habit of speaking with metaphor referring to the bible. When she is seduced by Alec, she is morally broken, and when she gets her illegitimate baby, she baptizes him, and when he dies she buries him with a Christian ceremony. Yet, when she is in the Talbothays, Angel finds her pagan in her thinking; the thing that he enjoys in her and he links to her innocence.

Considering Angel Clare, he always finds explanations to phenomena in a religious way. For instance, in Talbothays, he explains to Tess that even though he left his father's life as a person and Anglican, he remains a strict moralist. (Ibid. p. 97). He says:

Though I believe my poor father fears that I am one of the eternally lost for my doctrines, I am a stickler for good morals, Tess. I used to wish to be a teacher of men, and it was a great disappointment to me when I found I could not enter the Church. I loved spotlessness and hated impurity, as I do now. Whatever I think of plenary inspiration, I heartily subscribe to these words of Paul: Be thou an example –in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity (p. 224).

When he discovers in his bridal night that Tess is not pure as he thought her to be, he leaves her emotionally hearted without considering their love. He turns sore to her supplies for forgiveness, and he claims angrily that her mistake is unforgivable: “ ‘In the name of our love forgive me.’ She whispers with a day mouth ‘I forgive you for the same!’ And he did not answer, she said again ‘forgive me as you are forgiven! I forgive you Angel’, ‘yes you do but you do not forgive me’.” (p. 271).

Even Alec D'Urbervilles, who is unable to control his masculine instincts, is influenced by moral conventions. Indeed, when he leaves Tess, he is fleeing shame within his

religious and traditional society. At the end, Tess, in her way to visit Angel's family, she meets him in Emminster as a preacher being converted to Methodism. Yet, his masculine desires raise against his hypocrite religious practices when he lies on Tess by saying that her husband Angel will never come back, and takes profit from her family's economic conditions to convince her to live with him despite her status of a married woman.

In addition to the individual characters, the whole society in Hardy's novel is presented as a traditional and religious one, and this is shown through many examples in the novel; especially when Tess does not find forgiveness or pity towards her mistake, wherever she lives, even within the family for which she sacrificed her youth. Despite the fact that Victorian Britain embraced the age of development in every field of life thanks to industrialization, British people were modeled by the Church order and the social class system of which they could not get rid.

In *Jennie Gerhardt*, Dreiser revises the Victorian views about sex and marriage. He narrates the story of Jennie, who is parallel to the character of Tess in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. She is a poor girl, who undergoes the harshness of American Capitalism in the early years of the twentieth century; the thing which drives her to commit mistakes that changed her life. The mistakes she committed are especially related to chastity and morality. Indeed, Jennie's first blunder is perpetrated when she offers herself to the first man she encounters in the field of work before marriage. Dreiser, as in most of his novels about women, does not condemn his character for her deed. Instead, he narrates her story in a way that justifies it. Indeed, when Jennie offers herself to Senator Brander, she does it to reward him for his help to her poor family as well as his offer of marriage to her without considering the gap between their social classes.

In addition to his justification of Jennie's mistake by the fact that she is a victim of the harshness of her economic conditions, he presents her case in a modern way through the

different views of the novel's characters, and his view as a narrator, towards Jennie's bearing of an illegitimate child. He describes her as follows: "a girl like Jennie is a comfortable fire to the average masculine mind" (p. 76), taking it as natural and legitimate for a woman to seduce men to reach her economic desires. Indeed, when Jennie notices Senator Brander's interest in her beauty, she seizes the opportunity and accepts a love relation with him to take benefit from his fortune. The same deed is repeated by her, when she meets Lester Kane with whom she accepts to live without marriage in return for his help for her and her family.

Clare Virginia Eby, in *The Cambridge Companion to Theodor Dreiser* (2004), argues that Dreiser presents the emotional and psychological power of women as an aspect that makes them less passive: "Jennie succeeds in housing her family by unconsciously projecting a force that men find irresistible because it seems so acquiescent." (p. 150). Indeed, when Lester Kane falls in love with her, he seduces her by his material possession promising her a house for her family, because he knows what she needs at that moment: "You can take a nice home for them and furnish it in any style you please." (p. 157). In her turn, Jennie accepts his offer as she understands that "he would help them, and her mother would not be troubled anymore." (p. 157). She is convinced that by becoming Lester's mistress, "she would make a good home for her family." (Eby, 2004: 150).

Considering Jennie herself, as a female and main protagonist of Dreiser's novel, we find many events in her life that demonstrate her modernity in the field of marriage, sex and especially motherhood. Even though she is frightened and ashamed at the beginning when Senator Brander dies before their marriage, leaving her with a pregnancy, she comes to accept bravely her situation at last, and decides to give birth to her illegitimate child. Indeed, she has never made an attempt of abortion, and in her months of pregnancy, she thinks that it is a beautiful thing to be a mother even without marriage.

Dreiser presents her as a good mother, either for her child or her brothers and sisters, being the eldest girl of the family. It is this power of motherhood that provides her with courage to bear and give birth to her child. Virginia Eby claims that

Dreiser uses the traditional linking of motherhood and home to elevate Jennie, over Lester and over the society which condemns her. [...] Jennie contravenes social codes in pursuit of relationships more fundamental than social one, and Dreiser rebukes those who ostracize her. [...] He casts Jennie as a figure who embodies a quiet yet transgressive power, a force that may be temporarily suppressed but never defeated, an authority more enduring than that exercised by either her father's God or Lester's family's millions. (Eby, 2004: 151).

The love that Jennie feels towards her coming child helps her to defeat all the conventions of her society, including her father's religious beliefs and later Lester's class belonging. When the time comes to inform Lester about her daughter, she does it whatever his reaction will be. She considers that her caring for her child comes before her love to Lester.

Moreover, the members of her family and Lester understand her case and forgive her mistake. Even her father, who rejected her at the beginning, forgives her at the end, and comes to live with her and Lester, looking after her child until his death. The first one who comprehends her mistake is her brother Bass, who helps her all the time, and provides her with a new job in a town in order to forget her past in her village and start a new free life with her baby. Next to Bass, we have her mother who takes care of her child while she is working, and when she decides to live with Lester.

Another character, who is described by Dreiser as being liberated from the traditional understanding of love and sex, especially in Jennie's case, is Lester Kane. He is, according to Dreiser, the product of freedom of thought and action. He describes him as follows: "Lester Kane was the natural product of a combination of elements; religious, commercial, social, modified by that pervading atmosphere of liberty and our national life which is productive of almost uncounted freedom of thought and action." (p. 79). Although he is an important merchant, he falls in love with Jennie, a maid-servant from the lower class of society. He is

modest and generous; he considers that his position in society will not be an obstacle between him and Jennie. He does not believe in social classes nor in gender differences.

Another fact that indicates his open-mindedness is when he lives with Jennie out of marriage for many years without looking for her past. Moreover, when he knows about her baby, he becomes angry at the beginning, but he forgives her later on and he behaves like a good father to her child. When his father gives him an ultimatum to leave Jennie, he forechooses her over his father's heritage until the day when Jennie herself persuades him to leave her and marry a woman of his class, because she does not want to be the reason behind his destruction. In the years he spends far from her, he becomes an important personality, but he has never forgotten her. In the last moments of his life, he asks for her to be near him.

Within all these events, we notice that Lester and Jennie remain attached to each other, despite all the obstacles in their life. Once again Dreiser's characters are determined by their natural emotions and by the materialistic conditions of their period. The love story between Lester and Jennie is described by Dreiser differently from Hardy's description of love in his novel. Dreiser puts aside all social conventions and/or moral restraints, which are broken by the excess of materialism in the American society. Lester and Jennie believe that when love is present, marriage as a social and conventional link is not so important; a man and a woman can live a happy life without being bound by marriage.

Another character through which Dreiser presents the disparity between the American and European societies vis-à-vis love, marriage and sex is Mr. Gerhardt, Jennie's father. The latter is described by Dreiser with rigid moral conventions and strict religious beliefs, being a German Lutheran who practices his religious duties regularly. This fact urges him to reject Jennie at the beginning, when he learns about her mistake. Yet, with time, he understands that religion is in fact forgiveness and searching what lays behind human's deeds, not superficial



judgment. Religious meditation brings light to his mind, and he understands that “he might have done differently by his daughter” (p. 70).

Mr. Gerhardt does not give up his religious beliefs, but he reshapes them within the new socio-economic American context in which he is put. His religious tendencies are apparent when he says about his granddaughter Vesta whom he accepts at the end that she must be baptized in the Lutheran Church. He says: “it should be baptized.” (p. 72). Dreiser Says about Mr. Gerhardt: “All the forces of his conventional understanding of morality and his naturally sympathetic and fatherly disposition were battling within him, but, as in so many cases where average mind is concerned, convention was temporarily the victor.” (p. 70). In this passage, we understand that Mr. Gerhardt experiences a conflict of thoughts. This conflict is resolved at the end, when he moves from a traditional to a modern understanding of religion. The Capitalist world, then, determined even the religious beliefs of individuals.

From the different moral views of Dreiser’s characters about Jennie’s mistake, we deduce that morality at that time is conceived in a modern way. Their moral opening enables them to understand that life is a number of experiences and examinations in which an individual can do right things or wrong ones. Even the institution of marriage is put into question as couples can live their love happily without it. Happy life, for them, becomes more important than an unhappy marriage.

If compared to Hardy’s *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, one can notice a difference in the discussion of the theme of the fallen woman by the two authors. This difference is due to the fact that the American society perceived the notions of marriage, sex, chastity and mainly religion in a modern way if compared to the English one. Dreiser’s revision of the English understanding of religion is mainly illustrated by Jennie’s father, who is presented as a devoted Christian. Despite his rigidity, he forgives his daughter, and loves her illegitimate girl. This is due to his revising to his old religious understanding and his ability to perceive

that religion is not something static, but rather flexible. Indeed, he comes to recognize that his daughter is a victim of the economic conditions of her age, and any person can be subject to the same mistake. Analyzing Jennie's person, he realizes that she is good in her nature, and a good person has not to be punished for one mistake all along his/her life. Mr. Gerhardt's moving from the traditional understanding of religion to a modern one can also be perceived as his detachment from his European traditions to embrace the American ones. In fact, at the beginning of the novel, he is described as "a convinced and very pious German Lutheran." (p. 35). And with time, he suffers from a conflict of thoughts to be convinced at the end to have a new look to religion.

Another example in Dreiser's novel that shows a shift and modernity in religious beliefs is the Kane family; especially Lester Kane. A detailed reading of the novel shows that this family is of Irish Catholic origins, but they seem to be "Americanized", especially Lester who belongs to the second generation. Lester, as his brothers, is described to be less devout to Christianity than his parents: "Raised a Catholic, he was no longer a believer in the Divine inspiration of Catholicism." (p. 126). Indeed, he is described as a free-minded person who does not believe in the superiority of his social class: "...raised a member of the social elect, he was not altogether a believer in that innate superiority which is too often supposed to exist in those socially elect." (p. 126). Instead, Lester decides to live his life freely, and love a girl from humble origins and with a stained past. We notice, then, that the second generation of European immigrants in the U.S.A. lost their old European conventions, and started to be American, believing in modernity in every field of life. Indeed, the young characters in Dreiser's novel, such as Lester, his brothers, Tess and her brothers revised their European religious conventions, and redefined them in relation to the American context.

If we compare the case of Jennie, in *Jennie Gerhardt* to that of Tess, in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, we find that unlike Tess, who fails in her life because of moral reasons,

Jennie's failure is due to material ones. In fact, when Tess is left by her love Angel, it is because his Victorian mind cannot bear her mistake that he considers unforgivable. However, when Jennie is left by Lester, it is for material reasons. Indeed, Lester accepts to live with her despite her past, and accepts her illegitimate baby. Yet, at the moment when he falls in economic difficulties, he finds himself obliged to submit to his family's will and marry a woman of his own class to inherit his father's capital.

The difference between Dreiser and Hardy in their portrayal of the subjects of sex and morality is that Dreiser, as a naturalist and determinist, is just portraying the American reality as it is in his age. Hardy, however, claims change toward a modern society in every sphere of life. Indeed, many critics claim Hardy as a feminist, since he writes always about a Victorian society of patriarchal-capitalist domination. The latter is apparent in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* through Tess's rape, which happens in a time of harsh economic deprivation. This exemplifies the behavior of the Capitalists, who exploit poor women materially and sexually. Hardy, then, is revealing injustices within the Capitalistic system, and claiming for modernity in every sphere and for everybody. In this context, Margaret Elvy argues that "Thomas Hardy's female protagonists can be seen as characters struggling to attain coherent social and sexual identity, to become an independent body and soul, someone who can exist independently of a patriarchal culture" (Elvy, 2000, 2010: 35), and he himself argues: "What are my books but one long plea against 'man's inhumanity to man' –to woman- and to the lower animals?" (Hardy, 1904, in Pinion, 1968: 178).

Dreiser, however, shows how the American society was unconsciously driven by the flow of modernity under Capitalism, believing that it was the ideal way of living. In this context, he argues that

Here in America, by reason of an idealistic Constitution which is largely a work of art and not a workable system, you see a nation dedicated to so-called intellectual and spiritual freedom, but actually devoted with an almost bee-like industry to the gathering and storing and articulation and organization and use of purely material things (Brown, in Eby and Cassuto, 2004: 84).

In *Jennie Gerhardt*, a very important passage can present his view about his society, which was determined by the effects of business and Capitalism:

We live in an age in which the impact of materialized forces is well-nigh irresistible; the spiritual nature is overwhelmed by the shock. The tremendous and complicated development of our material civilization; the multiplicity and variety of our social forms, the depth, subtlety and sophistry of our mental cogitations, gathered, multiplied and phantasmagorically disseminated as they are by these other agencies –the railroad, the express and post-office, the telegraph, telephone, the newspaper and, in short, the whole art of printing and distributing- have so combined as to produce what may be termed a kaleidoscopic glitter, a dazzling and confusing showpiece which is more apt to weary and undo than to enlighten and strengthen the observing mind (p. 125).

From Dreiser's and Hardy's views about their societies in the turn of the twentieth century, one can notice how the Americans started to emerge as a nation which was independent politically, economically and mainly socially and culturally from the European one. Unlike England, which was still bound and governed by morality and patriarchy, America was a nation where notions of city, Materialism and liberty were predominant. Dreiser presents in his novels a modern American Dream based on wealth, success, greediness and the climbing of individuals from one social class to another; using all the means, moral or immoral to make this dream come true. Moreover, he emphasizes that this dream is possible, at least for a certain category of people who are ambitious, hard working and intelligent enough to seize the opportunities given to them in cities

Dreiser expresses the American Dream especially via the main character of his *Sister Carrie*, who knows how to seize her opportunity to make her dream of wealth and success come true, despite her status as a woman and a countryside working class individual. He shows how this girl climbs from one social class to another until she reaches the upper one, using all the means she has at hand, including her body and artistic talents. This girl challenges the patriarchal system of her society, manipulating men for her own interest and using them as means to achieve her dreams. He presents her as a liberal woman, who

succeeds to reach a social and professional status that does not necessitate the presence of men in her life.

Dreiser relates the success of his main character Carrie and the fall of some others, like Hurstwood, to Spencer's philosophy of social Darwinism that prevailed at that time, and that stipulates that in a Capitalist society, the fittest should survive and flourish, while the unfit should be allowed to die just like animals in the forest. Spencer argues: "If they are sufficiently complete to live, they do live, and it is well they should live; if they are not sufficiently complete to live, they die, and it is best they should die" (Hofstadter, 1992: 41). For Dreiser, as for Spenser, human society is not the working out of a divine plan, but it is a random process dominated by the fiercest or luckiest competitors. (Brooks, 1973: 775).

In *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser describes human beings as animals; driven by the force of desires and the instinct of survival. As it is noted at the beginning of the novel, "When a girl leaves her home at eighteen, she does one of two things. Either she falls into saving hands and becomes better, or she rapidly assumes the cosmopolitan standard of virtue and becomes worse." (pp. 3, 4). Yet, the comparison of his main character to a helpless animal in a capitalist jungle does not mean that he is a mechanical determinist. For him, her success is not only determined by her immoral behavior, but also by her artistic potentialities. Indeed, he does not judge her, nor did he do with all his characters, as being good or bad, but he just presents them as being weak or strong. They are victims of their environmental conditions and biological desires.

Hardy's characters, however, experience the changes occurring in their society and economy in an obscure way, since their society is stuck to its traditions and moral values. In *Jude the Obscure*, the author explores the life of his main character, Jude Fawley, who is switching from tradition to liberalism and vice versa, until he dies without understanding his true personality. He presents also a liberal and intellectual woman, Sue, who cannot express

her intellectual capacities, because of her social conventions, and who is, like Jude, shifting from tradition to Liberalism, and from Liberalism to tradition. The lives of these main characters is similar to the lives of all the other characters of the novel. Hardy's characters, then, are lost between tradition and modernity.

Unlike Dreiser, who focuses on the success of his main character in the city, Thomas Hardy, in *Jude the Obscure*, presents city life in the Victorian Era in relation to the main characters whose dreams and ambitions ended in tragedy. It can be argued that this is due to the oppressive social forces that prevailed. For instance, Jude cannot make his dream of education come true, because of his social class, and Sue lives the same experience due to her gender. Throughout his life, Jude dreams to attend the university of Christminster, which represents the university of Oxford. Yet, During the Victorian Era, working class people could not hope to be promoted beyond a certain level. At that time, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge remained protectors of social privilege; serving only the interest of the elite. Women also could not go beyond a certain level of academic education. Despite their intellectual capacities, they were always bound to the institution of marriage. The latter was a necessity in their life and at the same time an obstacle for their academic careers and liberal aspirations.

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### **Part III: The Urban versus the Rural Aspects of the American Dream in Selected Fiction by Francis Scott Fitzgerald and John Steinbeck**

The last part has dealt with the displacement of the American Dream from the rural to the urban space in the turn of the twentieth century. The writers of this period focused on the city as the center of their characters' dreams. In their presentation of life in the American city, they revised the English perception of urban life. Theodore Dreiser's fiction depicts American people, who repudiate tradition and embrace modernity in the city. The reading of his novels in contradistinction with those of his English contemporary Thomas Hardy has revealed discrepancy between the American and English understandings of modernity and urbanization. The English author presents characters that are rather determined by tradition than modernity. American literature portrays a society that experienced the urban life before the English one. The urban lifestyle that Americans embraced in this period would know its heyday after the First World War, during the 1920s, to collapse after the economic crash of 1929.

The writings of the 1920s and the 1930s are concerned with the issue of the American Dream to outline its limitations during those two decades. In the 1920s, American literature depicts an American Dream that, like in the turn of the century, continued to be defined in urban terms and associated with unbridled Capitalism. The authors of that decade represent American people who adopt a consumer culture, as a result of their sufferings during the First World War. The generation they represent destroys itself by itself due to the excess of expenditure, pragmatism and repudiation of hard work. In the 1930s, the urban based dream is displaced to the countryside to be defined in terms of the westward mobility towards the agrarian states. The authors of that decade portray people suffering from the results of the carelessness of their predecessors. Suggesting solutions to the socio-economic hardships of their generation, these authors revised the urban behavior, favoring the rural ideals of hard

work and social collaboration. Unfortunately, these ideals cannot function under the Great economic depression of the period.

Francis Scott Fitzgerald, in his novels, anticipated the dead-end of American Capitalism in Post-war America. In fact, the economic prosperity and the consumerist mode of life that the Americans enjoyed during the 1920s did not last long, since the Wall Street crash of 1929 dramatically put an end to this life. The crash engendered a decline in the U.S. economy and marked the beginning of one of the worst depressions in the American history, lasting all along the decade of the 1930s, and leading to disastrous social and political degradations. John Steinbeck depicts, in his fiction, the life of Americans under the effects of the Great Depression. He focuses on Capitalism as the main reason behind the depression, and suggests a remedy in the rural West instead of the Urban East.

Having experienced the difficulties of the Great Depression, Steinbeck could not find better than Fitzgerald's fiction to create a contrast to the harsh suffering undergone by the American people in the 1930s. His return to Fitzgerald's narratives of the "Jazz Age" took the form of a revisionary discourse, whereby he creates a new America, defined not by the superficial manners of consumerist city-dwellers, but by the toil and incessant quest of a peasant class, bearing the doom of America during the Depression. For that, Steinbeck embarked on creating a narrative read by most critics as "epic", but which, in fact, is constructed by revisiting similar aspects in the fiction of Scott Fitzgerald, the proclaimed chronicler of the "Roaring Twenties".

Steinbeck deals with the same issues as those tackled by Fitzgerald, but in different social and economic contexts and from different perspectives. In the two authors' works, the allegorical and historical accounts of the American Dream in the 1920s and 1930s are explored in relation to some important issues, such as family building, gender roles, social class antagonism and the values of loneliness and companionship for individuals. Having

lived in the same historical period and achieved literary success at the same time, they read each other's fiction. In his misreading of Fitzgerald, Steinbeck does not question his importance and talent as a writer but grapples with the lifestyle he represents in his fiction. Brian Railsback and Michael Meyer, in *A John Steinbeck Encyclopedia*, argue that in *America and Americans*, Steinbeck counts *The Great Gatsby* among the great works of American literature but denies to be influenced by him. His anxiety of influence towards the other writer is apparent in a 1949 letter, in which he claims that he is not among the many American writers Fitzgerald influenced (Railsback and Meyer, 2006: 112).

This part examines the American Dream in the American fiction of the inter-war decades of the twentieth century to underline revisionary and displacing principles in the writings of John Steinbeck in relation to those of Francis Scott Fitzgerald. The literature of the latter underscores the dream initiated by the writers of the turn of the century and provides an instance of how Steinbeck displaces this dream to the rural spaces of the West by revising the socio-economic life presented by his predecessor. In his fiction, John Steinbeck considers the extravagant way of life portrayed by Fitzgerald the reason behind the Great Depression of the 1930s. The American Dream, based on the excess of material expenditure in the American great cities of the East, is therefore revised to fit with the opportunities provided by the agricultural West in that period.

The analysis of the revisionary and displaced meanings and functions of the American Dream in the inter-war period endeavors to show how Steinbeck and Fitzgerald, as the most representative voices of their decades, give opposing images about American urban and rural lives in their fiction through revising ideological principles, social and even gender roles in the 1920s and 1930s. This is illustrated in the way life in the 1920s is presented by Fitzgerald in his fiction, and by the manner in which its values are revised by Steinbeck who represents the social structures of the 1930s in his writings. The works selected for analysis are

Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922) and *The Great Gatsby* (1925) on the one hand, and Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) on the other hand.

This part highlights the two authors' visions about the American Dream, drawing a comparison between their tackling of parallel issues in their works. The issues are discussed in three chapters, the first of which explores the allegory and history of the American Dream in the works of the two authors. The second one focuses mainly on the ethics of work and the value of companionship in relation to the American Dream as dealt with by the two writers. The last chapter inquires into Fitzgerald's and Steinbeck's portrayal of the institution of marriage and gender roles in the context of the American Dream.

**- Background : American Life in the Inter-War period: From Hedonism to Depression**

During the inter-war period of the twentieth century, especially during the 1920s, American people enjoyed the fruits of their Industrial Revolution, which were mainly manifested in mass production and mass consumption. They moved to the large cities more than before to invest in different industries, legal or illegal, and to enjoy an urban life of decadence there far from any moral restriction. Unfortunately, this mode of life did not last for a long time and came to its end due to the economic crash of 1929, which is considered to be the result of the extravagant way of living and the irresponsible investments based on extreme Capitalism. As a result, Americans found themselves obliged to adopt a new way of life in the 1930s and revise their social and economic principles. To heal the crisis, they made appeal to agriculture (agribusiness), revised their urban principles by coming back to their traditional rural ones, and remedied the excess of Capitalism and Individualism by adopting some principles of Socialism and Collectivism.

During the 1920s, American factories manufactured various goods that made the life of the Americans easier. As a result, inventors enjoyed their inventions and worked hard to develop them. Henry Ford, for instance, in his *My Life and Work* (1922), states:

The natural thing to do is to work-to recognize that prosperity and happiness can be obtained only through honest effort [...] I take it for granted that we must work. All that we have done comes as the result of a certain insistence that since we must work it is better to work intelligently and forehandedly; that the better we do our work the better off we shall be. All of which I conceive to be merely elemental common sense. (Ford, 1922: 3).

Some thinkers believe that the spirit of invention and hard work, which were behind the development which characterized the 1920s, finds its basis in the frontier experience. They agree with Frederick Jackson Turner, who says that “the American Frontier may not be the key to American development, but it is certainly one major factor.” (Turner, 1893). Indeed, one cannot understand the socioeconomic life of the 1920s without special reference to the nineteenth century, when the Eastern shores of the United States became overpopulated. This urged many Americans to move to the Western regions, having in their minds the hope of making their ancestors’ dream come true through hard work and self-reliance, which would be manifested in cultivating the vast fertile lands of this region.

Once there, they found that life was not as prosperous as it used to be in the East. Instead of thinking about ways to achieve the wealth they dreamed about, they found themselves looking for ways to overcome nature and its hardships. Thus, the primitiveness of the West led many settlers to come back to the industrialized East during the twentieth century. There, they enjoyed the tremendous business and urban development, which characterized this part of America, as well as the development in the transportation system and electrical industry, which made life more comfortable and more enjoyable. Returning to the Urban East, the westerners armed themselves with a strong determination for success through hard work. However, the feverish desire which led many people to the East to enjoy comfort by all means led to the loss of the old established morals and ideals of the founding

fathers. This phenomenon spread to characterize the whole nation. In fact, the Western values of equality of opportunity, self reliance, competition and hard work were overshadowed by the Eastern materialism. It was the unpleasant price to pay for enjoying the happiness of wealth.

It is worth noting that the 1920s was assigned such names as Golden Twenties and Roaring Twenties. It was called so because of the economic boom and business development. Since people at that time earned large sums of money, they spent it in what suited them not in what they needed. Consequently, enjoying time in cinemas and restaurants was becoming the fashion of the age. Moreover, as the industry of cars boosted, cars were not only means of transportation, but means of display. Jean Claude Bernard's statement, "own a car worthy of yourself and your position in life" (Bernard, 1991: 210) was a prevailing slogan.

The inventions of the 1920s had also facilitated the daily tasks of many Americans, who gained free time that they had to fill in. Thus, they turned their attention to art and fashion. In the 1920s, the Jazz music was in its heyday to the point that this decade was also referred to as the Jazz Age. The latter witnessed also a mass production of films, which filled the cinema screens of the United States. (O'Callaghan, 2002: 94). Editor Rodney P. Carlisle argues in his book entitled *Day by Day: the Twenties* (2008), that during the 1920s

the movies flourished, generating a shared national culture that celebrated celebrities. Hollywood became adept at creating such figures, and other communities shared in the effort ... that evolved into the Miss America pageant [...] The movies of the era provided a cheap and thrilling form of entertainment. (Carlisle, 2008: 13).

In addition to its being a way of entertainment, cinema unified the American culture under a modern mode of life. Movie producers dared to show exaggerated scenes of love, sex and bootlegging, the thing which led to the emergence of new phenomena in the American society. Indeed, being disillusioned by the war, "people wanted to have fun, to enjoy mass produced automobiles, the movies, the new born radio, Jazz, bootleg liquor in the speakeasies and sex." (White, 1922, in Bernard, 1991: 208). All the preceding hedonism constituted the

nuance of the American Dream at that time. In fact, many people, driven by the nice image drawn of America by its movies, emigrated there to fulfill this dream. The First Great Internal Migration took place in this period. During it, large groups of Americans left the rural life of the South and West for Urban areas, dreaming of happier and easier life in the Eastern cities.

City life, however, was not easy and happy for everybody. In addition to the fact that the 1920s was coined as a booming decade in all the fields, it knew many problems, mainly social ones. What is the most noticeable is the wide gap between the class of entrepreneurs and the working class, which faced hardships even to secure a living. Working people were watching the beautiful life of the period, but they did not live it. This is why many of them wanted to rise to the Middle Class of entrepreneurs by all means. So, they entered in different illegal businesses, such as bootlegging and wild speculation in stocks.

The most dangerous illegal phenomenon that spread among Americans at that time was the selling and buying of liquor, and the most famous example of the breaking of laws was the violation of the eighteenth amendment, which forbade the making and selling of liquor. Those who dared to break the amendment were called bootleggers, who were coined so, because they used to conceal flasks or illicit liquor in boot tops. (O'Callaghan, 2002: 95). Their speakeasies run day and night and remained off limits to liquor. They bribed the police and members of administration so as not to interfere in their affairs. Lloyd Morris argues that

behind the sparkling front of Manhattan's gay night life, resonant with Jazz and running with liquor, a network of corruption spread over New York. Its citizens were in open rebellion against prohibition. They wanted liquor; they condoned the illegal practices which assured a wet metropolis. The effect was to make crime profitable on a scale never before conceived. (Morris, 1951: 342).

So, according to Morris, Americans during the 1920s became more thirsty for liquor than before, the thing which urged them to use all means to secure it, crime included.

The new culture that developed in this decade engendered changes at the social and family levels. Traditional gender roles were challenged, and the role of women, which was

supposed to be the protection of traditions and security in society, turned to be the encouragement of crime and involvement in all kinds of corruption. Women, having the same degree of liberty as men, enjoyed life in the saloons and night clubs and neglected their homes and children, who were brought up far from their mothers and fathers. The most familiar symbol of the “Roaring Twenties” was the flapper, a young woman with bobbed hair and short skirt, who drank, smoked and was more sexually “free” than the previous generations.

American movies and literature during the 1920s portrayed well the American life at that time. In fact, many films, like Howard Hawks’s *Scarface* (1932), and novels like F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* (1925) have successfully pictured life during the twenties, revealing the flappers, jazz, speakeasies, and the gangsters of the era. Many of those writers and artists described the period as one of the most glamorous and thrilling in modern American history. Fitzgerald, for instance, described it as an era defined by “what was fashionable and what was fun” (Fitzgerald, 1931: 2).

Unfortunately, the life of hedonism that Americans enjoyed during the 1920s could not go beyond that decade. Their irresponsible economic investments engendered the great economic crash that ruined the banking system in 1929. As a result, America experienced the worst depression in its history in the 1930s, either at the economic or social levels. Neither free market nor federal government were able to restore the prosperity of the 1920s. Unemployment, poverty, hunger and homelessness spread in the major cities of America (Krout and Rice, 1977: 159).

Economically speaking, the economic crash of 1929 shattered the banking system, leading to heavy impacts on factories and farms. Factories and mines were shut and thousands of farms were sold to pay debts (Tindall and Shi, 2004: 894). Business houses were closed, factories were shut, banks were ruined, and even foreign trade had declined into a great extent. As a result, unemployment soared from 5 million in 1930 to 13 million in 1932.



(Reeves, 2000: 101). As a result, American people were thrown into the dark period of the Great Depression of the 1930s, along which they faced severe moments at the social level. As people became homeless and jobless, famine spread all over the country and became a real threat. It was the first time in the American history that the breadlines and soupkitchen appeared permitting people small parts of food to avoid starvation.

The effects of the Great Depression were not only apparent in cities, but spread to the agrarian lands and destroyed the lives of the farmers. As business could not make an end to the depression, businessmen and government sought recovery in the western agriculture, trying to save some money by obliging the tenant farmers to pay rents to occupy their own properties. As misery reached the whole nation, these farmers were not able to pay these rents, and found themselves obliged to leave their houses and farms. In addition to this, they were ill equipped for other employments, as their life was all centred in their farms. So, the only solution for them was to migrate further westward to the southern cities, especially California to establish there a new farming activity in agribusiness. (Vicek, 2000: 08).

The Great Depression was not the only reason behind the Western farmers' migration to California. They witnessed another harsh natural phenomenon known as "The Dust Bowl", a severe drought caused by a violent wind and dust storms which destroyed their crops. Within this situation, they had no choice but leaving their farms to try their chances elsewhere. So, the wave of migration increased. In their way to California, the farmers, labelled "Okies", transformed their tracks and cars into homes and took Route 66 that would lead them to the land of their dreams. Along this route, they underwent several difficulties and dehumanising conditions.

As a result, they found no choice but forgetting about the Individualism of their previous life in the 1920s and acting as one single body to face the hardships of their trip and life in California. At the level of family, people were in need of the contribution of all the members of the family, men and women, to maintain a living. At the level of society, the farmers' families

had to help each other in moments of distress. So, they knew a coming back to the old values of the preservation of the family and cooperation among the members of society, because they came to understand that only the sense of community could help them to make advances in their life. From this, one can understand that these people started to give up some characteristics of Capitalism, as pragmatism and excess of Individualism, that they inherited from the 1920s to adopt some traits of Socialism and Communism to heal their crisis.

It is, then, noticeable that The Great Depression changed the American society's view towards life. Men and women found themselves face to face with a reversal in their roles either within their families or at the social level. Men, who perceived themselves as breadwinners, felt as if they were denigrated when they lost their jobs, because they couldn't take care of their families. Women, on the other hand, saw their roles in the household and outside enhanced, as life hardships considerably increased and the luxuries of the 1920s could not be reached. As a result, both genders were obliged to work hand in hand to sustain their families. So, gender roles during the 1930s were completely different comparing to the 1920s, being once again influenced by the socio-economic conditions, which turned from luxury to misery.

## **Chapter I: The American Dream between History and Allegory in Fitzgerald's and Steinbeck's Selected Fiction**

Reading Fitzgerald's and Steinbeck's novels, one can notice that they all contain historical facts and allegorical accounts about the American Dream. These accounts represent two decades that historians classified within the same epoch referred to as "the inter-war period", the period between the First and Second World Wars. What is noticeable is that within the same period, all principles were revised, moving from urban values to rural ones, from modernism to tradition, and from Individualism to Collectivism, because of the collapse that happened to the American economy at the end of the decade of the 1920s. As the American Dream is always subject to change whenever the socio-economic conditions change, its principles were also revised in the 1930s if compared to the 1920s.

### **I- American Dream as History**

The majority of scholars agree that Fitzgerald's novels are evocative work that offer insightful views of the American society in the 1920s. They deal with the jazz-age and with the issue of the increasing materialism and cynicism. For instance, Kirk Curnutt, in *The Cambridge Introduction to F. Scott Fitzgerald*, argues that "Part of the interest of his work derives from the fact that the mad, gin-drinking, morally and spiritually bankrupt men and women he wrote about led lives that closely resembled his own." (Curnutt, 1964: vii). Like his characters, Fitzgerald experienced the American Dream that led many Americans in the 1920s to move from the American rural West to the urban East to enjoy its business triumph and high consumerism. He and his wife led years of irresponsible life with much time spent without working, enjoying the modern life of pleasure brought by alcoholism and decadence, the thing which led to the decline of their social, moral and familial life.

In the *Great Gatsby*, the relation between the American history and the American Dream during the 1920s is more emphasized and is represented mainly by the character of

Gatsby. The latter, like Nick Carraway, is a Midwesterner; Nick is from Minnesota and Gatsby is from North Dakota. Like all the Westerners, Gatsby came to New York armed with hard work and energy to achieve great wealth in the East. Yet, he experiences the Eastern Dream deeper than Nick and all the other characters of the novel. It is through Gatsby that the Eastern experience in the 1920s is well portrayed by Fitzgerald and well understood by his character Nick. Since his childhood, Gatsby possesses the sense of optimism of a westerner, and when he rises to riches, he rises from nothing except his dream. Unlike Nick's family, Gatsby's parents are unsuccessful farmers. This is why he repudiated them from his childhood.

As Gatsby engages to realize his dream by his simplicity of heart, goodness and high sensitivity, Fitzgerald associates him with the Midwest. When he realizes great wealth, he is obliged to hide his identity by claiming himself a "son of god" (p. 98) or "Mr. nobody from nowhere". (p. 123). Doing so, Gatsby stands as a myth in relation to American history and the Mid-West. As "a son of god", he is comparable to the Greek Zeus, a rich and powerful god in the sky. His unrealistic vision of Daisy as a perfect woman is also similar to Zeus's unrealistic image of Athena. The myth of success that Gatsby represents is, in fact, set in the Mid-west not in the East. His story is comparable to that Icarus, who used the wax wings made by his father to escape the prison of Crete and reach the light of the sun, which melted his wings and led to his early death. Like Icarus, Gatsby adopts ancestral western values of Dan Cody to escape poverty and reach the light of Daisy, who burned him and led to his early death.

In addition to his mythic representation of the Mid-west, Gatsby always lies when he is asked about his past and how he gained his wealth:

I'll tell you God's truth. His right hand suddenly ordered divine retribution to stand by. I am the son of some wealthy people in the Middle West –all dead now. I was brought up in America but educated at Oxford, because all my ancestors have been

educated there for many years. It is a family tradition [...] My family all died and I came into a good deal of Money (p. 71).

We understand from this that he is not ashamed of his Western origins, but of his humble family. The Mid-west remains the myth of success in Gatsby's and Fitzgerald's eyes, and in the eyes of all Americans. Here, a return to the Jeffersonian dream of agrarian America is noticeable. In fact, Jefferson's ideology, which focuses on the working of land as a way that makes the American wealth last is favored, as the industrial East ends in a tragedy in the American economy. Agrarianism stresses the superiority of the rural life over the urban one, which destroys independence and dignity and fosters vice and weakness. In his words, Jefferson considers "those who labor in the earth [...] the chosen people of God" and "corruption of morals [...] is the mark set on those, who not looking up to heaven, to their own soil." (Jefferson, 1781, reported by Voelker, 2006: 18). Fitzgerald, in his description of Gatsby, notes that all what is good in his person is inherited from his western origins, and the corruption of his morals is the result of his contact with the urban industrial East.

Fitzgerald informs the reader that Gatsby was just a young man when he adopted the schedule of Hoppalong Cossidy as a plan of work. This schedule is traced to Benjamin Franklin's thirteen virtues of self-improvement; ordering to "lose no time, be always employed in useful and cut off all unnecessary actions." (Dan piper, 1970: 204). Similarly, Cossidy orders "no wasting time at shafters" and "read one improving book per week." (p. 180). Moreover, Benjamin Franklin writes "at five o'clock get-up", and Gatsby at six o'clock, leaves bed, because as a frontiersman, he believes that self-improvement must be achieved. To be practical in life, he studied electricity. So, Fitzgerald has "made Gatsby a kind of Benjamin Franklin, a frontiersman without a frontier." (Lehan, 1969: 116).

In *The Great Gatsby*, Dan Cody's name evokes two frontiersmen of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The first is Daniel Boone (1734-1820), who is an American pioneer who

opened a road through the Appalachian Mountains in 1770, and the second is Frederick Cody (1846-1917), a Civil War soldier, who was known for his skill in hunting buffalo and “Wild West Show”. Fitzgerald, by his reference to these two men, praises the Frontier experience just like Frederick Jackson Turner, who claims that all the history of America is situated in its Western part, and who stresses the importance of the pioneer’s character, a self-made man free in choosing his way of living.

In his interpretation of the American past, Turner recognizes, in his “Frontier Thesis” explained in his paper “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” (1893), the interaction of politics, economics, culture and geography, which constitute the multicausal model of history. In this sense, American continent, according to him, is unique with its frontier history, as the American character is shaped by the conditions he experienced in the Western frontier, developing from primitive life as the explorer, trapper and trader, maturing through agriculture, and reaching finally the complexity of city and factory. This development is reached through self-reliance, mobility, Individualism, the spirit of inventiveness and Materialism. He concludes that “civilization in America has followed the arteries made by geology [...] until at last the slender paths of aboriginal intercourse have been broadened and interwoven into the complex mazes of modern commercial lines.” (Turner, 1893: 4). In *The Great Gatsby*, Gatsby followed the same development that Turner explained in his thesis, living the frontier experience, moving through self-reliance, mobility, Individualism and Materialism to reach his present success in the city. It can be arguable, then, that the history of the country is personified in the character of Gatsby.

By the description that Fitzgerald gives to Gatsby, he makes a link between him and the American history. He is “devolved to the success maxims of the Benjamin Franklin tradition” (Watkins, in Lehan, 1969: 201), but when he gets rich he makes a break with his

traditions and origins. The American civilization, in fact, underwent the same process in its history. It has grown into the top thanks to the ideals of its founding fathers, and when it reached its height of success, it made a break with its past by adopting new ideals of Materialism, emulation and conspicuous consumption, the thing which led to its decline at the end of the decade of the 1920s just like Gatsby's tragic death at the end of the novel.

Gatsby has not only given up his family, but all his past and ideals as a Midwesterner. Once in North Dakota, he used all the means to achieve success, but in vain. He comes to the conclusion that the virtuous ideals of the West are not adequate for modern life (Elbe, 1977: 96). As a result, he takes his road to New York and engaged in an immoral business; bootlegging, putting aside all his Western virtues. He does not find something wrong in the business he is performing, because the most important for him is to raise to the upper class of society, and to get a new identity of a successful man to regain his love Daisy that he lost because of his unsuccessful past. Money, for him, is just a means to an end. His dream, then, is not guided by materialistic ambitions, as Eastern people, but rather by emotions. He has taken his dream of regaining his love as a challenge and an act of heroism.

In fact, the only two things that Gatsby wants to keep from his past is his love to Daisy and his Platonic conception of himself, when he is mentored by Dan Cody. From the conversations he takes with Gatsby, Nick comes to understand that his dream is a confirmation of an identity that he lost when he lost his love because of his humble past. He says, "He talked a lot about the past, and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy." (p. 110). To do so, Gatsby is in need of an ideal identity that he can only constitute by adopting Cody's instructions:

Cody's largesse serves the same purpose as Daisy's affection: both confirm the "instinct toward glory" that compels Gatsby to transform himself into a mysterious man of wealth, substantiating for him "the unreality of [his] reality" as a child of "shiftless and unsuccessful farm people." Because "his imagination never really

accept [s his parents] as his parents at all.” (98), he requires someone from the privileged world to which he aspires to confirm that “the vague contour of Jay Gatsby has fill [ed] out to substantiality of a man.” (101) (Curnutt, 1964: 59).

Gatsby wants to construct an unreal future, which remains an ideal dream for himself, to regain his Daisy. It is from this dream that his worship of money and success begins, and Fitzgerald develops a kind of respect for it via Nick’s sympathy with Gatsby. The latter, in the Eastern city, does not find an alternative that can help him to reach his dream. This is why he resorts to bootleg business. He finds himself absorbed by the materialistic atmosphere in which he is plunged, because a person is only valued if he/she possesses money. Women, being lured by the modern life of leisure and mass-consumerism, are only interested in successful men, like Tom Buchanan. So, Gatsby comes to understand Daisy’s longing for the latter, and he does everything to regain her as quickly as possible.

From Fitzgerald’s glorification of the West and Nick’s sympathy with Gatsby, we can deduce the author’s ambivalence towards the latter. He is, in fact, against his repudiation of his western ideals, but at the same time, he justifies his longing for the Eastern artificial and materialistic life. The reason is perhaps due to the fact that as a frontiersman, Fitzgerald, like his characters Gatsby and Nick, is brought to the New York city by the same ambition; having an idea about the East as a place of Business triumph. While there, however, they find themselves face to face with a materialistic atmosphere that Nick can overcome by his noble origins, but Gatsby cannot without building a social status similar to them. In fact, Nick, the voice of Fitzgerald in the novel, is disillusioned by the materialistic mood that link people to each other in the East.

For the Easterners, material possessions must be visible. This is why Gatsby’s house “was a factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy...” (p. 11). It is built in this way to impress everyone who sees it. This is why Gatsby organizes parties to which people go to



enjoy the luxurious food and drinking offered to them. His expenditure of large sums of money in these parties is just a means to show what Torstein Veblen calls in his *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) “conspicuous leisure”, which is characterized by its conspicuous consumption and emulation. This means that the dream that Gatsby fulfilled in the present moment is based on artificial and corruptive values.

While the American Dream in Fitzgerald’s novels is reflective of the American history of the 1920s, in Steinbeck’s fiction, the American Dream is reflective of the history of the 1930s; either at social, economic or political levels. The majority of his characters represent real individuals whose dreams are determined by the historical events that hindered their daily life during this decade of socio-economic hardships. In fact, most of critics, agree that John Steinbeck’s novels, particularly *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), describe accurately the American life during the 1930s, the decade of the Great Depression. While Fitzgerald’s works show the importance of urban life during the twenties, Steinbeck’s ones put apart this urban space, which, according to him, laid behind the depression that characterized the decade of the 1930s. In his analysis of the American life during this decade, Steinbeck focuses on the daily life of the agricultural workers, because for him, hope is put in the values of this category of people to restore the American Dream that failed due to the artificial values of the 1920s’ urban life. Moreover, the setting of his novels is based in the Western part of America and in its rural space. Even in the moments of depression, his characters take their way further to the Western city of California instead of coming back to the East as Fitzgerald’s characters. It seems that Steinbeck lost hope in the Eastern cities, and revises the 1920s’ generation’s understanding of success, which is based in these areas.

George Henderson argues that Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) stands for a regionalist and social realist text written in an interpretive way. According to him, the author

brings real facts about the rural socio-political conditions of the working class's life in the Western vast American lands that underwent great and devastating changes due to economic and natural phenomena. Thus, he adds that "*The Grapes of Wrath* did fulfill a role as a regionalist and social realist interpretive text. The novel stands as a document of social change." (Henderson, 1989: 4). It is, then, a means to critique the political power behind the situation of the working class in the West that is in a perpetual struggle against the upper class of businessmen, who confiscated their unique source of living, their lands.

In the same context, Harold Bloom states that rereading Steinbeck's novels as *The Grapes of Wrath* is a valuable experience from an aesthetic as well as an historical perspective. He considers that the novel is an American epic, and that "what remains wholly Steinbeck's own in *The Grapes of Wrath* is the book's stance towards America." (Bloom, 2007: 171). It is, then, an American myth, presenting new realities about America and its capitalist system, and suggesting new solutions to the problems engendered by the latter.

Steinbeck suggests that for Americans to overcome the Great Depression, they have to start by revising their personalities that are corrupted by the capitalist system. Some of the novel's critics consider his characters as examples of individuals, who succeeded to survive the hardships of the depression thanks to the change they have undergone in their inner selves. Kenneth Burke and Peter Lisca, in their approach to the novel, focus on Steinbeck's characters, who are submitted to change in their behavior due to the hardships of the Great Depression. They point out that in *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), the characters are highly influenced by the socio-economic conditions in which they are living, the fact that forged their selfness. They claim that "most of the characters derive their role, which is to say their personality, purely from their relationship to the basic situation." (Burk and Lisca, 1957: 736).

The situation to which Steinbeck refers in *The Grapes of Wrath* is brought from a social reality. This is why the solution he suggests can have an influence on any American who

reads the book. The majority of the events reported by Steinbeck are events he witnessed when he was working as a journalist and infiltrating in the migrant farmers' camps while they traveled from Oklahoma to California to fulfill their dream of working in agribusiness. The events he reports turn around the migrant farmers, Okies, who desperately look for solutions to overcome misery, homelessness and despair. In his narrative, Steinbeck has never shown sympathy towards the bankers or the landowners. He rather sympathizes with these farmers whose rights are seized by the greedy capitalists, who turned their attention to the Western farms after the fall of their business in the Eastern cities.

Steinbeck's characters give a different meaning to the American Dream if compared to Fitzgerald's ones. Being devastated by the socio-economic conditions in their region, they found themselves obliged to leave westward to California to practice any activity related to agriculture. Their movement from Oklahoma to California in *The Grapes of Wrath* is not a choice but an obligation. They are presented as being stuck to their land in Oklahoma, and all their dream is centered there. Their land is seen as part of their identity, and their region is seen as their country as a whole. Leaving elsewhere, then, means for them leaving the American nation, because it will lead to the loss of their identity. This is shown in the novel by Grandpa who expresses his refusal of leaving his land, when the farmers are discussing their will to leave to California: "This is my country", he says, "I belong here. An' I don't give a goddamn if they's oranges an' grapes crowdin' a fella outa bed even. I ain't a-goin'. This country ain't no good, but it's my country. No, you all go ahead. I'll jus' stay right here where I Belong." (p. 152). This means that all the happy dreams about which they are talking do not attract him; he prefers his land with its misery than a luxurious life elsewhere.

Grandpa's resistance against dislocation is, in fact, the position of everyone in the novel. Each one of them tries to avoid it in his/her own way. At the beginning, they express

their resistance against the landowners and the bankers, who come to take their lands by force, explaining to them that they are ready to die to defend their possessions:

Sure, cried the tenant men, but it's our land. We measured it and broke it up. We were born on it, and we got killed on it, died on it. Even if it's no good, it's still ours. That what makes it ours –being born on it, working it, dying on it. That makes ownership, not a paper with numbers on it (p. 45).

So, these farmers are tied to their land by their blood and flesh. For them, this is enough to consider it as their own, which means that they are not in need to use any document to claim it as a possession as the landowners do. This marks the naivety and the traditional way of thinking of these western people, who have forgotten to own their lands officially.

In this context, George Henderson argues that “Steinbeck was very keen on establishing the notion that an emotional relationship to land depends on close physical contact with the soil.” (Henderson, 1989/1990: 218). This is shown in the novel in many passages and fragments from its different chapters. To give meaning and strength to this relationship, Steinbeck makes a contrast between a farmer and what he calls machine man to show how their relation to the land is perceived differently. He says:

The man who is ... walking on the earth, turning his plow point for a stone, dropping his handles to slide over an outcropping, kneeling in the earth to eat his lunch; that man who is more than his elements knows the land that is more than an its analysis. But the machine man, driving a dead tractor on land he does not know and love, understands only chemistry; and he is contemptuous of the land and of himself. When the corrugated iron doors are shut, he goes home, and his home is not the land (p. 158, quoted in Ibid.).

Unfortunately for these farmers, despite this closer relationship they established with their land and all the efforts they make to keep it, they find themselves under economic and natural forces toward which they have no control. In fact, when storms of dust hit heavily the great plains of Oklahoma, a huge change takes place in the environment; turning a fertile and fruitful land to a barren wasteland. Steinbeck, in his novel, portrays vividly the harshness and the danger of this natural disaster to which he associates the “Red” color:

TO THE RED COUNTRY and part of the grey country of Oklahoma, the last rains came gently, and they did not cut the scarred earth [...] The clouds appeared, and went away, and in a while they did not try anymore [...] The weeds frayed and edged back towards their roots. The air was thin and the sky more pale; and every day the earth paled. Men and women huddled in their houses, and they tied handkerchiefs over their noses when they went out, and wore goggles to protect their eyes (p. 20).

These lines reveal how people are no longer leading a normal life after the terrible Dust Bowl that affected nature and people. The coming pages of the novel show that these people's suffering do not stop at this natural catastrophe; the serious catastrophe is caused by the economic outcomes of the Great Depression and greedy Capitalism.

When the banks and landowners come to claim their repossession of the lands and to ask the farmers to pay the loans, many families are unable to pay them, and the landowners decide to replace this great number of workforce by machines in order to make more profits in a short period of time by turning the lands into cotton fields. Steinbeck describes the transformation that happened to the farms in the following lines:

The Reverend Casy and young Tom stood on the hill and looked down on the Joad place. The small unpainted house was mashed at one corner, and it had been pushed off its foundations so that it slumped at an angle, its blind front windows pointing at a spot of sky well above the horizon. The fences were gone and the cotton grew in the dooryard and up against the house, and the cotton grew close against it... They walked toward the concrete well-cap, walked through cotton plants to get to it, and the bolls were forming on the cotton, and the land was cultivated (pp. 54, 55).

Farmers' families are, thus, forced to vacate their lands and abandon their houses, and to become "migrants" instead of "farmers", "an army made up of penniless unemployed" (p. 22) or "squatters" (p. 23), as Steinbeck calls them. The owners of the means of production are, then, considered by Steinbeck as "monsters", who are determined to destroy what has been left from the already ruined life of these poor farmers. In the voice of Tom, he narrates how these men dispossessed the farmers of their land; he says:

Well, the guy that come aroun' talked nice and pie. "You ought to get off. It ain't my fault." "Well," I say, "whose fault is it? I'll go an' I'll nut the fella." "It's the Shawnee Lan' an' Cattle company. I just got orders." "Who's the Shawnee Lan' an' Cattle

Company?" "It ain't nobody. It's a company." Got a fella crazy. There wasn't nobody you could lay for (p. 65).

After these events, the farmers' dream which centered in their lands is destroyed, and Oklahoma is no more the place of their expectations or even normal life. As such, the only way for them to survive is to build elsewhere another dream that will displace the ancestral one. They have no alternative than giving up their life as farmers and adopt another life as ordinary workers or laborers. When Pa Joad hears about opportunities of work in California, all the members of his family take the decision to travel along Route 66, "The mother road, the road of flight" (p. 24), as it is called by Steinbeck, along to the West in order to probe the new land. This road that the Joads have taken is the destination of many other families that find themselves in the same situation. In the novel, Steinbeck says about it that

66 is the path of a people in flight, refugees from dust and shrinking land, from the thunder of tractors and shrinking ownership, from the desert's slow northward invasion, from the twisting winds that howl up out of Texas, from the floods that bring no richness to the land and steal what little richness is there (p. 25).

From this quotation, one may understand that these people, who take their road westward are, in fact, fleeing the Capitalist system that came from the East to destroy what they have built.

Route 66 in the period of the Great Depression was considered to be the myth that opened the road to the promised land. Many people considered it as an opportunity that would lead them to success in California. It was the road of their dreams for a better life. The mythic aspect of the road rises from the fact that it makes a link between the conquest of the West, the Great Depression and the American Dream. The history of the Route goes back to the mid-nineteenth century, the time of gold rush and the conquest of the West. In this time, American settlers crossed this road to reach California, looking for gold and wealth, and they constructed along it railroads as means of transportation. In the twentieth century, especially during the 1920s, with the advent of the automobile, the road opened and named officially in 1926 (Weiser, 2018). In the 1930s, the Great Depression pushed many farmers in the same

direction taken by the nineteenth century explorers of the West towards California, dreaming of a better way of living. The mythic aspect of the road, which rises from the collective dream of the migrants, is, in fact, the result of the myth of the West and the frontier.

While travelling along this route to California, the farmers' dream is based on the new kind of farming established in their region. From the beginning, they know that industrialized farming is set in all the Western region, and they have to find a way to cope with it. Their dream is, in fact, not different from that of the new rural order established by the landowners in their lands. Henderson argues that "it was such a scheme that the Joads and others dreamed of reproducing in their exile." (Henderson, 1989/1990: 218). In the novel, Ma Joad expresses overtly her dream of having her own house and land in Claifornia, when she acknowledges that land there is, after all, better than their Oklahoma farmland. She says:

... But I like to think how nice it's gonna be, maybe, in California. Never cold. An' fruit ever' place, an' people just bein' in the nicest places, little white houses in among the orange trees. I wonder –that is, if we all get jobs an' all work- maybe we can get one of them little white houses (p. 124).

Then, getting a job in California is not their ultimate dream; it is just a way that will permit them to establish their own agribusiness.

Despite the farmers' absorption to this new economic system, they remain stuck to their western values of hard work and family life. Their dream remains centered in the West, and hard work is the only way that can make it true. This proves that people in the 1930s started to change their attitude toward Capitalism and the American Dream in general, the thing which distinguishes them from the national character of the 1920s. Indeed, the dream of Steinbeck's characters is different from that of Fitzgerald's ones. Unlike the latter who turned their attention to the urbanized and capitalist East as the land of their dreams, the former traveled further West to be far from this East that destroyed their economy. Moreover, unlike

Gatsby, who abandoned his family and engaged individually in easy and illegal means to achieve wealth, the Joads opted for hard work collectively to reach collective wealth.

It can be argued that Steinbeck reverses the frontier once again to show that only the Western part of America can heal the crisis, and only the western people, who are convinced by the importance of land, hard work and social relations, can lead the whole country to salvation. Comparing Steinbeck's vision about the American Dream to Fitzgerald's, we notice that the concept is redefined in the 1930s to take a Western dimension, based on agriculture instead of big business to be, thus, centered in the agrarian space instead of the urban one. The American Dream, in Steinbeck's view, is put in the hands of the Western farmers instead of the Eastern businessmen, and is based on collectivism instead of individualism.

In his portrayal of the farmers, Steinbeck distinguishes them from the urban and industrialized people portrayed by Fitzgerald in his novel and from the greedy capitalists who occupied their lands. Each individual is described with a specific character through which he laid something to the benefit of the whole group; either throughout their way westward or once in California. The spirit of solidarity they have is, in fact, inherited from their ancestors and reinforced by the endless difficulties they met all along their journey to California. In one of his autobiographical essays, Steinbeck expresses his admiration to them by saying:

I like these people. They had qualities of humor and courage and inventiveness and energy that appealed to me. I thought that if we had a national character and a national genius, these people, who were beginning to be called Okies, were it. With all the odds against them, their goodness and strength survived. (Zirakrazden, 2004: 595).

This shows that the farmers are rehabilitated as people capable of heroic change.

The harshness of California's environment, inevitably, has its effect on the migrants' character. Their strive to achieve wealth is not as easy as Gatsby's in the 1920s, and their access to the luxuries that Gatsby's generation enjoyed is made impossible by the socio-



economic conditions of the Depression Era. So, their dream is reduced to gaining what to eat. This distinguishes this generation of people described by Steinbeck in *The Grapes Of Wrath* from the one described by Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby*. Fitzgerald and Steinbeck's reflection of the history of the two decades of the 1920s and the 1930s respectively through their reference to the socio-economic conditions of the two decades shows in a way how historical events have their impact on the dreams of people, and at which point the socio-economic conditions are able to inverse the ideological currents of the people, which moved from Individualism, Eastern Frontier and urbanization in the 1920s to Collectivism, Western Frontier and Agrarianism in the 1930s.

## **II- The American Dream as Allegory**

In both Fitzgerald and Steinbeck's novels, the authors make use of allegory in their representation of American Dream in the 1920s and the 1930s respectively to show how the meanings associated to the concept in the two decades failed in responding to the expectations of the American people, despite the revision of principles in the 1930s. In addition to the use of history, both authors use characters and incorporate some events or places to deliver a broader message about the possibility of making the dreams of characters come true. Many figures, actions and images in the works of the two writers are, in fact, symbolic of the functioning of the American Dream in the two decades they represent.

The allegory of the American Dream is present in the majority of Fitzgerald's fiction, but is mainly manifested in *The Great Gatsby* via the dream of Gatsby, as it is interpreted by the character of Nick Carraway, who experienced nearly the same dream as his, but under different conditions. Nick succeeds to understand the personalities of all the characters of the novel, and concludes that all of them are taken in the wave of the American Dream of that decade. He also notices that Gatsby is the most absorbed by the materialistic atmosphere of

the 1920s, and qualifies him as the representative of all the other characters' dreams. The character of Nick Carraway is, in fact, the voice of Fitzgerald in the novel.

In *The Great Gatsby*, the American Dream is symbolized by the character of Gatsby in relation to the setting and different events that hindered the plot of the novel. Gatsby's dream stands for the American Dream in the decade of the 1920s, which is mainly defined in terms of Capitalism and Pragmatism, and his tragedy at the end of the novel symbolizes the fall of American Capitalism at the end of the decade due to the excess of Pragmatism. The plot of the novel in itself is symbolic of American civilization and American Dream. Referring to Edwin Fussell, Kermit W. Moyer argues that

'Roughly speaking Fitzgerald's basic plot is the history of the New World... more precisely, of the human imagination in the New world.' Fitzgerald's subject in *The Great Gatsby*, Fussell insisted, is not the Jazz Age or the Lost Generation, 'but the whole of American Civilization as it culminated in his own time.' (Moyer, in Donaldson, 1984: 216).

Within the same context, Fussell makes reference to James E. Miller, who finds the significance of Gatsby's dream in the dream of those who discovered and settled the American continent, and to John R. Kuehl, who finds *The Great Gatsby* "a sort of cultural-historical allegory." (Ibid.).

The allegorical significance of *The Great Gatsby* is, then, centered on Gatsby's dream, but not limited to it. The plot of the novel is, in fact, a story of the American frontier and democracy, as symbols of American ideals in conflict with the excess of Materialism that made an end to their meanings. Moyer Kermit claims that in *The Great Gatsby*, "We move from a personal sphere (a story of unrequited love), to a historical level (the hope and idealism) of the frontier and of democracy in conflict with a rapacious and destructive materialism." (Ibid). The novel's plot tells about this generation of Americans, who were lost between the West and the East, moving in circles to achieve the wealth they were dreaming

of. Their American Dream was, unfortunately, self-destructive, since it was based on modern Materialism and Pragmatism instead of their ancestral ideals.

Among the characters who experienced this dream, Nick Carraway who raises as a major protagonist in the novel. He is described as a good listener, open minded and tolerant character. He sees that “this has been a story of the west.” (p. 183), meaning by this that all the characters of the novel are Westerners, who moved Eastward to make their material dream come true. Tom Buchanan, Daisy, Jay Gatsby are all from the mid-west, but they left this region, because for them the East, especially New York, is the place where they can make wealth and achieve their ideals. Nick, like the others, is a Mid-westerner, who traveled to the East in order to accomplish his project of studying bond business, because for “the Midwesterner everything culturally desirable lay in the East.” (Cross, 1964: 33).

It seems that Nick Carraway and his family are influenced by these waves of immigrants back to the Eastern part of America, or what the historians call the “great war”. The latter happened after the closure of the frontier in the 1880s, when the Census Bureau declared that it could no longer designate the boundaries of the frontier by means of population statistics. This event resulted in the emergence of new metropolis, such as New York and Chicago as the centre of American political and economic life, and gave birth to new values different from those of the peaceful agrarian America. As a result, the Americans who experienced the frontier found themselves obliged to come back to the East to embrace modernity, because the West did not provide them with enough opportunities to live a decent life. F. Scott Fitzgerald compares this circular movement to a serpent turning back upon itself. It is “a metaphor of a reversed migration to the East as inverted frontier.” (Moyer, in Donaldson, 1984: 225). As such, the East became a new frontier to be exploited.

In *The Great Gatsby*, the only character, who succeeds to understand the historical process in which all the characters are trapped, is Nick Carraway. He is called “the historical voice of the book”. This does not mean that he escaped this process; he has just understood it. Indeed, he confesses that when he came back from the war, he felt restless: “Instead of being the warm centre of the world, the Middle West now seemed like the ragged edge of the universe –so I decided to go East and learn the bond business.” (p. 3). Moyer argues:

Like all the characters in the novel, Carraway has moved from the Midwest to the East –an inversion of the earlier, westward movement. The total progression implied here is, once again circular: beginning in the East, America pushed westward, pursuing the frontier to California, and then turned back upon itself. The ultimate dead end of that historical thrust lay not in California then but in East Egg, at the original point of departure: it is there that the circle closes. (Moyer, in Donaldson, 1984: 225).

Nevertheless, at the end, the Midwest is proved to be more important than this new frontier, at least for Nick, who views it as a centre of his memories and childhood. So, the dream, which led him to the East, turned him to the West, since his warm life at home and his innocent friends are found there. At the end of the novel, Nick recalls all the moments spent with them: “[...] it was not the wheat or the prairies or the lost Suede towns, but the thrilling returning trains of my youth.” (p. 187). He adds: “[...] that is my Midwest” (Ibid.), meaning that this region is the centre of his heart and inner world. When the tragedy of the Great Gatsby happens, he uses the Midwest as a refuge to secure himself from that obscurity, which lays behind the New York city. It is perhaps the authenticity of the Carraway family with its Western values that provides him with the security he needs.

Indeed, Nick’s family “have been prominent and well to do people in the Midwestern city” (p. 08). According to Kathleen Parkinson, the Carraways have a legendary rather than a real past, and this family shares some similarities with the European aristocracy (Parkinson, 1988: 133). Despite the fact that this family’s wealth goes back to the Civil War period, its founder did not take part in it; he sent a substitute while he was establishing a considerable

fortune. Everything he gained was obtained by his hard work. The latter helped him to set a code of honor, far from participating in the war; an honor which represents the virtuous morals of the Midwestern family through *The Great Gatsby*.

The founder of the Carraways' business is his great uncle, to whom Nick is supposed to look like. This uncle worked in hardware business that Nick's "father carries-on today." (p. 9), and for which Nick is prepared to carry-on in the future. By this succession on work, Fitzgerald personifies the spirit of the frontiersmen, who carried on the ideals of their ancestors for many generations in order to achieve success. Indeed, when Nick goes East to study bond business, the decision is not his, but the commend of the members of his family: "[...] all my aunts and uncles talked over, as if they were choosing a prep school for me." (p. 09). This means that they are preparing him to face a great responsibility, which consists of enlarging their wealth and carrying their ethics, which are sacred for them. It is clear, then, that the Carraways' dream is still traditional; focused more around the family than wealth. It is more based on maintaining the family's honor through generations and on conservatism.

In *The Great Gatsby*, the allegory of the American Dream is represented by a tragedy in the East and a coming back to the West, which seems more hopeful for the people, because of its traditional values of hard work and family importance. Characters in the novel are lost between the East and the West looking for the dream of material success. At the end, Nick decides to take his way back to the West, where the old values prevail. Nick is disillusioned by the modern way of life that characterized the city in the 1920s.

Fitzgerald, in his part, considers the tragedy of Gatsby as the tragedy of the American nation as a whole. His labeling of the place where Gatsby lives "a Valley of Ashes" is very significant; it means that the excess of materialism transformed its citizens into empty souls. When he speaks of Manhattan, he describes it as "the old island here that flowered once for

Dutch sailors' eyes –a fresh green breast of the New World. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams" (p. 217). In this passage, he reminds the Americans about their past that vanished and replaced by the material dreams of people. In fact, he is warning them about these new emerging ideas in the East, because for him they will lead to the destruction of their nation. The Great Depression confirmed Fitzgerald's fears, by making an end to the hedonism and the excessive materialism, and by making all Americans reset their mode of life, by revising principles.

In *The Beautiful and Damned*, the allegory of the American Dream is represented by the couple Anthony and Gloria, who led to their own destruction not by the lack of awareness but rather by the excess of irresponsibility. Their destruction represents the tragedy of the American Dream, which is the result of excess of materialism and hedonism. After the two characters' honeymoon, things started to take another direction in their life, as they come to understand that they cannot stand as a couple relying on their small incomes, and that they have to wait the death of the old Patch to make their common dream of inheriting his fortune come true. Anthony becomes anxious about the fact that "it was going to cost" (p. 127) now as a couple, and the problem is that "grampa (Adam Patch) may die tomorrow and he may live for ten years. Meanwhile we're (Anthony and Gloria) living above our income and all we've got to show for it is a farmer's car and a few clothes." (p. 174).

Anthony's words prove that he understands well the paradox in which they are living, as a couple, spending money as millionaires, but having the income of simple workers or less. The problem is that they maintain this mode of life of a leisure class, through which Anthony insists on "paying for everything" (p. 223), because they are identified with this class from the beginning, and they do not want people to know about their actual situation. Sergio Perosa

argues that when Anthony and Gloria developed a new dream of an expected inheritance that kept them together,

Adam Patch is not so eager to die, and he disapproves of their spending and reckless living. He keeps a close watch on them, while they are unconsciously preparing their ruin. Anthony tries in vain to go on with his book and has a short and fruitless working experience; Gloria plays with the idea of becoming a film actress, but her husband objects to it. His further attempt to write commercial short stories is also a failure (Perosa, 1965).

After his grandfather's death, Anthony cannot bear the idea of his disinheritance, and he plunges himself more and more in alcoholism while he and his wife file an appeal on his grandfather's will. Waiting the result of the appeal they filed to regain the inheritance, the couple enter in a struggle with life to survive in the present moment, and with the courts to regain their social and material importance in the future. It seems that their minds cannot bear the reality of their poverty, and they are ready to wait further the result of their appeal to make their dream come true. Once again, they create for themselves another *raison d'être*, as it is called by Fitzgerald, which is their struggle with the courts to regain their inheritance, and once again they do not show their readiness to work to keep their status at least in the present moment. Instead, they show signs of irresponsibility and weakness as results of the meaninglessness of their life.

Anthony's irresponsibility and weakness are shown when he escapes from his surroundings, because he cannot hear the "rumors about themselves (Anthony and Gloria) from all quarters, rumors founded usually on soupcon of truth, but overlaid with preposterous and sinister detail" (p. 246). They are shown also, when he escapes his marriage with Gloria to make a military training at Camp Hooker in South Carolina, because he has no money with which he will be able to make meaning to their marital life. Anthony's escape is a kind of a refuge for him, because he cannot find a solution for his dark and damned life with his manipulative wife and mocking friends.

Anthony's irresponsibility does not stop at this point, but furthers when he establishes a sexual relationship with Dot just because "life is so damned hard" (p. 281) with him, without caring about her feelings towards him. Indeed, when his regiment leaves South Carolina to Long Island, he leaves her, forgetting about her existence, and when she looks for him in New York after the end of the war, he throws her hysterically out of his house, because for him Dot is just a means to satisfy his desire in a moment of despair. In this context, Thi Huong Giang Bui argues that "Anthony finds himself a reason to have the affair, but he never thinks any affair is stable. It seems to him that life is like a game or an organizing joke, and what you desire is not what you can really catch." (Giang Bui, 2012: 65).

As for Gloria, her irresponsibility is shown when she goes back to her former life of going with different friends at the absence of her husband and to her former dream of becoming an actress. Sergio Perosa argues that "Gloria, who has recognized the failure of their love [...], falls back on the obstinate dream of her beauty. She flirts with old friends and new acquaintances, makes a new attempt to go into the movies, which results in bitter failure, and is unable to come to terms with reality" (Perosa, 1965). It seems that Gloria, like Anthony, tries to escape from reality by returning to her old dream of beauty.

The problem with Gloria is that she is unable to give up her life of leisure and get rid of her anxiety about money. In her husband's absence, she has taken seriously the court appeal. When Anthony comes back, Gloria's anxiety over money and manipulation over him increase. At the end, she succeeds to convince him to take a job; selling stock in the company of "Heart Talks", but what Gloria and Anthony do not come to understand is that after the war, circumstances changed and people changed with them.

Anthony's last experience in the field of work results in another failure, the thing which ends with his sinking further in the world of alcoholism and loneliness. Too late, nearing the end of the novel, both Anthony and Gloria come to understand that their dream



does not fit the circumstances in which they are living. Gloria understands this when she makes her last attempt to be an actress, and she is informed by the film producer that her age nearing the 30s does not permit her to perform the role, as it requires a character much younger than her, and Anthony understands it when he is unable to interest any customer by his pamphlets in "Heart Talks."

When the two characters come to understand their situation, they find refuge in their dreams once again, but this time their dreams are not localized in the future but in their past. Gloria reverts to her colorful childhood, dreaming to be a child once again in order to find protection. Anthony, in his part, resorts to drinking in his disordered room, and returns to the dreams of his past youth and childhood as a stamp collector. It seems that the present has no place in the life of the two characters; their life is fallen between too early at the beginning of the novel and too late at its end.

At the very end of the novel, their dream of inheritance comes true as they succeed to win the fortune reversal. Yet, this victory comes too late for both Anthony and Gloria, who have fallen apart. When Gloria and Dick Caramel come to inform Anthony that he has won the case and he is now worth thirty million Dollars, they find him out of his senses, and he threatens them that he will tell his grandfather if they do not leave. When he gets his money, after a few months, Anthony is a little bit crazy, and he travels to Europe with his wife, accompanied by a doctor who follows his state of mind. His madness reflects, as Fitzgerald mentions it, "the hardships, the insufferable tribulations he had gone through (p. 449). Despite the belated arrival of his fortune, he rejoices that he has never given up his principle of refusing to work, the latter being, according to him, a sign of mediocrity. He tells Gloria, "I showed them [...] it was a hard fight, but I didn't give up and I came through!" (p. 449).

Anthony's madness at the end urges many critics to classify *The beautiful and Damned* in the genre of tragedy. The tragedy is, in fact, not only the tragedy of Anthony or his

wife; it is the tragedy of a whole generation, and the tragedy of the American Dream at that time. Fitzgerald makes it clear before the publication of the novel that Anthony is just one among many others like him, and his wife Gloria, who has the same dreams as her husband is selected to show that the generation Fitzgerald is referring to does not exclude women from this tragedy. The liberty that certain women started to enjoy at that time was not used by them to show any personal achievement. It was rather used to look for a wealthy husband, who would provide them with the life of leisure and expenditure to which they were opened.

Gloria reflects the category of young American women, who, in the period that followed World War One, started to use their bodies as means to achieve an end. These women, who belonged mainly to the educated middle class of society, were influenced by the women's liberation movements and the New York intellectual circles of the pre-war period, which preached that women, like men, are free in using their bodies for personal achievements. The circles were influenced by the philosophies of the period, and they were mainly supportive of the philosophy of eugenics, developed at that time in the writings of Ellis Havelock and promoted that a human being has the right to be selective of his/her genetic quality (Kuersten, 2003: 134). Influenced by these trends of thought, educated middle class women gave themselves the right of selecting their own husbands, as Gloria does.

The tragedy of Anthony is not limited to his madness at the end but extends to his persistence in the mode of life he selected. The difficult moments he has lived do not serve him for a lesson; he does not come to understand what is wrong with him, and he is rather proud of himself as he has never given up his principle of boycotting work whatever the circumstances. Despite his physical and mental ruin, he still believes that the inheritance of his grandfather's wealth is a victory for him, as he succeeds finally to regain the social status he thinks that he is worthy of as a Patch. Work, according to Anthony, is not made for people like him, since they are born to be superior as life guaranteed for them everything.

At the end of the novel, Fitzgerald explains Anthony's problem; being a problem of dignity and social class that needs money to be manifested, and thus sympathizes with him and validates his motivations. Yet, his understanding of and sympathizing with the hero and heroine of the novel does not mean that he does not recognize what is wrong in their life. When he wrote *The Beautiful and Damned*, Fitzgerald noticed the emergence of such a generation that was similar to him and Anthony, and he knew that this new way of life that started to take roots in the American society would lead to its destruction. The novel, then, is a kind of moral lesson or parable to be taught to his actual readers, and this parable, as Perosa argues, "is precisely that of the youthful dreams and illusions that gradually become a lethargy and then a nightmare and are involved in an inevitable ruin." (Perosa, 1965).

The teachings of the parable are presented in three parts or books that cannot be separated from each other and that developed in a chronological way to show how each one comes as a result of another. The first part entitled "The Pleasant Absurdity of Things" shows the absurdity of dreams in Anthony and Gloria's lives before their marriage. The second entitled "The Romantic Bitterness of Things" refers to the romantic dreams of the two characters and their marriage. While the third entitled "The ironic tragedy of things" shows how the ironic dream of the couple turned into a tragedy. The novel, then, is a parable on the absurdity of youthful dreams, excess of romanticism and the deceptive aspect of the American Dream, based on superficial values.

The tragedy in the novel lies mainly in the fact that the heroes at the end do not come to understand the reason behind their ruin, which means that they are not ready to correct their mistakes, and thus the tragedy will not have an end. Fitzgerald, as a spokesman of his generation, raises in this novel to warn people that things that seem beautiful can turn to be damned at the end. Perosa argues that "far from being the mouthpiece or the singer of the Jazz

Age, Fitzgerald is its lucid accuser. He is well aware of its equivocal dangers, of its irresponsible attitudes, and he pitilessly exposes its disastrous consequences.” (Perosa, 1965).

It can be argued that in *The Beautiful and Damned*, Fitzgerald presents a failure of the American Dream that characterized the same generation as that of *The Great Gatsby*. The difference between the two novels is that in the latter, the characters’ dreams are discussed in relation to their geographical or spacial location, as they are moving from West to East and from East to West to make their dreams come true. In the former, the characters’ dreams are discussed in relation to their location in time, as they are switching from past to future, and from future to past to make their present dream come true. The American Dream in Fitzgerald’s fiction, then, knows a failure both in relation to temporal and geographical locations. This led to the dislocation of the concept in the coming decade from the East to the West and from the urban location to the agrarian one. This is apparent in Steinbeck’s fiction, in which another allegory of the American Dream is presented.

In Steinbeck’s fiction, the allegory of the American Dream is mainly expressed in his *Of Mice and Men*. In the latter, the author presents a new failure of the American Dream through his characters George and Lennie’s tragedy, linked mainly to natural and socio-economic factors. Contrary to Fitzgerald’s characters Anthony and Gloria in *The Beautiful and Damned*, George and Lennie are determined from the very beginning of the novel to work hard to make their dream of owning their personal farm come true. The two, as migrant workers, have no social prestige to defend; they are, in fact, dreaming to make this prestige by themselves, when they succeed to get rid of the exploitation of the ranch owners. Their dream, then, is divided chronologically into two phases, making for them two “*raison d’être*”. The first is that of working hard to make the sum of money that will permit them to buy the ranch; and this first one is linked to their present moment, and the second is that of working hard on this dreamed ranch and reach wealth in the future.

Since the two men's dream is based on hard work, they feel the need to unite their forces, because it is impossible for one individual in their state to realize alone such a dream. As such, George is in need of Lennie's huge force despite he is mentally retarded. Thus, he puts himself in front of two responsibilities; one is working hard to gain money, and the other is taking care of Lennie, facing all the troubles he is making, and finding a way to urge him to work. To face the situation, he creates for Lennie an image about their dreamed ranch, which becomes his "raison d'être" in the present moment. He keeps repeating for him his beautiful words, "... Someday we're gonna get the jack together and we're gonna have a little house and a couple acres an' a cow and some pigs and – an' live off the fatta the lan'". George's words become like a tape recorder for Lennie, who has the habit to continue the rest of the speech, "An' have rabbits. Go on, George! Tell about what we're gonna have in the garden and about the rabbits in the cages and about the rain in the winter and the stove, and how thick the cream is on the milk like you can hardly cut it. Tell about that George."

Peter Lisca argues that George and Lennie's dream is, in fact, an expression of needs, which are fundamental; they are, according to him, "fundamental longings [...] yearnings for peace, for some existence in or with nature, for the satisfaction of basic needs and the comfort of honest work." (Lisca, rep. by Bloom, 2008: 24). While George has the capacity to pronounce these needs, Lennie, lacking the capacity to "scoff at" dreams and ideals in public, is secretly needing them. Lisca continues to note that the "earth of [...] Lennie [...] was not to represent insanity at all but the inarticulate and powerful yearning of all men." (Ibid.). This means that Lennie's dream is, in fact, the dream of every man on earth; any person is in need of his basic rights of a dignified life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. And this kind of dream is mainly manifested in periods of social turmoil and crises. In the 1930s, it was evident that such a dream was to be found in the mind of any migrant worker. The proof is that other ranch workers, as Candy and Crooks, join the dream and find it interesting.

Candy, the oldest man on the ranch, represents the future of this generation, who spend all their life working without any assurance about their future. Realizing that he reached an old age without making any interesting thing in his life, Candy does not hesitate to join George and Lennie's dream, contributing by all his life savings. When he hears them speaking of their project of buying ten acres of land worth of six hundred dollars from an old couple, he buys his part of the dream by his saved three hundred dollars. George, in his part, does not hesitate to accept his offer as this will make their dream come sooner. Candy expresses his conviction that their dream is a necessity for everybody, when he says " 'Sure they all want it. Everybody wants a little bit of land, no much. Jus' som'thin' that was his. Som'thin' he could live on and there couldn't nobody throw him off of it. I never had none'" (p. 133).

Crooks, the black man, expresses his longing for the same dream, and links it mainly to a need of some companionship by which he will make an end to his loneliness that he considers to be something terrible. In his conversation with Lennie, he tells him, " 'Books ain't no good. A guy needs somebody –to near him... A guy goes nuts if he ain't got nobody'" (p. 127). Being seduced by the dream, he tells Lennie and Candy that if they permit him to join them in their project, he will be able to work and help. The problem with Crooks is that his race constitutes another obstacle for him to realize or even dream of something. Soon, when Curley's wife arrives and reminds him of his state, "...you keep your place Nigger," (p.81) she reduces him "to nothing", and he remembers that it is difficult, if not impossible, for him to share a dream with white men, and he finishes by giving up.

When Candy offers to George and Lennie his life savings for a partnership in the farm, the three men are nearing the point of making the dream a reality. Unfortunately, the death of Curley's wife comes suddenly to put an end to their project. She takes profit from other men's absence to seduce Lennie, whom she views as a source of innocence and natural love she lacks with her husband. Lennie, on the other hand, cannot resist his instinctual desire to feel

soft things, and control his physical force. George predicted from the very beginning that such a kind of troubles can happen with Lennie, when he ordered him to come back to hide himself near the river if something happens with him. He also predicted that Curley's wife might be the source of this trouble, when he forbade Lennie to talk to her, and when he articulated from his first meeting with her that "She's gonna make a mess. They's gonna be a bad mess about her. She's a jail bait all set on the trigger." (p. 92).

When Lennie murders Curley's wife while feeling her soft hair with his fingers, he is just afraid of his friend's reaction; he does not come to make a difference between the dead woman and the dead puppy. "Lennie went back and looked at the dead girl. The puppy lay close to her. Lennie picked it up. 'I'll throw him away,' he said. 'It's bad enough like it is.'" (p. 159). Through this event, Steinbeck does not consider Lennie as being guilty of what he has done; he is incapable of any logic. George asserts to Slim that "he never done this to be mean," (p. 97) meaning that Lennie is good in his intentions, and he is not cruel by choice. Lennie's act of murder, then, seems to be inevitable in the novel, and all the circumstances combined to make it happen. George's murder of Lennie too seems to be inevitable. When he hears about the possibility of torturing him as an animal by locking "him up an'" strapping "him down and" putting "him in a cage," he does not find an alternative than killing him. In this sense, Bloom argues:

...*Of Mice and Men* is Steinbeck's highest expression of his belief in a non-teleological world, the inevitability of the novel is underscored by its original title, *Something that Happened*, showing how little stock the author put in things having some reason for being. For all the pathos in the plight and death of Lennie, of all the weak people struggling against the brute forces of the ranch, the sum is simply something that happened. No meaning, no fate, no avoiding it (Bloom, 2006: 55).

Lennie's death at the end of the novel marks the failure of the American Dream, which is shared between him and his friend. Indeed, when George shoots him, he knows that he kills with him his dream of owning a personal farm and being independent from the ranch owners. Just before the shooting, he repeats to him their dream of living off "the fatta the lan'," and

Lennie leaves the world without understanding anything, taking with him the image of the farm that becomes for him the image of Eden. Louis Owens, in his exploration of the significance of George and Lennie's Dream, asserts that "when Lennie dies, the teleological dream of the Edenic farm dies with him, for while Lennie's weakness doomed the dream it was only his innocence that kept it alive." (Owen, in Bloom, 2008: 87).

At the end of the novel, George expresses to Candy his early pessimism about the dream, telling him softly, "I think I knowed from the very first. I think I knowed we'd never do her." (p. 107), and when Candy asks him if "it's all off", he says, "I'll work my month an' I'll take my fifty bucks an' I'll stay all night in some lousy cat house. Or I'll set in some pool room till ever'body goes home. An' then I'll come back an' work another month an' I'll have fifty bucks more" (Ibid.). By this, both the reader and Candy understand that "it's all off". At the end of the novel, George and Slim go to have a drink together, marking a new beginning of a new friendship within the institution of migrant workers.

Crooks' words about the Edenic dream proved to be true, when he told Lennie, "I seen hundreds of men come by on the road an' that same damn thing in their heads.... Very damn one of 'ems got a little piece of land in his head. An' never a God damn one of 'em ever gets it. Just like heaven.... Nobody ever gets to heaven, and nobody gets no land." (pp. 129-30). In this quotation, Crooks extends the case of George and Lennie to everyman. He is convinced that no one will be able to make the dream of owning a land a reality, because he is accustomed with many cases of people who failed to do it.

George and Lennie in the novel are selected by Steinbeck to represent everyman or every ranch man to mean that their problem is the problem of all their fellows. This is expressed in the famous refrain that George has the habit to repeat to Lennie in the novel:

'Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They don't belong no place. They come to d ranch an' work up a stake and then go into town and blow their stake, and the first thing you know they're poundin' their tail on some other ranch. They ain't got nothing to look ahead to' (p. 28).



The phrase “guys like us” means that George and Lennie do not make an exception; they are like all the other guys who work on ranches. Moreover, their desires are the same as those of all their fellows. Steinbeck makes this clear, when he describes Lennie’s yearnings for soft things as “the inarticulate and powerful yearnings of all men.” (Steinbeck rep. by Owens, in Bloom, 2006: 85).

The only thing that makes a difference between the two friends and the rest of men is their devotion to each other. Yet, even their companionship cannot stand for a long time, because of external factors. In fact, at the end, George finds himself as lonely as the others, and Candy, who joined the company later, is forced to return to his loneliness. In this sense, William Goldhurst argues that “... fraternal living cannot long survive in a world dominated by the Aloneness, homelessness, and economic futility which Steinbeck presents...” (Goldhurst, in Bloom, 2006: 44).

George and Lennie’s tragedy symbolizes the tragedy of the American Dream in this period of social and economic turmoil. It is the tragedy of all the American ranch workers in this period of instability. Harold Bloom argues that

the social framework against which George and Lennie’s dream is ordered is the reality of migrant farm workers. In an itinerant life, they desire stability. In a life of individual distance, they look to some communal existence. In a life of scarcity, they seek abundance. And in an existence of men looking out only for themselves, they seek the assurance that someone else looks out for them. Yet, everything in the society they occupy conspires, intentionally or not, to undermine their dream (Bloom, 2006: 27).

According to Bloom, there is a great evidence in George and Lennie’s dream, as human beings dream always of things that they lack, and in this period of scarceness, they desire everything necessary to their happiness. It is, perhaps, this scarceness that makes their dream impossible. George and Lennie dream of things that do not exist in their time; they dream of buying a farm with a money they do not yet possess, and their dream goes too far in the idealistic image they have given to their farm.

William Goldhurst argues that the image that George and Lennie give to their farm is overly idealized. They give it an Edenic image, with an abundance of fruits and vegetables and a lot of soft pretty domestic animals, and imagined a utopian land, where “ain’t gonna be no more trouble. Nobody gonna hurt nobody nor steal from ‘hem”. Yet, Crooks’ experience shows that, at their era, “nobody never gets to heaven, and nobody gets no land. It’s just in their head. They’re all the time talkin’ about it, but it’s just in their head.” (p. 81). This means that these are impractical expectations, because even if they succeed to buy the farm, it will not be as it is imagined (Goldhurst, in Bloom, 2006: 119). The dream, then, is destroyed by the nature of the dream itself and the circumstances in which it is placed.

The title of the novel seems to be allegorical, as it makes a link between mice and men in one single context. As Lennie has the habit to destroy unintentionally the mice and soft animals he loves to touch, men’s dreams are also unintentionally destroyed. Moreover, men’s dreams are as futile as Lennie’s desire to feel mice. The poem from which the title is taken expresses well this futility and vanity of human wishes: “The best laid schemes o’ mice and men / Gang aft a-gley / An’ leave us nought but grief an’ pain / for promised joy.” (Ibid., p. 116).

The failure of George and Lennie’s American Dream is due to the fact that the 1930s western farmers, who were struggling against the hard conditions of life caused by the Great Depression, were unable to make a meaning for their dreams and displace them to the right location where they would be fulfilled. In fact, there is one concept of the American Dream, but many versions of it, as each generation grapples with the meanings and values it attributes to it. To do that, it keeps revising the dream of the preceding generation. Therefore, the American Dream is not a monolith, but rather a plural, diverse and multiple concept. All these features make it a democratic ideal open to every person or class defined by solidarity to put his/their aspirations and hopes in it, but at the same time there is one single aspect shared by

all its versions, that of revision. So, to be an American dreamer, one should be able to choose, to change and to revise. Without this freedom of choice, there will not be an American Dream. George, Lennie and their fellows are deprived of this freedom; this is why their dream doomed to failure.

From the analysis of the historical and allegorical dimensions of Fitzgerald's and Steinbeck's fiction in relation to the American Dream, one can notice that the principles and aspects of the concept underwent a revision, following the change that occurred to the American economic system in the two decades of the 1920s and 1930s. In the 1920s, the rapid business and technological development that revolutionized the economic system, radicalized with it the social and moral values that turned from tradition to modernity, engendering a shift from the ancestral moral principles of hard work and religious values. This led to the destruction of this generation of Americans; either at the personal, familial or economic levels. People's dream, in this decade, was centered in the urban spaces and was mainly based on selfish and individual interests linked to excess of consumerism and emulation, as the individual's importance in society was defined by the social class to which he/she belonged. As such, people's dream was mainly based on their striving to move to the moneyed class of society that was mainly identified by its economic growth shown through fashion, architecture, innovation and business. The American Dream in this decade was mainly based on social class mobility, as people were always in a movement between social strata to change their social status.

The striving of the people to rise to the upper class of society led the greedy capitalists to monopolize the market, the thing which resulted in the economic crash of 1929. This engendered the Great Depression, which paralyzed the economic business system, leading to the redefinition and revision of the social values. When people's dream of material success failed, businessmen turned their attention to the agricultural and rural spaces of the West to

make investment in agribusiness. This affected the mood of life in this part, leading its people, who centered their living on agriculture, to poverty after driving them out of their lands.

The Western people's dream, however, raised to be different from the Easterners' one, as they understood that only their ancestral religious and moral values could change their situation. Despite difficulties, Western people, as they were presented by Steinbeck, reacted differently from the Easterners to the depression. They remained stuck to their moral traditions and to the original principles of the American Dream, based on hard work, the importance of family and collaboration.

The economic turmoil caused by the Great Depression, however, made their American Dream impossible to come true. Thus, Steinbeck, in his fiction, presents another tragedy of the American Dream, based mainly in the agricultural centers of the West. Unlike Fitzgerald, who owes his characters the responsibility of the failure of their dreams, which are destroyed by their lack of responsibility and bad behavior, Steinbeck owes the responsibility of the failure of his characters' dreams to the socio-economic situation of the 1930s, which was the result of the 1920s irresponsible way of life. Thus, Steinbeck comes to revise principles, and suggest solutions in the agricultural fields and their inhabitants, despite the difficulty of life there.

The analysis of the historical and allegorical dimensions of the American Dream in Fitzgerald's and Steinbeck's novels reinforces the idea that the concept is all about movement, change, and renewal, based on future hopes and aspirations. It is never a reconquest of the past. As such, it is always a denial, an escape of the past. The only past allowed in the American Dream is mythical, not historical. It is a mythical past of innocence and purity. The renewal and change for which the concept asks finds its validity in its multiplicity, diversity and freedom brought by revision.

## **Chapter II: Work Ethics, Companionship and the American Dream in Fitzgerald's and Steinbeck's Selected Fiction**

In Fitzgerald's and Steinbeck's fiction, ethics of work and companionship are discussed along with each other in the context of the American Dream. While the former overlooks the ethics of work in his fiction and uses characters, who want to reach material success with easy and corruptive means, the latter presents characters, who work hard to achieve the least means life. In his description of the characters' working conditions, Steinbeck focuses on companionship and collaboration among them as being necessary to overcome the difficulties of the Great Depression. Fitzgerald's characters, however, are characterized by their loneliness, individualism and selfishness. The reason is due to the materialistic environment of the 1920s, which made companionship something secondary in the lives of individuals.

### **I- Work Ethics and the American Dream**

In his novels, Fitzgerald describes people, who raised to a social class that "all they think of is money" (Fitzgerald: 1925: 37). Little interest is put on the way of gaining it. Hence, for them, the ethics of hard work and self-reliance are no longer regarded as means for achieving material happiness. Instead, easy and illicit ways are the most adopted means, because people found themselves in a hurry to reach the rapid prosperity of their country. People, in Fitzgerald's fiction, are thirsty of material possessions, like fashionable dresses, automobiles and big houses, because for the generation he describes, "the search for wealth is the familiar Anglo Saxon Protestant ideal of personal material success." (Mizener, 1965: 44).

In the *Great Gatsby*, Gatsby possesses a Limousine, a Ford and a Rolls-Royce. In addition, he employs a man who used to bring for him clothes from England. And all "what Gatsby buys for a purpose: to win Daisy." (Brucoli, 1985: 52), but to achieve his aim, he must display all the wealth he owns. He has to show Daisy that with him, she can spend

money in the same way she is doing with the Buchanans or more, because in his mind, she has never loved Tom Buchanan; she is just attracted by his wealth and position in society.

Another form of aimless expenditure is shown via the family of the Buchanans. Tom Buchanan and his wife Daisy say: “we just went to Monte Carlo and back we went by way of Marseilles. We had over twelve hundred dollars when we started [...] all in two days...” (p. 40). It is clear from this quotation that Daisy and Tom went to Monte Carlo for the mere aim of exhibiting their carelessness in dealing with money, a way to show their belonging to the elite class. This sycophantic way of life is described by Fitzgerald in one of his short stories entitled “The Rich Boy” (1925), in which he says:

Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me. They possess and enjoy early, and it does something to them, makes them soft where we are hard, and cynical where we are trustful, in a way that, unless you were born rich, it is very difficult to understand. They think, deep in their hearts, that they are better than we are because we had to discover the compensations and refuges of life for ourselves. Even when they enter deep into our world or sink below us, they still think that they are better than we are. They are different (Fitzgerald, quoted in Curnutt, 2007: 60).

The mode of life that Fitzgerald exposes in the above quotation and throughout *The Great Gatsby* is the world of the Bourgeoisie that some American citizens admired in the 1920s. As such, they had to find ways to get access to it easily, the thing which affected their social and familial lives negatively, and resulted in the corruption of their moral values of hard work and self-reliance. In this context, Frederick Hoffman argues that the Bourgeois were condemned, not often for having made money, but for having turned the making of it into a religion and morality. (Hoffman, 1949: 235). When making money became a morality in itself, Americans engaged in criminality and bootlegging and many other illegal means to secure wealth, because, for them, if wealth was secured, everything else was easily accessible. Even love and marriage were defined by the amount of money that someone possessed.

In *The Great Gatsby*, Gatsby's thirst to get wealth is determined by his dream to win Daisy, who is lured by wealth, and this dream in itself is destroyed and corrupted by the

illegal means he adopted to get her easily and rapidly. The Prohibition Era of the Roaring Twenties offered him the opportunity to become rich. Since, at that time, liquor trade was forbidden by the law, such men as Wolfsheim and Gatsby, known as bootleggers, got quick richness provided to them by the thirsty drunkards. This business is so interesting to Gatsby that he tries even to convince Nick to be involved with him in bootlegging: “This would interest you. It wouldn’t take up much of your time and you might pick up a nice bit of money...” (p. 89). Indeed, large sums of money and little efforts are the required characteristics in this kind of work.

The spread of bootlegging in the 1920s was also the result of the fact that alcohol became a fashion among men of the Bourgeois class and a symbol of pleasure and modernity. Kirk Curnutt argues that Fitzgerald himself belonged to that class that legitimized alcohol and saw that drinking could help a man to live a happy life. He says: “I cannot consider one pint of wine at the days [sic] end as anything but one of the rights of man.” (Fitzgerald, quoted by Curnutt, 2007: 66).

The reason which pushes people, like Gatsby, to have recourse to these illicit ways to get wealth is, in fact, their awareness that hard work lost its value in the American urban space at that time. Fitzgerald provides us with an example of a hard working man, who cannot achieve social mobility, and remains dependent on the upper class men, as Tom Buchanan, to secure a living, via the character of George Wilson. For men like Wilson, who have inherited nothing from their families, “the roaring twenties” were worse than other periods, since they were forced to work hard to live decently, and even by doing so they remained far from the development of the period. His case is an example among many others, which show that hard work in the urban East cannot even secure a decent life, and that the American Dream which implies that working hard in the United States will automatically lead to prosperity is corrupted. Wilson is, in fact, dependent on Tom, since without the car Tom will

sell him, he will not have an occasion to get money elsewhere. This relation between Tom and Wilson lets the reader note the dependence of one class (the low class) on another (the upper class). This is shown in their conversation about the car Tom is supposed to sell him:

‘When are you going to sell me that car?’  
‘Next week; I’ve got my man working on it now.’  
‘Works pretty slow, don’t he?’  
‘No, he doesn’t,’ said Tom coldly. ‘And if you feel that way about it, maybe I’d better sell it somewhere else after all.’  
‘I don’t mean that,’ explained Wilson quickly. ‘I just meant-.’ (p. 31).

Wilson’s case, then, illustrates the fact that hard work has no place within the harsh Capitalist system of the 1920s.

While *The Great Gatsby* Portrays people who lost their ethics of work and use illicit ways to get wealth easily, *The Beautiful and Damned* portrays the life of people that find work something related to mediocrity, dreaming to get rich and enjoy the modern life of the twentieth century without making efforts. Indeed, the shines of the modern way of life characterized by frequenting party clubs, dancing and drinking, as well as enjoying everything fashionable do not give this generation time to manifest their talents. Anthony Patch finds no shame in turning his life from a talented writer to a drunken person, but finds working to gain money something mediocre. Gloria also finds no problem in Anthony’s decision that she has to give up her talent as an actress, as she is lured by the inheritance that waits him and her as his wife.

After their marriage, Anthony and Gloria are in a hurry to see old Patch’s death, and this becomes their immediate dream. Anthony’s initial dream to have “had found his grandfather dead” (p. 13), when he came back from Rome becomes now for him a necessity. Unfortunately, they have to wait for a long time to see this dream coming true, especially after Anthony’s disinheritance by his prohibitionist grandfather, who cannot bear his grandson’s drunkenness. After this event, the dream that keeps the couple together, after the failure of their love story, fades and turns into a nightmare.



When Anthony hears about his disinheritance, he feels completely ruined. During the period when Adam Patch is waiting him to produce something in his life, he is waiting his death and he fails in everything he tries. He even becomes an obstacle for his wife's dream of becoming an actress. He is always dreaming and waiting "some golden day, of course, he will have many millions; meanwhile he possesses a *raison d'être* in the theoretical creation of essays on the popes of the Renaissance." (p. 13). It is that dream that keeps him from doing anything seriously, even after his marriage. It seems that Anthony will never give up this dream; it is his *raison d'être*, as it is expressed by Fitzgerald. It becomes clear for old Patch and for the reader that even in moments of distress, the idea of working has no place in the mind of neither Anthony nor Gloria, as their life as socialites becomes their ordinary way of life. Anthony does not do anything in his life that will satisfy the dream of his grandfather, who used to tell him, "you (Anthony) ought to do something." (p. 15).

What matters to Anthony more is, in fact, his social status, not the money he will inherit. Arguably, if he can find another means that will guarantee for him his superior position in society, he will give up his longing for the cause of inheritance. Money is, thus, just a means to an end; the end being of a superior social position displayed through enjoying the life of expenditure to be seen by all the people. Fitzgerald, in the novel, illustrates this fact in the description he has given about Anthony after gaining his fortune:

Anthony Patch, sitting near the rail and looking out at the sea was not thinking of his money, for he had seldom in his life been really preoccupied with material vain glory. [...] No –he was concerned with a series of reminiscences, much as a general might look back upon a successful campaign and analyze his victories. He was thinking of the hardships, the insufferable tribulations he had gone through. They had tried to penalize him for the mistakes of his youth. [...] Only a few months before people had been urging him to give in, to submit to mediocrity, to go to work. But he had known that he was justified in his way of life—and he had stuck it out staunchly (pp. 448,449).

From the above portrait about Anthony, it is clear that when he refuses to submit to work, he is defending his social class i.e. that from the beginning of his life, he belongs to the

Bourgeoisie, and he believes that work will reduce him to the working class, and for him people have to understand his position.

In one of the rare visits he makes to a friend called Muriel Kane, Anthony defends his social rank in a conversation with her:

“Why do you (Anthony) say such awful things?” She (Muriel) protested. “You talk as if you and Gloria were in the Middle Class.”

“Why pretend we’re not? I hate people who claim to be great aristocrats when they can’t even keep up the appearance of it.”

“Do you think a person had to have money to be aristocratic?”

[...] “Why of course. Aristocracy’s only an admission that certain traits which we call fine –courage and honor and beauty and all that sort of thing- can best be developed in a favorable environment, where you don’t have the warpings of ignorance and necessity.” (p. 336).

Anthony, in this conversation, gives his own understanding of aristocracy; linking it to courage, honor and beauty, which a person can only develop in a specific environment, in which ignorance and necessity have no place. Here, he refers to his own environment of leisure and intellectuals.

What is ironic in the novel is that Anthony does not belong to this environment. His intellectual attempts have always ended in failure, despite his high degree of education, and his income “[is] slightly under seven thousand a year, the interest on money inherited from his mother.” (p.12). He has never got money from his millionaire grandfather, who does not want him to depend too much on his wealth. His old belonging and status are just used by him to keep a certain superiority in society and “draw as much consciousness of social security from being the grandson of Adam J. Patch.” (p. 6). It is from this irony that his anxiety about money raises, and leads to the deterioration of his character. Mary Jo Tate claims that “*The Beautiful and Damned* is concerned with character deterioration as it traces Anthony Patch’s path from immaculate intellectual to broken drunk.” (Tate, 1998- 2007: 31).

Unlike the luxurious and corrupted mode of life of the 1920s presented by Fitzgerald in his novels, the mode of life that Steinbeck presents in his fiction is characterized by misery

and hardships. As a result, his characters experienced the domain of work differently from Fitzgerald's ones. Steinbeck presents characters, who are eager to work honestly, but fail to achieve their dreams because of the harsh conditions which determined their fates. As a result, he has never considered them as being responsible of the situation they are living. Instead, all along his novels, he keeps an image about them as national heroes of whom dreams are destroyed by the economic and environmental factors around them.

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, he gives a vivid image about the misery in which the Joads and their companions live. He details his description of their life, starting from their journey along route 66 arriving to their settlement in California. Along Route 66, these migrants are met by problems related to climate and lack of food and life necessities, the thing which leads to the spread of illnesses and deaths among them. The Joad family, for instance, loses Grandpa and Grandma, whose age does not permit to endure the difficulties of the voyage. The Wilsons witness the illness of Wilson's wife.

Reaching the Californian shores, the Joads start to restore hope, when they see the beauty of the land. Each member of their family expresses his joy in his own way:

Al Jammed on the brake and stopped in the middle of the road, and, "Jesus Christ! Look!" he said. The vineyards, the orchards, the great flat valley, green and beautiful, the trees set in rows, and the farm houses... The distant cities, the little towns in the orchard land, and morning sun, golden in the valley ... The grain fields golden in the morning, and the willow lines, the eucalyptus trees in rows. Pa sighed, "I never knowed they was anything like her." (p. 309, 310).

Despite the Joads's description of California as a rural paradise, Tom wonders whether the image they see is the real one, when he remembers words of a man who came back from the city's landscape, and told him what he found there:

She's a nice country. But she was stole a long time ago. You git acrost the desert an' come into the country aroun' Bakersfield. An' you never seen such purty country –all orchards an' grapes, purtiest country you ever seen. An' you'll pass lan' flat an' fine with water thirty feet down, and that lan's layin' fallow. But you can't have none of that lan'. That's a Lan' and Cattle Company. An' if they don't want to work her, she ain't gonna git worked. You go in there an' plant you a little corn, an' you'll go to jail (p. 297).

This man meant that even in California, lands are confiscated by the business companies, and work is scarce for men like Tom. He encouraged him to try his chance anyway.

Once in California, this man's words proved to be true, and the migrants' hopes to find work and live in better conditions in the West are vanished. There are also episodes in the novel, where we can notice that if ever the migrant worker succeeds to get a job, he is ill paid, as there are many people asking for the same job just to maintain a living. This, of course, is a good opportunity for the landowners to employ many workers with very low wages, and maintain their existed manipulation and dominance, despite their dependence on this workforce in their productivity. In this context, Steinbeck writes:

... When there was work for a man, ten men fought for it –fought with a low wages. If that fella'll work for thirty cents, I'll work for twenty-five. If he'll take twenty-five, I'll do it for twenty. No, me, I'm hungry. I'll work for fifteen. I'll work for food [...] and this was good, for wages went down and prices stayed up... (p. 387).

The Joads' first experience with such a kind of living starts when they settle in the first Hooverville camp they meet in the city. This kind of squatters' camps, as they are called by Steinbeck, are found outside the real town, and are occupied by migrants or "Okies", as they are labeled by the local inhabitants of California. He describes them as rag towns: "The rag town lay close to water; and the houses were tents, and weed-thatched enclosures, paper houses, a great junk pile." (pp. 319, 320). In this camp, the Joads start to notice contradiction in the city of California, when they compare the landscape they viewed from atop the Tehachapis and what they are living. The Hoovervilles are dominated by agribusiness, which exploits the migrants. In the camp where the Joads settled, an old wise man explains to Tom how things function, in the sense that the workers themselves allow the employers to pay them with low wages and remove them from their jobs:

"They's a big son-of-a-bitch of a peach orchard I worked in. Takes nine men all the year roun'." He paused impressively. "Takes three thousan' men for two weeks when them peaches is ripe... They sent out han'bills all over hell. They need three thousan', an' they get six thousan'... Whole part a the country's peaches. All ripe together. When ya get 'em picked, ever' goddam one is picked. There ain't another damn thing

in that part a the country to do. An' then them owners don' want you there no more. ... So they kick you out, they move you along. That's how it is" (pp. 334, 335).

The Joads live the same experience in this Hooverville, in which they are submitted to miserable conditions, and none of them succeeds to get a job. As a result, they find themselves in obligation to migrate once again to look for a better place.

This time, the Joads take Route 99 Southward, to push the frontier in another direction. They do not give up their hope of establishing their proper house and farm, despite difficulties. Route 99 is used by Steinbeck as a reversal of Route 66, which led them to misery. In this sense, Henderson argues that

Route 66 was essential for the formation of the migrants' new social consciousness, yet for all its symbolic and cultural weight, it led the Joads down a circular path in their search for house and garden. After the Joads' scrape with the law in the first California 'Hooverville' they came to, they made a narrow pre-dawn escape *down* (italics is the author's) Route 99 (Henderson, 1989/1990: 215).

This route leads the Joads to a government camp known as Weedpatch, which is established by the federal government outside of Bakersfield. There, they find some comfort comparing to the Hooverville. Yet, after a short period, they come to understand that they cannot enjoy this comfort for a long time, since what they are looking for is, in fact, a permanent habitat. Steinbeck, in the novel, gives a positive description to Weedpatch, considering it better than Hooverville, since at least it can lodge the migrants and answer their short term needs. By this, he alludes that perhaps those people are in need of government interference to protect them from the exploitation of the capitalist agriculture. Carl R. Siler argues that

in *The Grapes of Wrath*, the chapters depicting the government camp, Weedpatch, [...] put face and place on the concept of government assistance for individuals in a social emergency [...] camp manager Jim Rawling treated the Joads with civility and respect. The camp provided running water, flush toilets, cleanliness, and sanitation. . In addition dances provided entertainment, and the camping cost could be paid by working (Siler, 2005: 41).

Steinbeck describes the camp as a crossroad between three institutions: the migrant workers, federal relief policy and capitalist agriculture. It is half “secret garden” of which the Joads dreamed and half “rag town” or Hooverville. (Henderson, 1989-1990: 218, 219).

After a succession of events and troubles caused by the landowners’ agents, the Joads find themselves obliged to leave the Weedpatch to pursue their dream elsewhere. This time, they succeed to find a permanent work and habitat in a peach orchard. Yet, they find themselves obliged to leave it once again after being harshly treated by those who take control of it and the problems of their son Tom with the police while organizing a strike to protect the rights of the workers. The Joads finish by taking their car as a shelter, and the novel finishes before they make an end to their migration. By this open ending, Steinbeck leaves the reader with a bit of optimism that these people will one day make an end to their migrating process by establishing a good living.

The migrant farmers’ suffering in California is not limited to their difficulty in finding work and shelter. To all this, added the hatred and the discrimination of the local inhabitants of California towards them. These migrants are perceived as a threat that endangers the interests of the Californians, who do everything to chase them from their lands. This is well demonstrated by Steinbeck in a conversation between a man who comes back from California and Pa and Tom: “Well, Okie use ta mean you was from Oklahoma. Now it means you’re a dirty son-of-a-bitch. ...ever’thing in California is owned. An’ them people that owns it is gonna hand on to it if they got ta kill ever’body in the worl’ to do it” (p. 139). The migrants are attributed different hurting appellations, segregated and even menaced to be murdered.

The large farmers hire the police to keep order in their properties, and this leads to fights and quarrels between the migrants and the police. Steinbeck exemplifies this in these words: “The deputy, sitting on the ground, raised his gun again and then, suddenly, from the group of men, the Reverend Casy stepped. He kicked the deputy in the neck and then stood

back as the heavy man crumpled into unconsciousness.” (p. 180). All these measures are taken because the large farmers are afraid of losing control over the huge number of the workers in whom they feel a hidden force.

This discrimination is also the result of a clash of culture between the “have nots” and the “haves”, as they are called by Steinbeck. In the novel, he presents this cultural discrimination through a conversation between two men working at the serving station, in which they compare the Joads to animals, when they see them crossing the desert; they say:

Them Okies? They’re all hard-lookin’.... Jesus, I’d hate to start out in a jalopy like that.... Well, you and me got sense. Them gddamn Okies got no sense and no feeling. They ain’t human. A human being wouldn’t live like they do. A human being couldn’t stand it to be so dirty and miserable. They ain’t a hell of a lot better than gorillas (p. 301).

From Steinbeck’s description of the Migrant farmers’ life in California, we notice that they endure all kinds of hardships and humiliation that make obstacles for their dream of work. Yet, this does destroy their families and values. They remain unified and learn more the value of family and union and their importance to overcome problems. They, also, succeed to understand that only hard work and collaboration among members of the family and society can help them to endure difficulties in a period of depression. As such, Steinbeck’s characters are described differently from Fitzgerald’s ones whose families and social life are destroyed by the excess of materialism and luxurious life. So, Steinbeck gives the American Dream another meaning different from that associated to it by Fitzgerald in his urban space. Steinbeck presents one generation of youth who endure the consequences of the Great Depression and live a difficult life, moving from one job to another hoping to find better working conditions and higher wages that will permit them to live a decent life. The economic hardships in which they are living have their consequences on their social life, which is characterized by loneliness and romantic emptiness.

## II- Companionship and the American Dream

The importance of companionship among people for making the American Dream come true is mainly highlighted in Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* and Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Both authors communicate the need of their characters for each other to fulfill the dream of wealth, but under different conditions and perspectives. While Fitzgerald's characters express their need for each other to keep the life of hedonism they are accustomed with, Steinbeck's characters express their need of each other to overcome the hardships they are living, and unite their forces to achieve the decent life they are dreaming of.

The main issues of *The Beautiful and Damned*, which are corruption, misfortune, pain, broken beauty, as well as the dissipation of the inner self, are reflective of the self-destructive aspect of the American Dream in Fitzgerald's era. Self-destruction is paralleled with the themes of companionship, loneliness and dependence on others' money rather than working to live a beautiful life. These new traits of the American Dream find their fruitful ground in the American urban space, where everything that reflects modernity is accessible.

In his treatment of all these issues, Fitzgerald selects for his novel "male" and "female" main characters, who share the same dream and the same vision of life, making them very suitable for a good companionship. Before meeting each other, both Anthony and Gloria have artistic dreams related to fame; the former's one is of becoming a famous novelist, and the latter's is of becoming a famous movie actress. What interests each of them is achieving reputation and living the life of leisure of which every man and woman of their generation is dreaming. At the moment when they meet each other, both of them see in inheriting Adam Pitch's fortune a means to achieve their objective. So, the couple's dream becomes common, and their companionship becomes something evident.

Before meeting Gloria, Anthony lives in loneliness and feels himself as someone strange in the city of New York, since a large part of his life was spent abroad. The only



people with whom he spends his time are his two friends Maury Noble and Dick Caramel with whom he has graduated at Harvard, and with whom he discusses subjects related to literature and philosophy. Most of his time is spent in his New York luxurious apartment, in which he reads and tries to prove his intellectual and artistic talents. Sergio Perosa, in *The Art of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, gives us a portrait of Anthony, as it is given by Fitzgerald at the very beginning of the novel:

He is a sophisticated and blasé aesthete, who lives in a comfortable ivory tower in a New York apartment. [...] Anthony has the advantage of a certain culture (he reads Flaubert's *Education Sentimentale*...), is independent and rich and has his future assured by the prospect of a big inheritance. He [...] enjoys the close friendship of a small set of people, through whom he makes hesitant and timid approaches to the world. His real desire is to perpetuate his pleasant life: he is content to contemplate his own image (there is a touch of Narcissus in him, too) in the golden mirrors and polished surfaces of his house. His favorite retreat is the bathtub, and there he weaves immaterial dreams, castles in the air, reveries of himself contemplating sensual beauties, or playing imaginary violins (Perosa, 1965).

It follows from this that Anthony is given a romantic image; he is all the time sunk in his dreams of huge castles and golden future. Moreover, he has a touch of Narcissism, enjoying his beauty and believing that he deserves everything beautiful in life. Since his future material life is assured by the big inheritance which is waiting for him, he finds no reason to work; he spends his free time in reading all what is related to romantic life, such as the French philosophy. At this moment, Anthony has no worries in his life; he has everything that a young person is dreaming of at his age. It seems that he enjoys his loneliness, in which everything is beautiful, and he is just waiting for a beautiful love to add glamour to his life: "He felt that if he had a love he would have hung her picture just facing the tub so that, lost in the soothing steamings of the hot water, he might lie and look up at her and muse warmly and sensuously on her beauty." (pp. 11-12).

When he meets Gloria, who is introduced to him by Dick, he finds in her beauty something that he is looking for and the only remaining dream to complete his beautiful life by filling in his empty soul. Yet, when she enters his life, this beautiful girl marks a turning

point in it. She is the one who succeeds to get him out of his enclosed world, and introduce him to her world of party clubs and different friends, which he finds later very suitable to his case, as it is the world in which he can show off his social superiority through his emulative and conspicuous consumption. In this world, Anthony adds another dream to his previous ones; it is that of being an important person in society, of whom fame and wealth must be seen and discussed by everybody.

At a certain moment, he finds that Gloria will make a good wife for him, believing that his marriage with her will fit the purpose of realizing one part of his dream of being important in society, as, for him, being selected by Gloria as a husband among all the other men who turn around her will mark a success in his life. Moreover, his love of this girl is considered by him as something beautiful, which will make a change in his boring life of loneliness and laziness. He thinks that their marriage will make a social event that will be the subject of all his mates, at least in their present moment.

In one of the passages of the novel, Fitzgerald describes Anthony's desire to possess Gloria through a portrait drawn about him as "a wealthy man, middle-aged enough to be tolerant with a beautiful wife, to baby her whims and indulge her unreason, to wear her as she perhaps wishes to be born –a bright flower in his buttonhole, safe and secure from the things she feared." (p. 99). This strong desire to get her turns into a love story that Fitzgerald describes as being childish, for it symbolizes the empty and stupid world of the two heroes. The author maintains that Anthony's fear to lose Gloria "drove him childishly frantic[...] and wanted to kill Bloekman and make him suffer for his hideous presumption. He was saying this over and over to himself with his teeth tied shut, and a perfect orgy of hate and fright in his eyes." (P. 99). What is marking in their relationship is that instead of attracting her by something important in him, Anthony lures Gloria by the huge fortune he will inherit from his old grandfather once died, being the only heir of the family.

As for Gloria, her life before her relationship with Anthony is not as lonely and boring as his. She is described by Fitzgerald as a model of a flapper, wearing fashionable clothes, making her beauty more noticeable by make ups and bobbing her hair. Moreover, she leads the life of a modern woman, going away with different male friends with whom she establishes friendly relationships. Fitzgerald has never introduced to us a female friend of Gloria. She enjoys her life as a free woman, whose beauty attracted the majority of men in her surrounding, including the film producer Joseph Bloekman, whose only aim in introducing her to the world of cinema is to be close to her.

In his portrait of Gloria, Perosa, reporting Fitzgerald, says that she

Is a new, more dangerous incarnation of the “debutante” or flapper, both careless and fascinating. She, too, is possessed by an illusory dream, the dream of a beauty to whom all is due, who accepts no responsibility and subordinates every other aspect of life to an aesthetic principle. To Gloria, “who took all things of life for hers to choose from and apportion, as though she were continually picking out presents for herself from an exhaustible counter,” it is enough for people to “fit into the picture.” She does not mind “if they don’t do anything.” “I don’t see why they should –in fact it almost astonishes me when anybody does anything.” (Perosa, 1965).

It is clear from this description given to Gloria that her character is similar to that of Anthony as far as their attitudes towards beauty, dreams, fascination and work are concerned. This makes it evident that their future marriage will rather be based on resemblance than complementarity. In fact, there is no need of complementarity in their relation, since both of them are detached from the world of work or personal achievement.

When Gloria accepts to marry Anthony, she is, in fact, integrated in his dream of inheriting his grandfather’s fortune. She is convinced that he is the man, who will give her the chance to continue the mode of life she started without being obliged to work. This is illustrated by her giving up of her project of being an actress just after her marriage and by many expressions in which she wishes that “someday when we (Anthony and Gloria) have more money, we’ll build a magnificent estate.” (p. 116).

In her view about marriage, she shows modern and revolutionary ideas comparing to the established view about it. She says that “marriage was created not to be a background but to need one. -Mine is going to be outstanding. It can’t, shan’t be the setting- it’s going to be the performance, the live, lovely, glamorous performance, and the world shall be the scenery.” (p. 147). This quotation reinforces the resemblance between Anthony and Gloria’s aim through this marriage, which is to be watched by all the people.

In her words, Gloria compares her marriage to a piece of theatre with a scenery and performance, to which she associates the adjectives “outstanding,” “glamorous,” “live” and “lovely.” The scenery, according to her, will be the whole world, as she is dreaming that Anthony’s wealth will permit her to visit all the world and accomplish what she started to enjoy to do before, when she was travelling nation-wide. In fact, she is known as “Coast-to-Coast” Gloria (p. 58).

While Fitzgerald’s characters lead a life of extravagance and laziness, waiting their dream of becoming millionaires to be fulfilled, Steinbeck’s ones live a life of perseverance, as hard work is necessary for them to fulfill a dream. Moreover, companionship and mutual help are necessary to endure difficulties. The American Dream in *Of Mice and Men* is expressed via the two male characters George and Lennie, who unified their forces to make a dream of owning a ranch come true. George contributes with his rational force, providing the mentally disabled Lennie with ideas and hopes, and plays the role of his protector. Lennie, in his part, is always ready to contribute with his huge physical force to perform any job that can assure money to realize the scheme.

All along the novel, George is presented as a wise man knowing how to react in the due and right moment. His role as Lennie’s protector and tutor is apparent at the very first action of the novel, when he orders Lennie to stop drinking water from the stream like an animal, and advises him to drink only from cooling water in order not to be sick. His devotion

to instruct and protect his friend does not stop here, but continues all along the novel. Within the same chapter, he orders him to throw the dead mouse and to be patient until the day they will own their own farm to pet his own animals freely, and he reminds him several times to keep himself out of any trouble at work if he wants this project to be accomplished. He also advises him to come back to the river's shore and hide himself in case of any danger; predicting from the very beginning that Lennie cannot keep out of troubles.

George's tutorship and protection of Lennie is also shown when they reached the place of their work. When the boss wonders about the fact that Lennie does not talk and about their friendship, George takes the floor immediately, and answers that Lennie belongs to his family and that he is a little bit mentally retarded, but he is not dangerous and he is a good and strong worker that can perform many hard tasks. To urge his friend to execute his orders, George always reminds him about their dream of having a ranch of their own and being able to rise their own animals, and thus having the freedom to pet rabbits whatever he wants.

Lennie, in his part, does his best to follow George's instructions and keep out of trouble, despite his strong ability to defend himself physically against any attack. Once on the ranch, he keeps silent in front of the boss, as George orders him to do, and when he is attacked by Curley, he does not show any reaction until George gives him his permission to defend himself. Moreover, he always tries to keep distance from Curley's wife as his friend advises him to do. George's repetition of the farm dream functions as a lullaby that keeps Lennie quiet and do anything necessary to get money.

Despite Lennie's readiness to follow his companion's instructions about a good behavior, he puts him several times in jeopardy, because of his being conducted by his instincts manifested in his physical need to be in touch with soft things. Jeffry Schultz and Luchen Li describe Lennie as the one who "does not have the intellectual capacity to erect emotional barriers, or to acquire the niceties of polite intercourse. He operates as a natural

force with the most primitive of human inclinations.” They add that “because of his mental limitations? Lennie reacts instinctively, not nobly, though his instincts are decent and loving.” (Schultz and Li, 2005: 146).

Describing the nature of the relationship between George and Lennie, Schultz and Li argue that George shows braveness in his taking care of a fellow human being with whom he has no blood connection. He is, in fact, the only one who sees Lennie as “a human being rather than an insensitive target of fun.” (Ibid.). The reason behind his sympathizing with him raises from a specific need of a companion that can alleviate his loneliness, according to the same authors. He stands “for the family he never has had or anticipates having.” He adds “permanence” to his “existence”. At the same time, he associates him with his goal which is not actually realized (Ibid., p. 146). In the novel, George expresses his need and necessity to keep nearer to his friend, when he tells him: “I want you to stay with me Lennie. [...] No you stay with me.” (p. 13). In his part, Lennie shows his need to his friend protector, as he is the only one who cares of him and provides him with a goal to live for.

George emphasizes his and his companion’s need for each other when he tells Lennie repeatedly, “...But not us! An’ why? Because ...I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you.” (pp. 15, 103). While George’s role is more manifested in the novel than that of Lennie, the latter constitutes the germ of the former’s role. He is the one who keeps it functioning. In this sense, Peter Lisca argues that “the dream of the farm originates with Lennie; and it is only through Lennie, who also makes it impossible, that the dream has any meaning for George.” (Lisca, 1956-1957: 234). Lisca explains the way in which both of George and Lennie need each other by pointing out that

Lennie’s need for George is obvious, but that George’s need for Lennie, though less obvious, is as great. In his most candid appraisal of himself, George says, “I ain’t so bright neither, or I wouldn’t be buckin’ barley for my fifty and found. If I was even a little bit smart, I’d have, my own little place...” He needs him, however, as more than just a rationalization for his own failure; for George not only protects but *directs* Lennie [...] Another aspect of the relationship becomes apparent when George tells Slim that Lennie “can’t think of nothing to do himself, but he sure can take orders.”

Since George gives the orders, Lennie gives him a sense of power (Bloom, 2006: 76, 77).

So, in addition to the fact that Lennie provides George with companionship and a sense for his dream, he gives him a kind of superiority in his society, as he gets the image of his friend's protector and director among his fellows.

Moreover, the two friends' companionship provides them with a sense of difference comparing to the other ranch workers, as all the rest of the characters in the novel live in loneliness and need for companionship. Describing the relation that joins them with each other, George always draws a comparison between themselves and the other men on the ranch, "Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world [...] They ain't got nothing to look ahead to.", and he continued but saying "...But not us! An' why? Because ...I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you." (pp. 15, 103).

George and Lennie's companionship is perceived as something abnormal by the majority of the other ranch men. At first, the boss wonders how two guys travel with each other looking for a job. Slim, also, questions their relationship when he asks George when and how he met Lennie and why he protects him. He says:

I hardly never seen two guys travel together. You know how the hands are, they just come in and get their bunk and work a month and then they quit and go out alone. Never seem to give a damn about nobody. It jus' seems kinda funny a cuckoo like him and a smart little guy like you travelin' together (p. 39)

In addition to the fact that the two men's relationship is suspected by people around them, they are envied by most of their fellows, as each one of them suffers from a specific kind of loneliness, and cannot find a way to alleviate it.

All the characters in *Of Mice and Men* are described as being single, and Steinbeck makes no reference to family in the novel, except for that of the boss and his son. People's loneliness is, in fact, the result of many factors that prevent them from living an integrated life in their society. It is caused partly by the economic hardships they are living, which do not

permit them to found families or to live with their parental families, and partly by the fact that in the field of work they are strange to each other.

Loneliness and need of companionship in the novel are expressed especially through the characters of Candy, Crooks and Curley's wife. Candy, the oldest man on the ranch, expresses his loneliness and his need for companionship, when he loses his old and sick dog that is shot by Carlson. To alleviate his loneliness, he offers to join George and Lennie in their dream to spend the rest of his life in some quiet place near these two guys, and to make his future more secure. As he finds the idea of buying a ranch interesting, he does not hesitate to invest all his life savings by contributing in this project.

Crooks, the Negro as he is called on the ranch, expresses his need for companionship through his conversation with Lennie. More lonely than the others, Crooks experiences a double solitude; one is related to his work and the other to his race. Being a black, he is not accepted to get a place among the other ranch men in the bunkhouse. This is why he lives alone in a separate room. Comprehending the white men's attitude towards him, he explains to Lennie when he visits him that he is not wanted in his room, because he is black. When he recognizes Lennie's innocent soul, he invites him to come in, and shares with him a short conversation through which he starts to be lured by George and Lennie's dream. Harold Bloom argues that "all Lennie wants", when he visits Crooks, "is company –which, to some degree, is all Crooks wants as well, though he does not want to admit it, given how he has been treated by the men of the ranch." (Bloom, 2006: 42). In his conversation with Lennie, Crooks goes on to explain to him at which point separation is harmful and companionship is important: "just bein' with another guy. That's all" (pp. 39, 40).

As for Curley's wife, the only female character in the novel, she experiences loneliness in relation to gender and in relation to marriage. Being the only woman in the ranch, she feels isolation among men and annoyance at her home, and she always tries to find



a way to alleviate her loneliness and boredom by flirting with different men on the ranch. Her seeking of companionship among the ranch men is also due to her hatred of her husband because of his lack of attention towards her.

She, too, finds companionship in Lennie, whom she tries to seduce, especially when she knows that he is the one behind her husband's broken hand. Before offering him to feel the softness of her hair at the end of the novel, she exchanges a conversation with him, and explains to him at which point she feels sad in her marriage. She tells him about her dream of becoming an actress, and her mother's being against it. Her marriage with Curley is, in fact, an escape from her mother's control. Yet, she tells Lennie that she feels trapped with him, as does at her home. What Curley's wife is looking for, in fact, is independence.

It is clear from Fitzgerald's and Steinbeck's treatment of the value of work and companionship in shaping the social and economic dreams of the characters in their novels that life in the rural spaces of the 1930 is so much different from the urban spaces of the 1920s. *The Beautiful and Damned's* main character Anthony, feeling that he has got everything he wants in his life as a member of the Bourgeois class, seeks companionship in marriage, which he finds the best way to alleviate his loneliness. He thinks that the only thing that he lacks at that moment is the love of a beautiful woman, who can lead him out of his boredom. Steinbeck's characters, however, being plunged in poverty and necessity of work to assure a minimum of living, have no conception of love or marriage in their minds.

In *Of Mice and Men*, except for the Boss's son, all the other characters are bound to remain single. Companionship, in *Of Mice and Men*, is rather identified with work and independence from the bosses. George and Lennie's companionship, for instance, is guided by their determination to unite their forces and work hard to live an independent life from the ranch owners by owning their own farm. Moreover, Curley's wife's marriage is guided by the hope of getting independence from her parents to achieve her desire of becoming an actress.

Ethics of work in Fitzgerald's fiction are secondary, as people engage in any kind of work, legal or illegal to secure a certain social position, and people of a higher class find in work a kind of shame and mediocrity. Work, in Fitzgerald's fiction, then, is rather associated with social position. In Steinbeck's fiction, however, ethics of hard work are given much importance, and are used as means to secure a living. Work, for Steinbeck, is a sign of braveness, especially under the harsh living conditions of the 1930s that do not permit people to secure even a humble job.

The study of the American Dream in relation to work and companionship in F. Scott Fitzgerald's and John Steinbeck's fiction leads us to the conclusion that despite the fact that both of the authors express the impossibility of the American Dream in both the urban and rural spaces, their characters experience this impossibility in different ways. Fitzgerald's characters destroyed themselves and their dreams by themselves. All the opportunities are open to them to maintain a certain prestige they started to enjoy, but they do not want to seize them. The dream they want to fulfill is, in fact, existent, and the ground is prepared for them to maintain it. The fact is that the extravagant way of life they lead does not give them time to do anything worthy in their lives to keep their social status. Steinbeck's characters, however, struggle with difficult socio-economic conditions to make a dream they have never seen a reality. Contrary to Fitzgerald's characters, they invest all their efforts, but the dream remains in their minds. It is, then, apparent that ethics of work and values of companionship are revised by Steinbeck if compared to Fitzgerald's discussion of them. This revision is due to the socio-economic conditions of the 1930s, which are different from those of the 1920s. Life conditions in the two decades affected even the institution of marriage and gender roles in family and society.

### **Chapter III: Marriage, Modern Gender Roles and the American Dream in Fitzgerald and Steinbeck's Selected Fiction**

Marriage and gender roles in Fitzgerald and Steinbeck's fiction are presented in relation to the socio-economic conditions of the two decades of the 1920s and the 1930s respectively. Being social issues, they are determined by the economic dreams of the characters of each writer's fiction. Steinbeck gives an image about the institution of marriage in the rural environment that seems to be revisionary comparing to the one given to it by Fitzgerald within the urban space. The authors also present a reversal in gender roles within the family and society, following the change that happened to the American economy. Indeed, the depression of the 1930s obliged people to give up the excess of hedonism of the 1920s, urging both men and women to revise their roles at the level of family and society.

#### **I- Marriage and the American Dream**

In Fitzgerald's fiction, Marriage is used as a way to secure the dream of social mobility and wealth without resorting to work. In *The Beautiful and Damned*, the subject is discussed in relation to the couple Anthony and Gloria. The latter is presented as a free woman, who has all the possibilities to make her dream come true before marriage. Yet, she abandons it and joins Anthony's dream of inheritance through her marriage with him. As a result, she is always showing respect to her husband and glorifying her marriage as a very important social event, despite her deliberate way of life during her celibacy and her revolutionary and challenging ideas about marriage.

Gloria's attitude about marriage and love is shown via her relationship with Anthony and the other men she has known before him. Indeed, she is described with a lot of progressiveness to the point that her social surrounding views her as a sexually free woman, and her patriarchal and tyrannical father is always mad at her. The fact is that Gloria refuses the traditional idea of staying at home waiting for a good husband that her family will select

for her, a kind of marriages to which she refers to as “colorless marriages.” Her sexual experiments, according to her, are the only way that can help her to opt for the man who suits her sexually and mentally. She claims that a “woman should be able to kiss a man beautifully and romantically without any desire to be his wife or his mistress.” (p. 109).

She also declares that her love relations “had no effect” on her (p. 177). In fact, when one of her earlier boyfriends, Percy, tries to do with her something beyond kissing, she does not allow him to satisfy his desire, as she does not find him her suitable husband. The only man for whom she allows sex before marriage is Anthony, and this does not happen until she makes up her mind to marry him: “Maybe I’ll marry him some time.” (p. 141). It was this kind of marriage that she finds colorful (Tachibana, 2004: 143).

It seems from Gloria’s views about sex and marriage that she has not adopted all the modern attitudes about them, and she is not fully liberated in these matters. Despite her complete freedom, she is still influenced by the traditional female education that a good woman has not to offer her body to any man or get multiple sexual relations. The reason is perhaps the fact that the novel’s setting before Gloria’s marriage has not yet attained the 1920s. It is until the last part of the novel that the 1920s start. So, Gloria at that time developed a mixed character of a Victorian and modern woman. What matters for her is not the fact of getting a complete sexual freedom. The freedom she is looking for, however, is a freedom of selecting the husband that suits her character (Ibid. p. 144).

In fact, when she opts for Anthony, she is not only attracted by his fortune but even by his character. She finds him different from all her previous suitors, like Joseph Bloekman, who views woman as “the miraculous mouthpiece of posterity” (p. 95), or Percy who “demanded a girl who’d been never kissed and who liked to sew and sit home and pay tributes to his self-esteem.” (p. 175). Anthony, according to her, respects “all the originality in her” (p. 141), and finds her close in mind with him, forgetting about their difference in gender.

During their engagement, Anthony explains to her several times that he is not tied to the traditional marriages based on gender differences, using some expressions that illustrate this fact, as when he tells her, “We’re twins” (p. 127), or “You’ve got a mind like mine. Not strongly gendered either way.” (p. 130). Gloria admires all this in Anthony’s character as she feels that she will be able to manipulate him at any subject. What Gloria is looking for, in fact, is dominance not liberty. After their marriage, she manifests her desire for dominance overtly in their honeymoon, when Anthony calls her “my darling wife”, and she answers him by saying, “Don’t say ‘wife.’ I’m your mistress. Wife’s such an ugly word. Your ‘permanent mistress’ is so much more tangible and desirable.” (p. 153). Her marriage with Anthony, in fact, is based on the desire of social mobility and dominance.

In *The Great Gatsby*, social mobility is more emphasized in relation to marriage. Fitzgerald introduces women similar in character with Gloria, as Daisy Buchannan, who abandons her love, and marries Tom Buchannan to raise to his social class and enjoy his life of luxury. In fact, their only object in life becomes looking for well-to do men, who can provide them with all the necessary means to live plainly their era. As a result, they lost their traditional role of preserving their families and the moral values of their society. Instead, they are freed to embrace modernity with its consumerism and fashion as men do.

Men, on their part, have to do everything to secure money in order to attract the most beautiful woman because the latter is a sign of success and heroism. In this sense, Kirk Curnutt comments on the 1920s man by saying that “Love for him is rarely a quest for companionship but, instead, a confirmation of the perfected identity. The women his beaux pursue are less important for who they are for what they represent; they are the symbols and rewards of the hero’s success.” (Curnutt, 2007: 59). Men use marriage as a way to show their power of attracting beautiful women by their wealth and social position, as it is the case of Tom Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby* and Anthony in *The Beautiful and Damned*. Even

marriage in this decade, is influenced by the materialistic and the emulative way of life of the urban environment. People do not show respect to this institution, and they are always ready to cheat each other, as the case of all the married characters in *The Great Gatsby*.

In Steinbeck's fiction, however, characters perceive marriage differently. They are influenced by the traditional life in their rural environment, and the socio-economic conditions of the 1930s. In his fiction, Steinbeck introduces us to young people who are not ready to think about marriage and family because their economic conditions do not permit them to establish families. This confirms their sense of responsibility, consciousness and respect for this sacred institution, which represents the most serious social bond. In *Of Mice and Men*, all the ranch workers are single. Marriage is presented only through Curley, whose economic conditions permit to establish a family. The characters' motives to establish families are, however, different from those of Fitzgerald's characters.

Curley's wife, in *Of Mice and Men*, for instance, perceives her marriage in a different way from Gloria in *The Beautiful and Damned*. Her marriage with Curley, according to her conversation with Lennie, is an urgent choice that she has made to escape her mother's restrictions and interference in her life and dreams. Her decision is taken the night when she enters in confrontation with her mother, after discovering that the latter has destroyed or hidden the letter she received from a movie director to start work as an actress. At this night, she meets Curley in a party and accepts his offer for marriage, hoping that she will find with him the liberty to make her dream come true. In this context, Harold Bloom argues that

her dream [...] was to be on the stage, or "in pitchers" (the movies), given that men had come to town and offered her such possibilities. The man who made her the promise romanced her, probably got what he wanted, and then promised to write her. She never received the letter, which unconvincingly claims is because her "ol' lady stole it." [...] However, she tells Lennie, she doesn't like Curley and feels just as trapped with him as she did at home. She asserts again, finally, that she could have been someone, that a man said she "was a natural." At the claim, she "made a small grand gesture with her arm and hand to show that she could act (Bloom, 2006: 50)

Her marriage with Curley is not based on any sentiment of love or material attraction; it is rather an escape from a despised situation.

Curley, on his part, uses this marriage to a beautiful girl just to show his difference or superiority comparing to the other men of his ranch, who live in solitude and loneliness, being incapable of making families. The fact is that he has never cared if his wife loves him or not. His disaster is that after their marriage, his wife does not only lack love towards him, but she hates him after realizing that she has taken the wrong decision as far as her dream, and feeling that she is trapped by this marriage, because of her husband's excess of jealousy and his lack of attention and pugnacious behavior. Through Curley's relation with his wife, Steinbeck provides the reader with another example of the absence of romanticism in the 1930s environment. Curley, in fact, proves to be not much different from the other men on the ranch, as he lives a distant life from his wife, who has never loved him.

Curley's wife discovers that her marriage with a man from a high social class is not the kind of solution she is looking for to escape her situation of parental control. The fact is that she moved from one dominance to another, from the dominance of her mother to that of her husband. As a result, she expresses her hatred to the latter in a form of revenge by cheating him with other men on the ranch. The relations she is making with the ranch workers are, on the one hand, an escape from her solitude, and on another hand, a kind of performance of her role as an actress by exposing and investing her physical beauty; a role she is deprived of by her social environment.

From Curley's wife's situation, we can draw a comparison between her attitude towards marriage and woman's position in society and Gloria's perception of these issues. While Gloria has given up her dream by her own will to join the institution of marriage that she keeps until the end of the novel despite her husband's irresponsibility, Curley's wife is deprived of her dream by her social environment, starting from her parental family and

finishing by her marital one. As such, what Curley's wife is looking for is independence from her husband and her society as a whole not dominance, as Gloria does. This highlights a difference in the perception of marriage in the American urban and rural environments.

## **II- Gender Roles and the American Dream**

Gender roles are discussed by Fitzgerald and Steinbeck in their novels *The Great Gatsby* and *The Grapes of Wrath* respectively. Considering gender roles in the two novels, revising principles are apparent in the latter if compared to the former. In *The Great Gatsby*, the change that affected gender roles in the twentieth century is manifested all along the novel, especially through the families referred to by the author: the Buchanans belonging to "Old money" families, the Wilsons who belong to "No money" and Jay Gatsby, the representative of the "New money". The old money people are those who inherited fortunes from their parents, who were rich before the 1920s. The new money people, however, are those who prospered during the economic boom of the 1920s in the United States either by legal or illegal means. The no money people are those people who can not get profit from the prosperity and the wealth the United States enjoyed during the 1920s despite their hard work.

In the Buchanan family, gender roles are typical of old money families during the 1920s, but characterized by hypocrisy. They pretend to stick to their traditional social values of prudery and conservatism but none of them does or means what he says. Ronald Berman says that "some of the words that Fitzgerald later uses in *The Great Gatsby*, like 'family' and 'home', seem to have fairly continuous meanings. But, their use in the text suggests that a process of redefinition has already begun." (Berman, 1997: 5). Indeed, when Tom Buchanan invokes the word 'family', we are lost between the traditional Victorian family and the modern one (Ibid). Moreover, in their conversations about the values of home and women, they show hypocrisy. For instance, when Tom says about Jordan that it is bad for a woman to



run around the country alone, his wife Daisy answers him “coldly”, because she knows that he means that she will be available to men like him (Berman, 1997: 39).

Tom Buchanan, the representative of the male gender in his family, is an American upper class man, who uses the money he inherited to satisfy all his desires, either with women or in other matters. Contrary to the other characters, such as Wilson and Gatsby, he is a professional football player. It is needless for him to work hard to live well. We are given his physical description, which is the typical one for a man: strong and virile, but without any reference to suffering or obstacles encountered in his way to have his luxurious life, since he has not had any one:

Now he was a sturdy straw-haired man of thirty with a rather hard mouth and a supercilious manner. Two shining arrogant eyes had established dominance over his face and gave him the appearance of always leaning aggressively forward. Not even the effeminate swank of his riding clothes could hide the enormous power of that body—he seemed to fill those glistening boots until he strained the top lacing, and you could see a great pack of muscle shifting when his shoulder moved under his thin coat. It was a body capable of enormous leverage – a cruel body (p. 6).

His long free time allows him to get anything he wants in his life, especially Daisy. The latter is a means for him to confirm his wealth and ability to get that beautiful woman that everyone desires. In fact, he is described as an unfaithful husband, who has many relationships with other women, especially Myrtle Wilson who is attracted by his wealth.

Daisy, the representative of the female gender in this family, is the perfect example of a flapper, a modern woman. Many examples in the novel show her breaking with the traditional gender roles of women. Before marrying Tom Buchanan, she is sexually free, and has many relationships with different men in her life:

She went with a slightly older crowd –when she went with anyone at all. Wild rumors were circulating about her –how her mother had found her packing her bag one winter night to go to New York and say good bye to a soldier who was going overseas....After that she didn't play around with the soldiers anymore, but only with a few flat-footed, short –sighted young men in town...and in February she was presumably engaged to a man from New Orleans .In June she married Tom Buchanan of Chicago...” (p. 82).

When she decides to get married and make a family, she opts for the rich Tom, who can provide her with the luxurious and easy life every woman is looking for at that time. Indeed, it is not so difficult for her to get him because beauty of face is very important for men, and getting a beautiful woman like her is interesting for Tom too. In the novel, Fitzgerald describes her life in the Buchannan's home:

...in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women were buoyed up as though upon an anchored balloon. The other girl, Daisy, made an attempt to rise – she leaned slightly forward with a conscientious expression – then she laughed, an absurd, charming little laugh...her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth...” (p. 12).

Here, Daisy is described as a princess, who is most of the time in her ‘castle’ doing nothing except focusing on her beauty. Contrary to the woman of the nineteenth century or what is called ‘the angel in the house’, who was in charge of the domestic tasks, such as cleaning, cooking and taking care of her husband and children, Daisy does none of these tasks. Even her daughter is always with the servant and rarely sees her mother. Daisy has not the affection a mother should have for her daughter; she is only dreaming of her future, hoping that she will find a rich family that will permit her to be a flapper like her, she says: “...And I hope she’ll be a fool-that’s the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool” (p. 24). Doing so, she challenges the traditional gender roles.

Her marriage with Tom is, in fact, a chance for her to maintain the modern life of extravagance she is dreaming of. She has not to work, since her husband provides her with all what she needs. As such, she is free to go outside whenever she wants, she buys and wears and eats all what she desires, and also smokes, something reserved only to men previously: “In the music-room Gatsby turned on a solitary lamp beside the piano. He lit Daisy’s trembling match...” (p. 82).

In addition to the Buchannans, who represent the upper class in *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald introduces another type of family; those working hard to achieve the wealth they

are observing without embracing it. This kind of family is represented by the Wilsons, who are also affected by the change happened to the American society in the 1920s. Contrary to the wealthy Tom, who gets a huge amount of money without any suffering, Wilson works hard in his garage to live decently. He is the example of the traditional man, whose only concern is working to live well with his family.

The narrator, Nick Carraway, introduces him when he goes to his garage with Tom Buchanan, who actually goes there to see his mistress, Myrtle, Wilson's wife. This highlights another characteristic of Wilson, his naivety. The fact that he has a rude life obliges him to work continuously, forgetting thus to think of other things in his life. Via Wilson, Fitzgerald contrasts between the traditional and modern male roles of the American society. It is mainly done to emphasize the specificity of this new generation. Nick, in the following quotation explains how George Wilson suffers to secure a living:

It had occurred to me that this shadow of a garage must be a blind, and that sumptuous and romantic apartments were concealed overhead, when the proprietor himself appeared in the door of an office wiping his hands on a piece of waste .He was a blond, spiritless man, anaemic , and faintly handsome. When he saw us a damp gleam of hope sprang into his light blue eyes (p. 32).

From this quotation, we notice that George Wilson's life differs from that of the wealthy Tom Buchanan, who, thanks to the money he inherited, is not in need to work hard to live.

While Wilson is persevering to make his family live decently, his wife, Myrtle, is another example of the flapper. Like all the women of her age, she is lured by the life of upper class women like Daisy. Through her behavior, she is always trying to imitate them. Despite the fact that she does not belong to their class, she carries on a living as an upper class woman with fashionable clothes and make ups, and takes part in parties without consulting her husband or caring about her house. It is the way she finds to get a place in this new society. In the novel, the writer describes her as an artificial woman, who is only interested in having fun and showing wealth and "hauteur" in front of the members of society:

She was in the middle thirties, and faintly stout, but she carried her flesh sensuously as some women can. Her face, above a spotted dress of dark blue crêpe-de-chine, contained no facet or gleam of beauty, but there was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smoldering [...] The intense vitality that had been so remarkable in the garage was converted into impressive *hauteur*. Her laughter, her gestures, her assertions became more violently affected moment by moment, and as she expanded the room grew smaller around her, until she seemed to be revolving on a noisy, creaking pivot through the smoky air (pp. 31, 36).

Myrtle Wilson represents the superficiality of American women during the 1920s and shows how the family's harmony can be easily demolished because of money and social status. She is the perfect example of the absurdity of life during 1920s America. Even though her husband is working hard and loves her, she prefers having an affair with Tom Buchanan, since the latter can offer her all what Wilson cannot. Tom, however, does not love her; he takes her just as an object of pleasure that he possesses and that satisfies his desires when he wants. Myrtle's case is not much different from that of Daisy; they are not looking for love, they are rather looking for luxurious life, and they are enjoying this change in their lives.

The change that affected the American social life in the 1920s is also expressed via the character of Jay Gatsby and his relation with Daisy Buchanan. Gatsby is, as it is already mentioned, the character used by Fitzgerald to deal with the typical man of the twenties. He symbolizes the American Dream, and this category called "New Money", which emerged in the 1920s after the economic boom in the United States. He lives alone in a great mansion in 'West Egg', a fashionable island in New York full of 'New money'. No one can guess the source of his wealth; many hypotheses are given in the novel mainly from his guests in the huge parties he organizes in his mansion. "People say, somebody told me they thought he killed a man once [...] it's more that he was a German spy during the war [...] he was in the American army during the war" (p. 50).

Jay Gatsby is always hiding the source of his huge fortune that he has grown from bootlegging. Unlike George Wilson, he prefers to give up his virtues of hard work and long for easy ways to get money because he comes to realize that the virtues of hard work are not

functioning in the Eastern cities. Moreover, his dream to regain Daisy as quickly as possible makes him in a hurry to secure large sums of money in a short period of time. His longing for this kind of business is the result of the fact that women at that period interested only in wealthy men. Nick informs us that “Gatsby bought that house so that Daisy would be just across the bay [...] He wants her to see his house.” (p. 85). In fact, he succeeds to attract her, and to establish with her an extra marital love relationship. Nick, in chapter V of the novel, describes the moment when Gatsby succeeds to regain Daisy as the happiest day in his life:

As I watched him he adjusted himself a little visibly. His hand took hold of hers, and as she said something low in his ear he turned toward her with a rush of emotion. I think that voice held him most, with its fluctuating, feverish warmth, because it couldn't be over dreamed –that voice was a deathless song. (p. 97).

From Daisy's love and connection with Gatsby once she learns that he became a wealthy man, who owns a great mansion, we deduce that she married Tom Buchanan only for his wealth. Thus, we understand that marriage and love in the 1920s lost their value as sacred social bonds; they became rather a commercial bond between a husband and his wife. Men represented for women an economic security that could keep them always in a high position in their society. Women, on the other hand, represented for men an opportunity to display their power and wealth. The proof is that at the end of the novel, when Tom Buchanan discovers Daisy's relationship with Gatsby, he does not revolt against her. Instead, he expresses his competition and challenge to Gatsby, trying to reduce him in the eyes of Daisy by revealing the nature of his business, and by being confident that he cannot get her.

Tom's reaction delineates also the decline of the legendary authority that men have upon women which is another fact shown by Fitzgerald in his novel. This decline is also shown via the character of Myrtle, who is not only unfaithful to her faithful husband but also authoritative upon him. This is illustrated when she gives orders to him, when Tom visits her husband's garage with Nick: ‘Get some chairs, why don't you? So somebody can sit down [...] ‘oh, sure’ agreed Wilson hurriedly...’ (p. 32).

Wilson remains always faithful and obedient to his wife despite he is always suspecting her of having a lover. At the end, when she is killed, he reacts in the same way as Tom when he is informed that his wife is cheating him with Gatsby. He immediately believes Tom who tells him that Gatsby is her lover, and he kills the latter before committing self murder, giving Tom a double chance to get rid of his rival and to bury his relation with Myrtle forever, continuing his life peacefully as if nothing has happened.

Both men and women, in the novel, enjoy the change that affected their social life. Ronald Berman argues that “women as well as men had in the early twenties begun to share the ambitions of change.” (Berman, 1997: 12). This change creates in them a kind of energy and movement from outmoded sources toward money, sex and self-fashioning. This mode of life creates in their souls a kind of moderation since women give up some of their traditional roles to embrace masculinity, and men, on their part give up some of their masculine roles to taste femininity. Modernism conjoined the sexes: “Tom shows effeminate swank and Jordan looks like a young cadet.” (Ibid., p. 25).

Fitzgerald, in his novel, gives an image of a new woman and a new man in the 1920s America. The modern gender roles are mainly shown through Gatsby’s parties in which this ‘new woman’ is given the chance to go outside in the night, smoke, drink, wear short skirts and be sexually free . This new woman is no longer obliged to care of the house and the children since with the economic sufficiency they can have servants in their houses to deal with these tasks. Woman’s freedom, nevertheless, is not complete, since women in the novel are portrayed as being dependant on men, who are the ones who possess wealth, as in the case of Daisy with Tom and Gatsby, and Myrtle with Tom. Women, as portrayed by Fitzgerald, have not yet been well prepared to take in task their economic life, and to be independent from men. None of the female characters presented in the novel is involved in a domain of

production that lets her be economically independent. They have passive roles in the society with two objectives in their lives: being rich and having fun.

In Steinbeck's fiction, social and gender roles are presented differently from Fitzgerald. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, both men and women are given active roles and presented with a traditional character that indicates their belonging to a rural space. Unlike Fitzgerald's characters, Steinbeck's are not exposed to the corrupted world of the city that can make a change in their traditional values of family and love. Moreover, the hardships they meet in their life due to the economic depression engenders a positive change in their personalities, making women more economically and socially active than before, and making men more responsible towards their families and society.

Gender roles in *The Grapes of Wrath* are defined within the Joad family that Steinbeck uses as a prototype of all the farmers' families at that time. Through this family, Steinbeck presents the change that happened to the personalities of both male and female characters, but he focuses mainly on the important and active role that women play within the American society during the 1930s, and their great contribution in finding solutions to the problems caused by the great economic depression. He shows how women find themselves obliged to struggle with men for survival, and how men find themselves obliged to give up some of their traditional traits as home leaders to accept women as active agents. The latter can take important decisions in their families, when men find many difficulties to be bread owners with the high rate of unemployment that characterized the decade. The active social role that Steinbeck attributes to women starts to develop during the Joad's journey to California, when strong relations between the migrant farmers are established.

Along this journey, "a new familial relationship begins to grow, based on joint need and reciprocal responsibility" (Schultz and Luchen, 2005: 95). It is, then, at the moment when men cannot bear alone the hardships of the trip that a shift from a male dominated society to a

society in which women have an important role and even reverse the balance of power. At the beginning of the novel, Steinbeck portrays a traditional Western family, in which men bear the responsibility of feeding and defending their women and children, and which is characterized by a hierarchy based on age and sex. Many examples in the novel illustrate this fact. For instance, when Casy asks if he can travel with them to California, Ma answers him that only men have the right to take such a kind of decision:

Ma looked to Tom to speak, because he was a man, but Tom did not speak. She let him have the chance that was his right, and then she said, Why, we'd be proud to have you .Course I can't say right now; Pa says all the men'll talk tonight and figger when we gonna start. I guess maybe we better not sat till all the men come. John an' Pa an' Noah an' Tom an' Grampa an' Al an' Connie, they're gonna figger soon's they get back (p. 98).

The above answer shows that even though Ma Joad has some power, the family is always under men's authority.

Another image of a traditional family is given by the positions taken by the Joads in the truck which carries them to California, when Uncle John takes the best place in front of the driver to the detriment of the pregnant Rose of Sharon:

Had he not been fifty years old, and so one of the natural rulers of the family, Uncle John would have preferred not to sit in the honor place beside the driver. He would have liked Rose of Sharon to sit there. This was impossible, because she was young and a woman (p. 100).

From the above examples, we notice that at the beginning of the novel, Steinbeck does not integrate women in decision taking; they are depicted as being subordinate to and dependent on men. The latter are the ones who take the responsibility of every matter and find out solutions to each problem; they are the leaders. This organization within the family is, in fact, the norm of life in the 1930s on the farm lands of the West.

When the family is dislocated from these lands, this structure is broken with the break of its economy. Women see that their families begin to be broken, as the male members cannot perform their attributed roles as feeding and protecting agents. As a result, they start to



challenge the old structure of gender roles in the family by doing everything they find necessary to keep their families' union. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, this role is performed by Ma Joad, who, according to Steinbeck, becomes the "citadel of the family". All along their journey along Route 66 and once in California, Ma Joad transforms her family from being patriarchal to a matriarchal one, by becoming the one who commands. In this context, Carl Siler argues about Ma that "In an era of male dominance, she becomes the strength of the family. Ma finds herself losing her home, dealing with the death of Granma, and coping with the breakup of the family." (Siler, 2005: 43). In the novel, Steinbeck links Ma's raising to the position of a house keeper to her female instinct of keeping the union of family members, not to something done in the purpose to prove her power. At the end, her instincts are transformed to an act of heroism, since she succeeds to impose herself as the brain of the family; he says:

Ma's challenge is made to prevent the weakening of the group structure, not for personal power. The fact that she acts on instinct as an agent for group preservation is underlined by her surprise at what she has done. Once the group realizes that she has taken control, that she is the power, they decide not to try to fight her (p. 80).

He adds,

She seemed to know, to accept, to welcome her position, the citadel of the family, the strong place that could not be taken.... She seemed to know that if she swayed the family shook, and if she ever really deeply wavered or despaired, the family would fall, the family will to function would be gone (p. 100).

Ma's role in keeping the family unified is shown in many episodes in the novel. For instance, when they decide to move to California, she works to be sure that all the family will move, including Grampa and Granma. In their road to California, she refuses Tom's idea of staying with Casy to repair the car and let the family continue the journey without them. She does not only refuse the idea, but also challenges her husband's opinion when he approves Tom's idea; she insists that whatever the situation, all the family members must move together or stay together:

Ma stepped in front of him . "I aint a-gonna go"

"What you mean, you ain't a-gonna go? You got to go .You got to look after the family". Pa was amazed at the revolt

Ma stepped to the touring car and reached in on the floor of the back seat. She brought out a jack handle and balanced it in her hand easily

“I aint’t a-gonna go” she said.

“I tell you, you got to go. We made up our mind.”

And now Ma’s mouth set hard. She said softly,” On’ y way you gonna get me to go is whup me “She moved the jack handle gently again.”An’ I’ll shame you, Pa. Iwon’t take no whuppin ,cryin an’ a-beggin’. I’ll light into you. An’ you ain’t so sure you can whup me anyways. An ‘if ya do get me, I swear to God I’ll wait till you got your back turned, or you’re settin’ down, an’ I’ll knock you belly- up with a bucket .I swear to Holy Jesus’ sake I will.” (p. 176).

In addition to decision making, Ma Joad plays the role of the servant and protector of her family members. She does all the home tasks, such as cooking and taking care of the children alone all along the journey since Granma is old and Rose of Sharon is pregnant. Her devotion to her family can also be noticed when she stays all night in the truck with Granma’s corpse just to not disturb the family’s journey and protect them from the police: “ I was afraid we wouldn’t get acrost” (p. 239). So, her rise to the position of the decision maker in her family does not detach her from her traditional role as a woman. She becomes the symbol of tradition and power. The image Steinbeck gives about her is progressive; she moves from her traditional female role to adopt male characteristics within her family and in society.

The role that Steinbeck attributes to Ma Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath* seems to be a kind of gratitude towards women during the depression period. He shows a positive attitude toward them by demonstrating how they emerged and developed to become very helpful members in society. This does not mean that he has taken a feminist stance in the novel; he has just portrayed things in a realistic way. In fact, he does not focus on the positive role of women in this era of troubles to displace men from their roles; he presents them working together complementarily to overcome the depression.

Men in the novel represent resistance and sacrifice. They endure all kinds of humiliation while trying to gain money because they know that the whole family relies on them. Besides, they are described as hard workers, brave and men with dignity. At the beginning, they defend bravely their land: “the tenants cried...maybe we got to fight to keep our land, like Pa and Grampa did” (p. 34). Unfortunately, they are incapable in front of the

landowners, “the power holders”, so they eventually find themselves obliged to leave the land and surrender to their fate. Moreover, when they lose their land and work, they remain responsible towards their families; they sell their possessions like cars and old materials and perform any humble job to feed their families.

The male roles in the novel are shown through the characters of Tom Joad, Pa Joad and Connie Rivers. Tom is the main protagonist, a man who does not accept injustices. At the beginning, he is paroled from the prison after killing a man in self-defense and joins his family which is preparing to move westward. Throughout the novel, Tom is always devoted to his family and friends, and revolts against any form of injustice or suffering that either his family or the migrants are experiencing. He is a man of action, and he cannot afford injustice. He likes to be free and does not bear to receive orders from someone, mainly from people of the upper class.

Tom’s devotion to his family and friends is shown in many sequences in the novel. For example, when his family decides to leave Oklahoma to California, he moves with them despite his being against the fact. He explains this by the impossibility of abandoning his family in a time of crisis. Once in California, he protects his family from any outside danger, especially from the aggression and the injustice of the power holders. This is apparent, when he plays the role of a servile whiner to protect his family from the armed men they meet when they go out of the camp. His devotion to friendship is depicted ultimately, when he kills the policeman who murdered his friend Jim Casy.

The second male character is Tom’s father Pa Joad, who is called Old Tom. He is described as an aging, lean and easygoing man. Like Tom, he is a hard worker, and is devoted to his land in Oklahoma and his family; he is the leader. At the beginning, his leadership in managing the family affairs is revealed, when Ma Joad tells Casy that she cannot tell him if they are able to go with them until Pa comes back. In addition to this, he is the one who has

the final word as far as the family's migration to California; he leads the men assembly to make the decision of going there. So, initially he performs a traditional gender role as a man at the head of the family under a patriarchal social system.

Ultimately, Pa's patriarchy has been challenged, and a new family structure has emerged as Ma Joad raises to share with him the role of the head of the family. This is strongly exemplified by Ma's stronger opinion, when the family does not let Casy and Tom alone to repair the car, despite Pa's approval of that idea. He even obeys her orders, and helps her in home chores, especially when she is very busy: "look in that box an' get you some clean overalls an' a shirt. An', Pa, I'm awful busy. You git in Ruthie an' Winfel's ears." (p. 317). He also takes care of children, either by washing them or giving them their meals: "Pa served plates for the children and for himself" (Ibid.).

Moreover, when her family's men cannot find work at the government camp, it is Ma Joad who makes the decision to move on and rouses "her camp" for their early-morning.. Later, she is the one who plans her son Tom's escape from the peach ranch after avenging his friend Casy's murder. Ma becomes the brain and the hands of the family:

During the final catastrophic chapters Ma Joad Controls the family's money, handles Ruthie's betrayal of Tom's hiding place, finds the family work, leads them away from the flooded railroad car, and finally urges Rose of Sharon to suckle the starving man in the ark-like barn at the top of the hill (Motley, 1982: 405).

Ma performs this role, when she feels that men have forfeited their patriarchal roles " 'either a-thinkin' or a-workin' " (pp. 148, 491).

Later, Pa confesses that there is a radical change in the family, and he no longer even makes a pretense of having control of it: "Seems like times is changed," he says sarcastically. "Time was when a man said what we' do .Seems like women is tellin' now. Seems like it's purty near time to get out a stick." (p. 368). Strangely, he comes to accept this reality, because he knows that his presence as a man is lost when he loses his role as a feeding agent of his family. He admits that the fact of not being able to feed them does not give him the right to be

their leader. In this context, Warren Motley argues, “As the older Joad men sink into ineffectiveness and despondency, family authority shifts to Ma Joad. First she aggressively challenges patriarchal decisions that might fragment the family, and by the end of the novel she has taken the initiative.” (Motley, 1982: 405).

From Steinbeck’s definition of gender roles in *the Grapes of Wrath*, we notice that, as it is the case for most of the American families during the years of depression, Pa and Ma Joad are obliged to unify their forces to face the difficult period they are living. Contrary to the passive role played by female characters in *the great Gatsby*, Ma Joad plays a major role in her family. She does not only take care of her children and home, but she becomes the decision maker in the family and works hard inside and outside home.

Pa Joad, on the other hand, is ready to perform any job available to secure a living for his family, and works hard to get them out of their bad situation. When he loses all hope to find a job, he does his best at home to support his wife and the other members of the family; sacrificing his virtues of leadership for his wife and children’s interest. Their relation has never been related to wealth or social status as it is the case in *the great Gatsby*. Steinbeck, in *The Grapes of Wrath*, gives an image of a society tied by the virtues of collective efforts; a society which succeeds to revise and get rid of the excess of Individualism that characterized the society of the 1920s.

From the analysis of the issues of marriage and gender roles in Fitzgerald’s and Steinbeck’s fiction, we deduce that Fitzgerald in his novels, presents his characters as the ones who determined their fate by their decisions and behavior. The situation of ease in which they are living gives them the possibility to take any decision related to their life. Steinbeck’s characters, however, are rather determined by the social and economic conditions they are living. Economic hardships and social restrictions do not give them the possibility to decide

about their situation, and imposes on them certain choices, especially concerning their roles within their families and society.

Fitzgerald presents people characterized by irresponsibility and hypocrisy vis-à-vis their relations and roles within their families. Their corrupted behavior is the result of the materialistic environment that characterized the Eastern cities in the 1920s and that affected family and social relations. In fact, sacred institutions as marriage and family lost their meaning and become defined in terms of social mobility and strive for wealth and emulation. Steinbeck, however, depicts people characterized by naivety and responsibility vis-à-vis their families. They are ready to make any sacrifice to survive the difficult moments of the depression of the 1930s. The traditional meaning of marriage is still alive in the minds of these Western rural people.

From the analysis of Fitzgerald's and Steinbeck's fiction in relation to the urban and rural aspects of the American Dream in the inter-war period, one can recognize that the meaning of the American Dream underwent a change; following the change that occurred to the American economic system at that time in the two decades of the 1920s and 1930s. In the 1920s, the rapid business and technological development engendered a shift from the ancestral moral principles of hard work and religious values. People's dream, in this decade, was centered in the city and was mainly based on selfish interests linked to excess of consumerism and emulation, as the individual's importance in society was defined by the social class to which he/she belonged. This created a generation, which focused on pecuniary emulation and conspicuous consumption to keep their honor in society instead of their protestant ethics of work.

The class that Fitzgerald represents in his fiction illustrates Torstein Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* published in the turn of the twentieth century. Being among America's most influential cultural critics, his theory remains very pertinent to the study of

the first decades of the twentieth century's American society. The most important focus of the leisure class is to show how much wealthier than the others they are, by sustaining an "invidious comparison" (Veblen, 1899: 31) with their fellows. The purpose is, then, asserting personal superiority, as the individual's importance is reduced to cash value and "pecuniary canons of taste" (Ibid., p. 115).

The strive of the people to rise to the upper class of society led the greedy capitalists to monopolize the market, the thing which resulted in the economic crash of 1929. This engendered the Great Depression, which paralyzed the economic business system, leading to the redefinition and revision of the social values. In the 1930s, people's dream was centered in the West, where people raised to be different from the Easterners, as they understood that only the coming back to their ancestral moral values could change their situation. As such, the cooperative aspect of life is important for them. Despite difficulties, Western people, as they were presented by Steinbeck, remained stick to the original principles of the American Dream, based on hard work, the importance of family and collaboration.

It is evident that the urban space of the 1920s, with its modern atmosphere, provided its people with good opportunities to achieve wealth and prestige, but at the same time paralyzed them from work, preventing them from achieving it. The rural space of the 1930s which became the people's target during their years of poverty caused by the Great Depression, however, did not help its people to achieve anything interesting in their lives, as their expectations were out of reach in this period of socio-economic hardships. The American Dream, thus, remained unachievable in both decades and in both spaces.

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## General Conclusion

Myth is part and parcel of the American Dream. Right when James Truslow Adams published his *The Epic of America*, where the term was first coined, he refers to the 'heroic' legacy of American founding fathers, such as John Winthrop, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and others. In drawing on Puritan mythology to explain American history, Adams was not alone, nor the first. Many historians, such as Alexis de Tocqueville, Frederick Jackson Turner, Andy Koffman and others did the same. The mythical aspect of American history is always associated with the American Dream, which is reflective of the American founding documents, whatever the idea it expresses.

However, a close reading of *The Epic of America* also shows that it is directed against Franklin Delano Roosevelt's socialist program of the New Deal and the European thought on government and social organization. Adams' reaction to Roosevelt, a father of the nation, and to Europe, the mother continent of the U.S.A., is an Oedipus instance of rebellion. My thesis has built on this case of "family romance" in order to reread the American Dream from a psycho-poetic perspective. Since dream and myth are the two sides of the same coin, this research does not pretend to contradict previous works, but to show how the American Dream in American history has always been redefined by the various generations of writers thanks to the psychic process called "revision" highlighted by Harold Bloom in his *The Anxiety of Influence*.

The study of the American Dream in the selected nineteenth and twentieth century writings in the light of the theories of revision and displacement shows that the concept has always taken a revisionary dimension. Each writer evokes it in relation to his social, economic, religious, political, geographical and mainly historical circumstances. As a result, the dream takes on sometimes a nationwide dimension to represent crucial issues or events in American history, and some other times it takes on a narrower sense to be defined in terms of

regional circumstances within the vast American continent. Indeed, the dreams presented in each of the writings analyzed in this work are representative of the social structures, moral codes, political systems as well as the economic conditions specific to the writers' historical periods or geographical locations.

By linking the American Dream to their life conditions, historical and geographical circumstances, the studied authors could not escape the misreading of their predecessors. Therefore, revision constitutes the essence of all the works analyzed on which the authors' visions about the concept are built. Bloom's theory of revision, inspired from psychoanalysis and extended to all kinds of literature, finds its ground in the American fiction dealing with different subjects that constitute the American Dream. In fact, all the studied authors give the concept a revisionary meaning, expressing their influence by a predecessor. This reinforces Bloom's idea that all authors are influenced and influential. Moreover, his assertion that modern literature is that of "cultural criticism" is proved to be true, as authors' misreading of their precursors is expressed in a form of criticism of their cultural perspectives, presented in the different issues they treat. The fiction analyzed in this dissertation carries always a criticism of a previous understanding of specific issues that shape the dreams of a particular generation of Americans. The American Dream is, thus, reflective of the studied authors' "strategic location" and "strategic formation".

The study of the American Dream in selected writings of Herman Melville, as a representative of the antebellum generation of writers, and in other selected ones of Mark Twain, as a representative of the postbellum writers, shows that the two authors deal with the concept within the context of Nationhood, seeking to identify themselves as American citizens different from the Europeans. However, the meaning that Twain gives to Nationhood in his fiction seems to be revisionary if compared to the one given to it by Melville. The latter expresses a nationwide vision about the subject, providing a national dimension to some

issues that characterized the American socio-economic and political history at that time, such as industry, social class, religion, slavery and racism. His aim is to unify the American nation under one social, political and economic system to avoid conflicts in the nearer future. Mark Twain, after surviving the Civil War, tackles the same issues and gives them a regional meaning, emphasizing that they cannot function in the same way for all the American people, who come from different ethnic origins and live under different geographical conditions. As a Southern writer imbued with the region's aristocratic heritage, he focuses on the functioning of slavery, racism and religion, and shows that each aspect of life has its specificity in the South. In so doing, Twain misreads Melville's understanding of nationhood, displacing and narrowing the American Dream to the agrarian South, which was undergoing an acute identity crisis after the defeat in the Civil War and the destruction wrought by the latter on its economy, politics and mode of life.

Within the perspective of the conflict that shook the early American constitutionalists, who drafted the constitution of the country, Twain may stand as an example of an Anti-Federalist, who is against the idea of a strong national government managing the affairs of all the American states on the basis of the Constitution. His writing emphasizes the specificity of his region in relation to culture, economy and politics, implying that the United States of America cannot be unified under a strong central government. His dream is mainly rural, local and independent from the rest of the states. It is reflective of the Jeffersonian view that opinions, either in religion, philosophy, politics, or anything else can never be submitted to any party's doctrine (Thomas Jefferson, 1789). Twain's American Dream, as Jefferson's, is thus based on the preservation of personal liberties.

Melville is rather representative of the Federalist Party, which favored the ratification of the Constitution, aiming to preserve the unity of the states under a strong national government to better manage the tensions that followed the American Revolution. He seems

to be afraid of an eventual struggle among the states over policies related to slavery, taxation, etc. His American Dream is in line with Alexander Hamilton's view that the extension of the laws of the federal government to individual citizens would give a better union to the American states (Hamilton, in Federalist Paper N° 23, 1787). This view was supported by John Jay's argument that the American people must yield the government some of their "natural rights" in order to endow it with requisite power. (John Jay, in Federalist Paper N° 2, 1787). The founding of a strong government, according to the Federalists, requires all American citizens, from diverse ethnic origins and different geographical locations, to give up some of their individual liberties to establish a unified political system and avoid conflicts.

In the turn of the twentieth century, when the United States identified itself from the rest of the world as an independent nation, American writers displaced the American Dream to the urban centers, following the industrial and urban development that characterized the period. In doing so, they give nationhood a broader meaning, by revising the English understanding of some issues, such as industrialization and urbanization, on the one hand, and woman and modernity, on the other hand. The analysis of selected writings of Theodore Dreiser put in comparative perspective with the fiction of his English contemporary Thomas Hardy, as samples of the writings of this age in America and in England respectively, reveals that both authors portray the same lifestyle, characterized by the spread of industry, the movement of people from countryside to cities, the introduction of women to the field of work and the transition to the modern age. Yet, Dreiser describes in his fiction an American society, which perceives these issues differently from the English one. The American woman presented by Dreiser enjoys modernity, freedom and success earlier than the English one. This is apparent in his female protagonists, especially Carrie Meeber in *Sister Carrie*. The English woman, however, is presented by Hardy as being torn between modernity and tradition, as it is the case of Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure*. Moreover, people in the American cities are

introduced to modern types of education and art that permit them to achieve material success; these domains do not find ground in the English cities at that time.

As a naturalist writer, Theodore Dreiser, in his fiction, borrows the social Darwinist philosophy, presenting his characters, especially the female ones, as being determined by the ruthless Capitalist system of the era. He describes their lives without moral judgment, since, for him, they are victims of their environment, which controls their actions and destiny. In his description of the characters' environment, he shows socialist leanings, exposing the socio-economic problems, which resulted from industrialization and Capitalism, and defending the lower classes of society. He also rises against Victorian notions of property and respectability, and presents characters that succeed materially without any moral code. His conception of the American Dream is a kind of criticism of the Capitalist system and the English influence upon the American society.

In the literature of the inter-war period, the revisionary meaning of the American Dream takes on another dimension, linked mainly to socio-economic concerns characterizing the American society itself. During the 1920s, America reached its heyday in industrial and technological developments, the thing that engendered changes at the social level, leading people to enjoy the life of material display and hedonism, away from traditional moralities. This modern lifestyle, which prevailed in the cities, had damaging effects on the socio-economic standing of Americans, leading them to the economic crash of 1929 and the Great Depression of the 1930s. As a result, writers of the 1930s negotiated the American Dream presented by other writers of the 1920s, considering the generation they represent the reason behind the failure of the American Dream in their decade. The study of selected writings of Francis Scott Fitzgerald, the spokesman of the wild generation of the 1920s, and John Steinbeck, a committed writer of the 1930s, shows that both of them give pessimistic views about the American Dream in the two decades. Yet, they chronicle the failure of the concept

differently. Steinbeck situates the dream in the rural space, and presents characters dreaming of success through hard work in agriculture, revising the dream of Fitzgerald's characters that associate success with urbanization and business. Moreover, Fitzgerald, in novels like *The Beautiful and Damned*, represents people, who destroyed themselves by the materialistic lifestyle they adopted, while Steinbeck represents in novels, like *The Grapes of Wrath*, people who bore the effects of the preceding generation's hedonism and materialism, becoming unable to fulfill any dream in their life.

Steinbeck's fiction reveals his sympathy with the farmers of the agrarian plains of California. The regional and rural flavor of Twain's fiction is felt in his writings set in the agricultural centers of the West. In his presentation of life in this part of America, Steinbeck expresses a failure of the American Dream during the period of the Great Depression due to the greediness of the Capitalists, who deprived the peasantry from every chance to succeed in life. He reports the dreams of the lower classes of society represented in the farmers of the Western frontier, whom he describes as the heroes of the nation. He underscores their courage, their naturalness and their spirit of collectivism that help them to survive in moments of despair and economic turmoil. According to Steinbeck, the impossibility of their dreams is not the result of their behavior.

In Fitzgerald's fiction, the failure of the American Dream is presented through characters of the higher classes of society that have all the means to fulfill their dreams, but are paralyzed by the urban way of life in the Jazz Age. The author links their dream to the myth of the first discoverers of America, who moved from the Old World to live a happy life in the New one. He considers Jay Gatsby's dream in *The Great Gatsby* "the Platonic conception of himself", which urges him to move from the agrarian West to the urban East to reach material success. Gatsby's tragedy at the end of the novel represents the failure of

American business, which is based on easy ways of making wealth, and the failure of the American Dream, which substitutes its real values for artificial ones.

Throughout the study of the American Dream in the selected periods of American history, we notice that it always takes on a revisionary dimension by negotiating the previous generation's understanding of the concept. This reinforces Bloom's view that modern literature is politicized and became a form of propaganda used to serve the interests of state or any social order or any religion, reflecting dialectical visions and misreading among authors. The writers' visions, according to him, are expressed in a kind of criticism, which is part of literature, leading great writing to be always the misreading of previous writing, and creating conflicting ideas among authors. (Bloom, 1973: xix). This engenders revisionary understandings of similar issues. The revisionary aspect of the American Dream expressed in American fiction strengthens also Bloom's view that each author tries to create his own understanding of history, fearing to be influenced by another. This leads authors to coin some ideas, concepts, phrases, or even sentences and paragraphs from other authors giving them their own meaning, and falling unconsciously in the trap of influence.

Since U.S. history is in perpetual change and the U.S. territory includes different ethnicities and cultures, it is evident that the American Dream takes on different meanings and functions from one historical period to another, from one ethnic group to another, from one geographical area to another, etc. It seems that the revisionary process of the American Dream will not find its end, and the ground of study will remain open to researchers who have the endeavor to study the revisionary aspect of the concept in relation to other writings and issues. Since Bloom's revisionary ratios that make misreading are inspired from psychoanalysis and philosophy, they are workable for all people of all generations and of all origins.

The views offered by the different American novelists in their fiction about the American way of life reflect the change of the dreams of American people from one period of



history to another. Dealing with the subject of the American Dream, revision and displacement are expressed by every author, from Melville to Steinbeck, Albee, Faulkner, Updike, Morrison and others, through criticizing an existing order or view, and expressing another that would replace it, or by exposing an actual way of life that came to displace a previous one. All their works are, in fact, about movement, either in time or in geography.

Edward Albee, for instance, in his play *The American Dream* (1961), explores the American Dream within the twentieth century American family, in which old values are displaced by new ones. Via his characters and the dialogue between them, he expresses the falsity of the American Dream, as it is functioning in his society and as it is represented in fiction. In the preface of the play, he says that

it is an examination of the American Scene, an attack on the substitution of artificial for real values in our society, a condemnation of complacency, cruelty, emasculation, and vacuity; it is a stand against the fiction that everything in this slipping land of ours is peachy-keen (Albee, 1961: Preface).

The American Dream he exposes in this play revisits its original meaning through the character of Grandma, who represents the real old values of American life, and mourns their substitution by new artificial ones exemplified in the character of the Young Man dubbed “the American Dream” by Grandma. The latter is, in fact, the mouthpiece of the author in the play. She is the one, who realizes that the Young Man is the twin of the child mutilated by Mommy and Daddy. He is introduced as a substitute for the original child. Being raised alone, he is characterized by an empty soul. When Grandma sees him, she exclaims: “Yup. Boy, you know what you are, don’t you? You’re the American Dream, that’s what you are. All those other people, they don’t know what they’re talking about. You . . . you are the American Dream” (p. 108). He is described as the Hollywood style American Dream, sexy, materialistic and superficial.

Grandma, on the other hand, represents the old utopian American Dream. She is associated with innocence and Agrarianism. This is clear in the words of Mommy, who tells Mrs. Baker: “you must forgive Grandma. She’s Rural.” Moreover, when the Young Man admires her resourcefulness in the bakeoff contest, where she has shown a kind of Yankee ingenuity, she tells him that she is a “Pioneer stock” (p. 112). She stands for the American Humanism on which the American Democracy is built. Grandma’s incarnation of the original American Dream appears mainly in her juxtaposition with the Young Man. Although she empathizes with the latter’s lack of innocence, she understands that his arrival to the family means her departure. In fact, the apartment cannot house both of them. Moreover, Mommy rejects her, and opts for the Young Man. In reply to Mommy’s question, “Who rang the doorbell?” Grandma responds, “The American Dream! . . . (Shouting) The American Dream! The American Dream! Damn it!” (p. 108), meaning that it is the American Dream who came to replace me.

It is clear that Albee, in *The American Dream*, expresses a displacement that happened to the meaning of the American Dream in the twentieth century, by juxtaposing the values of his day to old ones pertaining to the previous centuries. At the same time, he revises the American authors, who give an ideal image about the American Dream in the twentieth century. The play is about claiming change by revising principles. It is an allegorical account about life in the twentieth century that departed the original values of American people.

Another example of American authors, who relates the American Dream to movement and Displacement is John Updike. The latter follows, in his novels, the development of American history during the twentieth century, and includes the different events that affected people’s lives and dreams. As such, he makes reference to characters, who move from one place to another looking for liberty and happiness. They are, in fact, striving to restore their

basic liberal rights constituting the main principles of the American Dream, which they think they have lost in the suburban space.

His quartet *Rabbit, Run* (1960), *Rabbit Redux* (1971), *Rabbit is Rich* (1981) and *Rabbit at Rest* (1990) trace the life of Harry Angstrom “Rabbit” along four decades. In these novels, the author expresses the dreams of American people through the life of Rabbit, the main protagonist, who represents everyman. In his presentation of the plot of the novels, he refers to historical, cultural, political and economic events that shaped the dreams of people during the last half of the twentieth century. In *Rabbit, Run*, he portrays Rabbit running to escape his suburban life, when he feels that he is trapped by his life of marriage and fatherhood. He takes a journey through “Cheever country”, a white landscape, looking for happiness far from his society. He is, then, making movement in geography, exploring new territories and following the American tradition of yearning to be free and happy. The problem is that the plot of the novel takes place in a period, when the American frontier is closed, and people move in different directions, losing the sense of guidance. In fact, when he is asking for a map, he is given the advice that “the only way to get somewhere, you know, is to figure out where you’re going before you go there.” (Updike, 1960: 32).

Rabbit finishes by not running, and coming back to his wife in the coming novels. In each book of the quartet, he lives as a nationalist, supporting his country in every political matter, as the Cold War, the Vietnam War, etc. He also deals with issues of his age, such as equality among the races. By this, Updike alludes to the fact that American people in the twentieth century cannot escape the life conditions that surround them, and their American Dream rests in their homeland. Movement is not an option for them to live a happy life, as they are trapped by the political, cultural and economic conditions of the period. Updike expresses in his fiction an American Dream linked to displacement in geography. Yet, he

presents the second half of the twentieth century as a period of paralysis as far as movement is concerned. So, people could not live the movement the Huck Finn experienced in the nineteenth century.

Andy Kaufman, in *Wrestling with the American Dream* (2005) argues that the American Dream is “that public fantasy which constitutes American identity as a nation.” (Kaufman, 2005: 49). It is, then, an ideological apparatus which constitutes a set of social values and ideals that changed their meaning over time until they lost the original one they had in the founding years of the United States, and became as an imaginative myth that is not adequate to the socio-economic conditions of the nation. To reinforce his argument, he adds that in the Oxford English Dictionary, the American Dream is defined as an “ideal of a democratic and prosperous society which is the traditional aim of the American people,” and as “a catchphrase used to symbolize American social or material values in general.” (Ibid.). Moreover, the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines it as an “American ideal of a happy and successful life to which all may aspire.” (Ibid.).

Despite the fact that the first definition is inspired from the preamble of the American constitution and the second from the Declaration of Independence, both of them make it clear that it is rather viewed as an ideal than a real fact. Relying on the two definitions, the American Dream is, therefore, defined by Kaufman as an “ideal of a life full of happiness and success,” an ideal that is “open to everyone.” (Kaufman, 2005: 51). The second definition indicates mainly the passage of the American Dream from an ideal to an ideology. In Kaufman’s definition of the American Dream, we notice that the Declaration of Independence is revisited and revised. Kaufman’s revision is mainly based on revisiting another founding document of the American nation, which is its constitution. A comparison drawn between the two documents shows that the concept is in constant change and displacement, as it moved from being an ideal to an ideology.

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## Résumés en Français et en Arabe

La présente recherche porte sur l'étude de l'aspect révisionnaire du rêve américain dans une sélection de fiction des dix neuvième et vingtièmes siècles. Elle démontre comment le concept prend toujours une dimension révisionniste dans la littérature américaine, que ce soit au niveau national ou international, en négociant la littérature précédente. Le processus de révision en son cœur entraîne un déplacement du concept, que ce soit au niveau historique ou géographique. Au milieu du dix neuvième siècle, le rêve américain avait pris une vision nationale dans la fiction des écrivains de la période antebellum, qui rêvait d'unifier la culture, l'économie et le gouvernement américains en vue de former une seule nation distincte de l'Europe. Durant la période post-bellum, les écrivains locaux ont procédé à la révision de la littérature antebellum en revendiquant la spécificité de leurs régions et l'impossibilité d'unifier la culture, l'économie et le gouvernement américains en raison de la multiethnicité et de la géographie dans ce vaste territoire. Le rêve américain a ainsi pris une dimension régionale dans leur fiction. Au tournant du vingtième siècle, la littérature américaine avait révisé la pensée anglaise en fonction de leur compréhension de certaines problématiques comme l'urbanisation et l'éducation, la femme et le mariage, etc. Le rêve américain de cette période s'est ainsi dressé pour prendre une dimension internationale en mal interprétant et en négociant des questions internationales, et en leur donnant une compréhension Américaine. Durant l'entre-deux guerres, le rêve américain a été discuté entre les visions urbaines et rurales dans la fiction des années 1920 et 1930, cela est illustré dans la fiction des auteurs des années 1930 qui ont donné au rêve américain une vision rurale, révisant la littérature des années 1920 qui a donné au concept une vision urbaine. La révision qui caractérise le rêve américain est du à son aspect psychologique, géographique et historique. L'aspect psychologique du concept est traité à la lumière de la théorie de la révision de Harold Bloom; expliquée dans ses livres *The Anxiety of Influence/L'angoisse de l'influence* (1973) et *The Map of Misreading/ la carte de la mauvaise lecture* (1975). Dans ces deux livres, Bloom dessine une relation entre les écrivains et leurs précurseurs, et explique le processus d'influence et de révision en termes de la relation entre le fils et le père comme expliquée par Freud. D'après l'étude du concept du rêve américain à la lumière de la théorie du révisionnisme de Harold Bloom, il apparaît que le concept a pris une dimension dialectique, comme chaque écrivain ou génération d'écrivains l'a présenté en relation avec ses/leurs circonstances sociales, économiques, religieuses, politiques, géographiques et principalement les circonstances historiques. Le processus de révision dans cette recherche est associé à ce que T.S. Eliot appelle « le sens de la tradition » et au processus de déplacement, comme expliqué dans l'ouvrage de Northrop Frye *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) et consolidé par ce que Edward Said appellera le « lieu stratégique » de l'auteur. La raison en est que l'aspect révisionniste du rêve américain entraîne des déplacements géographiques et historiques, dus aux localisations géographiques et historiques de l'auteur et à sa relation avec sa tradition littéraire.

يدرس هذا البحث الجانب التنقيحي للحلم الأمريكي في روايات مختارة من القرنين التاسع عشر والعشرين. يبين بحثنا كيف يأخذ المفهوم دومًا بُعدًا تنقيحيًا في الأدب الأمريكي، إما على المستوى الوطني أو الدولي من خلال تباحث الأدب السابق. تحمل عملية المراجعة إزاحة في مفهوم الحلم الأمريكي سواء على المستوى التاريخي أو الجغرافي. في منتصف القرن التاسع عشر، اتخذ الحلم الأمريكي رؤية وطنية في روايات كتاب ما قبل الحرب الأهلية، الذين كانوا يحملون بتوحيد الثقافة الأمريكية واقتصادها وحكومتها لتشكيل دولة واحدة متميزة عن أوروبا. في الفترة ما بعد الحرب الأهلية، بدأ الكتاب الإقليميون في مراجعة أدب ما قبل الحرب الأهلية مدعين خصوصية مناطقهم واستحالة توحيد الثقافة الأمريكية واقتصادها وحكومتها، وذلك راجع إلى التنوع العرقي والجغرافي في هذه المنطقة الشاسعة. وبالتالي، قد اكتسب الحلم الأمريكي، رؤية إقليمية في رواياتهم. في مطلع القرن العشرين، بدأ الأدب الأمريكي في إعادة النظر في الفكر الأوروبي فيما يتعلق بفهم بعض القضايا مثل التحضر والمرأة والتعليم والزواج. طرح الحلم الأمريكي في هذه الفترة بعدًا دوليًا، عن طريق خطأ قراءة القضايا الدولية وتباحثها، ومنحها فهمًا وطنيًا. خلال فترة ما بين الحربين، تمت مناقشة الحلم الأمريكي بين الرؤى الحضرية والريفية في روايات سنوات عشرينات وثلاثينات القرن العشرين، وقد تجسد هذا في قصص كتاب ثلاثينيات القرن العشرين، الذين أعطوا الحلم الأمريكي رؤية ريفية، حيث قاموا بمراجعة أدبيات عشرينات القرن العشرين، التي منحت الحلم الأمريكي رؤية حضرية. قد عالجتنا هذا الموضوع على ضوء نظرية هارولد بلوم للمراجعة وسوء القراءة؛ وهي نظرية متعلقة بالأدب فسرها في كتابيه القلق من التأثير *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) وخريطة سوء القراءة *The Map of Misreading* (1975). يضع بلوم في هذين الكتابين علاقة بين الكتاب والسلف، ويشرح عملية التأثير والمراجعة، ويوسعه إلى الكثير من الميادين، ولا سيما الفنون الراقية والتخصصات الفكرية وحتى المجال العام. من خلال دراسة مفهوم الحلم الأمريكي في كتابات مختارة من القرنين التاسع عشر والعشرين في ضوء نظرية المراجعة لهارولد بلوم، من الواضح إلى حد كبير أن هذا المفهوم قد اتخذ بعدًا جديداً، حسب ما قدمه كل كاتب أو جيل من الكتاب طبقاً لظروفهم الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والدينية والسياسية والجغرافية والتاريخية بشكل أساسي. ترتبط عملية المراجعة في هذا البحث بعملية النزوح، كما هو موضح في كتاب نورثروب فري *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) ومفهوم التقاليد الأدبية للكتاب إبليوت وما أسماه إدوارد سعيد "الموقع الاستراتيجي" للمؤلف. والسبب في ذلك هو أن الجانب التنقيحي للحلم الأمريكي يحمل معه النزوح الجغرافي والتاريخي، بسبب المواقع الجغرافية والتاريخية للمؤلف وعلاقته بتقاليد الأدبية.