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Love for the Nation and Betrayal of the Revolution in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's

A Grain of Wheat (1978) And Rachid Mimouni's *Le fleuve détourné* (1982)

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Dedication

We would like to dedicate this work to our families and friends especially our parents and we would like to thanks them for all the help and support they have provided during all these years.

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Abstract

This piece of research aims to analyse the issues of love for the nation and betrayal of the revolution in the African postcolonial literature, namely the Algerian novelist Rachid Mimouni's *Le fleuve détourné* (1982), and the Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* (1978) literary works. We will support our analysis with Frantz Fanon's theories developed in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) mainly the chapter entitled *The pitfalls of National Consciousness*. Both novels deal with the post independence era of both Algeria and Kenya. Their aim is to denounce and criticize the corrupt aspect of the revolution and its betrayal by the local bourgeoisies. We will try to illicit the role of the peasants and lower class populations in the two countries and the betrayal of middle class intellectual that led to the failure of these revolutions. All of this resulted in a massive decay in the socio-economic and political spheres of these two countries. Our paper aims to analyze aspects of this decay and the effects on the lives of those who fought against the former coloniser to gain independence and to live in peace and dignity.

Keywords: betrayal, revolution, postcolonial, independence, denounce.

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I. Introduction:

Postcolonial literature addresses issues which are related to formerly colonized countries. It is usually concerned with the cultural and socio-political aspects of these countries. Authors of this genre often describe the outcome of the struggle for independence and how people are disillusioned after they achieved the so called independence.

The fight to achieve independence in these countries was initiated by people with a deep sense of love and dedication for the motherland. These people were usually peasants, generally perceived as naive and uneducated but they were fully aware of the necessity to break free from colonial domination. They were solely motivated by this deep love for the land of their ancestors which is rightfully theirs.

All formerly colonized communities paid a heavy price in the hopes of liberating their countries to live in peace and dignity only to see their revolutions betrayed by groups of traitors and power thirsty individuals. Those people took advantage of the situation to seize power completely forgetting about the abuses of the coloniser, and in some cases becoming even worse.

Some of these groups became dictators suffocating people's voices and in some cases remained loyal to the former colonisers. This was the case in most decolonized African countries, and it is the reason why we have chosen Rachid Mimouni's *Le fleuve détourné* (1982) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* (1978) as samples for our piece of research. Both works deal with the fight for independence, the efforts and sacrifices that have been made by so many honest people and the revolutions which have been diverted. Betrayal proved to be devastating and brought about consequences, the echoes of which are still with us even today.

1. Review of the Literature:

Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Rachid Mimouni are important figures in postcolonial African literature. Their novels *A Grain of Wheat* (1978) and *Le fleuve détourné* (1982) have been widely dealt with by many critics.

In his article, *Ngugi's Retrospective Gaze: The Shape of History in "A Grain of Wheat"* (2007), Tej N. Dhar's confirms that Ngugi's involvement with history in *A Grain of Wheat* comes from his reaction towards the way imperialistic nations recorded history, but it does not stop here. He insists that Ngugi takes a definitive position on what constitutes the true history of Kenya, and thus challenges the very basis of a leader-centered nationalist historiography¹. The same critic explains that by looking at Kenya's history through the forest fighters, the Mau Mau, and comparing their activities with the everyday lives of peasants and workers, Ngugi is not only showing similarities between the two groups, but he also makes it a central theme. In this respect, Ngugi reclaims the stolen history of his country by exposing it to the mainstream in the way it was originally meant to be. He remarks that Ngugi considers freedom from colonial domination is a much more complicated matter than is usually conceived². Dhar concludes that a proper historical subject deals with a character with thoughts and actions that are relevant to the situation in which he or she lives; in the colonial context, this character is supposedly working for the freedom of his nation and not for reaching his personal interests³.

The second piece of criticism is from Simona Klimkova in her *History and Fiction: Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Vision* (2015) She argues that Ngugi wa Thiong'o's understanding of the social commitment and responsibilities of a writer fully corresponds with the "moving spirit in the nationalist struggle"⁴. She adds that Thiong'o, whose fiction and critical essays are characterized by his socialist visions, promotes active participation of writers in the

process of social reconstruction and rejuvenation⁵. “I think that any writer who is dealing with serious problems that confront an individual must write about the whole social and political society”⁶. Klimkova mentions that in Ngugi’s view, literature is seen not only as a mere tool of entertainment, but rather as a medium of social change; the real job of a writer is then to “raise consciousness of the people”⁷.

As far as Rachid Mimouni is concerned, Labib Dadi describes, in an article entitled *Le Fleuve Détourné* (2011), the way Mimouni scrutinizes with meticulousness and rigor postcolonial Algeria. The critic argues that Algeria was stolen from its Algerians by some individuals who were cowering at home during the revolution while glorious martyrs were watering with their blood the sacred homeland⁸. Dadi describes how Mimouni exposes in a subtle manner those leaders who have been unworthy of their fame. This is done through the story of an amnesiac man, who is denied his identity and whose wife and self-esteem have been dishonored. The same critic asserts that this is the story of all Algerians, who before 1962 were colonized by the French and since that year are colonized by a group of Algerians. Bitter fact is still relevant thanks to the revolutionary breezes of the so called Arab Spring⁹. Dadi goes also to contend that this book is actually split into two parallel parts. One of them is that of this amnesiac man, the other, more allegorical tells the fate of a group of people locked up, surrounded, and watched in the image of the Algerian people. The peculiarity of these men is that they are considered subversive like their sperm, which is why the administration decided to castrate them. He feels through this part, as in other books by Rachid Mimouni a negative criticism of socialist policies led by Boumediene with a lot of goodwill (as a majority of Algerians think), and catastrophic results on the national economy¹⁰.

As still another piece of criticism, in his article *De l’indépendance confisquée à l’identité bafouée dans Le fleuve détourné de Rachid Mimouni* (2001), Najib Redouane claims that; in *The Diverted River*, war is the reference of the characters but the author's main

Concern is that of a criticism of the confiscation of the Algerian Revolution. Redouane reveals that the choice of a shoemaker, a simple man without any motive who goes with his brothers to fight, devoid of political conviction, is nevertheless a significant choice which allows the reader to appreciate the courage of Mimouni in his denunciation of the immense historical betrayal¹¹. According to Redouane, Rachid Mimouni who believes in the promises of revolution like many Algerians, relates in this novel his disappointment and his bitterness. The same critic goes to argue that it should be noted that the originality of Mimouni in this novel is that it is tackling many taboos. Not only does he claim disenchantment, but he demystifies the heroic struggle and criticizes the socio-political situation of Algeria¹². Redouane describes Mimouni's denunciation with great courage the betrayal of the revolution, the disappointed hopes, the lost illusions of independence and the errors of a regime. In fact, Redouane argues that the novel presents a country without freedom, with no justice system, where the bureaucracy and personal interests are opposed to progress, where corruption reigns supreme and where religion is often just a mask¹³.

2. Issue and WorkingHypothesis:

Reviewing previous literature on our subject allowed us to notice that many aspects in *Le fleuve détourné*(1982) and *The Grain of Wheat*(1978) have been dealt with, especially the socio-political landscapes of Algeria and Kenya. Nevertheless, we want to focus on political aspects to demonstrate the implications of betrayed revolutions on various levels. Our aim is also to show that this phenomenon was not constrained only to one country, but rather widespread to include most, if not all decolonized countries.

In this respect, we found that none of the critics has grasped the full extent of both works. We thought it would be interesting to address the two novels from a Fanonian perspective relying on his thorough analysis and detailed description of how therevolutions

took place and their outcomes that proved often disappointing in his *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) on the chapter *The Pitfalls of National Consciousness*. The basis of our hypothesis is the idea that Ngugi and Mimouni are committed to denounce and demystify realities in order to inspire change and offer a crisp image of what their countries have become after the long awaited independences.

3. Methodological Outline:

The outline of this discussion will follow the IMRAD method. The dissertation starts with an introduction in which the problematic is identified. It is followed by a brief review of the literature conducted on both novels. The Method and Materials section is dedicated to the overview of Fanon's theory in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) and the summary of both *Le fleuve détourné* (1982) and *A Grain of Wheat* (1978). The Results part presents the findings we have reached. Our discussion is divided into two main chapters. The first one deals with the love for the nation and the second tackles the issue of betrayal of the revolution. Finally, the work will be ended with a general conclusion.

Endnotes:

¹ Dhar, Tej N. “*Ngugi’s Retrospective Gaze: The Shape of History in A Grain of Wheat.*”

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ Klimkova, Simona. “*History and Fiction: Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s Vision.*” *Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra*, 90, no. 12 (2015): 155. Accessed February 15, 2019. Doi: 10.15584/sar.2015.12.14

⁵ Ibid, 155

⁶ Sander, R. and Lindfors, B. (Eds.). “*Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o Speaks*”. (Nairobi: James Currey/Oxford, 2006): 23

⁷ Klimkova, Simona. “*History and Fiction: Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s Vision.*” *Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra*, 90, no. 12 (2015): 156. Accessed February 15, 2019. Doi: 10.15584/sar.2015.12.14

⁸ Labib Dadi, “*Le Fleuve Détourné de Rachid Mimouni*,” Labib Dady’s blog, June 30, 2011, URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituaryrachid-mimouni-1573136.html>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Redouane, Najib. “*De l’indépendance confisquée à l’identité bafouée dans Le fleuve détourné de Rachid Mimouni.*” *Études littéraires*, 33, no. 3 (2001): 169. Accessed February 20, 2019. URL: <https://doi.org/10.7202/501316ar>

¹² Ibid, 175

¹³ Ibid, 183

II. Methods and Materials:

1. Methods:

As stated previously, it is the purpose of this piece of research to discuss issues of love for the nation and betrayal of revolution in Rachid Mimouni's *Le fleuve détourné* (1982) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* (1978). To do so, we will rely on the theoretical auspices developed by Frantz Fanon in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), mainly in the chapter entitled "*The Pitfalls of National Consciousness*". In this chapter, Fanon discusses extensively the role of "National Bourgeoisies" who are mainly educated middle class intellectuals who imitate the former colonizer. He views them as opportunists and describes them as unnecessary; "The bourgeois phase in the history of underdeveloped countries is a completely useless phase"¹.

In the same chapter, Fanon however, argues that there is a category of people who are honest with no political agenda. These people have a real love for their country and hate schemers. He claims that: "There almost always exists a small number of honest intellectuals, who have no very precise ideas about politics, but who instinctively distrust the race for positions and pensions"². He mentions also the role of the masses, these illiterate people who participated in the fight with no other goal in mind but that of gaining their freedom. This fight, however ended with a deep disillusionment and an awakening to a dark reality. He writes:

the Algerian people, that mass of starving illiterates, those men and women plunged for centuries in the most appalling obscurity have held out against tanks and airplanes, against napalm and "psychological services," but above all against corruption and brainwashing, against traitors and against the "national" armies of General Bellounis³.

Fanon also describes the misery that characterizes these decolonized societies and the poverty of the people who are surrounded by substantial national wealth. This, for Fanon, is partly due to the incompetence of local bourgeoisies and the monopoly they exercise on the most sensitive sectors of national economy; “The greatest wealth is surrounded by the greatest poverty”⁴.

Moreover, a great deal of this misery originated from what Frantz Fanon coined “Reverse Racism”; this form of discrimination was exercised by the new leaders against people from lower social classes. It was characterised by hatred and oppression of the people much like what they experienced from the former colonial forces. Western colonisers often viewed the colonised as sub-humans who are inferior in every way. Fanon claims:

Every effort is made to bring the colonized person to admit the inferiority of his culture which has been transformed into instinctive patterns of behavior, to recognize the unreality of his "nation," and, in the last extreme, the confused and imperfect character of his own biological structure⁵.

This antagonism was taken over by the new leaders after they got access to power and prestigious social status. They quickly forgot about the former coloniser’s oppression and slowly detached themselves socially and economically, here, Fanon takes the example of work under the colonial regime. He maintains that “The settler never stopped complaining that the native is slow. Today, in certain countries which have become independent, we hear the ruling classes taking up the same cry.”⁶ The new bourgeois views the lower class citizens as an obstacle to the achievement of his personal goals. The people are constantly asking for change, rights and more democracy. These requests are obviously never in favour of a leader as more rights to the people ultimately mean more accountability for the leaders. Fanon adds:

The national government, if it wants to be national, ought to govern by the people and for the people, for the outcasts and by the outcasts. No leader, however valuable he may be, can substitute himself for the popular will; and the national government, before concerning itself about international prestige, ought first give back their dignity to all citizens, fill their minds and feast their eyes with human things, and create a prospect that is human because conscious and sovereign men dwell therein⁷.

2. Materials:

This section of our research paper is dealing with the two novels we are working on. First, we are going to provide brief summaries of both *Le fleuve détourné* (1982) and *A Grain of Wheat* (1978); these will give the reader enough information to understand the novels. Then, we will include the biographies of Rachid Mimouni and Ngugi wa Thiong'o. The two authors tackled similar subjects and issues about African revolutions, and this is why we have chosen their works as samples of African postcolonial literature.

A. Historical Contexts of Both the Novels:

a. Historical Context of *A Grain of Wheat*:

The Kikuyu, the largest ethnic group in Kenya, resisted colonial authority, which culminated into what became known as Mau Mau, led by the Kenya Land Freedom Army. During this time, the British colonial government imposed laws limiting their access to land, politics, and independence. The turbulent 1950s in Kenyan history should be considered as a revolution because of its violent nature, the high level of participation, and overall social change that resulted from the war⁸.

The newly instated governor of the Kenyan colony in 1952 was determined to take care of Mau Mau swiftly by taking the legs out from under the organization. After the assassination of the loyalist Chief Waruhiu, the governor Sir Evelyn Baring recommended that London declare a state of emergency in Kenya that would allow him to detain Mau Mau insurgents without trial. He believed the first target should be Jomo Kenyatta, the suspected

mastermind behind the terrorism. Once the Emergency was in place, Operation Jock Scott cleared the slums of Nairobi of all suspected Mau Mau insurgents and sympathizers. Kenyatta was captured without any resistance on his part while the real leaders of Mau Mau resistance fled to the mountains. From there, they planned their attacks and recruited men, women, and children to take part in the movement to rid Kenya of its British invaders⁹.

One of the most remarkable social changes brought about by Mau Mau was the leaders' activation of African Kenyans in political protest. Mau Mau forced the colonial government to react and as a result the British had to change the format of African political participation. Not all social change was positive. Initial reaction to Mau Mau caused massive upheaval, primarily in the form of detention camps. Ultimately, the high number of detainee deaths affected the livelihoods of their families, and the indefinite separation of husbands from wives often resulted in split families. The "rehabilitation" process in the camps worked a profound cultural transformation within the camps that lingered in the cultural thoughts and behaviors of the released detainees¹⁰.

Perhaps the greatest impact that the Mau Mau uprising had on the struggle for Kenya's independence was its role in politicizing and mobilizing the agrarian sectors, and shaping their political awareness and economic thinking. By awakening this key section of Kenyan society to the damage and repression caused by colonial rule, the Mau Mau set in motion a popular movement for independence that captured the national consciousness of the economically disenfranchised Kenyan people like never before¹¹.

b. Historical Context of *Le fleuve détourné*:

Towards the end of the Algerian war of independence, different conflicts started to emerge among the ranks of the leaders. Several key figures had divergent views on policies to be adopted after the independence. Some of them were clearly thinking of positions and

power well before the end of the war. In 1962 Algerian independence became official and attempts were made to establish a democracy based on the principles of the revolution; but in 1965 a military coup by Houari Boumediene effectively put him in power. He established a military dictatorship eliminating all political opposition; “Primauté du facteur militaire, absence de légitimité démocratique, exercice violent de l’autorité”¹².

The result was much suffering and deep disillusionment among the Algerian people who have dreamt of a better life after a long and costly war; “La société algérienne a l’impression de vivre dans l’imprévisibilité et l’arbitraire”¹³.

The socio-political landscape of independent Algeria looks nothing like the people hoped. The real revolutionary leaders and the national values disappeared making way for individuals with various political agendas to rule the country serving only their own interests. As Abdkader Djeghloul states: “Cette Algérie ne ressemble guère à celle dont rêvaient les premiers combattants de Novembre dont la plupart sont absents des sphères des dirigeants de l’Algérie indépendante”¹⁴.

B. Summaries:

a. Summary of *A Grain of Wheat*:

Ngugi’s *A Grain of Wheat* (1978) is set in Kenya on the eve of independence. Over a period of four days leading up to “Uhuru” or independence, the people of Thabai (Kenya) ready themselves for the celebration of freedom. However, the troubling events of a not-too-distant past continue to affect the novel’s characters. Many of the Kikuyu people were somehow affected by the Mau Mau uprising. As a response, the British government responded by declaring a state of emergency, during which time any of the people in Thabai or surrounding villages could be forcibly detained, imprisoned and tortured as suspected conspirators.

The story revolves around a few central characters, whose experiences during the Emergency have altered their present-day lives. Some were detained; some tortured in detention. Others turned against their countrymen, working for the British administration or betraying members of the Rebellion to save themselves. For the villagers of Thabai, one loss in particular – that of Kihika, a man known for his heroic actions against the British during the Emergency – has united them. Although he has been dead for several years, it is Kihika's story that provides a backdrop for the narrative as well as a framing device for the story. Much of the present-day, narrative revolves around various people of Thabai trying to convince Mugo, a quiet man regarded as a hero for his actions during the Emergency, to speak at the Uhuru celebration. Mugo seems strangely reluctant – in fact, he is hiding a dark secret that will emerge only much later in the narrative. Gikonyo and Mumbi, an estranged husband and wife, both seek out Mugo to persuade him to participate and in the process end up revealing their own secrets of life during the Emergency to Mugo.

While the native Kenyans are preparing for their independence, the British administrators are preparing to leave Kenya once the government has been transferred to black power. John Thompson, once a perpetrator of cruel acts against detainees and now a disgraced official, is depressed at the thought of the British abandoning their progress – his life's work – in Kenya. Karanja, a Kikuyu who worked for the British as a member of the homeguard during the Emergency, is also distressed at the thought of the transfer to black power, as he will lose his favored status among the white administrators and the respect and fear of his own people. However, Karanja hopes to remain in Thabai to be close to Mumbi, who he has long loved and whose child he fathered while Gikonyo was in detention. It is Karanja who is suspected by most of the villagers of Thabai as the person who betrayed the heroic Kihika; Karanja's boyhood friend.

As more and more secrets and desperate acts from the Emergency are revealed through the narration, it becomes clear that Mugo, regarded by many as a hero to rival Kihika, was in fact responsible for Kihika's death. Mugo finally confesses as much to Mumbi, although she keeps his secret. At the Uhuru celebration, the traitor is asked to come forward, and many look at Karanja. However, it is Mugo who confesses and is later led away by the soldiers of the new regime. Karanja, having lost his place in the new society and any hope of Mumbi's love, leaves Thabai. In the book's final scene, Gikonyo realizes his love for Mumbi still stands and plans to reconcile with her.

b. Summary of *Le fleuve détourné*:

Mimouni's *Le fleuve détourné* (1982) is set in Algeria of the colonial and postcolonial periods. The narrator tells two stories simultaneously. The first one deals with the set of events that happened before and after the Algerian revolution and the second tells the story of the narrator once he ends up in prison sharing stories and situations he experienced with other inmates.

The narrator is a nameless character who lives in a small village with a very simple rural life. He gets married and he has a son. His father urges him to become a shoe maker then he ends up being contacted by the mujahidin to help with the war effort. He abandons his village abandoning his wife and son for glory. One day, the camp is bombed, the man is injured and loses his memory. He is found and taken to hospital where he goes through a long recovery process. Years later, he returns home only to find the country has deeply changed, and that he is presumed dead. Few recognize him and those who do refuse to help him fearing to lose their positions or privileges.

The man then starts a long quest to regain his identity and to reunite with his wife and son. After a long and perilous journey, he finally locates his wife, but the reunion proves

disappointing. The wife suffered a lot especially because of the men who pretended to help her. He kills four men and goes to prison with no fair trial.

Once in prison, the man shares stories of his inmates and all of them are waiting to be castrated but he keeps thinking that he will be soon released because his presence there is just the result of a misunderstanding.

C. Biographies:

a. Biography of Ngugi wa Thiong'o:

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (formerly James Ngugi and known generally as Ngugi) was born in Limuru, Kenya, on January 5, 1938. Educated initially at a mission school and then at a Gikuyu independent school during the Mau Mau insurgency. He went on to attend Alliance High School in 1955-1959, and Makerere University College in Kampala, Uganda in 1959-1964. After earning a B.A (Bachelor of Arts) in English, he worked as a journalist for Nairobi's Daily Nation for half a year before leaving to continue his studies in literature at the University of Leeds in England.

He began his writing career in 1962 with a play written to celebrate the Independence of Uganda. "A Grain of Wheat" was first published in 1967 and it is the last one that he wrote in English. After this, Ngugi wa Thiong'o wrote in Gikuyu; his home language. During his career as a teacher of literature he has fought hard for African literature to have as much as value as English literature.

In the late 1970s and after his performance of his play *I Will Marry When I Want*, Ngugi was arrested and detained in prison without a trial. He was still in prison for a year. After his release, he left Kenya and, since 1982, he has lived much of his life in exile.

b. Biography of Rachid Mimouni:

Rachid Mimouni (1945-1995) was born to a poor family in Boumerdes (Algeria). He studied in his village's primary school then moved to Rouiba where he went to secondary school. Mimouni studied science at the university of Algiers where he graduated in 1968. He obtained a scholarship and studied for a year at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales in Montreal Canada then became a teacher at the Ecole Supérieure du Commerce in Algiers.

Mimouni was president of the 'Kateb Yacine's Foundation' and held the position of vice president at Amnesty International. He was a research assistant in the 'Institut National pour la Productivité et le Développement Industriel'. He was also a member of the Conseil National de la Culture.

Rachid Mimouni won a large recognition as one of the most read francophone writers for some of his best book such as *Le fleuve détourné* (1982), *Tombeza* (1984), *The Honor of the tribe* (1989), and *The Misfortune* 1993. He wrote also several novels and short stories that established him as one of the most successful Algerian writer of his era.

He fled Algeria to France in 1993 to escape the intellectuals' assassinations during the so called "dark decade". Mimouni was threatened several times by radical Islamists because he always described their movement as being based on archaic ideas that are irrelevant in modern times. Rachid Mimouni died On February 12th, 1995 in Paris.

Endnotes:

¹ Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1963, 176.

² Ibid, 177.

³ Ibid, 188.

⁴ Ibid, 172.

⁵ Ibid, 236.

⁶ Ibid, 194.

⁷ Ibid, 205.

⁸ Lewis, Amanda Elizabeth. "A Kenyan Revolution: Mau Mau, Land, Women, and Nation." *(Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2007): 2.*

⁹ David, Anderson. "Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire." (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2005): 61-63.

¹⁰ Caroline, Elkins. "Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya." (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2005): 154-191.

¹¹ Ochieng, W. R. "Themes in Kenyan History". (Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya Limited, 1990): 196.

¹² Stora, Benjamin. *Histoire de l'Algérie depuis l'indépendance*. (Paris: La découverte, 1995): 06.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid, 14

III. Results:

It has been the purpose of this research to investigate Algerian novelist Rachid Mimouni's and Kenyan Ngugi wa Thiong'o's depiction of the issues of love, revolution and betrayal in their novels *Le fleuve détourné* (1982) and *A Grain of Wheat* (1978). To undertake the task, we have relied on Frantz Fanon's concepts of 'National Bourgeoisie' and 'Reverse Racism'.

While discussing the issues above mentioned, we reached interesting findings. The first of our major findings concerns committed literature. In fact, through our investigation of Ngugi and Mimouni's works, it has been shown that both have remained committed to the cause of the oppressed, they worked for the emancipation of peasants and workers of their countries respectively Kenya and Algeria. The two authors converge in their depiction of the same issues of common people's love for their nations and the betrayal of the few native bourgeois to their revolution's ideals. The result is that it has been shown that these issues are not proper to one independent spot in Africa, but the continent as a whole.

The second of our major findings concerns post independence African literature. In fact, we have shown that neither the difference in the languages they use-French for Mimouni, English for Ngugi-nor the geographical distance or even the difference in colonial experience prevented both Ngugi and Mimouni from denouncing the same issues. After all, they have been both imprisoned as tribute for their daring attacks upon the local governments of their countries.

Last but not least, it has been shown that Fanon's prophecies on 'Native Bourgeoisie', 'corrupt African independencies', 'Reverse Racism' and the betrayal of African revolutions remain appropriate for post independence African literature if the concern is the study of issues like those we discussed in our piece of research. Our borrowing of his theory has

enhanced the major findings and the discussion of the issues of love, revolution and betrayal in Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* (1978) and Mimouni's *Le fleuve détourné* (1982).

IV. Discussion:

Chapter One: Love for the Nation

Rachid Mimouni's *Le fleuve détourné* (1982) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* (1978) are novels that deal mainly with post-colonial Algeria and Kenya. Both authors describe how the revolutions were carried out in both countries and the sacrifices made by the people to achieve independence. The two novels portray various social and political aspects and deal with some important issues related to revolution. In this chapter, we intend to show the real meaning of both titles as they are used ironically and how love and sacrifice for the nation is depicted through different characters and events.

1. Waiyaki: The Hero as a 'Grain of Wheat'

Starting with Ngugi's novel, the words 'grain' and 'wheat' carry a deep meaning in them. They express the idea that, before a seed can grow into a new plant, it must first dry out and sacrifice its own life. Grains of wheat are therefore a symbol for the people who started the Kenyan independence movement – those who sacrificed their lives so that others may live free from colonial rule.

Waiyaki, a protagonist in Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat*, is a warrior-leader who fought the British. He is one of those heroic characters in the story. In the novel, he is buried alive with his head facing the centre of the earth. He symbolizes the first seed that grows into the freedom movement. Ngugi wa Thiong'o compares him to "a seed, a grain, which gave birth to a movement whose strength thereafter sprang from a bond with the soil." (Ngugi, 1967: 15)

Ngugi did not choose this title randomly. His main goal is to describe how the Kenyan people had fought and suffered from the repression of the British colonial power. Throughout the story, Ngugi shows how the real heroes sacrifice their lives, wives and children in order to

free their country and make a better future for their families. Ngugi wa Thiong'o takes the idea for the title from this quotation in the Bible:

But someone may ask "What a foolish question! When you put a seed into the ground, it doesn't grow into a plant unless it dies first. And what you put in the ground is not the plant that will grow, but only a bare seed of wheat or whatever you are planting." (1 Corinthians 15:36 Holy Bible New Living Translation)

2. 'Le fleuve détourné' as the Diverted Revolution:

Just like 'Wheat', the 'Fleuve' in Mimouni's *Le fleuve détourné* is heavily loaded with meaning. 'Fleuve' that is 'river' in English symbolizes a source of life which like 'wheat' nourishes people generously.

The Algerian revolution was not the result of one event, the will of the people to break free from colonial oppression is the result of more than a century of suffering characterized by violence, discrimination and alienation. All of these factors paved the way for an armed uprising against the colonial forces in the hopes of achieving independence to live in peace and dignity. The war for independence was long and costly but people accepted to pay this heavy price if the outcome meant freedom. But to everyone's horror, the so-called independence was only an illusion. The colonial oppressors were replaced by the new bourgeois leaders who showed the same hatred and oppression towards the local population.

All of those dreams and aspirations for a better future turned out to be mere illusions mainly because of those leaders who confiscated the revolution. Those people were fighting and scheming to gain power and access higher position even during the war and well before the independence. In this regard Larbbi Ben M'hidi said: "je préfère mourir avant l'indépendance pour ne pas assister à vos déchirements pour le pouvoir"¹

3. Love and Sacrifice:

With thereference to our theoretical framework, in his celebrated book *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), Fanon talks about the love of one's nation and how the African people should be unified in order to gain their independence. Man and woman must stand side by side and encourage each other to be strong enough to face the enemy with bravery and hope for freedom. Fanon says: "African unity, that vague formula, yet one to which the men and women of Africa werepassionately attached, and whose operative value served to bring immense pressure tobear on colonialism."².

Both novels under study depict clearly the issue of love and sacrifice for the nation. To begin with Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* (1978) the Kenyan uprising was first started by a group of rebels called the Mau Mau Freedom Fighters; also called as the 'Movement'. The British named it as Terrorist Gangs. The Mau Mau was established in 1947. It was created as an opposition and a resistance against the British colonial intrusion. The British hidden goal is to confiscate the homeland and freedom of the Kenyan people. The members of this movement carried guns and made their bases in forests all around Rung'ei village. They struggled against the enemy hoping to regain their national sovereignty and take revenge on "loyalists"-people who served the British interests. Later on, it became an inspiration for many people in Kenya who love their country and have sacrificed their lives by joining this movement and taking the oath of fighting the enemy. In *A Grain of wheat*, Ngugi describes the Mau Mau as:

Nearly everybody was a member of the Movement, but nobody could say with any accuracy when it was born: to most people, especially those in the younger generation, it had always been there, a rallying center for action. It changed names, leaders came and went, but the Movement remained, opening new visions, gathering greater and greater strength, till on the eve of Uhuru, its influence stretched from one horizon touching the sea to the other resting on the great Lake³.

The British government in Kenya feels the threat that the movement has become, so it declares a State of Emergency and gathers its army to put an end to the situation; "One day

people in Thabai and Rung'ei woke up to find themselves ringed round with black and white soldiers carrying guns, and tanks last seen on the road during Churchill's war with Hitler."⁴The authorities arrest every man who is suspected of having contacts with the Mau Mau. The order is to put all of them in detention camps to be questioned or tortured. The ones who confess that they have taken the oath would be freed later on; the others will be tortured and murdered savagely. Many of those men lost their lives during the State of Emergency, wives turned into widowers and children became orphans.

In the first pages of *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi describes the village of Thabai and how the villagers suffer from British oppression. He depicts this village as a place of a complete despair and loneliness. The village is wrecked and reduced to rubble, and yet its people are still solid and endure the very hard conditions. Here, Ngugi compares also the village to a place of sacrifice; "Some huts had crumbled; a few had been pulled down. Yet the village maintained an unbroken orderliness; from a distance it appeared a huge mass of grass from which smoke rose to the sky as from a burnt sacrifice."⁵.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o often uses descriptions of the land as a way to show the effect of the colonialists on the lives of the Kenyans. Before the State of Emergency the Kenyans had control of their land and it was a sacred link to their history and ancestors; "This soil belongs to Kenyan people. Nobody has the right to sell or buy it. It is our mother and we her children are all equal before her. She is our common inheritance."⁶.The suffering of the land mirrors the suffering of the people. The destroyed land symbolises how the British have destroyed the Kenyan people.

As one of Ngugi's historical novels, *Harry Thuku*, *Waiyaki* and *Jomo Kenyatta* who worked the Kenyan history are inevitably mentioned. They are real characters who are seen as examples of persons who made personal sacrifices for the Gikuyu community. Ngugi asserts

that: "Names like that of Jomo Kenyatta and Waiyaki are unavoidably mentioned as part of the history and institutions of our country."⁷. All of them were arrested during the British occupation of Kenya. Harry and Kenyatta were released, but Waiyaki was kept prisoner and was buried alive like a seed in the ground; "Waiyaki was buried alive at Kibwezi with his head facing the centre of the earth."⁸.

Gitogo on the other hand, is a fictitious character- a deaf and dumb man who lives only with his mother. Like many other victims in Thabai and Rung'ei who lost their lives, Gitogo died for the love of his mother. At the beginning of the story, he is shot by mistake because one of the British soldiers thinks that he is a member of the Movement:

Gitogo continued running. Something hit him at the back. He raised his arms in the air. He fell on his stomach. Apparently the bullet had touched his heart. The soldier left his place. Another Mau Mau terrorist had been shot dead⁹.

In *A Grain of Wheat*, Kihika is the hero of the freedom movement. In addition to Waiyaki, Kihikacan be seen as the second seed, as he too, is a great fighter. He faces the British with ferocity and bravery. To avoid capture, he flees to the forest and joins a group of freedom fighters. After he officially becomes one of the Mau Mau leaders, Kihika returns to his village and murders the British District Officer "Thomas Robson or as he was generally known, *Tom*, the Terror"¹⁰. In Thabai village, Kihika is considered as a symbol of courage and resistance. He gives speeches to people which make them shiver and motivate them to fight and oppose the colonizer. He believes that Kenya belongs to black people and not to the White man, and he insistently calls the Kenyans to sacrifice their lives and join the movement to make Kenya free and independent; "he had once stood calling for blood to rain on and water the tree of freedom"¹¹. Kihika uses the example of Christ's sacrifice to explain to the people that sacrifice is necessary in the fight for independence. He tells his friend Karanja:

In Kenya we want deaths which will change things, that is to say, we want true sacrifice. But first we have to be ready to carry the cross. I die for you, you die for me, we become a sacrifice for one another. So I can say that you, Karanja, are Christ. I am Christ. Everybody who takes the Oath of Unity to change things in Kenya is a Christ. Christ then is not one person. All those who take up the cross of liberating Kenya are the true Christs for us Kenyan people¹².

Representing the grain of sacrifice for the others, Kihika is captured alone at the edge of Kinenie Forest. No one can say exactly who betrayed him and how he is trapped between the Whiteman's hands; "Believe the news? The man who compelled trees and mountains to move, the man who could go for ten miles crawling on his stomach through sand and bush, was surely beyond the arm of the whiteman."¹³ After Kihika's resistance and refusing to cooperate with the British, he is tortured, and then executed by hanging him on a tree at Rung'ei Market. Kihika pays for Kenya's freedom with his life.

Mugo is another main character symbolizing another grain. He is involved in the story as a hero in the eyes of those who know him; "Stories about Mugo's power spread from mouth to mouth"¹⁴. During the State of Emergency, the British soldiers forced the people of Thabai; men and women, to dig a trench around the village. They even beat them when one of the villagers stopped working or digging slowly. Mugo describes the scenes while he says:

They took us to the roads and to the quarries even those who had never done anything. They called us criminals. But not because we had stolen anything or killed anyone. We had only asked for the thing that belonged to us from the time of Agu and Agu. Day and night, they made us dig¹⁵.

The love of the nation is also depicted through Mugo's love for the others. This is depicted when he tries to save a pregnant woman called Wambuku -Kihika's girlfriend- after she is beaten by a homeguard while she is digging. Everyone in the trench is watching the scene without any reaction or movement, but Mugo commits himself to defend her and quarrel with the soldier. He is then beaten too and sent to Rira detention camp where he finds many other detainees who are taken as prisoners and questioned to confess their oaths. Mugo has suffered while he is in the detention camp. John Thompson; the head of Rira detention

camp, tries to make Mugo reveal any information that he knows about the Mau Mau thugs, but he keeps repeating that he is not a member and he knows nothing about the movement; “Mugo was the only one who consented to answer questions. But he only opened to repeat what he had said in all the camps. Thompson, like a tick, stuck to Mugo. He questioned him daily.”¹⁶.

While the huts in villages are left with no men, the soldiers and homeguards are putting every suspected person into detention camps where all of them will be screened and interrogated. Everyone has sworn not to confess their oaths or give any information concerning the Mau Mau, no matter the cost:

The detainees had agreed not to confess the oath, or give any details about Mau Mau: how could anybody reveal the binding force of the Agikuyu in their call for African freedom? They bore all the ills of the whiteman, believing somehow that he who would endure unto the end would receive leaves of victory¹⁷.

Love and sacrifice for the nation is also collective in Ngugi’s eyes. This is demonstrated in *A Grain of Wheat* when the detainees of the Rira camp; where Mugo is among them, decide to demonstrate their anger and complain about the degraded situation in the camp. They start a hunger strike as a reaction to what they endure as prisoners. Being the head of the Rira camp, John Thompson orders his soldiers to beat and whip all the riotous; nearly eleven men died in this event. Even when they are detained and tortured, the Kenyan people never stop fighting for their country and showing their real love for it. In the novel, one of the detainees says: “What thing is greater than love for one’s country? The love that for Kenya kept me alive and made me endure everything. Therefore it is true, Kenya is black people’s country.”¹⁸.

4. Women and the Love of the Nation in Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat*:

In *A Grain of Wheat*, the issue of love of the nation is also depicted through women's characters. Throughout the story, Ngugi depicts how women suffer during the State of Emergency, but still display love for Kenya. With the absence of their men and the poverty that invades the villages; some of them are obliged to work hard to feed their children, others are even forced to sell their bodies to the soldiers just to gain a few shillings. Like Wambui, many other women have joined the struggle for liberation and participated in the fight against the British colonizer beside the Mau Mau fighters. Concerning Wambui, Ngugi says; "During the emergency, she carried secrets from the villages to the forest and back to the villages and towns."¹⁹.

Ngugi gives an important position to women in the Gikuyu society, and it is depicted in the novel mainly through their participation with men during the Emergency. Mumbi is Kihika's sister and Gikonyo's wife. She is an ambitious woman who always dreams of Kenya's independence. She loves listening to her brother Kihika when he talks about revolution and the history of the country. In her eyes, Kihika is a hero and like him, she believes that sacrifices should be made to save Kenya from the British claws and to free the black people:

When my brother talked. My heart travelled with his words. I dreamt of sacrifice to save so many people. And although sometimes I feared, I wanted those days to come. Even when I got married, the dream did not die²⁰.

Mumbi also talks about her friend Njeri, who like Mumbi, has her own secrets. Even though she knows that Kihika and Wambuku are in love, she hides her feelings for him. Secretly she falls in love with Kihika and never tells anyone. She even follows Kihika into the forest to fight beside him. Unfortunately, both of them were captured and killed by the British soldiers; "None of us, however, knew that she had secret dreams. Anyway, not until she ran

away to the forest to fight at Kihika's side. She was shot dead in a battle, soon after Kihika's death."²¹. Njeri sacrifices herself for both Kihika's love and her country.

The issue of love and sacrifice for the nation is also well reflected in Mimouni's *Le fleuve détourné* (1982). In fact, Sacrifice has always been part of revolution as all revolutionaries know there is a price to pay for freedom to be achieved. In Mimouni's *Le fleuve détourné*, the theme of sacrifice is paramount. It is epitomized by the nameless main character that sacrifices everything he loves to join the ranks of resistance and take part in the war effort. Although; he is only a shoemaker and he is asked only to make shoes for the fighters. He has to make a huge sacrifice by leaving his wife and his unborn son. He knows that he may not come back and that the moment he leaves may be the last time he ever sees his wife and family; "Ma femme m'épiait à travers une haie de roseaux. J'approchai, elle recula. Son visage était baigné de larmes et elle sanglotait à petits coups."²².

The saddest part about the man is that after he recovers from his injuries and regains his memory, he comes back to his country only to find misery, despair and chaos ; "J'ai traversé des terres en friche et des campagnes désertes. Que sont devenus les paysans qui les travaillaient"²³. and worst of all, instead of being welcomed as a hero, he is presumed dead then starts the nightmare to recover his identity and locate his wife and son who have been long gone. The man struggles in every bit of the journey because he is a ghost, a man with no identity and no legal existence. As a result he becomes homeless; hence a target for police oppression and no one wants to recruit a man with no identity. When he goes to see his uncle Si Mokhtar for advice, he is told:

Tu reviens au pays bien après la fin de la fête, bien après que les fanfares se sont tues. Tu aurais pu persister dans la voie de l'oubli, ou, comme Ali, ton cousin, dans celle de l'inconscience. Ce sont aujourd'hui les seuls gages de sérénité. Mais tu veux savoir. Mon fils, ta douleur sera grande²⁴.

Another character that exemplifies this sacrifice is another shoemaker Said that the man meets during his quest. Just like him, Said was also injured in the mountains during the war and lost some fingers and part of his hand. He cannot have a normal life. He is unable to find a woman or even a decent job. Even after he was told he could get a pension for his injury, he refused to live out of charity because earning money of one's sweat is part of being a man. The only job he is accepted for is a factory where working conditions are unbearable. In the end, he decides to ask for the pension, but he has been waiting for ten years now, and he never saw the pension money: "Alors j'ai fini par aller demander ma pension. J'ai eu à fournir des dizaines de documents. Puis on m'a demandé d'attendre. J'attends toujours. Cela va faire bientôt dix ans."²⁵. Honest men try to live in dignity, but the social and economic situation never allows that. It seems there are only two options; live in poverty and misery with no hope for a better future or embrace corruption and illegal activities such as the man's uncle Mokhtar who is regarded as a highly respected religious man who knows influential people but he takes part in illegal activities.

The life of the main character can be viewed as a microcosm of the post independence Algerian society. He is the archetype of the simple, honest man who has no political agenda whatsoever. He is one of those who have done much for their country and received so little in return. Worse still, all he gets is alienation, oppression and disdain. Everything he fought and hoped for is gone after independence. Fanon describes this category of people as those:

Who have no very precise ideas about politics, but who instinctively distrust the race for positions and pensions which is symptomatic of the early days of independence in colonized countries. The personal situation these men (breadwinners of large families) or their background (hard struggles and a strictly moral upbringing) explains their manifest contempt for profiteers and skimmers²⁶.

Women's sacrifice is also depicted mainly in the reaction of the man's wife when he leaves to join the ranks of the resistance. She is crying as her husband is about to go to war knowing that she may never see him again and that she would have to bear the burdens of life

alone. Her situation is that of millions of other Algerian women who had to let go of their husbands, sons and brother knowing that they could make the ultimate sacrifice in the exercise of their duty towards the motherland.

From our analysis of the issues of love and sacrifice for the nation, we notice that both issues are at the core of Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* and Mimouni's *Le fleuve détourné*. Characters in both novels committed themselves to the fight and love of their love of their nation states respectively Kenya and Algeria. Both men and women embody the seeds of this struggle.

5. Disillusionment:

All the colonized populations who fought for freedom have the dream of living in a better world free from oppression and tyranny, a world in which people would be equal living in harmony and peace. In other words, independence meant the suppression of all that is negative in society after the colonizer is driven out of the mother land. Unfortunately, all these visions, dreams and illusions slowly faded after the end of the independence celebrations leaving place to deep despair and disillusionment. People gradually realized that the peace and dignity they have long dreamed of were never meant to be. Instead, they woke up to find the country in the hands of a group of traitors who came to power only to take advantage of the vacuum left by the colonizer. These leaders' primary interests never included the well being of the lower classes.

A. The Co-operator and the Member of Parliament as Colonial

Agents in Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat*:

In *A Grain of Wheat*, the theme of disillusionment is clearly depicted through the events which lead to the Independence Day or 'Uhuru'. Ngugi wa Thiong'o describes the

ways in which some characters trick their population and co-operate with the British colonizer while the latter is preparing to leave Kenya. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), Frantz Fanon firmly condemns the so-called 'Native Bourgeoisie' or 'National Bourgeoisie' as being the cause of regression in the newly independent countries in Africa. Fanon criticizes this category of people from a point of view in which he denounces their actions, attitudes and how they interact with the colonial bourgeoisie during and after the war of independence in all the African colonies:

The bourgeoisie in the colonies is, before independence, a Western bourgeoisie, a true branch of the bourgeoisie of the mother country, that derives its legitimacy, its force, and its stability from the bourgeoisie of the homeland. During the period of unrest that precedes independence, certain native elements, intellectuals, and traders, who live in the midst of that imported bourgeoisie, try to identify themselves with it²⁷.

In chapter six of *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi depicts mainly the Kenyan middle class such as the bus' proprietor and the Member of Parliament who collaborated with the British government during the war of liberation. A DILIGENT CHILD's proprietor and the Member of Parliament are indifferent to the war of independence and feel unconcerned with the liberation of their country from the foreign regime. Their mere interest is to create opportunities with the British. They seek only for business and political status. Instead of expressing their solidarity with the suffering homeland and its hopeless people, the new middle class collaborates courteously with the British government. Even during the State of Emergency, those national bourgeois take every chance and advantage for them just to fulfill their personal objectives. As the British new strategy of imperialism, they intelligently allow them to build their own enterprises and collect fortunes. This is shown by Ngugi when he says:

The bus, called A DILIGENT CHILD, belonged to one of those people in Rung'ei whose fortunes were made during the war of Independence. Those were men through active co-operation with the colonial government had acquired trade and licences and even loans to develop their business²⁸.

After six years in detention camps, Gikonyo is finally released. The description of life in the detention, and the changes Gikonyo sees in Thabai when he returns home, show how Kenyans suffered during the State of Emergency. Now, he is disillusioned by the situation. He cannot make a link between the past and the present. He notices the poor conditions of the land and how it has become; “The very air choked him; Thabai was just another detention camp.”²⁹. Gikonyo’s feelings of despair at finding his village so changed upon his return can be compared to the despair felt by all the Kenyans:

The bumpy battered land sloped on either side; sickly crops just recovering from a recent drought, one more scourge which had afflicted the country in this period leaving the anxious faces of mothers dry and cracked³⁰.

After independence, Kenyan people hope for a prosperous country both in economy, politics and social development. They dream of peace, equality and honest leaders who can transform Kenya into a free country. The native leaders; also called the national bourgeoisies have promised their people to make Kenya new again with an autonomous and a tolerant government. At first, people have believed in those promises and expect a great future with those new leaders. Unfortunately, what they have experienced after independence is just a new image of the old colonizer. The middle class is exercising the same oppression and repression on the peasantry. Those politicians are behaving just like the British; they continue to exploit people as slaves. Actually, the new leaders of Kenya have become more racist towards their nation than the British have ever been before. The way Ngugi wa Thiong’o introduces the Member of Parliament can give us a hint about those new native bourgeoisies who are ruling the new Kenya; “The MP arrived; he was dressed in a dark suit and carried a leather portfolio. He smoked a pipe. He greeted all the people like a father or a headmaster his children. He went into the office without apologizing.”³¹.

Gikonyo’s hard working and determination make him become successful in business; both as a carpenter and as a trader. Now, with five other men, he wants to buy a farm

belonging to Richard Burton; “Burton was one of the earliest settlers, who, encouraged by the British Government to settle in Kenya.”³². They have asked a Member of Parliament ‘MP’ to help them get a loan. While Gikonyo is excited to meet the MP for a positive response about the farm, many other people are waiting for him to come into his office to complain about their bad situation. Even if he is a native middle class Kenyan, he never assumes his responsibility as a politician, he does not take his job seriously and always late for coming to his office; “It is like trying to meet God, one woman complained.”³³.

When Gikonyo finally meets the MP, he becomes suspicious about the latter. Gikonyo thinks that he can get the loan in a determined time, but the Member of Parliament tries to avoid the subject and delays the exact date. He even excuses himself for not going to attend the Uhuru celebrations because; “On that day all the Members of Parliament have been invited to various functions here in the *capital*. You see, we have so many foreign guests to look after.”³⁴. Gikonyo is disappointed by the result and his excitement about the small farm is starting to disappear. After few days, joined by the five men, he decides to see Dr Burton personally at his house and tries to convince him to sell the farm. Unfortunately for him, Burton has already left Kenya and he has been tricked by the MP as he takes for himself the same farm that Gikonyo wants to buy:

The first thing they saw at the main entrance to Green Hill Farm (as Burton’s farm was called) was a new signpost. Gikonyo could not believe his eyes when he read the name. They walked to the house without a whisper among themselves, all dwelling at the same thought. Burton had left Kenya for England. The new landowner was their own MP³⁵.

B. The Nameless Character and Disillusionment in Mimouni’s *Le*

***fleuve détourné*:**

The deep sense of disillusionment is also expressed in Mimouni’s novel *Le fleuve détourné* through various characters and events. The disillusionment of the nameless main

character starts as soon as he comes back to his country. He is happy to be back, but soon he realizes that things have changed to the worse; “Les compagnes semblaient désertes. Les champs de vignes qui autrefois verdissaient le flanc des collines avaient disparu.”³⁶. The man’s disillusionment continues through his perilous to find his wife and son and also to recover his identity. He comes to the sudden realization that the country is nothing like what he had hoped for. One of the first people he talks to is his father and he describes him as weak and somehow older than he really is. The father’s expressions are also a testimony of his despair and his misery; “Je fixais longuement mon père. Il y avait une grande tristesse dans ses yeux. Je compris que depuis longtemps il avait perdu tout espoir”³⁷.

Since the man returned to the country, nothing is easy. He has no identity, no family, no home and no job. He returns home to resume his life peacefully. Instead, his return is becoming a nightmare as everything is going wrong and no one seems to be able to help; “Depuis mon retour au pays, j’ai l’impression de vivre mauvais rêve.”³⁸. The man ends in prison and shares stories of his fellow inmates. The prison itself is an analogy to the country that became like a prison to its people and most importantly, they are controlled and constantly threatened by those in power. The administration also makes them empty promises just to keep them quiet:

Qui croit encore aux promesses de l’administrateur? demande Omar. S’il nous fallait un réquisitoire contre ces hommes, nous n’aurions justement qu’à établir la liste des promesses non tenues. Ils ont appris à gouverner par le mensonge et la fuite en avant, et croient pouvoir nous leurrer encore. D’ailleurs, aujourd’hui, cela n’a guère d’importance: ne nous sommes habitués à vivre dans la poussière et la boue³⁹.

The man's disappointment continues when he finally locates his son. He was told that he should go north to the sea and that he would answers there. When he finally gets there with his son, there is none of the ocean breeze and no sense of relief; “Nous débouchâmes enfin sur le port, en vue de la mer. Mais aucune brise marine ne vint du large pour rafraîchir mon visage. Je fus déçu.”⁴⁰.

This reaction is an analogy to that of most Algerians who hoped to see independence only to find themselves colonized all over again. All that was negative still remains. Misery, inequality and oppression are still part of the daily life even after the so called independence; “Nous étions nombreux à venir ainsi contempler la mer, à scruter sans cesse l'horizon. Mais nul que nous attendions n'est venu.”⁴¹. The final blow to the man's hopes comes when he talks to his son. He is denied fatherhood by a desperate son who has been living in utter misery for far too long:

Tu divagues, l'homme. Tout les désespérés ont mes yeux. Je ne te connais pas. Tu n'es pas mon père. Mon père est mort il y a bien longtemps. Nous sommes ainsi des milliers à trainer dans les rues, orphelins sans passé et sans mémoire, confrontés au plus total désarroi. Pour vivre, nous vendons notre jeunesse aux soldats en permission à la recherche de bordels introuvables⁴².

It is clear from the above analysis that Mimouni's *Le fleuve détourné* is a cry of anguish amidst the disillusionment that deeply trapped Algerians after independence was achieved. Mimouni committed himself to denounce how three generations that are the grandfather, l'homme (the son) and the grand-son are caught in the dilemma of living in not an independent but an imprisoned country.

Endnotes:

¹ Stora, Benjamin. *Histoire de l'Algérie depuis l'indépendance*. (Paris: La découverte, 1995): 06.

² Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1963, 159.

³ Ngugi, wa Thiong'o. *A Grain of Wheat*. London: Heinemann, 1978, 13.

⁴ Ibid, 8.

⁵ Ibid, 6.

⁶ Ibid, 89.

⁷ n. t. Union News, Leeds U, 18 November, 1966.

⁸ Ngugi, wa Thiong'o. *A Grain of Wheat*. London: Heinemann, 1978, 14.

⁹ Ibid, 8.

¹⁰ Ibid, 166.

¹¹ Ibid, 19.

¹² Ibid, 86-87.

¹³ Ibid, 19.

¹⁴ Ibid, 194.

¹⁵ Ibid, 61.

¹⁶ Ibid, 122.

¹⁷ Ibid, 95.

¹⁸ Ibid, 61.

¹⁹ Ibid, 21.

²⁰ Ibid, 124.

²¹ Ibid, 12.

²² Mimouni, Rachid. *Le fleuve détourné*. Paris: Robert Laffont, 1982, 22-23.

²³ Ibid, 59.

²⁴ Ibid, 101.

²⁵ Ibid, 121.

²⁶ Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1963, 177.

²⁷ Ibid, 178.

²⁸ Ngugi, wa Thiong'o. *A Grain of Wheat*. London: Heinemann, 1978, 56.

²⁹ Ibid, 106.

³⁰ Ibid, 94-95.

³¹ Ibid, 58.

³² Ibid, 56.

³³ Ibid, 57.

³⁴ Ibid, 59.

³⁵ Ibid, 152.

³⁶ Mimouni, Rachid. *Le fleuve détourné*. Paris: Robert Laffont, 1982, 43.

³⁷ Ibid, 47.

³⁸ Ibid, 79.

³⁹ Ibid, 91.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 205.

⁴¹ Ibid, 207.

⁴² Ibid, 210.

Chapter Two: Betrayal of the Revolution

This chapter investigates both Ngugi's and Mimouni's intellectual convergence to the denunciation of the local people's betrayal of the Kenyan and Algerian independencies. In fact, the issue of betrayal of revolution is paramount in *A Grain of Wheat* (1978) and *Le fleuve détourné* (1982). Not everyone was honestly committed in the freedom of the country from oppression; some clearly betrayed the revolution either by joining the ranks of the enemy or by seeking only personal interests. Those traitors are mainly part of what Fanon coined the 'National Bourgeois'. These people are generally middle class intellectuals who took advantage of the void left by the colonial leaders and colonial bourgeoisie. They took over most strategic positions in power and economy and slowly replaced the former colonizer.

So many have made the ultimate sacrifice to free the nation and the result was millions of widows and orphans. Was the sacrifice worth the result? Evidently not because the situation has worsened after the so-called independence and the only people who have benefited from the outcome are those Fanon calls the 'National Bourgeois'. Most of them were hiding during the war or even supporting the colonizer. In his celebrated book *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) Fanon asserts that even after gaining independence:

The bourgeoisie who are in power vainly increase the number of processions; the masses have no illusions. They are hungry; and the police officers, though they are now Africans, do not serve to reassure them particularly. The masses begin to sulk; they turn away from this nation in which they have been given no place and begin to lose interest in it¹.

Fanon's words clearly echoed the mood of the novels under scrutiny. It reinforces on belief that most African independencies have been diverted from their ideals by some individuals who had other objectives in mind than the freedom of their

1. Opportunism and Rapacity:

In both novels, the theme of betrayal is depicted mainly with the results it had on decolonized countries. This betrayal brought about consequences that wreaked absolute havoc on many levels paving the way for utter decay; chaos and despair. Most of the new leaders and those who occupy higher positions are middle class intellectuals. These leaders display a clear hatred towards lower class populations although elected by these people. As Fanon puts it, the leader rather threatens and oppresses. The leader even displays racism towards the less fortunate with what Fanon coined 'Reverse Racism'; "The racial prejudice of the young national bourgeoisie is a racism of defense, based on fear. Essentially it is no different from vulgar tribalism, or the rivalries between septs or confraternities." ².

According to Fanon, the local bourgeoisie is characterized by rapacity and excessive greed. It uses every opportunity to become wealthier, regardless of the means or the results on the people. Fanon views them as a caste completely detached from society as it no longer shares the same problems or the same aspirations with the rest of society. The local bourgeoisie tries to imitate the former colonial bourgeoisie and remain deeply connected to it and turns its back to the suffering local populations.

In his manifesto, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), Fanon deals extensively with this category of decolonized societies and the role they play after these countries gained their independence. He describes them mainly as a useless phase and as a group that constitutes an obstacle to the development of the newly created nations. According to Fanon, the local bourgeoisie does not have the means nor the knowledge it takes to create a bourgeois society:

In underdeveloped countries, we have seen that no true bourgeoisie exists; there is only a sort of little greedy caste, avid and voracious, with the mind of a huckster, only too glad to accept the dividends that the former colonial power hands out to it. This get-rich-quick middle class shows itself incapable of great ideas or of inventiveness³.

Fanon argues that the European bourgeoisie developed and gained strength due to its elaborated ideology, secularism and substantial wealth, so it was able to give something back to society. Local bourgeoisies on the other hand, lack this secularism, ethnicity and the will to give something back:

A bourgeoisie similar to that which developed in Europe is able to elaborate an ideology and at the same time strengthen its own power. Such a bourgeoisie, dynamic, educated, and secular has fully succeeded in its undertaking of the accumulation of capital and has given to the nation a minimum of prosperity⁴.

In *A Grain of Wheat* (1978) Ngugi wa Thiong'o portrays the odds in Kenya's independence and calls for revolutionary change against the corrupt system. Most of the main characters are marked by a personal or political betrayal. Mugo, Karanja, Gikonyo and Mumbi make choices; each character in his own way betrays his community, his nation and even his friends during the Mau Mau struggle. Before writing *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi comments on the Kenyan situation during the war of liberation and how corruption and betrayal have destroyed the social environment:

The terrible thing about the Mau Mau war was the destruction of family life, distrust of personal relationships; you found a friend betraying a friend, a father suspicious of his son, a brother doubting the sincerity of a brother⁵.

It becomes clear from the quotation above that the Kenyan masses whether individuals, families or groups are deeply caught in the trap of a renewed form of native oppression that Fanon terms 'Neo-colonialism'.

A. Mugo as a Hero and a Traitor:

One night during the State of emergency, Kihika shoots and kills the British District Officer Tom Robson. While he is being hunted by the soldiers, the only refuge he finds to hide in is Mugo's new hut; near Rung'ei Railway Station. By the way, Kihika talks with Mugo about the war and revolution. He tries to convince him that they have to find a solution

to make the Whiteman weak and the Mau Mau movement stronger. Before Kihika leaves the hut, he tells Mugo that he needs him “to organise an underground movement in the new village.”⁶ . Mugo starts fearing about the suggestion and with a hesitation and a protest tells Kihika that “I-I have never taken the oath.”⁷.

After that night, Kihika’s words make Mugo drown deeply into his thoughts, incapable of thinking about anything else. He thinks about that meeting and keeps asking himself; “Why should Kihika drag me into a struggle and problems I have not created? Why?”⁸. Now, Mugo is paranoid; his isolation is destructive for both the community and himself. He is confused between joining Kihika in the movement or working for the colonial government:

What shall I do, he asked himself. If I don’t serve Kihika he’ll kill me. They killed Rev. Jackson and Teacher Muniu. If I work for him, the government will catch me. The whiteman has long arms. And they’ll hang me⁹.

From the day that makes Kihika a famous figure among the other Mau Mau freedom fighters, Mugo arises a feeling of envy towards him. Every motivating speech that Kihika gives at Rung’ei Market to fight the British, Mugo becomes more and more jealous; “Kihika had everything; Mugo had nothing. This thought obsessed him; it filled him with a foamless fury, a tearless anger that obliterated other things and made him unable to sleep.”¹⁰. What makes him betray Kihika ultimately proves to be a desire for personal power. He believes that God speaks to him and he sends him as a messenger to save his community and nation; “God called out to him in a thin voice, Moses, Moses. And Mugo cried out, Here am I, Lord.”¹¹. He compares himself to Moses in the bible who led his people to freedom, but Kihika’s face stills stuck in his mind.

Throughout the story, Ngugi gives Mugo a double role. Ngugi describes him as Judas who betrayed the Christ, because he has betrayed his friend Kihika and as a hero because of what he does at Rira detention camp. As he discovers the wanted poster of Kihika, the

thoughts of reward and renewed life with children, a wife and a big house replaced the anguish of his previous jealousies. Mugo is determined to sell Kihika's life to the British soldiers and get the money. He goes to the District Office where he will meet the District Officer John Thompson. Mugo tells him about his secret meeting with Kihika after a week, yet he is offended by Thompson's reaction. The DO spits and slaps Mugo's face thinking that the latter is giving him wrong information. Mugo; the false champion of the detention camp is clearly suffering psychologically for his betrayal of Kihika:

The word struck, blocked the throat. His open mouth let out inarticulate noises. Foam had collected at the corners of his mouth. He stared at the whiteman, a watery glint in the eyes, without seeing him. Then the table, the chair, the DO, the white-washed walls – the earth – started spinning, faster and faster again. He held on the table to still himself. He did not want the money. He did not want to know what he had done¹².

In the Uhuru Celebration Day, while people are waiting for Karanja to profess publically his betrayal of his friend Kihika. In front of the crowd, Mugo has finally declared with a deep sensation of guilt that he is the traitor, so he confesses that; "He put his life into my hands, and I sold it to the whiteman. And this thing has eaten into my life all these years."¹³. When the sacrifice for the Uhuru Celebration Day has ended, General R. And Lt Koina go to Mugo's hut to get him ready to be tried and then executed.

B. Karanja; Natives Serving the Empire:

Among the issues that both novelists deal with is the contribution of some natives to the renewed of the colonial plight. In Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* Karanja stands for a native who serves the former empire and colonizer.

Karanja; another main character in *A Grain of Wheat* has also betrayed the communal interests of the Mau Mau Movement by fighting for his personal retribution. After the capture of his friend Kihika, he confesses his oath to the Mau Mau and he is registered as home guard when Thompson was the District Officer. Instead of fighting for the freedom of the land, he

follows the collaborationist route. The greed for a position among the British settlers pushes him to co-operate with them; “And soon his qualities of faithfulness, integrity and courage revealed themselves, and quickly became a trusted servant of the white people at Githima.”¹⁴ . Karanja is considered as a traitor not only for his working for the British government, but he even betrays his friend Gikonyo by having sex with his wife Mumbi.

Karanja’s experience as a home guard makes him exercise power over his poor people. He always thinks about Thompson’s power and wonders if; “Had he not experienced that power, which also ruled over the souls of men, when he, as a chief, could make circumcised men cower before him, women scream by a lift of his finger?”¹⁵ .He even punishes anyone who is not respecting the rules or not paying the poll-taxes. Afterward, at Githima Forestry and Agricultural Research Station, Karanja works for both John Thompson and Mrs Dickinson; “as their personal messenger”¹⁶ . Now, Karanja is very worried because he thinks that his boss John Thompson is going to leave Kenya and he will lose his position. Thompson is really planning to leave Kenya to return to Britain. Like Mugo, Karanja is troubled, confused and his life becomes meaningless; “Thompson has gone, I have lost Mumbi. His mind hopped from image to image, following no coherent order. Incidents in his life would pop up and then disappear.”¹⁷.

Karanja prepares himself to leave Thabai village as he thinks that without the Whiteman’s protection, he will not be able to stay. In the end, Ngugi describes Karanja’s guilt and shame about the betrayal of his community. He becomes more anxious when he thinks that the British and the people of Thabai have abandoned him. It seems as if he wants to commit suicide at Rung’ei Railway Station as the train passes in front of him:

He felt the screeching in his flesh as on that other time at Rung’ei Station. He was conscious too, of many angry eyes watching him in the dark. The train was only few yards from the crossing. He moved a step forward. Then it swished past him, the lights, the engine and the coaches, so close that the wind threw him back. The earth where he stood trembled. When the train disappeared, the silence around him deepened; the night seemed to have darker¹⁸.

C. The Middle Class Opportunists:

In *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi wa Thiong’o explicitly clashes the middle classbourgeoisies who betrayed the Kenyan revolution for their personal interests. Ngugi denounces those who are in power after independence as they came only to satisfy their own egos. Some critics believe that the British colonists have formed this category of people; also called ‘the loyalists’, to leave their roots and continue what they have not accomplished yet during the occupation of Kenya.

This ‘corrupt ruling elites’ that Alan Woods describes in his article, *Kenya, the Barbaric Consequences of Capitalism* (2008) are: “just as rapacious as the British, but even more corrupt inefficient and rotten. In effect, they were only the local office boys of the British and American imperialists”¹⁹. He argues that even after the period of colonialism, the Kenyan people endure the imperialist systems and suffer from the oppressive African leaders; “the middleclass leaders of independence struggle continued the oppressive and exploitative system as the British.”²⁰.

Ngugi wa Thiong’o describes these loyalists from Gikonyo’s point of view. Gikonyo admits that they are not the same as those who suffered during the war. As he talks to Mugo, Gikonyo denounces the so-called leaders who suddenly become businessmen and take the rank of the middle class. He describes them as they are cowards and they never committed themselves for the country’s liberation; “They are mere uncircumcised boys. They knew suffering as a word.”²¹. Those political figures have never contributed to the Kenyan

independence. They are the ones who never joined the movement or even take a gun to fight the enemy and protect their country. Gikonyo talks about them with disgust and hatred:

Whom do we see riding in long cars and changing them daily as if motor cars were clothes? It is those who did not take part in the movement, the same who ran to the shelter of schools and universities and administration. And even some who were outright traitors and collaborators²².

D. Corruption and rapacity in *Le fleuve détourné*:

In *Le fleuve détourné*, virtually all those in power; whether in prison or those met by the man throughout his journey are opportunists, liars and hypocrites. They all display a clear detachment and disdain towards the common people. When the man meets his cousin; the mayor, he describes a portrait of a man on the wall, most likely that of the president, with a menacing look. It is a clear allusion to the dictatorship of Independent Algeria; “Derrière le dos du maire, un portrait en couleur. Un homme dont le regard sévère ne cessa à aucun moment de me fixer”²³

Even before he meets the mayor, the man has to get through the ‘Chaouch’, the assistant who lets people into the mayor’s office. He is often rude and treats people with disdain. He is impolite and inconsiderate to the man right to the point he assumes the latter came back from France: “Tu étais en France? demanda-t-il tandis que pour la première fois depuis le début de l’entretien son visage s’éclairait d’un sourire.”²⁴. This indicates that those in power are much more considerate and respectful towards foreigners than towards the locals especially if they come from France, home of the former colonizer.

The man is quite happy that the mayor is his cousin and he is confident that his relative will help him recover his identity. Unfortunately, the mayor is not really willing to help and he is even annoyed by the man's story; “J'avais le sentiment que mon récit ennuyait le

maire.”²⁵.The mayor does not provide help because of some paperwork technicalities but primarily fearing to lose his position and all the privileges that go with it:

Tu dois bien te douter que les Marzougs reviennent de voir un des leurs occuper ce fauteuil. Ils sont en permanence a l'affut du moindre faux pas, de la plus petite erreur pour créer le scandale destine a me détrôner²⁶.

It is clear from the above that, like many incompetent people, the mayor used to be considered as a useless and worthless person. This is expressed in the conversation the man has with his former camp commander Si Cherif that he exhumes to get some advice, Si Cherif says: “Je n'aurais jamais cru que ce vaurien d'Ahmed put un jour devenir maire du village. Il s'est toujours montre plus bête que l'âne de son père”²⁷.

This indicates that those in power are most often incompetent and unfit to serve the people. Another character incarnating this rapacity and hypocrisy is the man's uncle Si Mokhtar. He returns from a pilgrimage and offers everyone a feast to celebrate it. He is described as a very pious and generous man who does a lot for his community. People are often praising him as a good and generous man; “Que dieu bénisse Si Mokhtar et accroisse ses biens. C'est un homme bon et généreux.”²⁸.

However; Si Mokhtar is very rich and knows many powerful and influential personalities as many city officials and the chief of police were invited to his party. He has a luxurious house, servants and businesses. He accepts to help the man by giving him an obscure job as a shepherd supposedly to help him lay low and avoid trouble with authorities. The man later discovers that the whole operation is illegal and he is again on the run trying to escape from the authorities.

Various other characters in Mimouni's novel portray this opportunism of those in power. All influential characters are rich, always distant and detached from the rest of the population both socially and financially. The leaders always have huge houses and move

around in nice armoured cars. They can't be approached by others, because they are always surrounded by security and police patrols.

Mimouni depicts this distance particularly when the prison administrator comes on a visit. He arrives in an armoured car surrounded by guards and policemen. The man wants to approach him and states his case hoping to be released quickly as he thinks he is imprisoned unjustly. Unfortunately, he realizes that there is no way he can get through that much security:

Pourquoi cette débauche de motards, de gorilles, des policiers en uniforme ou en civil, cette voiture blindée et cette tribune si lointaine, séparée de la foule par des chevaux de frises ? Que craignent-ils donc ces dirigeants aimés du peuple ?²⁹

What Mimouni targets here is the public authority which symbolizes outrage against those 'Native Bourgeois' who diverted the 'Fleuve' of the Algerian revolution.

Corruption is also denounced by Mimouni through his description of the leaders' practices and businesses. The prison administrator builds a luxurious house with materials he procures illegally thanks to his position and he even sells them with higher prices. Other corrupt leaders engage in businesses and useless projects which cost money, harm the environment and people but they do not care as long as they benefit from it.

Ils ont amène des machines qui mangent nos montagnes et construit partout cette cheminée qui répond partout sa poussière vénéneuse. Meurent les plantes, les bêtes et les homes tandis que grandit la cheminée. On nous a promis qu'au bout de peu de temps, nous deviendront des statues³⁰.

This is a clear indication that the leaders are extremely greedy and that they would do anything it takes to become even wealthier no matter the means or the consequences on others.

In *The Wretched of the Earth*(1963), Frantz Fanon has also denounced the political parties who lead the African countries after independence. He says that the middle class who instead of satisfying the needs of the people, takes every opportunity to widen their properties

and increase their possessions, but never contributes to develop economy of the country. These bourgeois monopolize businesses and leave the hard labor for the poor and the peasantry class; “The living party, which ought to make possible the free exchange of ideas which have been elaborated according to the real needs of the mass of the people, has been transformed into a trade union of individual interests.”³¹.

2. Poverty and misery as Issues in Mimouni’s *Le fleuve détourné*:

Widespread decay characterized most if not decolonized countries and this is a direct consequence of the betrayal mentioned earlier. Only a small proportion of the populations seem to have benefited from the recently achieved independence and the rest of the people are left in complete disarray. These low class citizens, mostly peasants are put aside, isolated from the leaders because of the deep wedge that separates the two classes.

In his *the Wretched of the Earth* (1963) Fanon tackles this issue of inequality and decay describing the differences between the bourgeois and lower class. Fanon tackles this issue of inequality and decay describing the differences between the upper and lower class especially in way of opportunities. The Bourgeois are always at the forefront of all profitable businesses and they have the support of the leaders of the country whereas the poor people are exploited almost as slaves. This state of affairs is exacerbated by the support of the nation leaders to this caste. In this regard Fanon states:

The leader judges the ingratitude of the masses harshly, and every day that passes ranges himself a little more resolutely on the side of the exploiters. He therefore knowingly becomes the aider and abettor of the young bourgeoisie which is plunging into the mire of corruption and pleasure³².

In Mimouni’s *Le fleuve détourné*, suffering and misery are at the core of the novel. Mimouni describes the chaos that is raging through his main character. Signs of this misery appear as soon as the man comes back to his country and with the first interactions he has

with his family. His father grew very old and became weak and skinny. He has to plough a very rocky infertile land:

Mon père était entrain de labourer son petit lopin de pierrailles. Le cheval qui tirait la charrue était si maigre et chétif qu'a chaque pas on craignait de le voir s'effondrer. L'homme qui tenait les manches de l'outil n'avait pas meilleure mine³³.

The tribe is suffering so much that the father claims it is cursed as so many have died during the war, others have gone mad and occasionally, mysterious plagues appear and decimate those who are left:

Une terrible malédiction pèse sur les membres exiles de la tribu. Beaucoup sont morts pendant la guerre. D'autres nous ont quitte pour devenir vagabonds, des commerçants, ou des employés dans les administrations. Et régulièrement, d'étranges maladies viennent éclaircir nos rangs déjà clairsemes³⁴.

Homelessness is another raging problem which deepened people's poverty after the independence. Many are compelled to live in abandoned cars or sleep in mosques. This is due to the lack of any housing programs and the carelessness of the leaders as housing the poor was never a priority:

Ce n'est pas un regain de ferveur religieuse qui les attire en ce lieu. Non, nos dirigeants ambitieux qui rêvent d'un grand pays laissent proliférer le peuple mais oublient de lui construire des habitations. Les hôtels sont complets et hors de prix et les hammams infestés de brigands³⁵.

Women especially suffered a lot during this period as many of them lost their husbands in the war and had to bear the burden of raising and providing a living for their children alone. Others are constantly victims of domestic violence from desperate husbands. This is shown through the case of the woman who comes to the police full of bruises to file a complaint against her husband who beats her every day because he cannot find a job so he always gets drunk. But despite the obvious violence the police are not doing anything:

C'est la même chose tous les soirs. Il détache sa ceinture et me bat à mort. Parce qu'il est ivre et ne sait pas ce qu'il fait. Parce qu'il est de mauvaise humeur de n'avoir pas pu se saouler, faute d'argent³⁶.

Police violence against the deprived is also discussed in Mimouni's novel. This issue is another contributor to misery and characterizes most dictator regimes. People are repressed for no reason especially if they are poor. People are often beaten or taken to prison just for being on the streets. The homeless are blamed for wandering the street despite that the authorities are responsible for this problem:

Un policier allait et venait le long de la range. De temps en temps, il désignait quelqu'un avec son bâton. L'homme, ou la femme, s'approchait, rependait aimablement au salut du policier, ôtait sa coiffe et tendait le crâne en se courbant légèrement comme pour une révérence. L'agent lui assenait alors un grand coup de matraque³⁷.

Police brutality and violence is part of the daily life. It was directed towards those who were making a living whether selling goods or providing services on the streets. This is shown through the man's encounter with another cobbler. The latter jumps up and runs away as soon as he sees policemen coming; "débouchèrent du coin de la rue, deux policiers. L'établi fut renversé d'un grand coup de pied rageur"³⁸.

Mimouni stresses the suffering of the less fortunate in society, mainly peasants, orphans, and the homeless who invested abandoned parking lots to live in old rusty vehicles no longer in use. They live in shabby hastily modified cars and trucks in complete depravation. The parking lot is often flooded and home for a swarm of frogs and other animals:

Par immense, autocars innombrables. Ils furent graduellement investis par les sans-logis arrivés dans la ville, les vagabonds, les paysans en rupture de ban, les miséreux et les orphelins à la recherche d'abris pour se protéger des brises de l'hiver³⁹.

If there is a character that epitomizes suffering, it is certainly the man's wife. She had to endure the unendurable during her husband's absence much like any widow after the war. She has to move to the city to get the necessary paperwork done for her pension. At first, men are kind to her pretending they want to help, and that her status is unacceptable. However,

their kindness is not motivated by altruism but rather lust. The same man who helped her get a home keeps coming to see her with his friends. They turn her into a slave subjecting her to the most violent and degrading human savagery.”C’était horrible, je n’aurais jamais cru l’esprit humain capable de tant d’intentions perverses.”⁴⁰.

All these illustrations of misery by Mimouni are just samples to show the scope of decay characterizing lower class citizens of post-independence Algeria. He both describes and denounces what has become of most honest people and offers a crisp picture of a bitter reality; A reality which is a daily nightmare for the unfortunate in society but a distant and insignificant phenomenon for the leaders and the rich for whom all advantages are granted.

3. Psychological Suffering in Ngugi’s *A Grain of Wheat*:

While depicting people’s suffering at the social level like his Algerian counterpart, Ngugi goes beyond the social in his *A Grain of Wheat* by exploring even the psychological plight of the Kenyans.

In *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi wa Thiong’o discusses also another type of betrayal which is a personal betrayal. Ngugi recounts the events that happen between the two married; Gikonyo and Mumbi, and the obstacles they have faced. Ngugi depicts the psychological suffering of both Gikonyo and Mumbi during the State of Emergency. Each of them has made a mistake by betraying either his nation or partner. Ngugi tries to explain that the theme of betrayal has not only affected the war of independence, but also expanded into families.

When Gikonyo is taken to the concentration camp; where he endures six years of prison, he deeply suffers by the way he leans to his previous life. Gikonyo misses his home, Mumbi, and his lovely job as a carpenter. In chapter seven; always at the detention camp, Ngugi depicts clearly Gikonyo’s psychological instability. The flashbacks and the face of his

wife make him becomes uncontrollably stressed and weary. In the dark cell, Ngugi describes Gikonyo's suffering from his hallucinations; it seems if he hears Mumbi's voice and sees her body walking around the gloomy room. Incapable to recognize his mind, Gikonyo's thoughts are completely soaked in despair:

In his cell, Gikonyo found that everything – the barbed-wired, Yala Camp, Thabai – was dissolved into a colourless mist. He struggled to recall the outline of Mumbi's face without success, there was only a succession of images each one concealing out the one immediately preceding it⁴¹.

Even though Gikonyo is a freedom fighter against the British, he cannot resist the idea that he is so far from his wife and family. Unfortunately, he puts the priority of his problems over those which concern the Mau Mau movement and the independence of Kenya; "I did not care about Uhuru for the country any more. I just wanted to come home. And I would have sold Kenya to the whiteman to buy my own freedom."⁴² It is apparent that Gikonyo has betrayed his comrades by confessing to the British that he is a member of the freedom movement. He knows that he does wrong, but he is obsessed by the idea to be free and leaving the detention camp no matter the consequences. Desperately, he declares to his friend Mugo that; "We confessed. I would have done anything to come back home."⁴³

After his release, Gikonyo feels guilty. Eventhough; "The detainees had agreed not to confess the oath, or give any details about Mau Mau"⁴⁴.but he betrays the movement and his friends with whom he takes the oath. Outside the concentration camp, Gikonyo is already living the guilt which is transforming into shame inside him. He is afraid about the future and people's reaction towards his liberation; "Would the steps always follow him, he wondered, suddenly scared of meeting someone he had known in the old days. He did not feel victorious, less so a hero."⁴⁵

Suffering that leads to betrayal is also depicted through Mumbi; one of the female protagonists' betrayal to her husband. Mumbi is Gikonyo's wife. While he is detained in the

concentration camp; “Mumbi was depressed because there was no man of the house.”⁴⁶. She really suffers from the absence of her husband and the bad situation in which she lives with her mother in law Wangari. The two women are forced by the Whiteman to leave their hut and build another one; “They told us to remove our bedding and clothes and utensils.”⁴⁷. As soon as they leave, the hut is burnt and destroyed. Mumbi and Wangari are left without a house and sustain, so they are obliged to build a new home and work hard to feed themselves.

All starts when Mumbi talks to Mugo about the hard times she endured during the absence of her husband Gikonyo. She also confesses to Mugo that she betrays her husband and gets an illegitimate child by having sex with Karanja. Even though Karanja is Gikonyo’s close friend, but he really loves Mumbi and wants her to be his own wife; “Karanja had once proposed to me, a week or so after I had already accepted to marry Gikonyo.”⁴⁸. Karanja tells Mumbi that; “Your husband is coming back.”⁴⁹. The joy she feels at that moment pushes her to do the mistake; “I let Karanja make love to me.”⁵⁰.

Ngugi describes Gikonyo’s reaction and anger as he finds that his beloved wife has cheated on him and got even a child with his close friend Karanja. He thinks about the past, the promises and all what they had planned together before he got arrested. Now, he is face to face with a confusing reality. He becomes more stressed and angry as he thinks about Mumbi and the child she has had with Gikonyo:

She had betrayed the bond, the secret, between them: or perhaps there had never been any communion between them, nothing could grow between any two people. Gikonyo greedily sucked sour pleasure from this reflection which he saw as a terrible revelation. To live and die alone was the ultimate truth⁵¹.

It is clear from our analysis of the issues of both Mimouni and Ngugi describe and denounce the effects of betrayal on their respective nations. They also portray the subsequent decay and betrayal of revolution that plagued both Algeria and Kenya. In both *Le fleuve détourné* (1982) and *A Grain of Wheat*(1978), the theme of betrayal is clearly depicted

through the main characters. The deprived social classes have to bear all the difficulties that the corrupt middle class has brought upon them. The poverty and misery of the peasantry are actually the consequences of opportunism and rapacity of the leaders, the greed for power and personal interests.

Endnotes:

¹ Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1963, 169.

² Ibid, 163-164.

³ Ibid, 175.

⁴ Ibid, 178

⁵ Interview with Ngugi wa Thiong'o, January 1964, Dennis Duerden and Cosmo Pieterse, eds, *"African Writers Speaking"* (London: Heinemann, 1972): 121

⁶ Ngugi, wa Thiong'o. *A Grain of Wheat*. London: Heinemann, 1978, 172.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 173.

⁹ Ibid., 174.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 112.

¹² Ibid., 179.

¹³ Ibid., 200.

¹⁴ Ibid., 142.

¹⁵ Ibid., 140.

¹⁶ Ibid., 35.

¹⁷ Ibid., 206.

¹⁸ Ibid., 207.

¹⁹ Woods, Alan. “*Kenya: the Barbaric Consequences of Capitalism*”. In *Defence of Marxism*, February 5th, 2008, URL: <https://www.marxist.com/barbaric-consequences-capitalism.htm>

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ngugi, wa Thiong’o. *A Grain of Wheat*. London: Heinemann, 1978, 64.

²² Ibid.

²³ Mimouni, Rachid. *Le fleuve détourné*. Paris: Robert Laffont, 1982, 58.

²⁴ Ibid., 57.

²⁵ Ibid., 60.

²⁶ Ibid., 63.

²⁷ Ibid., 81.

²⁸ Ibid., 86.

²⁹ Ibid., 109-110.

³⁰ Ibid., 105.

³¹ Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1963, 169.

³² Ibid., 166.

³³ Mimouni, Rachid. *Le fleuve détourné*. Paris: Robert Laffont, 1982, 44.

³⁴ Ibid., 46.

³⁵ Ibid., 70.

³⁶ Ibid., 75

³⁷ Ibid., 108-109.

³⁸ Ibid., 111.

³⁹ Ibid., 115.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 177.

⁴¹ Ngugi, wa Thiong'o. *A Grain of Wheat*. London: Heinemann, 1978, 101.

⁴² Ibid., 63.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 95.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 102.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 127.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 126.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 129.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 135.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 136.

⁵¹ Ibid., 105.

V. Conclusion:

This piece of research has allowed us to study two samples of African postcolonial literature namely Rachid Mimouni's *Le fleuve détourné* (1982) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* (1978). The two Authors portray many Neo-colonial aspects mainly the issues of love and betrayal of revolution in Algeria and Kenya. The scope of our research is limited to the role of middle class intellectuals that Fanon calls 'The Native Bourgeoisie' and the devastating effects that their betrayal has had on the honest people. The two novels also portray the reverse racism, rapacity and oppression of those in power as well as the suffering of the less fortunate and their deep disillusionment.

Throughout our research, we have shown that the intellectual class in most decolonized countries proved to be a hindrance rather than a driving force toward rebuilding countries torn by revolutionary wars. Our findings and arguments are supported mainly with Fanon's ideas in the chapter *The Pitfalls of National Consciousness* from his book *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963). In this chapter, Fanon describes the corrupt nature of the national bourgeoisie, their greed and their lack of good intentions towards other social classes and towards the country. Their primary goal is to accumulate wealth regardless of the means or repercussions on the future of the country. Thus; they are unfit to assume power and rule.

As far as economy is concerned, we have clearly given evidence from both *Le fleuve détourné* and *A Grain of Wheat* that the new leaders are unable to build a strong, independent national economy because they lack the means and the technicity of the colonial bourgeoisies that they try to emulate. This inability is mainly the result of greed and indifference towards the real social issues as this class is virtually unaffected. On the other hand, lower class people are left struggling with the same basic problems they were facing even under colonial rule.

On a social level, we have learned that those who were truly committed in the fight and sacrificed the most are often those who get the least. These lower class populations who believed in the revolution found themselves isolated and even oppressed by those in power; although elected to serve and lead the nation. Suffering and poverty became part of the daily life. They are used almost as slave labour for those opportunists and the corrupt elite class.

On a political level, this piece of research demonstrate that the leaders turn into oppressors as soon as they access power and establish dictatorship that suffocates all voices including those of honest intellectuals because they threaten the interests of the leader and question his rule. The Leaders justify their presence in power mostly by reminding the people of their participation and achievements during the war. This leader also supports the national bourgeoisie that Fanon views as an obstacle to the development of decolonized nations; “The single party is the modern form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, unmasked, unpainted, unscrupulous, and cynical.” (Fanon, 1965: 165)

Overall, we have concluded that both *Le fleuve détourné* (1982) and *A Grain of Wheat* (1978) are both committed to the denunciation has become of Algeria and Kenya after their respective revolutions. The populations did not gain independence but simply traded one colonizer for another and the independence they craved was only an illusion. Fanon stresses the role of the national bourgeoisies in this treason and urges honest people to fight and resist this class with all means. This treason brought about devastating consequences, some of which are still plaguing Africa even today.

Our piece of research has been limited in scope; Mimouni’s *Le fleuve détourné* and Ngugi’s *A Grain of Wheat* remain rich for workable issues. Coming researchers can, for example investigate the use of proverbs in both works. Others can undertake research on the representation of women in both novels.

Endnotes:

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