

# Sadism and Fear as Dominant Metaphors in the African Novel: A Study of Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*, *Wizard of the Crow* and Henri Lopes' *The Laughing Cry*

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Received: 04 Nov 2020; Received in revised form: 18 Dec 2020; Accepted: 24 Dec 2020; Available online: 30 Dec 2020

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**Abstract**— African literature is, in essence, the dramatization of sadism and fear that has impacted greatly on both its themes and style. This is because African historical and political experiences have presented highly topical subjects for the continent's literary creation. The purpose of this paper is to show the relationship existing between sadism and Art with reference to Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o *The River Between* and *Wizard of the Crow*, and Henri Lopes's *The Laughing Cry*. The exploration of these novels reveals that symptoms of the mental pathology could be diagnosed both among some characters who, either in the relationship colonizer-colonized, or in the context of post-independence, as well, joyfully perpetrate acts of an extreme barbarity.

**Keywords**— sadism, fear, power personalization, psychological disturbance, post-colonial.

**Résumé**— La littérature africaine est par essence une fictionnalisation du sadisme et de peur qui l'ont beaucoup impacté d'un point de vue thématique et stylistique. Ceci s'explique par le fait que les expériences, historique et politique ont toujours continué un terreau fertile pour l'imaginaire littéraire du continent. L'objectif de cet article est d'établir la relation qui existe entre le sadisme et la littérature telle qu'elle est contextualisée dans *The River Between* *Wizard of the Crow* de Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, et *Le Pleurer Rire* d'Henri Lopes. Il ressort de l'analyse de ces romans que des symptômes d'une certaine crise psychologique sont évidents dans le chef de quelques personnages qui, soit dans la relation colon-colonisé ou dans le contexte postcolonial, s'adonnent allègrement à des actes d'une extrême cruauté.

**Mots-clés**— sadisme, peur, culte de la personnalité, trouble psychologique, post colonial.

## I. INTRODUCTION

African literature is characterized by realism and factualness. In this regard, the African critic, Abiola Irele, rightly suggests in the preface of his *African Imagination: Literature in Africa and Diaspora* (2001:5) that the African novel is directly linked to the historical circumstances of its emergence. He also maintains that *the historical experience of colonialism in all its ramifications serves as a constant reference to the African imagination and has a consequence for any form of criticism concerned*

*with African literature*. Irele Abiola is to the point because most of African literary works depict not only fictional characters' episodes of life but also the real problems of African societies as well.

According to Sesan Azeez Akinwumi (2012:71) the intersection of politics and literature has greatly enriched the content of African writings because:

Literature in Africa is the encyclopaedia of the collective African cultural, social, economic, sociological and political experiences of the

continent. African writers are therefore expected to record and reflect these collective experiences in their literary texts. Going by this position, it is therefore said that the attention of literary writers in Africa should therefore be shifted from colonial problems to the postcolonial realities of questionable national and foreign diplomacy that degenerated into civil war, political dissent, local terrorism and at large global terrorism.

The novels chosen as templates for this study are not an exception because they were written in periods of intense social turmoil and contestation. They have their origin in the politics of the anti-colonial struggle and bear the marks of that struggle. This means that the anti-colonial movements to struggle for their freedom have greatly influenced African literature. Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o and Henri Lopes's fiction is an illustration of the history of African continent during which Africans face the white man's and African leaders' violence, terror and other forms of intimidation they perpetrated.

This study deals with sadism and Fear as dominant metaphors in the African Novel with reference to Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o's *Weep not, Child, The River Between* and *Wizard of the Crow*, and Henri Lopes's *The Laughing Cry*. It purports to evidence symptoms of sadism and paranoia as they are recorded among some characters in some of the novels by the selected writers. The rationale behind this analysis is that a thorough exploration of these narratives still places African literature as a formidable conceptual tool of the opposition to military dictatorship and tyranny. It provides an important platform for a systematic study and interpretation of society. Hence, such a critique ultimately helps pave the way for an enduring political regeneration and reform.

From the mid-1960s up until the 1990s, we observed a turning period in the African political landscape, mainly because of the militarization of the political space. These military interventions climaxed with the repressive regimes of Ibrahim Babangida and the dictatorship of Sani Abacha in Nigerian, Daniel Arap Moi or Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire and Idi Amin Dada in Uganda, to mention only a few.

The novels under study dramatize seminal characteristics of 'sadism'. Etymologically, 'Sadism' is borrowed from Psychiatry where it initially carried connotations of an experience of sexual pleasure through inflicting physical pain. Usually considered as a sexual perversion, this neologism is coined and named after the French writer Comte Donatien (1740-1814), known as

Marquis de Sade with reference to various sexual aberrations described in his writings.

Most of the time, a sadistic person is a sociopathic personality, if not simply an anti-social personality who suffers from an 'identity crisis' which is "*The acute feeling that one's Identity and sense of Self have lost their Normal stability and continuity over time, leaving one disoriented and having difficulty in recognizing oneself.*" (*Concise Dictionary of Psychology*, 1998:28)

It is at this level that 'sadism' can be associated with a kind of mental disorder or emotional disturbances, bearing then similarities with madness. Since his actions are motivated by a kind of hysteria, a sadistic person becomes a menace for social peace, for he promotes fear and terror within the society. A position in tandem with *The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language* (2004:1107) where sadism carries its pejorative connotation since it is referred to as "*morbid delight in being cruel, an enjoyment from watching or making nobody suffer.*" In this study, such a definition really suits with our purpose as it helps scrutinizing in vivid what we think of sadism and fear in this paper.

As foremost African novelists, Ngũgĩ wa Thiongo', and Henri Lopes have been of interest to several African literary critics, in consideration of the plethora of works of criticism on the novels considered in this study. Likewise, 'fear' and 'sadism' have always provided the catalyst for the efflorescence of literary creativity. These forms of immoral acts have not started in twentieth century but date back from the Biblical narrative of Cain killing and shedding out his brother's blood: "*Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.*" (Genesis 4:8)

'Sadism' and 'fear' are among the topical issues in the African literature since writers appropriate art to delineate the mode of power relations between "*the economically exploited, underprivileged masses of the society*" (Ojaide 1996:24) As for Lindfors et al., (1972:8) "*The internecine relationship between text and postcolonial realities (terror) is a function of the nature of a writer's society.*"

Considering that African literature remains a formidable part of the opposition between tyranny and sadism, Williams Adebayo (1996: 350) writes:

African Literature is fundamentally incompatible with tyranny. In its purest state, literature is subversive of authority and authoritarian rulers. Its joyous and spontaneous celebration of life, its near anarchic contempt for regulation and regimentation makes it the most natural enemy of dictatorship. While the dictator seeks a total

domination of men and society, literature often seeks their total liberation.

There is a critically shared view that dictatorship and tyranny prove to be the fertile ground of sadism. Adeoti (2003:33) highlights the recurrence of the military in the nation's narrative fiction and possibly the public's perception of the military institution as follows:

That the reality of militarism has engendered its own aesthetics. Hence, the predominance of drama of rage, fiction of protest and poetry of indignation. Indeed, literature of "anger and protest" flourished during the period. These writings are remarkable for deliberate violation of hallowed conventions of literary compositions without necessarily impeding significations. After all, military rule itself thrives on violation and subversion of rules. Through their arts, writers participated in the general struggle to end military dictatorship. While some sympathize with victims of harsh politico-economic policies of military government (e.g. Structural Adjustment Programme), some depict the reality in its grimness. Some seek to stir resentment in the people against the military, goad them into a possible confrontation with a view to liberating them....

Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow* has attracted critical attentions as a novel which chronicles greed, sadism, and brutal horror of contemporary politics with regard to the Aburĩrian Ruler, whose ridicule of the powerful knows no bounds. In "Identity, politics and gender dimensions in Ngũgĩ WaThiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*", Njogu Waita highlights aspects of post-independence disillusionment, and concludes that African renaissance can never be achieved under a condition of alienation, as long as the evil practices, namely the endemic violence of the ruling class are not eradicated.

As for Henri Lopes, many critics, focusing either on thematic, sociological, or linguistic issues, show that his novels reflect a deep social distress, which is characterized by an environment where characters, spaces and speeches unfold a permanent contradiction. In this connection, Kouao Medard Bouazi (2015:15-16) writes:

Les romans d'Henri Lopes interrogent et parodient la société moderne avec un humour critique. En effet, en mêlant parfois ironie et dérision, le romancier s'est évertué à « dire les maladies [qui rongent la société] afin de les soigner. [...]Ce corpus rend compte du malaise de ses personnages principaux, victimes de la

violence de l'aventure coloniale et de l'intolérance de la société postcoloniale. [...]L'écrivain, avec dérision, va donc mettre à nu la violence symbolique qui empoisonne l'environnement social des jeunes États indépendants ; il dévoilera de ce fait, à travers la mise en scène de figures grotesques (le dictateur Bwakamabé dans *Le pleurer-rire*, par exemple), une Afrique sujette aux dérives des puissants. Avec *Le pleurer-rire*, Lopes représente la brutalité d'un régime totalitaire, introduit dans son écriture un langage populaire et désinvolte pour montrer le dérèglement d'un monde où il constate toujours l'échec des nouvelles classes dirigeantes. [...]Le roman de Lopes donne alors à lire l'envers et les revers de cette Histoire africaine qui a perturbé les fondements socioculturels du continent. Chez lui, l'Histoire devient prétexte pour peindre la violence qui a présidé à la fièvre de l'entreprise coloniale et au système d'oppression mis en place par les nouveaux dirigeants africains au lendemain des Indépendances.

The final assessment of this above 'requisitoire' is that with the failure of political independence to usher in the dividends of democratization in many African countries, disillusionment has set in. Hence, writers in their works, reflect these social dissonances manifested in political instability, ethnic identity, inequality, corruption, abuse of power, and leadership failure.

In the present study, unlike our predecessors, we propose to scrutinize the problematic of endemic cruelty in the African novel in an attempt to compare the manifestations of ideological and political power abuse in the Francophone and Anglophone world. Our main concern is therefore to answer the following question: What are the manifestations of fear and sadism in the selected texts.

The New Historicism which looks at records of events in wars arbitrations, negotiations and conflicts seems then appropriate for this study since it purports to show that the works selected are of an intensive physiological activity, mainly between the oppressors and the oppressed, as Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o (1972:121), for instance, confesses:

In my novels, I have tried to show the effect of the Mau-Mau on the ordinary man and woman who were left in the village. [...] You found a friend betraying a friend; a father suspicious of the son, a brother doubting the sincerity or the good intentions of a brother, and above all these

things, the terrible fear under which all these people lived.

Theorizing about this critical approach, Kofi Agyekum(2013:216-217) stresses its importance as follows:

Based on the tradition of psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud analyses a work of literature from the point of the mind, personality, mental and emotion of characters, the New Historicism examines the power relations of rulers and subjects, the haves and the have-nots, employers and employees. By analyzing this, we see the social stratification between the marginalized and the suppressed on one hand, and the oppressors and the oppressed on another. [...]The New Historicism reveals the conflicting power relations that underlie all human interaction and the way the oppressed struggle to attain self-confidence and independence, while the dominant group finds other ways of maintaining power. When all these view are expressed fully in literary works they enrich readers' understanding.

Three main points are developed in this study. Prior analysing fear and terror as they are contextualized in post-independent era either through ideological extremism or the cult of personality, it is worth examining some cases of sadism yet diagnosed long before in the context of colonizer-colonized.

## II. FROM ACCULTURATION, CONFUSION TO MADNESS

The exploration of literary works under consideration reveals that Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o and Henri Lopes develop an intensive psychological activity in the sense that some of their characters are profoundly concerned with moral or inner conflict. In fact, one of the most destructive impacts of colonization on the natives has been doubtlessly their moral alienation. For African people who have been targeted to receive the new western ideas in missionary schools and in Churches were not empty-minded; they already had their own customs. As a result, they find themselves in a dead-lock as they finally, no longer know which way to follow. Consequently, not only do they feel completely dehumanized and uprooted, but lose their dignity as a worthy people. They turned somehow mad because of the oppression of the colonial agents to the point they showed symptoms of mental disorder as Frantz Fanon (1961:125), in a chapter devoted to "Colonial War and Mental disorders", opines:

We had no control over the fact that the psychiatric phenomena, the mental and behavioural disorders from the colonial war, have loomed so large among the penetrators of 'pacification' and the 'pacified' population. The truth is that colonization in its very essence, already appeared to be a good purveyor of psychiatric hospitals. Because it is a systematized negation of the other, a frenzied determination to deny any attribute of humanity, colonialism forces the colonized to constantly ask the question 'who am I in reality?'

The same psychiatric and anthropological studies have shown that those colonizers so haunted by the burden of civilizing the earlier African populations were also acting just as madmen.

Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o deals with this issue in almost *Weep not, Child, The River Between, and A Grain of Wheat*, novels that he sets in pre-independence Kenya with regard not only to the colonizers but the natives too. Indeed, some of the characters, both among the colonized and the colonizers experience a psychological disorder illustrated by a kind of 'blind' extremism if not a sadism. In his first drafted novel, *The River Between* for instance, Joshua is pictured as the archetype of those natives who are involved in psychological conflict. In fact, Joshua is very soon enrolled into the new faith widely spread by the missionary and, blindly believes in it though he has been initiated in the ways of the tribe years before. And since he finds himself in front of two antagonistic cultures, he proves quite incapable to integrate them. He forgets that whenever two opposed philosophies meet, concessions have to be made so as to let the two reconcile harmoniously. Instead, Joshua creates, according to Robert Serumaga (1969:73), "*the barriers which suppress what comes up from his subconscious minds so that whatever emerges is rejected.*"

Indeed, he rejects his traditional values and grows completely uprooted by a religion which has nothing to do with his own tribal realities. He becomes so alienated to the point that he feels no emotion about his own daughter's death just, because the latter does not share his religious convictions: "*Joshua heard of the death of Muthoni without any sign of emotion on his face.*" (*The River Between*, p. 53)

Besides, he is confused for he does not really understand and master the new culture which he spreads. That is why he is unable to answer some questions when he is preaching. Joshua's inconsistency is too evident that

Robert Serumaga (1969:75) wonders if he is still a genuine Kikuyu:

Joshua, a man of the tribe who knew the language of the fields, is completely taken over by a Christian religion. He is muddled with the new faith and does not want anyone to attack it. Does Joshua exist? The Joshua we knew before he was Christianized is dead. This is someone else.

According to Robert Serumaga, Joshua like Okonkwo in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, does not discern the two cultures in order to preserve just what is good. He, on the contrary, refuses to change and embody both of them. Consequently, he is doomed to failure and comes to no good end, as Serumaga (op.cit.,p.75) adds: "To my mind anyone who fails to integrate his experiences, who is taken over by one side ... is going to lose. Joshua loses because he is completely taken over and ceases to be himself. He becomes different human being." Joshua passes then to be a good archetype of moral alienation and self-renouncement. He loses his tribal roots so that he finds it impossible to lead a normal life and to participate objectively in the tribal life. Here again, the author stigmatizes Joshua's naïve behaviour, as Palmer Eustace (1973:p.14) contends: "Joshua is as bigoted a religious fanatic as ever existed. In Joshua we see the dangerous consequences of a blind and uncritical acceptance of an alien ideology. Lacking any kind of intelligence, Joshua accepts Christianity with a naivety which is almost comic."

From this quotation, one easily infers that Joshua's psyche has been radically altered the first day he got converted into the new religion. He he considers himself to be pure whereas, he sees the others, his tribesmen as "sinners moving deeper and deeper in dirty mud of sin." (*The River Between*, p. 60) By the same token, Joshua's castigation of Muthoni because of her desire to be circumcised is rendered dubious by the realization that his wife and himself have grown up and been initiated in the ways of the tribe. In short, Joshua is not simply a mistaken extremist; he is a manipulative fraud too knowing that he is in league with the settlers:

Joshua preached with more vigour than ever and his followers sang damnation to the pagans openly and defiantly. Joshua was identified as the enemy of the tribe. He was with Siriana, with the white settlers. For now it was said that Siriana missionaries had been sent to prepare the way for the settlers. The white people were now pouring into in greater and greater numbers. Indian traders too had come and were beginning to carry on a thriving business. (*The River Between*, p. 125)

At this moment, Joshua appears as a permanent danger not only for his family, but for his tribesmen too. He is then considered as a social traitor because people accuse him of being the source of all the evils they experience, as *The River Between* (p.32) reads: "For the whole of that year, things had not gone well with Joshua. People at Kameno were becoming restless and believed that it was Joshua who was responsible for the white men who these days often came to the hills... . They blamed Joshua for this interference."

As it can be seen, the Christian church to which Africans are asked to migrate has its drawbacks for it somehow tears up the tribe. Through Joshua's psychological conflict, Ngũgĩ aims at stressing the inadaptability of such religion for the Africans. An opinion nearly shared by Williams Lloyd quoted by C. Pieterse and D. Munro (1969:54) while summarizing the novelist's position in the following words:

He knows that religion can be meaningful to a people only if it relates to them in their daily lives, only if it rises out of the important aspects of their past and speaks directly to their experiences in the present. A religion which speaks only of religious ideals and moral truths, without touching on the concrete situation of man in his everyday life, can give to man nothing but emptiness.

It is to fill this gaping hole of nothingness that Muthoni pursues and finds fulfillment in the ways of the tribe. Sadly, her father who has himself at times wondered why it is now considered a sin to marry more than one wife when in the old testament, many of the fathers of the faith have themselves got married with many wives, is far too blinded by his own self-righteousness and sheer misguided religious bigotry to be able to look beyond his nose and empathize with his daughter; pitifully too, he does not even grieve her loss:

Joshua heard about the death of Muthoni without a sign of emotion on the face. [...] He did not ask Miriamu when she died or how Miriamu had learnt of the facts. [...] To him, Muthoni had ceased to exist on the very day she had sold herself to the devil. Muthoni had turned her head and longed for the cursed land. Lot's wife had done the same thing and she had turned to stone, a rock of salt, to be forever a stern warning to others. The journey to the New Jerusalem with God was not easy. It was beset with temptation. But Joshua was determined to triumph, to walk

with a brisk step, his eye on the cross. (*The River Between*, pp. 53-54)

This kind of attitude obviously makes us realize the blindness with which Joshua clings to the new faith. In fact, he is no longer himself because the new religion makes him lose his humanity. The most unfortunate aspect that confirms Joshua's psychological conflict in this passage is the untoward misrepresentation as well as the misapplication, of biblical teachings. Indeed, a close reading of this text ultimately leads to the conclusion that Joshua's poorly digested Christianity encouraged and fuelled his repulsive attitude to his family. We are shocked at the degree of his inhumanity to others under the pretext of religious zealotry. His religious fervour is essentially empty and devoid of basic Christian tenets. He is evidently oblivious of the fact that physical abuse and an absolute lack of humanness is anathema to Christianity and to all well-known Christian values. Yet, drawing parallels between Joshua, Eugene Achike's religious fervour in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, Sophia O. Ogwude (2011:113) wonders:

Does Joshua's Bible not have the story of King David and his erring son, Absalom? Can a people's ways and culture, in this specific case, circumcision, be deemed devilish even if we concede that sanitary standards may not have been accorded the attention due it in these operations? By what stretch of the imagination can any truly informed mind compare Muthoni with Lot's unnamed wife and, Muthoni's Kenya with Sodom and Gomorra? Also, where is the temptation, of which he speaks? And where is this imagined New Jerusalem to which he must march?

We may notice that Joshua's autocratic nature as moulded and nurtured by religious narrow mindedness, is the bane of his family comprising his wife and two daughters, all of whom are subjected to, and suffer, severe emotional as well as psychological abuse. Obviously, Ngũgĩ here satirizes obsessive African converts to the new Christian religion especially because they barely understood much of what they so resolutely defended and held up for emulation against their tested culture. Indeed we learn that:

Joshua believed circumcision to be so sinful that he devoted a prayer to asking God to forgive him for marrying a woman who had been circumcised. "God, you know it was not my fault. God, I could not do otherwise, and she did this while she was in Egypt." Sometimes, when alone with Miriamu, his wife, he would look at her and sadly remark,

'I wish you had not gone through this rite.' Not that Miriamu shared or cherished these sentiments. But she knew him. Joshua was such a staunch man of God and such a firm believer in the Old Testament that, he would never refrain from punishing a sin, even if it meant beating his wife. He did not mind as long as he was executing God's justice. (*The River Between*, pp.35-36)

Yet, it is difficult to recall anywhere in the Bible where it is shown that men beat their wives for any reason; neither is there anywhere in the Bible where it is written that men are, or should be expected, to execute God's justice! Joshua's Christianity has no room for compassion. In him we see a man with a self-imposed mandate to "execute God's justice." Interestingly, this theme reoccurs in *POB* where Munira, the headmaster and his doubtful or misguided desire to save Karega, from the whoring Wanja, leads him to set her house on fire.

Joshua's psychological inadaptability reminds of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* where Okonkwo's extremism turns to a mere moral alienation. In fact, the "ontological" fear to be treated as a coward or an effeminate like his late father Unoka, makes the young protagonist impelled by some uncontrollable inner forces. "A *force de cultiver cet état anxieux, il en arrive à un comportement de nervosité*" to borrow Thomas Melone's (1973:212) words.

This fiery temper finally finds an outlet in violent actions in Okonkwo's immediate environment. As a matter of fact, he becomes a merciless man and gets angry with everybody and about everything. His exaggerated fear of effeminacy makes him conflicting with himself, his family and his clan. He is no longer a human being. According to Donald Weinstock and Cathy Ramadan (1978:128):

Okonkwo is consistently associated with masculinity, and he virtually always mistrusts, opposes and attacks anything feminine or linked with femininity. He is then fighting against ideals that counter everything he values. Christianity embodies and stresses the qualities that Okonkwo considers to be womanish-love affection, and mercy; and he characteristically evaluates the missionaries as a "lot of effeminate men clucking like old hens."

This inner conflict paves the way to his tragic downfall which is unavoidably to hang himself up. Consequently, Okonkwo commits "nsoani" after another and becomes rapidly a pariah or "a man whose *Chi* said no despite his affection" to borrow Achebe's words. (*Things Fall Apart*, p.119)

In fact, when Okonkwo's son Nwoye gets converted into Christianity, Okonkwo's heart is broken. For all his life, Okonkwo worked to prove himself as a man. His battle for success stemmed from the lack of success in his father's life. His only wish for his son was that he grows up to be a man. He was fighting against the woman-like characteristics his son exhibited. Since Okonkwo's family was his pride and joy, Nwoye's conversion was the final battle, and Okonkwo had lost: his own son had rejected his lifestyle. There was then no other option but to cease to live. Okonkwo's suicide symbolizes the death of the African culture. The author chooses to have Okonkwo kill himself instead of another person killing him, just to symbolize the Africans' hands in allowing Christianity to take hold; subsequently eradicating African culture.

Moreover, the psychological conflict is also one of Ngũgĩ's concern in *Weep not, Child*. Among the characters identified as renegades, social traitors in the novel, Jacobo is an eloquent illustration. Indeed, he is uprooted on the earlier days he accepts to betray his tribes for material advantages. It must be stated that Jacobo is the only Kikuyu allowed to grow pyrethrum, that cash crop yet planted by white farmers over the lands of his fellow Africans. David Cook and Michael Okenimkpe (1997:57) opine that at this moment, Jacobo's "*cynicism entails not only ruthless ambition geared to self-aggrandizement, but the shame of betraying his own people to achieve his ends.*"

Actually, Jacobo deliberately frustrates his fellows Africans who endeavour to move forwards and regain effective control of the land as Ngũgĩ better emphasizes it through the Barber's utterance:

Jacobo is rich. You know that he was the first black man to be allowed to grow pyrethrum. Do you think he would like to see another one near him? And how anyway, do you think he was allowed what had been denied to the rest?[...] It's because he promised them to sell us. (*Weep not, Child*, p.68)

From this quotation, one easily infers that what Jacobo fears the most is in fact to see other Africans have the same material privileges like him. Such an 'ontological' fears dehumanizes him, because he is no longer capable enough to discern what is salutary to the community. Ngũgĩ provides us with a good illustration of Jacobo's moral alienation when, sent by his mentor Mr Howlands, he decides to impede the strike that workers intend to organize for better conditions. It is reported that Jacobo chose to defend the White man's cause to the detriment of his tribesmen:

Jacobo the richest man in all the land around had been brought to pacify the people. For single moment Jacobo crystallized into a concrete betrayal of the people. He became the physical personification of the long years of waiting and sufferings. Jacobo could not have refused. For a time he had thought himself successful. (*Weep not, Child*, pp.66-67)

This passage helps us figure out how blind Jacobo was to accept such a perfidious operation. He feigns to forget that workers are struggling for better living conditions and goes against his own people. In causing this strike to fail; he is unconsciously digging his own tomb as a Kikuyu proverb goes saying: "*Don't go against the people. The man who ignores the voice of his own people comes to no good end.*" (*A Grain of Wheat*, p.256) Finally, in accepting to betray his own people, Jacobo becomes "*an enemy of the black people*" (*Weep not, Child*, p.67), and as such, is murdered by the freedom fighters just as they do for his guru. Jacobo's betrayal for his people is then seen as an act of dying for the protection of the white man's culture.

As it can be seen, the psychological conflict is persistent in Ngũgĩ's novels. Many characters are deeply involved in it, but they generally have no good end within the society. The major problem they face is perhaps their fundamental inability to get rid of their rooted traditional beliefs and internationalize to the unconscious level the new faith. Most of them simply understand the new system in the light of their tradition; it is not rare to find some new converts who have consciously and unconsciously severed all their ties with tradition. Put in another way, those Africans don't succeed in integrating the two cultures, that is to say they, as Robert Serumaga (1973:75) thinks, "*refuse to change and embody both experiences... they fail to realize that if a social duty conflicts with a personal matter, concessions have to be made so that the two can be reconciled.*"

Impelled by this principle, Muthoni though a Christian convert, resolves to get circumcised for the sake of reconciling herself not only with the Christian faith, but with the ways of her tribe. In fact, in Kameno, where she got refuge, Joshua's daughter frankly says to Waiyaki that she is still a Christian though conscious that nobody can follow her in such a reconciling path: "*No one will understand me, I say I am a Christian and my father and mother have followed the new faith. I have not run away from that. But I also want to be initiated into the ways of the tribe.*" (*The River Between*, p.21)

It is only after having undergone circumcision that Muthoni feels at ease and relieved from her psychological

conflict. That is why, despite the tragic effect this operation has on her body, Muthoni happily expresses her feeling of having accomplished her dream, that of reconciling at a personal level, Christianity and tradition. This accounts for the messages she sends to her elder sister Nyambura through Waiyaki: “*Tell Nyambura I see Jesus. And I am a woman, beautiful in the tribe...*” (*The River Between*, p.43). And, since “*An individual’s importance is not only the life he leads in this world, but the effect of his work on the other people after he has gone*” (*The River Between*, p.44), Muthoni’s act of reconciliation becomes an undying source of inspiration for some of her tribesmen in search for social balance. As a matter of fact, Nyambura and her lover Waiyaki will virtually follow this way of reconciliation paved by Muthoni’s death. In fact, despite their father’s strong opposition, they have fallen in love with each other at the neglect of the established principles for they believe in the necessity of the reconciliation between the essentially Christianized Kamenos and Makuyus which remains the stranglehold of the Kikuyu tradition. This reminds us of Jesus’ sermon on the mountain: “*Narrow is the gate to happiness and life. The way that leads to it is hard and there are few people who find it. But the gate to perdition or hell is wide and the road to it is easy, there are many who travel it.*” (Good News Bible, Matthew 7:13)

In fact, instead of following the way of salvation in order to lead a harmonious life, people of the two antagonistic ridges remaining, for fanatical motivations, blind to the religion of forgiveness, tolerance and peace, sticks rigidly to his position. The case of Joshua is there again to illustrate this idea as the narrator tells us:

Perhaps that was what was wrong with Joshua. He had clothed himself with a religion decorated and smeared with everything white. He renounced his past and cut himself away from those life-giving traditions of the tribe. And because he had nothing to rest upon, something rich and firm on which to stand and grow, he had to cling with his hands to whatever the missionaries taught him promised future. (*The River Between*, p.163)

An ambiguous behaviour that will prove very suicidal not only at the individual level but, above all, for African communities as the narrator better puts it through Waiyaki’s balanced conclusion:

Waiyaki had realized many things. Circumcision of women was not important as a physical operation. It was what it did inside a person. It could not be stopped overnight. Patience and, above all, education, was needed. If the white

man’s religion made you abandon a custom and then did not give you something else of equal value, you became lost. An attempt at resolution of the conflict would only kill you, as did Muthoni. (*The River Between*, p 163)

Since the Kikuyu people which symbolize Africa failed to reconcile not only with themselves, but above all, with the British settlers, all the conditions for a clash are then fulfilled. Assuredly, they would sink in a more dramatic situation which would lead Kenya to a terrible bloodshed never experienced in Africa at that time as we will realize it in the following section devoted to another kind of conflict.

### III. POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND SADISM

Sadism has permanently marked the relationships between Africans and Europeans in Kenya. This cruelty sets in battling two ideological and military forces: one colonial and the other made insurgents. The first resorts to acts of extreme violence so as to keep on controlling the heart of the economy by confiscating to the best and richest Kenyan highlands. In reaction to the alienation of their tribal land, the natives fighting in the single-minded determination to get it back, will also addict themselves in perpetrating violent acts too. In this connection, I will focus on the narrative of this violent confrontation since it is fictionalized in Ngũgĩ’s novels, namely those considered in this work.

In *A Grain of Wheat* for instance, the two conflicting parts are symbolized by John Thompson, the police officer and Kihika, the leader of the freedom fighters of Thabai. The narrator describes how both characters fell as invested with a mission that, at whatever cost, they want to execute regardless the moral dispositions, making them no more than “problematic heroes” to borrow Sunday Anozie’s (1970:54) expression.

Though the two rivals during the Mau Mau rebellion displayed their psychological insanity through sadistic violence, the narrator still shows a kind of sympathy for Kihika whose violence he legitimizes for it is only an ideological riposte to the aggression coming from the other camp.

To start with, who is that John Thompson depicted as the physical embodiment of the British civilisation in all its splendour? Intellectual graduated from the British universities, John Thompson is overwhelmed with Rudyard Kipling’s poem “The White man Burden” or his novel entitled *Kim* about the White man’s civilizing mission towards African and Indian colonized populations.

The portrayal that the narrator makes of John Thompson helps us figure out the ethnocentrism of the civilizing ideology which causes his illumination that we dare quote it at certain length:

Thompson first came to East Africa during the Second World War, an officer, seconded to the king's African Rifles. He took an active part in the 1942 Madagascar campaigns. Otherwise most his time was spent in Kenya doing various garrison and training duties. After the war he returned to his interrupted studies in Oxford. It was there, whilst reading history that he found himself interested in the development of the British Empire. At first this was a historian's interest without personal involvement. But, drifting into the poems of Rudyard Kipling, he experienced a swift flicker, a flame awakened. He saw himself as a man with destiny, a man poised for great things in the future. He studied the work and life and Lord Lugard. And then a casual meeting with two African students crystallized his longing into a concrete conviction. They talked literature, history, and war; they were all enthusiastic about the British Mission in the World. (*A Grain of Wheat*, p. 47)

And to deal with his psychological insanity, the narrator keeps on portraying as Thompson is fascinated by the sight of blood. In fact, one day, while in his office, Thompson watches Doctor Lynd bull massif dangerously emerging towards a group of Africans employed by the colonial administration including Karanja, a former Mau Mau rebel who is now defending the colonial cause. The massif dog is about to attack Karanja, Thompson is paradoxically interested in the violence that stands out on the horizon. The narrator depicts this sadistic reaction in the following terms:

The bull-massif emerged from the other side of the chemistry block, sniffing along the grass surface. Then it stood and raised its head towards the library. Thompson tensed up: something was going to happen. He knew it and waited, unable to suppress that cold excitement. Suddenly the dog started barking as it bounded across the compound towards the group of Africans. A few of them screamed and scattered into different directions. One man could not run in time. The dog went for him. The man tried to edge his way out, but the dog fixed him to the wall. Suddenly, he stopped, picked up a stone, and raised it in the air. The dog was now only a few feet away. Thompson waited for the thing he feared to happen. Just at a moment, Dr

Lynd appeared on the scene, and as the dog was about to jump at the man, shouted something. Thompson's breath came back first in a long-drawn wave, then in low quick waves, relieved and vaguely disappointed that nothing had happened. (*A Grain of Wheat*, p. 38)

The description above of the fascination in Thompson as he foresees the violence Karanja (his only agent) would be victim of is an unquestionable proof that racism becomes for him a mental illness as Palmer Eustace (1973: 44-45) better puts it:

Although Thompson is not presented in as much detail as the Africans, Ngũgĩ tells as much as we need to know him fully, partly through an analysis of his inner thoughts and struggles. When Dr Lynd's dog attacks Karanja, Thompson inwardly wrestles with paralysing unconscious sadism, which would really like to see the dog draw Karanja's blood. We are intended to feel to not contempt for Thompson, but pity for a man who is aware of his inner weakness and desires, and struggles to suppress them.

The omniscient narrator accentuates the intensity of the emotion, allowing the reader realize Thompson's sadism. The last sentence of the quotation "Thompson's breath came back first in a long-drawn wave, then in low quick waves, relieved and vaguely disappointed that nothing had happened" validates Palmer's critical postulation about Thompson's weakness or mental insanity. Another scene illustrating Thompson's psychological conflict or pathological aggressiveness is when he orders to inflict a severe collective punishment on the detainees just because they have denounced ill-treatments they were victims of in detention cells:

Thompson was on the edge of madness. Eliminate the vermin; he would grind his teeth at night. He set the white officers and warders on the men. Yes- eliminate the vermin. But the thing that sparked off the now famous deaths, was a near-riot act that took place on the detainees, a stone was hurled at them and struck one of them on the head. They let go the food and ran away howling murder! Riot! The detainees laughed and let fly more stones. What occurred next is known to the world. The men were rounded up and locked in their cells. The now famous beating went on day and midnight. Eleven men died. (*A Grain of Wheat*, p.117)

What draws the reader's attention about Thompson's madness and obsession for violence is the narrator's use of

lexical field “Eliminate the vermin, murder, riot, beating, eleven died.”

In a similar lexical choice of violence, the narrator helps us discover the same indicators of madness in Thompson’s predecessor, Thomas Robson purposely nick named “Tom the terror” for his ferociousness:

Those of you who have visited Thabaï or any of the eight ridges around Rung’ei (that is, from Kerarapon to Kihingo) will have heard about Thomas Robson or as he was generally known Tom, the terror. He was the epitome of those dark days in our history that witnessed his birth as a District Officer in Rung’ei that is, when the Emergency raged in unabated fury. People said he was mad. They spoke of him with awe, called him Tom or simply ‘he’ as if the mention of his full name would conjure him up in their presence. Driving in a jeep, one Askari or two at the back, a bren-gun at the knees, and a revolver in his khaki trousers partially concealed by his bush jacket, he would suddenly appear at the most unexpected times and places to catch unsuspecting victims. He called them Mau Mau. (*A Grain of Wheat*, p.162)

However, psychopathological symptoms are also diagnosed in Kihika, the chief of the Thabaï Mau Mau section in his anti-colonial riposte. Just like his enemy Thompson, Kihika shows an enthusiastic interest in his personal studies for, he is disillusioned and traumatized by the missionaries’ behaviours. The narrator tells us that his ideology on resistance finds credence in Warui’s stories about the emblematic figures who lead the resistance against the colonial intrusion in Kenya:

Kihika’s interest in politics began when he was a small boy and sat under the feet of Warui listening to stories of how the land was taken from black people. [...] Warui needed only a listener: he recounted the deeds of Waiyaki and the other warriors, who, by 1900 had been killed in the struggle to drive out the White men from the land; of Young Harry and the fate that befell the 1923 procession; of muthirigu and the mission schools that forbade circumcision in order to eat, like insects, both the roots and the stem of the Gikuyu society. Unknown to those around him, Kihika’s heart hardened towards ‘these people’, long before he had even encountered a white face. Soldiers came back from the war and told stories of what they had seen in Burma, Egypt, Palestine and India; wasn’t Mahatma Gandhi, the saint,

leading the Indian people against British rule? Kihika fed on these stories: his imagination and daily observation told him the rest; from early on, he had visions of himself, a saint, leading the Gikuyu people to freedom and power. (*A Grain of Wheat*, pp.72-73)

From the forgoing, one easily infers that the mention of Mahatma Gandhi as a “saint, leading the people of India” drives Kihika to forge a messianic and political image about his own person at whatever cost. Kihika rapidly makes a personal re-interpretation of the Biblical references in order to justify his combat against colonizers. The narrator provides us with three epigraphs underlined in Kihika’s personal Bible to help us understand his messianic philosophy:

And the Lord spoke unto Moses, Go unto pharaoh, and say unto him, thus saith the Lord, Let my people go. (*A Grain of Wheat*, p.29 - Exodus 8:1)

And the Lord said, I have surely seen, the Afflictions of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task makers; for I know their sorrows. (Ibid., p.113 - Exodus 3:1)

Verily, verily, I say, unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if dies, it bringeth forth much fruit. (Ibid., p.175- Saint Jones 12:24)

The first two verses extracted from the Old Testament are words of God who, in the first text, sends Moses unto pharaoh to tell him to set the Israelites free from Egyptian captivity. He asserts that he knows all the hardships they suffer from Pharaoh. The link between these two verses underlined in red and from which Kihika heavily draws inspiration, is that the people must turn towards God for liberation. However, the last passage underlined in black is drawn from the New Testament emphasizes on the sacrifice to consent for that freedom, martyrdom. In substituting the Kenyan people for the Jews, Kihika backs his ideology upon the third verse which according to him, better fits the Kenyan situation needing rapid sacrificial actions involving even suicides or bloodshed. The narrator helps us discover his Christian vision tainted with revolutionary ideas in the following passage wherein he tried to convince Karanja:

Yes - I said he (Jesus) had failed because his death did not change anything; it did not make his people find a centre in the cross. All oppressed people have a cross to bear. The Jews refused to carry it and were scattered like dust all over the

earth. Had Christ's death a meaning for the children of Israel. In Kenya we want a death which will change things, that is to say, we want a 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. (*A Grain of Wheat*, p.83)

As the narrative goes on, the reader paradoxically discovers that Kihika's obsessive extremism, that is to say, his fierce determination to drive away the colonizer, expresses a kind neurosis. For he progressively gets involved in actions of incredible violence though he tries to justify his intentions to Mugo in the following noteworthy passage:

We are not murders. We are not hangmen like Robson-killing men and women without cause or purpose. We only hit back. You struck on the left cheek. You turn the right cheek. One, two, three-sixty years. Then suddenly, it is always sudden, you say: I am not turning the other cheek any more. Your back to the wall, you strike back. [...] We must kill. Put to sleep the enemies of black man's freedom. They say we are weak. They say we cannot win against the bomb. If we are weak, we cannot win. I despise the weak. Let them be trampled to death I spit on the weakness of our fathers. Their mummery gives me no pride. And even today, tomorrow, the weak and those with feeble hearts shall be wiped from the earth. The strong shall rule. [...] That is our aim. Strike terror in their midst. Get at them in their homes night and day. They shall feel the poisoned arrow in the veins. They shall not know where the next will come from. Strike terror in the heart of the oppressor. He spoke without raising his voice, almost unaware of Mugo, or of his danger, like a man possessed. His bitterness and frustration was revealed in the nervous flow of the words. Each word confirmed Mugo's suspicion that the man was mad. [...] Kihika was mad, mad, he reflected, and the thought only increased his terror. (*A Grain of Wheat*, pp. 166-167)

This passage obviously reveals Kihika as a ferocious person ready to leap at the oppressor. His speech shows that, just as an insane person, he feels no pity for the bloodshed be it of the enemies or of his black confederates. This is quite justifiable by the recurrent

theme of murder and violence in the above speech (kill, smote all the first born, Strike terror, poisoned arrow...).

Since his sole preoccupation, becomes that of defending the Africans's interests and avenge his tribesmen killed for the cause of freedom, Kihika hits back and kills not only Robson, the cruel white man, but he also destroys a big camp named Mahee as Ngũgĩ puts it:

The greatest triumph for Kihika was the famous capture of Mahee... caught unawares the police made a weak resistance as Kihika and his men stormed in. Some policemen climbed the walls and jumped to safety. Kihika's men broke into the prison and led the prisoners out into the night. The garrison was set on fire and Kihika's men ran back to the forest with fresh supplies of men, guns and ammunition to continue the war on a scale undreamt of in the days of Waiyaki and Young Harry. (*A Grain of Wheat*, p. 16)

Kihika reminds us of those freedom fighters embodied by Boro in *Weep not, Child* for they too, haunted by the idea of recovering the alienated land at whatever cost, become murderers as well. Indeed, they find it judicious to apply the talion's rule by punishing every whiteman's crime by a murder of the same nature. Just as Kihika does, Karanja, one of these freedom boys, advocates the legitimacy of their ideology in the following passage:

"The homeguard with their white masters. They are as bad as Mau-Mau."

"No. Mau-Mau is not bad. The Freedom boys are fighting against white settlers. Is it bad to fight for one's land? Tell me that."

"But they cut black men's throats."

Those killed are traitors! Black white settlers."

"What is Mau-Mau?"

"It is a secret Kiama. You 'drink' oath. You become a member. The Kiama has its own soldiers who are fighting for the land. Kimathi is the leader."

"Not Jomo?"

"I don't know, but father say that Kimathi is the leader of the Freedom Army and Jomo is the leader of KAU and fear Mau-Mau."

"But they all are the same? Fighting for the freedom of the black people." (*Weep not, Child*, pp.81-82)

As a matter of fact, Dedan Kimathi reported above as one of the most famous freedom fighters, sends three letters as

a warning respectively to the colonial soldiers, to the missionary school, and to all those who act as traitors. The first one actually reveals how fiery his temper is: “*The letter to the police station at Njery: I Dedan Kimathi, leader of the African freedom army, will come to visit you at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday.*” (Ibidem, p. 75) As Dedan Kimathi is thought to be very mysterious since a myth goes on that he can change himself into anything, a white man, a bird or a tree, he goes to Njery but will not be caught by the homeguards in spite of all the security measures in place. After this first successful experience, he sends another letter the fierce of which is revealed as follows: “*The letter said that the head of the headmaster plus the head of forty children would be cut off if the school did not instantly close down. It was signed with Kimathi’s name.*” (Ibidem, p. 94) The third letter is significant of a war declaration since it directly targets Jacobo and his master Mr Howlands considered as the physical personification of the black people’s hardships. It is more incendiary than the previous; a very brutal warning for it reads: “*stop your murderous activities. Or else we shall come for your head. This is our last warning.*” (Ibidem, p. 66)

Subsequently, the day of the declaration of the State of emergency, Kenya is nothing but the theatre of bloodshed. In fact, freedom fighters realize that the white man is so stubborn to be threatened by warnings only. That is why they are determined to smite their enemies with their sword. Boro even turns somehow mad because he is haunted by the idea of killing the white man and his stooges as Ngũgĩ portrays him in the following passage:

Boro had now been in the forest for a considerable time. The ripe hour of his youth and had been spent in bloodshed in the big war. This was the only thing he could do efficiently. His mission became a mission of revenge. If he killed a single white man, he was exacting a vengeance for a brother killed. [...] The only thing left to me is to fight, to kill and rejoice at any who falls under my sword. But enough, chief Jacobo must die. And with him, Howlands. He is a dangerous man. (Ibidem, p. 116)

As the narrative goes on, the author provides us with the dramatic scene in which Boro fulfils his premeditated crimes. He assassinates Jacobo and his mentor Mr Howlands as sketched in an episode opposing the latter and Boro his executioner:

The door opened, Mr Howlands glanced at his watch and then turn round. A pistol was aimed at his heads.

–“You move, you are dead.”

–“Have you anything to say in your defence?”

–“Nothing.”

–“Nothing. Now you say nothing. But when you took our ancestral lands.”

–“This land is my land.” Mr Howlands said this as a man would say this is my women.

–“Your land! Then you white dog, you’ll die on your land.” Fear overwhelmed him and tried to life with his might. But before he could reach Boro, the gun went off. Boro had learnt to be a good marksman during the Second World War. The white man’s trunk stood defiant for a few seconds. Then it fell down. Boro rushed out. He felt nothing-no triumph. He had done his duty. (*Weep not, Child*, pp. 116-117)

This passage shows how Boro is a man of action; cowardice or passiveness is not a language proper to him. His mental insanity is revealed through the attitude he has after committing his crime for “*He felt nothing-no triumph. He had done his duty.*”

From these submissions, one easily infers how the psychological conflict has been perceptible and has heavily marked the relationships in Kenya at certain periods of its history. For, some symptoms of the mental pathology could be diagnosed both among colonial masters and natives as well. The representatives of the colonial administration such as Mr Howlands, John Thompson or Thomas Robson and their stooges (Joshua, Jacobo or Karanja) to quote only some, acting under the impulsion of a civilizing ideology, and searching the purify and heal the native from the “madness” they would suffer, paradoxically lose all humanity, evidencing then symptoms of a mental insanity.

However, the riposte by a revolutionary and messianic ideology reinforced by the war experience of Boro, Kihika and other freedom fighters only confirms the sadism of neurotic leaders in their search of rehabilitating the Kenyan people. For, riposting to violence by bloodshed without having any frame of mind, is vindictive and dangerous as well and cannot be legitimated whatever its motivations. It is accordingly that one can appreciate Malcolm X’s (online) appeal standing against violence:

Je ne crois pas en la violence, c’est pourquoi je veux y mettre fin. Vous ne parviendrez pas à y mettre fin au moyen de l’amour, l’amour des choses d’ici-bas Non ! Tout ce que nous demandons c’est une vigoureuse action d’auto défensive que nous nous sentons en droit de susciter par n’importe quel moyen.

Since they did not manage to contain their vengeful emotions, these veterans of the war for freedom, progressively slipped into confusion and sadism of an unbearable degree since they could not understand one another. Yet, Ngūgĩ says of Boro that “*At one breath he could talk of killing as the law of the land and then in the next breath would caution care*” (Weep not, Child, p. 117), a very strange and unbalanced character who promises the struggle to be an utter bloodshed. So far, this study has centred on terror and fear as contextualized in the context of colonizer-colonized, let us focus on the cult of personality as one of the many flaws which evidence symptoms of sadism recorded in some postcolonial characters.

#### IV. PERSONALIZING POWER STATE AS AN IDEOLOGICAL WEAPON OF SADISM

Since independence, the democratic rule with all its human rights implications is still a mirage for many Africans whose countries have sadistic rulers. These leaders, military or civilians, run the State as a private business, thereby militarizing the public sphere to ensure compliance from the masses. Hence, they personalize State power and liquidating all democratic rights.

Personalizing State power is nothing but the cult of personality which is a kind of excessive adulation of a leader in a dictatorial regime. It constitutes a widespread yet born practice in the African political scene during the colonial as well as the post-colonial period. This ‘sadistic’ behaviour is generally materialized through praise, nicknames, propaganda, and even songs to celebrate this cult. Considering themselves as the providential leaders of their countries, African hey want to be overestimated, and need people to praise then and be interested in whatever they do.

In Ghana, as reflected in Armah Ayi Kei’s *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, this power personalization is embodied by Kwame Nkrumah who, apart from ‘Osageyfo’ translated for ‘the redeemer’ or ‘he who never fails’, happens to be called by other demagogic nicknames such as ‘The awful one’, ‘The achiever’, ‘The ruthless’, ‘The valorous friend of farmers’, ‘The Quencher of fire’, ‘The High dedication’, ‘The Nation’s fount of honor’, and ‘He who never dies’, to mention only some. All these epithets unveil Kwame Nkrumah’s obsessional will to appear as a preordained man for all his compatriots. In the novel, Koomson, the party man maintains that ‘big’ names like his, must not be mentioned naked but always accompanied by some other endless pompous titles:

And these days it is all coming together in the person on Koomson. Careful, man. Big names must not be mentioned naked. His Excellency Joseph Koomson. Minister Plenipotentiary. Member of the Presidential Commission. Hero of Socialist Labor. (*The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, p.56)

Such an injunction is also given to the chief of protocol who is solemnly warned not to forget any of the Bwakamabé Na sakkade’s nicknames: “*Everyone will this be in the hall for my arrival, and must rise as the chief of protocol announces my name and each of my titles. All of them, mind. All of them, you heard, don’t forget a single title, or else, watch out, and with no hesitation or stammering, either applause, applause, I’m telling you.*” (*The Laughing Cry*, p. 63)

In the above quotations, narrations such as “*Careful, man*” or “*...announce my name and each of my titles. All of them, mind. All of them, you heard, don’t forget a single title... .*” show that even calling Koomson’s name without any honorific title is perceived as a kind of disobedience or a sacrilege. Through this quotation one may clearly notice how authors laugh at the ridiculous behavior of national leaders who seek glory and honor from the people with many attractive names while they are unable to satisfy their needs. And for them, people must call them by these names in order to avoid punishment. Put in other way, not calling a leader by his titles seem to appear as a lack of respect.

Furthermore, Koomson’s endless ostentatious nicknames remind some other African despots, real and fictitious. In Francophone Africa ‘Mubutu Sese Soko Kuku Ngwendo Wa Zabanga’ who ruled Zaire with an iron hand for more than three decades buttresses this idea. How to forget about the Congolese satirist who in his novel *The Laughing Cry*, coins ‘Bwakamabé Na Sakkadé alias Daddy Hannibal-Ideloy’, nickname which better fit all callous dictators that Africa has ever known. With the view to disguise their tyranny, they choose names which praise them as noticed in the following passage:

Who can forget the entrance of Marshall Hannibal-Ideology Bwakamabé Na Sakkadé, president of the republic, head of state, president of the council ministers, President of the council ministers, President of National council of Resurrection, Recreating Father of the nation, holder of many portfolios to be included in his citation in hierarchical order, not a single one excluded, son of Ngakoro, son of Foulema... (*The Laughing Cry*, p. 64)

In addition to this, the leaders have also turned their co-workers or members of the government into mere instrument of humiliation whose aim is to venerate the leaders in a sweet way. In other words, the members of the government have for mission to undermine themselves in order to praise the president. The following passage is enlightening: “I saw him give instruction toward this end in the hut to kijibo, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, sometime before latter’s departure for the city of the kings of kings where he preceded us. Kijibo kneel down and kiss the hand of our chief.” (p. 46)

Evidently, even the members of the government who are expected to help the president solve the crucial problems of the country undermine themselves in venerating the president with praises he does not deserve. Aziz is a perfect archetype of such a behavior when he concocts to write with the purpose to praise Daddy: “People of our country, you have every right to hold your heads high, for you have carried high the banner of our policy of our national cultural identity, and you have thus raised up, thanks to the dream of Bwakamabé, a work more solid and enduring than bronze.”(p. 60)

One can see through this quotation that Aziz is a mere puppet of Daddy. Here, Aziz intention is to speak of Daddy in good way. As a matter of fact, Aziz is not unmindful that Bwakamabé is a bad leader, but he does not hesitate to sing song of praise for him, he knows that he is doing it for an interest and for the fear to not be sacked up.

Hence, in Ngūgī’s *Wizard of the Crow*, the dictator president referred to as the Ruler is adulated by newly appointed ministers who even compete in expressing the best praise to the Ruler, as the narrator ironies in the following passage:

“May the Ruler be praised for his great inborn wisdom,” added Sikiokuu.

“It comes directly from his own God”, Kaniürü opined.

“But it also springs from his own efforts,” Sikiokuu said, resenting Kaniürü’s attempt to join his song of praise.

“He has mastered all the book of learning. He is the true dispenser of knowledge,” said Kaniürü, “the teacher of teachers, the number one teacher. The source of all the knowledge in the world.” [...] I, too, share the same sentiment, Your Mighty Excellency,” said Sikiokuu. “oh you should hear me when I am not in your presence, for that’s when I feel most free to sing your gifts.”

“I, too, praise you all the time, wherever I am.” Machokali said, not to be outdone. (*Wizard of the Crow*, p.541)

The power personalization leads these members of the Cabinet to a bitter positioning struggle to uphold the Ruler that Tajřrika even deifies to better flatter him, as one reads:

Tajřrika fell to his knees in humility and gratitude, even as the others were terrified by the potential consequences of his elevation. “Our Holy and Mighty Excellency”, he said. “I don’t know how to thank you. You are a deity who dispenses fair justice to us mortals, giving hope where there is despair, even resurrecting dead souls. How can I repay your tender mercies? I renew my pledge: Now forever, your enemy is my enemy. (*Wizard of the Crow*, p.561)

Heightening the Ruler with the intention to have his favour in return, John Kaniürü even overdeifies him. For he vows pre-eminence to the Ruler over God as follows:

“Deep in my heart,” Kaniürü said, ‘I know no calling higher than that of singing praises at all times because of what you have done and continue to do for us. One day I overheard my own heart saying, if God and the Ruler were standing together side by side and their hats were blown off their heads at the same time, I would pick up the one that belongs to the Ruler first, and without realizing it I had said loudly: Alleluia, may my lord and Master be praised forever and ever, Amen (*Wizard of the Crow*, p.541)

Furthering his exaggerated praise for the Ruler, Kaniürü suggests putting him at the center of educational system of the fictional Republic of Aburřria. Pretending that the Ruler and the country make a fusional entity, he assumes that all the Aburřrians should be brought to look upon the Ruler as the dispenser of knowledge and be constrained to learn about him, as evidenced in the passage below:

Everyone in Aburřria knew that the Ruler was the supreme educator. The Teacher number one. So all institutions of learning, from primary schools to university colleges, would be required to teach only those ideas that came from the supreme educator. They would be required to offer the Ruler’s mathematics, the Ruler’s science (biology, physics, and chemistry), the Ruler’s philosophy, and the Ruler’s history and this would definitely take care of their demands to know the country. (*Wizard of the Crow*, p.565)

The power personalization dangerously leads the country in perversion since the Ruler who, himself, bathes in the ocean of intellectual mediocrity, is looked upon by his subjects as the source of knowledge in the country. As a reminder, the Ruler's philosophy is nothing else but his vision of Marching to Heaven. His history is the history of his victory gained over the communists, and his mathematics is to calculate the day of his birthday which always falls on the seventh day of theseventh month at seven past seven. Furthermore, to confirm the assumption that the Ruler is the dispenser of knowledge, the government makes it an obligation for all writers to take the Ruler as the original author:

All books published in the country would carry the name of the Ruler as the original author. Anybody who aspired to write and published could do so only under the name of the Ruler, who would allow his name only on those books carefully examined and permitted by the sub department of Youth Conformity. All new editions of the Bible, the Quran, the Torah, and even Budda's Book of light or any other religious texts read in schools, would have preface and introductions by the Ruler. (*Wizard of the Crow*, p.565)

Moreover, in their obsessional will of power personalization, despots resort to terror with the intention of silencing people. They plan to slaughter the unarmed civilians and televise these tragic scenes so that when the prospective offenders see them, they will probably never stand up against the 'almighty' rulers for fear not to experience the same heartbreaking fate. This attitude shows a kind sadism since these monarchs really like seeing people filled with fight and are very happy when they see all their snipers and armoured cars all over the country provoking the people dread. This is the case of the Ruler in *Wizard of the Crow*, an archetype of terror sower who, succeeds to silence all the Aburirians and make them live with a permanent fear as they watch military parades on television:

The sight of armored cars on television, their long guns poised to murder, relentlessly moving down the streets of Eldares made him (the Ruler) feel manlier. The media swarming around the columns excited him. Let them see blood, the Ruler whispered of himself, pointing at the television screen. Let them see that I am still in Charge. (*Wizard of the Crow*, p.643)

Here, the Ruler's jubilant remark, "Let them see blood" really evidences his sadism, which is characteristic of post-

independence African leaders, who always justify the reign of terror for security imperatives, as the Ruler tends to reassure the Aburirians about his intensified and televised military show:

"yes," The head of the military said, "we are waiting for this ragtag army, first reported to us by a motorcycle rider, to reach the capital. Then we shall encircle it with the armoured cars and the latest guns you sold us some time ago-old, but against unarmed civilians, still lethal"

"A national massacre. To be televised. Live," [...] "You have heard from the horses' own mouths," the Ruler said, "[...] have no fear of those who threaten your interests and ours, for gunfire awaits them. (*Wizard of the Crow*, p.579)

This atmosphere of terror and fear is maintained by the Ruler's secret machine, M5 which is reported to be His Mightiness' five representative organs: eye, the ears the nose, arms, and legs. Its role nothing but to spy, threaten and investigate the civilians' activities, as the narrator reveals: " , *Silver Sikiokuu, the Minister of State in charge of spying on the citizenry, the secret police machine known as M5*" (*Wizard*, p.14) In the same way, paramilitary units headed by the Ruler's sycophants are committed to task. We are for instance told of John Kaniürü's patriotic gang which assaults foreign journalists at the airport so as dissuade them go in countryside with their cameras to broadcast the Aburirians' realities:

Since Kaniürü's patriotic gang had beat up foreign journalist at the airport, provoking protest from the Western embassies, the Ruler had ordered the police, the paramilitary units, and even Kaniürü's boys to be careful, very careful, before foreign cameras. If they really felt like cracking a few skulls, they should do so in rural areas and small towns. (*Wizard of the Crow*, p.639)

The truth is that instead of reprimanding, Ruler rather encourages and congratulates those of his 'lieutenants' who single themselves out in such cruelties, as evidenced in the following passage:

He could outsmart Titus Tajirika and seize more power of himself only by crashing all the queues old and new by apprehending Nyawira before his other rival Sikiokuu did. The Ruler had already congratulated Kaniürü for teaching those racist, meddlesome foreign journalists a lesson or two, but this had been done privately. (*Wizard of the Crow*, p.610)

This quotation shows that dictators terrorize journalists, mainly those who do not exactly do their will, organizing a blackout in order to prevent them from getting information about the inconceivable crimes which are being perpetrated by their acolytes.

The Ruler sadism reaches a climax when he creates the Red River, a river in which he breeds crocodiles. And, he and his stooges resort to this Red River to increase fear so as to make people reveal they think or have planned against him. As a matter of fact, Vijinia, Tajirika's wife is threatened to death for purportedly being in league with women revolutionist movement against the Ruler's project of Marching to Heaven, as the narrator epitomizes:

She who had not so much as raised her voice, now screamed so hard and loud that she thought her head would split. But to her horror all she heard in response was her own echo. "Nothing can hear you" Kaniürü, one or two steps behind, now said. "You know this river? It is called the Red River because these crocodiles have come to love the blood of any person who entertains any foolishness against the Ruler.[...] these are very hungry because, to tell the truth, since the Ruler went to America, they have not had their normal ration of human meat. (*Wizard of the Crow*, p.453)

This sadistic scene reminds of Henri Lopes' *Laughing Cry* where cruelty reaches alarming dimensions, mainly with Monsieur Gourdain, the Director of the Presidential Security who allows himself to thrust a bottle into the anus of a peaceful citizen. Indeed, apart from slaughter of sixteen terrorists and accomplices affiliated with Téléma Terrorist group accused for being activists militating against Bwakamabé Na Sakkadé's regime, *The Laughing Cry* epitomizes killing of Captain Yabaka as an emblematic case of sadism. For this opponent and some of his companions are arrested, tortured and shot dead by Daddy accompanied by members of his government: A macabre spectacle that even other spectators cannot help witnessing:

Yabaka and a dozen of his companions were shot at dawn.[...] Bwakamabé attended the execution in person, and insisted upon being accompanied by all the members of the Council of National Resurrection and all the ministers. They began by killing the first batch, while the Captain and five of his comrades, without blindfolds, were obliged to watch the spectacle of what awaited them. Then it was their turn. Bwakamabé, with a machine-pistol, joined the

ranks of the firing squad, all of them Djabotama. The Captain was tied to a post in the form of a cross, with arms outstretched, his eyes exposed. The orders were to kill with single shots. At the first command, they must shoot to one side, very close but without hitting him. A pause. At the second command, aim at the bottom of his legs. A pause. At the third command, aim for his thighs. Another pause. At the fourth command, shoot at his arms. A pause. At the fifth command, fire at will. Aim at his vital parts to box him up. The head, the chest, the belly. The soldiers, stuffed to the gills with wee, emptied their magazines with great delight. (*The Laughing Cry*, pp.253-254)

Narrations such as "They began by killing the first batch, while the Captain and five of his comrades, without blindfolds, were obliged to watch the spectacle of what awaited them" and "The orders were to kill with single shots" and "The soldiers, stuffed to the gills with wee, emptied their magazines with great delight" really confirm that Bwakamabé Na Sakkadé, the fictional embodiment of many African dictators, is a sadistic of another genuine who delight in inflicting pain upon their citizens.

Ngũgĩ keeps on denouncing the cruelty of the Ruler who beams with joy for having eliminated seven thousand and seven hundred citizens in just seven days, when he writes:

The Ruler was so proud of having eliminated seven thousand and seven hundred citizens in just seven days for posing a threat to the stability through protests in the major cities demanding social change. He would take this opportunity, he said, to renew old friendship and earn their trust by showing that he had not forgotten how to use strong-arm tactics against dissidents. (*Wizard of the Crow*, p.579)

From these above passages, one figure out how postcolonial leaders show sign of psychological disorder for as Kamiti Wa Karimiri asserts "dictators thrive on fear for they love to see their subjects quake and make desperate pleas for forgiveness". (*Wizard of the Crow*, p.640) their obsession with power makes them paranoid who see enemies everywhere. Indeed, throwing his citizens as preys to ferocious animals or "crashing all the queues" of persons is nothing but mental illness.

The cult of personality is also manifest through sculptures set here and there throughout the African despotic countries to the glory of the 'Almighty Leader'. In *Wizard of the Crow*, for instance, Eldares, the capital

city of Aburiria and some other places are famous because of the Ruler's memorials, as the narrator ironizes:

The Ruler's monuments were all over every street in Eldares. There he is on a horse in full flight and on others cantering. Here he is standing on a pedestal with hands raised in a gesture of benediction over passerby. There the commander in chief in military garb, a sword raised as if inspecting a guard of honour, and on another as if leading a charge. Here he is, the great teacher in a university cap and gown. There the thoughtful ruler in a moody poses. (*Wizard of the Crow*, p. 36)

In *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, power personalization climaxes when Kwame Nkrumah, in his obsessional will to appear as a providential man for his compatriots, decides to impose his face everywhere and, even on the national currency, as a journalist of *New YorkTime Magazine* (1960 n°11) satirizes:

The expressive face of Kwame Nkrumah is everywhere. On stamps of 1 shilling 3 pence, it is there in front of a group of silhouettes dancing around a fire. On the stamps of 4 pence, it is there also, in profile and in front of a flag, the image of Nkrumah is reproduced on the bills and coins. The taxis carry his effigy. At the stores it is also there in uniform of General, draped of purple tunic of the Nzimas peasants. Any governmental publication, any official document, a notarial act and even some transport tickets, carry, printed in medallion, the bust of the Redeemer. On Kwame Nkrumah Avenue, children sell postcards with the effigy of Nkrumah. Generally, he looks at the sky, and, above his head, one distinguishes the holy gilled halo. The legend stipulates: "the Christ of Africa scanning stars", "the Messiah of Ghana in prayer", or the simple and convincing words: "OyieaDieyie" (i.e. here is the Redeemer of all things).

However, it important to highlight the role of television as the favorite means of propaganda at the hands of dictators to get people know about their very moments. In *Wizard of the Crow*, media devote a cult to the Ruler so that television programs are conceived to hyper mediatized his actions and ceremonies of praise. The following extract is illustrative:

It is said that when he was told that he could not be granted even a minute on the air, he could hardly believe his hears or even

understand what they were talking about, knowing that in his country he was always on TV; his every moments-eating, shitting, sneezing, or blowing his nose-captured on camera. Even his yawns were news because whether triggered by boredom, fatigue, hunger, or thirst they were often followed by some national drama. (*Wizard of the Crow*, pp. 3-4)

All things considered, if during the colonial period, colonizers and colonized were to be blamed for the deleterious atmosphere of bloodshed due to their awful activities, the situation even worsens later after the independence under the rule Africans sadistic rulers. For unfortunately, what they claimed to be awful is once more established by themselves causing the masses to consider them not as fathers of nations but as gods.

## V. CONCLUSION

The analysis of Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*, *Wizard of the Crow* and Henri Lopes' *The Laughing Cry* has helped to learn more about the dramatization of sadism and fears as they are contextualized in the African literature. Through the New historicism's lens, this study has revealed us a great deal about how the psychological conflict has been perceptible and has heavily marked the relationships in Africa at certain periods of its history. We have striven to evidence that some symptoms of the mental pathology could be diagnosed both among colonial masters and natives as well. The representatives of the colonial administration such as Mr Howlands, John Thompson or Thomas Robson and their stooges (Joshua, Jacobo or Karanja) to quote only some, acting under the impulsion of a civilizing ideology, and searching the purify and heal the native from the "madness" they would suffer, paradoxically behaved themselves no more persons showing symptoms of a mental insanity. Likewise, African post-colonial leaders spit sadism and terror in their countries in order to keep people away from the idea of questioning their dictatorial rule. They share people's blood and joyfully broadcast these shameful images in order to psychologically terrorize the dear viewers who then feel contempt to be involved in political affairs. Obviously, the study corroborates some of the characters moved by uncontrolled emotional impulses, display some symptoms of mental disturbance. For they indulge in intimidating their countrymen and perpetrating many acts of extreme barbarity. We may then agree with the authors that Africans are not yet ready to rule their countries since they are still based on luxuries, appraisals, while the masses still long for responsible and 'humanist' leaders

who will help them meet their living needs, as Henri Lopes ironically wonders: “Yesterday, our miseries were all the fault of the whites, whom we must chase away in order to win happiness. Today, the Uncles have gone and misery is still with us. Who should we chase away now ?” (*The Laughing Cry*, p.10) All in all, throughout this analysis, we have thrown light some implications of sadism and fear as they negatively impact the life of the Africans in all social spheres. For sadism and fear do not only undermine the moral or inner self of some characters but above all, generate about a deleterious atmosphere of bloodshed that Africa has experienced for ever since.

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