A LAWRENTIAN IMAGINATION FOR A VIEW OF FICTION THE IMPACT OF D. LAWRENCE ON NGUGI WA THIONG'O

By Salah Kaci-Mohamed,
University of Algiers II

Ngugi's fiction is, in part, an outcome of the influence of Western – mainly Anglo-Saxon – writers. Ngugi acquired the rudiments of "the craft of fiction" by reading, either as part of colonial school curricula or out of his personal choosing, the writings of William Shakespeare, R. L. Stevenson, Charles Dickens, Jane Austin, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Matthew Arnold, Walt Whitman, Herman Melville, William Blake, Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot and, last but not least, D. H. Lawrence. He himself argues that some of these works had a powerful impact on him,[1] and, in practically all his books of essays and in many of his interviews and lectures, he suggests that his imaginative writings as well as his theories on culture, literature and language are developed in very close dialogical and intertextual relationships with them. Though to varied degrees and in ways that differ from one of his novels to another and from a set of them to another, all Ngugi's fiction, from *Weep Not, Child* to *Wizard of the Crow*, echoes such a background.

Ngugi's most thorough acknowledgment of his influences remains perhaps the one he makes in his interview with Dennis Duerden in 1964.[2] Asked then whether he would agree that his earliest novels are beholden to "two sets of influences," "one from African writers and one from English writers," he answers in the affirmative.[3] Among the English novelists who have influenced him, he cites D. H. Lawrence and Joseph Conrad as by far the most significant.[4] Critical discussions tended to linger on his indebtedness to Conrad, while they have underrated that of Lawrence. Yet the latter is definitely one of the authors that mattered most to Ngugi, and it is to him more than to Conrad or any other European writer that he seems mostly indebted.

The existence of a relationship of influence between Ngugi and Lawrence has not escaped the attention of critics. George Douglas Killam's reference to Ngugi's debt to the "neo-romanticism of D. H. Lawrence,"[5] and David Cook and Michael Okenimkpe's assertions that "places and peoples and ideas are inter-fused" in Ngugi's works "in a manner reminiscent of Lawrence's fiction" are knowledgeable statements on this relationship.[6] However, the question remains neglected, and its treatment is limited to an observation of general reverberations of Lawrence in Ngugi's early writings – most often in his earliest short stories and first two novels *The River Between* and *Weep Not, Child*. Much of the relevant critical material consists of all-purpose statements on the English background of Ngugi's debut in literature of the kind Simon Gikandi makes here:

Of the many writers he read as an undergraduate at Makerere University College (...) the ones who influenced his art most were modernists like D. H. Lawrence who "had a way of entering into the spirit of things," and Joseph Conrad who impressed the young writer by his mastery of "the morality of action" and the representation of human suffering.[7]

Yet one of Ngugi's most comprehensive statements on the ways in which he read and responded to Lawrence suggests that his indebtedness to this author is of great importance:

I discovered D. H. Lawrence and again his way of entering into the spirit of things, as it were influenced me quite a lot (…) I felt with D. H. Lawrence, although the situation, the geographical situation and even the moral situation he is writing about are in some ways remote to me, that he is able to go into the spirit of things. You know I felt as if he was entering into the soul of the people, and not only the people, but even of the land, of the countryside, of things like plants, of the atmosphere (…) when I am reading D. H. Lawrence I feel the spirituality of things very near me as if I am touching the very spirit of things.[8]

This declaration urges us to consider Lawrence's influence on Ngugi from a specific angle: within the framework of Lawrence's "way of entering into the spirit of things." The phrase might seem vague, but in fact it is extremely intense and revealing. It suggests that coming upon Lawrence Ngugi makes a decisive discovery; he falls upon *the* English writer with a mixed cognitive orientation which is very akin to his own, at once spiritual and rational, pagan and Christian, pragmatic and idealistic, worldview.[9] As his statement implies, Ngugi has been inspired by what can be described as Lawrence's response to, and imaginative incarnation of, a dual consciousness derived from his English education on the one hand and, on the other hand, his renowned leaning toward primitivism about which Harry T. Moore tells us:

So far as primitivism is concerned, it should be remembered that Lawrence was a man disgusted with the mechanism of civilisation, a man who would not have used its instruments as even the most mystical Nazis have done. His extolling of "blood knowledge" was not an advocation that what he called "mind knowledge" should be annihilated; on the contrary, he merely felt that civilisation had gone too far in the direction of cerebral activity and needed a strong dose of its opposite to help restore the balance.[10]

The literary outcome of Lawrence's concern with the "restoration of the balance" between "blood knowledge" and "mind knowledge" is his development of a singular form of transcendentalist romanticism based on a highly aesthetic fusion of mysticism, twentieth-century realism and nineteenth-century naturalism,[11] which has provided both a philosophical and aesthetic model for Ngugi.

This study aims to show how Lawrence's Romantic imagination reverberates in Ngugi's fiction. It argues that echoes of Lawrence's imaginative mode can be perceived at least in the novels which Ngugi wrote in English. But as we shall equally notice Ngugi has continued to undergo Lawrence's influence in writing his Gikuyu-language fiction, the main area of intersection being again a kind of imagination that disposes with the gap supposed to separate what is perceptible and expressible from what is hidden and ineffable. In *D. H. Lawrence: The Man and his Work*, Harry T. Moore, basing himself on a foundational study of Romanticism by René Wellek, maintains that the first of "three important criteria of Romanticism in general" is "imagination for the view of poetry;" the other two criteria being "nature for the view of the world," and "symbol and myth for poetic style."[12] Moore asserts that all of these factors "figure importantly throughout Lawrence's work."[13] Some of Lawrence's novels such as *The Plumed Serpent* and *Sun* are "almost pure romanticism," but on the whole Lawrence differs from the 'conventional Romanticists' principally in that the way he draws on the element of imagination is unique, as the same scholar specifies.[14] Understanding how Lawrence employs each of Wellek's three elements of Romanticism is necessary to fully understand how and to what extent Lawrence's way of entering into "the spirit of things" is echoed in Ngugi's fiction. However, the

impact on Ngugi of the Lawrencean approach to the other two elements can be deferred, so as to elaborate, on this occasion, on the more fundamental point of Ngugi's indebtedness to Lawrence's half-mystic-half–naturalistic imagination.

*Lawrence often resorts to a fantastic working of imagination which resembles that of traditional Romanticists even in works that are close to Naturalism like *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Thus, "in the actual working of ideas, [he] often came close to Romanticist imaginative usage," especially in his most fabulist stories such as *The Man who Died*, *Mornings in Mexico*, *Sun* and *The Plumed Serpent* as Moore points out.[15] Nevertheless, unlike the archetypal Romanticists, Lawrence is not exactly an 'escapist;' that is, he does not rely on this type of imagination to evade reality or to seek a surrogate for it in some utterly otherworldly settings. Although, in the vein of the Romanticists, he would employ imagination "as an important intuitional force,"[16] this remains for him basically a means to communicate a vision of *earthly* realities. In this context, Moore notes the difference that for the traditional Romanticists imagination was "perhaps a nobler instrument than it was to Lawrence: with them it was a means of getting in touch with a higher reality," while "the fulfilment Lawrence came to seek in his "dark gods" was not a higher reality but rather another reality."[17] If anything can allow Lawrence to dig as deep in reality as to give the impression he is taking us near the "spirituality of things" that Ngugi talks about, it would be above all such an imagination fed by an insightful endeavour, and a desire, to "apprize us of the eternal distinction between the soul and the world," to put it in Ralf Waldo Emerson's words.[18]

An important way in which Lawrence "enters into the spirit of things" is characterisation. Out of his belief that the traditional concept of "character" misrepresents the reality of human life, namely that it is a more obscure notion than what is generally embodied by usual types of characterization, Lawrence creates, in effect, a specific kind of character. True, his protagonists as he himself asserts range between "the old stable ego of character of *Sons and Lovers*" and the "other ego according to whose action the individual is unrecognisable, and passes through (…) allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense (…) to discover are states of the same single radically unchanged element of [his] character in *Women in Love*."[19] In both cases, nevertheless, the writer lays primary stress on the spiritual sides of the characters, or, to be more exact, on perpetual movement and change in their identities, and on interplay and complementation between their physical and spiritual components. The effect this produces is always a sense of his striving to reveal 'shadowy zones' of human nature, or more precisely to represent "the human soul in flux" and show it as an irrefutable part of *immediate* human reality. This is certainly what James Wood means when he writes:

Lawrence is famous for his desire to capture the ineffable, to put into words the shifting ecstasies, both negative and positive, of the human soul in flux. His reputation for "obscurity" is founded on such efforts. But at bottom he is an extraordinarily acute noticer of the world, human and natural.[20]

The resulting examples of characterisation testify not only to Lawrence's ability to render what is most deeply secreted within the human self, but also convey an original discourse about human nature and life that is scarcely paralleled in vitality, intensity and, perhaps, in veracity.

In *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, for example, 'people' are represented with this kind of emphasis on what Wayne Templeton calls "states of estrangement,"[21] and with such an insistency that they would have been, without Lawrence's genius, implausible as novelistic characters. Instead of being so, however, they put forward an elaborate and interesting

perspective on humanness by drawing attention to ignored, unexplored, or simply out-of-sight – but not unfamiliar – features of it. Consequently, in Ken Knabb's words, they stand out "lit by a light not of this earth and at the same time completely of this earth."[22] To Lawrence, such features are so crucial as to be no less than manifestations of Man's, and life's, vital essence(s)**.** Thus, characters such as Rupert Birkin and Hermione Roddice are more than just harmonious assortments of physical portraits, selected words, and – elaborately as their psychological conditions are treated – mental profiles. To say who exactly they are, material and psychological lexis alone might prove unsatisfactory. The consciousness about such characters the reader is likely to finish with would indeed go far beyond syntheses of their corporal and mental traits because Lawrence endows them with *spiritual* dimensions as *central* constituents of their identities.

In the chapter entitled "Class-room" in *Women in Love*, for instance, Hermione's "state of estrangement" does not suggest a neurotic condition in the clinical sense of the term – not even a subconscious state in the strictly Freudian meaning; it rather puts forward something like an 'evil' variation on her own self.[23] In the same sequence, and elsewhere in the story, Birkin equally goes through states that are too baffling to be duly expressible in a rigorously scientific terminology. For example, at some point in the story he simply ceases being a visible being and becomes, in the narrator's words, just a "passionate voice speaking." Such descriptions can be seen as part of what E. M. Forster calls "the usual stock-in-trade of the novelist,"[24] that is as metaphoric renderings of particularly emotional but finally 'normal' human behaviour. But even from this perspective, the recourse to metaphor itself as well as all the tropes in this kind of description – setting, action, atmosphere, language, mode and tone – are made to suggest (in unison) a spiritual point of view about human nature:

He looked at her in mingled hate and contempt, also in pain because she suffered, and in shame because he knew he tortured her. He had an impulse to kneel and plead for forgiveness. But a bitterer red anger burned up to fury in him. He became unconscious of her; he was only a passionate voice speaking (*Women in Love*, 57).

Likewise, in the language used to describe Rupert as seen by Ursula in the same scene, every limit between the physical and hidden constituents of the man is expunged. And, in Ursula's mind at least, the one is an indispensable foil for the other:

Ursula was watching him as if furtively, not really aware of what she was seeing. There was a great physical attractiveness in him – a curious hidden richness that came through his thinness and his pallor like another voice, conveying another knowledge of him. It was in the curves of his brows and his chin, rich, fine, exquisite curves, the powerful beauty of life itself. She could not say what it was. But there was a sense of richness and of liberty (*Women in Love*, 59).

Though Ngugi can seem less acutely interested in such numinous dimensions of Man and character, and this even in his rather fantastic Gikuyu-language works, he has a very similar approach to humanness and characterisation in general. Better, he is sometimes so reminiscent of Lawrence in this respect that what has just been said about Lawrence's characterisation could also stand as a reasonable comment on Ngugi's perspective on human beings, and on his way of creating protagonists. There is indeed a similar kind of mysticism about Ngugi's main characters, namely Waiyaki in *The River Between*; Njoroge in *Weep Not, Child*; Mugo, Kihika, Gikonyo and Mumbi in *A Grain of Wheat*; Karega, Abdulla, Wanja and Munira in *Petals of Blood*; Wariinga and Gatuiria in *Devil On the Cross*; Matigari in *Matigari* and Kamiti in *Wizard of the Crow*.

What is more, as in the case of Lawrence's heroes, this does not detract from their lifelikeness. Despite his commitment to realism, Ngugi's typical characters are always endowed, either allusively or literally, with dimensions which can be called metaphysical. Waiyaki's father in *The River Between* is a good example of a character with obvious metaphysical features. As for Waiyaki himself, he is an excellent example of a character whose spiritual components are suggested with just the measure of subtlety with which Lawrence typically presents similar aspects of his own protagonists. The Gikuyu situation in the next depiction of Waiyaki for example should not cause us to overlook the Lawrencean mould in which the portrait is cast:

The knowledge that he had in him the blood of this famous seer, who had been able to see the future, filled him with an acute sense of wonder (…) For the first time, Waiyaki felt really frightened. Unknown terror gripped him. He fought with it (…) Waiyaki felt as if a heavy cloud was pressing down his soul and he felt a strange sensation of suspension in his stomach (*The River Between*, 22-3).

More generally, this attitude can be seen in Ngugi's propensity for subjecting his protagonists to a thorough treatment, not just physically, psychologically and morally, but also spiritually. He has a notable tendency to depict his protagonists very deeply 'from within,' in a manner which suggests that he is indeed trying to "enter into" their "souls." Not infrequently, though not as keenly and as elaborately as Lawrence does, he too takes his readers into extensive and profound explorations of his characters' 'other,' internal, multiple and shifting selves in order to give expression to what is supposed to be these characters', and life's, secret and energetic qualities. This makes them, like Lawrence's characters, indefinable in technical terms (as opposed to the symbolist, mythological and religious language used in his novels), as it places some of their behaviours and aspects beyond rational interpretation. Similar to the main characters of *Women in Love* or *The Rainbow*, there is an assured spirituality about Mugo, for example – something that makes him range between states of holiness and evil – and which, instead of dehumanising him or alienating him from readers, makes him look remarkably 'real.' This is due to the fact that the limits between the physical and 'numinous' levels of imagination are non-existent in Ngugi's portrayal of characters such as Mugo, in the same way as they are overlooked (or transcended) by Lawrence as we have seen through the examples of Hermione, Rupert and Ursula. Passages like the following one, scattered all over Ngugi's novels, can exemplify this:

Mugo lay on his back under the shade of a Mwariki and experienced that excessive contentment which one feels during the noon rest from toil. A voice then, he always heard voices whenever he lay on his back at rest, told him: something is going to happen to you. Closing his eyes he could feel, almost touched the thing, whose form was vague but, oh, so beautiful (*A Grain of Wheat*, 125).

As with Hermione, such a depiction may attest to a pathological condition comparable to hallucination or "neurosis," as David Cook and Michael Okenimkpe think with reference to Mugo.[25] Nevertheless, the logic of Ngugi's stories urges us to seek beyond such psychiatric notions and psychopathologies to grasp them, seeing that, despite the influence of Frantz Fanon, he does not intend to deal with characters who are alienated from a medical point of view. Cook and Okenimkpe's own further stipulation that Mugo's "neurosis" "does not exonerate him" nullifies their earlier hypothesis that he is "mentally sick."[26] It is characteristic of *all* Ngugi's main characters to pass, at least occasionally, through such 'unexplained' states of mind while they remain mentally 'healthy' people. Lawrence argued that "[e]very man who is acutely alive is

acutely wrestling with his own soul",[27] and the point is that Ngugi's main characters are made to "wrestle with their own souls," and, rather than highlighting their alienations, this brings forth all their vim and vigour as imaginative representations of human beings.

Furthermore, Ngugi's protagonists usually appear in such weird conditions after they are pressured by intense emotions, or when they undergo stern emotional and physical experiences. It is most often the case when they are exhausted, feel excessive contentment or – even more typically – when they are in love. This makes their portraits acceptable by the standards of realism while it conveys a sense of their spirituality. Though he is also interested in rendering the impacts of various kinds of pressures on people at the psychological and mental levels, Ngugi's ultimate purpose is *not* to render these impacts. He uses them as parts of a profoundest quest, that of pointing up the souls of his characters so that they could look, like Lawrence's, alive and complementary in their shifting identities. From this point of view, the other main characters in *A Grain of Wheat*, notably Mumbi, Gikonyo, Kihika, Karanja and John and Margery Thompson all replicate the genre of characters imagined by Lawrence.

This also pertains to the major characters of *Petals of Blood*, mostly Wanja, Munira, and Abdulla who are subject to descriptions which insinuate ego-alteration and spirituality. In such descriptions, Ngugi proceeds with a delicacy corresponding to Lawrence's, using contexts and techniques (studied below) which are able to keep the personalities of these characters within the limits of what can be accepted even by readers who would seek a high degree of pragmatism. Below, even if we read for realism, we are likely to admit that Wanja's strange behaviour is true to life while the writer cautiously handles what anyone familiar with Lawrence would identify as a typical case of a manifestation of "dark gods:"[28]

She [Wanja] ended on a kind of savage screaming tone, as if she was answering doubts inside her. Karega sensed the doubt and now looked at her more intently. There was a hardness on her face that he could not now penetrate. He felt the needle-sharp ruthless truth of her statement: eat or you are eaten (*Petals of Blood*, 327).

Sometimes such conditions are more than just obliquely hinted at (as both Lawrence and Ngugi again typically, though not exclusively, do). For instance, Abdulla has about him a sort of aura, a suggested hidden energy, and an oddity, which we are made to suspect from the beginning through his unexpected and fortuitous cursing of Joseph, for example, or, more constantly, through the immense incongruence between his (puny) physique and his (huge) mental dispositions. Ngugi maintains the impression that this character has sides which are 'more than ordinary,' and that he is a 'changing' individual. And just as he seems to "continue revealing newer and richer aspects of his personality" to the people in the convoy from Ilmorog, so he does to us as readers (*Petals of Blood*, 134). In the sequence where he shoots antelopes with a catapult, an event which the narrator refers to as "a magic act in a dream" (*Petals of Blood*, 138), Abdulla's invisible self and power are no longer insinuated; they are almost literally affirmed. We are prompted to believe that it is with reason, after such a show of prowess, that Abdulla is called a "very extraordinary being." His depiction in the same scene, if again it might be understood as a figurative description of an actually 'ordinary' Abdulla, is evocative, not only of Lawrence's approach to characterisation but also of his hypothesis that a human being is best conceived as a changing blend of various egos: "Abdulla stood in the same position, now transformed in their eyes into a very extraordinary being whom they have never really known. Immobile like a god of the plains, Abdulla still rested his eyes on the distant hills which for years had been a home to him" (*Petals of Blood*, 139).

The attribution of features of this type to human beings may also be viewed as a Homeric – or simply Africanist – rather than a Lawrencean procedure. But in the case of Ngugi's English-language novels at least, they are more likely to be consequences of Lawrence's influence. This is not only in view of Ngugi's declaration on his inspiration by this characteristic of Lawrence's style, but also of the fact that it is a distinctive quality of Lawrence – perhaps more than any other novelist – to use such a mindful and affirmed interest in sudden and complete ego-alterations as parts of otherwise realistic portraits. As we already argued, Lawrence normally does so most overtly in his fable-like works but remarkably he also does it in all his works. Abdulla's representation above reminds us of the way in which Lawrence, in *Women in Love*, renders Birkin's fascination with Ursula's father. There we are prompted to marvel with Birkin "how curious it was that this was a human being!"(*Women in Love,* 246). Additionally, Lawrence more than sporadically associates what he called "darks secret power[s]" (of Gudrun in *Women in Love,* 248), "demons" (of Gudrun in *Women in Love,* 246), and "possessed voices" (of Gudrun in *Women in Love,* 248) with his characters. He even redundantly uses adjectives like "strange," "mystic," "unreal," "mysterious," "undiscoverable," and "obscure," to compare them to gods, angels and spirits. Lawrence's works are indeed crammed with such terminology, as well as comparisons, metaphors and protracted descriptions which weigh humans against such mythological and 'acausal' beings. As we progress in *Women in Love* we might be surprised no less at the frequency of such cases than at the insistency with which we are pushed to notice them. A good example is the sequence in "Sunday Evening" where, to Ursula (contemplating her husband and son), "Billy seemed angelic like a cherub boy, or like an acolyte, Birkin was a tall, grave angel looking down to him" (*Women in Love*, 227). Just like Abdulla, the latter "was motionless and ageless, like some crouching idol, some image of a deathly religion. He looked round at her, and his face, very pale and unreal seemed to gleam with a whiteness almost phosphorescent" (*Women in Love*, 227-28).

But it is Wanja who best points up the author's eagerness to illumine alternative elements of humanness in *Petals of Blood*. In effect, Wanja changes so often, and so suddenly, that one cannot help thinking of her as a byword of Lawrence's idea of Man as a continually changing combination of multiple selves. She is the epitome of a character with an "ego according to whose action the individual is unrecognisable," as she undergoes "allotropic states which it needs a deep sense (…) to discover are states of the same single radically unchanged element," and thus her portrait conforms to Lawrence's definition of his protagonists. Looking at "Wanja's utter transformation" at some stage of the story, Abdulla thinks of her as "a kindred spirit" (*Petals of Blood*, 201). In the following, caught in an "intuitional state of mind" indeed, Wanja cannot fail to remind us of these Lawrencean ideas:[29]

Suddenly she felt lifted out of her own self, she felt waves of emotion she had never before experienced. The figure began to take shape on the board. It was a combination of the sculpture she once saw at the lawyer's place in Nairobi and images of Kimathi in his moments of triumph and laugher and sorrow and terror – but without one limb. When it was over, she felt a tremendous calm, a kind of inner assurance of the possibilities of a new kind of power (*Petals of Blood,* 338).

Most of the excerpts noted thus far could as well illustrate Ngugi's adoption of the Lawrencean *method* of passing on this vision of human nature and reality. The two writers bring into play identical techniques for the purpose of achieving truthfulness and reliability, that is, to keep their characters' portraits credible in circumstances such as the above. It is obvious that both

authors endeavour to strike a balance between straightforwardness and subtlety when depicting such situations. At the level of language, this is to be seen in their coincident uses of comparisons and metaphors which point at peculiar facts, but are tempered with alleviating adjectives and/or adverbs. In the case of Lawrence, phrases and sentences such as "**like some** *crouching idol*", and "his face, *very pale and unreal* **seemed to** *gleam with a whiteness* **almost** *phosphorescent*" illustrate this well (*Women in Love,* 227-28). One can observe the same procedure in Ngugi's sentences, as in *"*She ended on **a kind of** *savage screaming tone*, **as if** she was *answering doubts inside her*"(*Petals of Blood,* 139); and "she felt a *tremendous calm,* **a kind of** *inner assurance* of the possibilities of *a new* **kind of** *power*" (*Petals of Blood*, 338).

More generally, and for the same purpose – rubbing out the confines between reality and fantasy in relation to the characters' portraits – Ngugi utilises the same imaginative scheme as Lawrence. As hinted at before, Ngugi relies on extreme emotions and sensations: fear, jealousy, fury, happiness, ecstasy, love and infatuation – and often on mixtures of these feelings – to shed light on his characters' 'curious' and mystical sides and offer them as lifelike. Like Lawrence, he is interested predominantly in characters that are potentially sensitive and who, furthermore, give an impression of psychological fragility. They always seem apprehensive, anguished or obsessed. In the case of Lawrence, Hermione, Rupert, Gerald, and any of the protagonists in *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* and *Sons and Lovers*, are good instances, and Mugo, Kihika, Munira, Abdulla, Karega, Wanja, Wariinga, Gatuiria and Kamiti illustrate this as regards Ngugi. Though they remain within the limits of mental normality on the whole, both authors' main characters seem to suffer from psychological pressures and complexes. With Lawrence, the psychological problems the characters habitually endure are the oedipal complex (as in *Sons and Lovers*) or sexual obsession (as in *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*). As far as Ngugi's characters are concerned, they usually look as if they suffer from inferiority complexes, anguish, different kinds of phobia, feelings of culpability, isolation and stress. In short, in both cases, characters are often emotionally overwhelmed (and often physically too). In this fashion Ngugi predisposes us (in the way of Lawrence) to accept the eccentric behaviour of his protagonists while he leaves us without commonsensical explanations as to the definitive causes of these reactions.

In the course of their narrations, both authors furthermore submit their characters to severe experiences such as betrayal, fear, overwhelming sexual desire, social and material misery, etc., so that they seem even more vulnerable than they already are, and *desperately* trapped. The writers hence, by design, leave us curious about the strangeness of the characters at the same time that they make sure they press us enough to admit that these estrangements are conceivable. Typically, it is only when the characters seem to have reached the limits of their natural abilities, when their passions and emotional confusions culminate, that the authors will have them behave in these perplexing ways. They exploit such delicate moments of reality to capture reactions that seem incomprehensible by logical analysis. At such junctures (which are very frequent), Ngugi, just like Lawrence, strives to draw the readers' attentions to small details like changes in the characters' features – often in their eyes and voices – through words, tones and atmospheres that suggest idiosyncrasy and mystery. It is only 'when appropriate,' as it were, that they refer to them, or their actions, as "strange," "inhuman," "unnatural," "extraordinary" and so on. In brief, Ngugi's general strategy in spelling out a character's mysterious and spiritual features is the same as Lawrence's: to work on "catching" it, in Alexandra Leggat's words, "not in a state of intellectual lucidity but in one of intuitional reasoning."[30]

One can easily notice how this process functions in Ngugi's early novels, those written in English. In *A Grain of Wheat*, one of the most expressive cases is Mumbi and her reaction when Karanja announces to her the news of Gikonyo's return from detention. Gikonyo's condition after years of incarceration, considered in relation to his overall experience, also provides an excellent illustration of Ngugi's recourse to the approach and method described here:

He [Gikonyo] blankly started into the wire one evening, and with sudden excitement, wanted to cry or laugh, but did neither. Slowly and deliberately (he stood outside himself and watched his actions as from a distance) he pushed his right hand into the wire and pressed his flesh into the sharp metallic thorns. Gikonyo felt the prick into the flesh, but not the pain. He withdrew the hand and watched the blood ooze; he shuddered and enjoyed a strange exhilaration (*A Grain of Wheat*, 109).

The section where Mugo, in a similar instant of general collapse, confesses to Mumbi the onerous secret of his betrayal of Kihika is equally illustrative. A quotation from that sequence fosters the hypothesis of Ngugi's borrowing from Lawrence's character-making schemata, as noted above. Notice, once more, how the language – mainly the adverbs and adjectives – and the emphasis put on the changes of voice and on other physical symptoms (in the emphasised parts) put across Mugo's ego-alterations:

'You want me to do that?' He asked, raising his voice. The *change of voice, like a groan from an animal about to be slaughtered,* startled her.

'Yes,' she assented, fearfully.

'I wanted to live my life. I never wanted to be involved in anything. Then he came into my life, here, a night like this, and pulled me into the stream. So I killed him.'

'Who? What are you talking about?'

'Ha! ha! ha! *He laughed unnaturally.* 'Who murdered your brother?'

'Kihika?'

'Yes.'

The Whiteman.'

'No! I strangled him – I strangled him –'

'It is not true – *wake up Mugo* – Kihika was hanged – listen and stop *shaking so* – I saw his body hang from a tree.'

I did it! I did it'! Ha! Ha! Ha! That is what you wanted to know. And I'll do it again – to you – tonight.'

She tried to cry out for help, but no voice would leave her throat. He came towards her, *emitting demented voices and laugher* [*A Grain of Wheat*, 180 (emphasis mine)].

In a similar scene in *Petals of Blood*, Wanja's behaviour under corresponding circumstances further exemplifies Ngugi's reference to the same scheme. Our suspicion of an enigma surrounding her personality is confirmed, and, as with Mugo, Gikonyo or Abdulla, this happens when her plight reaches a peak. In this example, the pressures are caused by a consuming feeling of guilt that has crippled Wanja's consciousness since she threw her child in a latrine, her sterility ever since, the long social quandaries she has been submitted to, and, last but not least, her unfortunate love experience with Karega:

She stood up and faced him, *hatred in her eyes*, anger in her voice, proud in her bearing.

'No… It is not true, I've tried to fight them, the only way I can. What about you? What I am you made me. You went away, you went away. I pleaded with you, shed tears, but you went away and now you dare blame me.'

Then as suddenly *her voice changed* and she spoke softly.

'I have been so lonely… so lonely. This wealth feels so heavy on my head. Please stay tonight … just tonight, like in the old times …'

Yet *again she changed* and this time she cried out to beyond Karega, beyond, a *savage cry* of protest:

Oh, it's not true. It's not true. I have loved life! Life! Life! Karega give me life … I am dying … dying … and no child … No child!" [*Petals of Blood*, 327 (emphasis mine)].

Lawrence currently uses this procedure. The next passage from *Women in Love* is not the only one able to demonstrate the analogy between him and Ngugi from the point of view of reliance on behaviour provoked by extreme circumstances to show the reality and prevalence of such 'revelatory idiosyncrasies.' This specific instance shows how Lawrence 'takes advantage' of Hermione's *normal* state of exhaustion to expose her *anomalous* responses. As we have just seen with Wanja, it also shows how Lawrence scrupulously 'pre-meditates' his character's odd comportment. Prior to, and during this scene, Hermione is submitted to enormous charges of emotions of different kinds: envy and hatred (of Ursula), passionate and sickly love and desire (for Birkin) added to her habitual self-consciousness. These powerful and conflicting feelings disable her self-control. The result is a queer sequence of behaviour in response to which the reader is not expected merely to wonder at Hermione's "convulsed movements" and repetitive voice "changes," but to acknowledge such reactions as at once deviant and true to life:

'Yes,' she said. There was *a look of exhaustion* about her. For some moments there was silence. Then pulling herself together with a *convulsed movement,* Hermione resumed, in a *sing-song, casual voice* (…) They thought she had finished. But *with a queer rumbling in her throat* she resumed, 'Hadn't they better be anything than grow up crippled, crippled in their souls, crippled in their feelings – so thrown back – so turned back on themselves – incapable – ' *Hermione clenched her fist like one in a trance* – 'of any spontaneous action, always deliberate , always burdened with choice, never carried away.' / Again they thought she had finished. But just as he was going to reply, she *resumed her queer rhapsody* – 'never carried away, out of themselves, always conscious, always self-conscious, always aware of themselves. Isn't anything better than this? [(*Women in Love,* 55 (emphasis mine)].

Important elements relating to the characterisation of *Devil on the Cross* could be seen as replications of Lawrence in the same way. Wariinga's and Gatuiria's tragedies are those of African individuals brought up in the principles of pragmatic and materialist culture, on a quest for spirituality in their African origins. They are balanced between the two cultures, and none of the various phases of evolution they undergo reflect settled identities: they always seem to be in an in-between location, and therefore in perpetual states of *dédoublment* and flux. Their general situations are comparable to, say, Kate's in Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent,* who undergoes a similar experience caused, in her own case, by "the irrationalism associated with (…) organic culturalism" in Mexico and her refusal to "return to the ostensible safety of "civilization"" in her native country.[31]

Like Wanja, Wariinga has an obscure nature in the mystic, Lawrencean, sense. She could be finally seen as a tormented soul, if not in an obviously Lawrencean way, in one that shows that echoes of Lawrence's character imagination in Ngugi have perhaps diminished, but are still perceptible in this novel. The final image of the ideal Wariinga we are presented with is one of "the mind, body, and soul," reflecting again a point of view of an author who disapproves of materialist civilization, but does not reject it altogether. On the other hand, Ngugi deals with at

least three 'different Wariingas,' and the movements from one to another are too abrupt to be satisfactory as results of ordinary character-development processes. The dreamy young Wariinga, completely transformed, becomes a depressed adolescent whose soul is haunted with images of her weakness and inferiority, and is obsessed with whiteness and Christianity. The latter, in her turn, metamorphoses into a half-human-half-goddess subtly but firmly suggested, like Wanja, to be healed of "demons" that used to 'inhabit' her body, mind and soul, to put it all in Lawrencean language. The narrator points out that Wariinga is "transfigured body and soul" after the Devil's Feast (*Devil on the Cross*, 225). In the same event, Ngugi tells us that she "went over the details of all that happened to her since her dismissal," and "felt as if all those things had happened to somebody else many years ago"; yet, "not even two days had passed since then" (*Devil on the Cross,*183). Following this stream of thought, and remembering the "stranger" and "the watchman who had rescued her from the wheels of the train", Wariinga has an irrational vision of reality which could be considered as an additional sign of Ngugi's ongoing indebtedness to Lawrence in matters of imagination and characterisation. Wariinga's exclamations "[w]hat a coincidence that Muturi and the watchman were one and the same person! Who was Muturi? An Angel in rags? Could he be the Angel who had rescued her from the bus in Nairobi?" may well be perceived as resonances of the author's continuing propensity to dispose with the limits between the 'causal' and 'acausal' dimensions of the protagonist (*Devil on the Cross*, 183). In another instance, Ngugi endows Wariinga with more than can be expected from a human being and a character in the 'habitual' senses. Indeed the description is evocative of Lawrence, given the fact that it starts with facts that could be seen by an eye other than Lawrencean as banal and ordinary and finishes in something mythical and magnificent. Here Wariinga, a commonplace woman, is elevated, through a fusion of Gatuiria's and the griot's viewpoints, to a "goddess of beauty and elegance" in the same way as, for instance, Birkin and his son are elevated in a previously quoted passage:

> Wariinga was dressed the Gikuyu way. A brown cloth, folded over a little at the top, had been passed under the left armpit, the two ends gathered together and held at the right shoulder by two flower-shaped safety pins, so that her left shoulder was bare (...) As she walked, Wariinga appeared to be the child of beauty, mother of all beauties, just created by the creator of twins, elegance and beauty (*Devil on the Cross*, 242).

Though Wariinga has allegorical functions that serve more overtly political – namely Afro-nationalist and pro-Marxist – and perhaps even ultimately different purposes than the exploration of obscure corners of life of the genre aimed at by Lawrence – this does not exclude the possibility of the dramatisation of one side of her personality in the style of Lawrence.

Unlike *Devil on the Cross*, *Matigari* and *Wizard of the Crow* are perhaps as passionately romantic and prophetic as *The River Between* and *Weep Not, Child*. Andres Breidlid's contention that "Ngugi's emphasis on art's and literature's function [in *Matigari*] may in some way seem to contradict Ngugi's own development from *A Grain of Wheat* to *Devil on the Cross*" is justifiable, and is applicable to *Wizard of the Crow* as well.[32] Regardless of their groundbreaking characteristics, these novels are able to display marks of a fundamental shift back to the more noticeably Lawrencean way of writing of Ngugi's beginnings. They "transcend the orbit of the Marxist, Materialist discourse of *Devil on the Cross*" and *Petals of Blood*, and propagate "a utopia which is based on what one could call an 'ethical universal'."[33] The notions of "human" and "spirit" are merged in connection with the identities of Matigari and Kamiti, by engaging the same old "holistic way of approaching the world" that Ngugi implements in his earliest works, as

well as an awareness that is “simultaneously set in heaven and earth."[35] One cannot even affirm whether Matigari is a man, a spirit, or both, and the character is rather more sophisticated than to be comparable to epic heroes like Achilles, Ulysses or D. T. Niane's Soundjata. Kamiti seems even closer to Lawrence’s characters than Matigari is; in all cases, the divide between the “body” and the “soul” is equally ignored in his case, and the interplay and unity between the two notions are emphasised with reference to him with a frankness that is arguably unparalleled in Ngugi’s fiction as a whole.

In some measure, this could even be true of the "ogres" – the capitalist/imperialist protagonists – in these Gikuyu novels. It is true that they are reminiscent of Dickensian characters, or those of other African writers like Tutuola, for example. Still these figures have Lawrencean textures, as they remain nearer to being common human portraits with ‘strange’ egos, “evil” souls, and more or less episodic manifestations of "dark gods," than to completely fabulous creatures of the kind one encounters in African and non-African fables, myths and epics. One can think of them as a type of simplified Lawrencean protagonist because, in spite of the epistemological shift which the Gikuyu novels embody in a sense, it is obvious that Ngugi does not depict the phenomenal aspects of these protagonists for their own sakes, but is continuing to cast them within basically realistic configurations.

* Ngugi’s adoption of a Lawrentian imagination can also be seen and sensed through a number of thematic considerations, namely the centrality of the theme(s) of love and sexuality in his novels. It must be noted first that Ngugi’s fiction in general focuses, like Lawrence’s, on intense emotional experiences such as sexual desire and love. Actually, the theme of love is as imperative for Ngugi as to make his stories – except for *Matigari* – readable as romances or love-stories of the kind Lawrence writes. The concept of love – conceived, as with Lawrence, in symbiosis with sexuality – not only occupies a central part in almost the totality of Ngugi’s fiction but is, what is more, often "explored with Lawrencean intensity" to put it in the words of David Cook and Michael Okenimkpe.[36] And, as in Lawrence, these are not only parts of the plots but are also treated as symptoms of the complicity between the visible and obscure sides of reality.

True, love-making scenes are relatively fewer in Ngugi's works – and are even non-existent in *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari* – and some of their diverse metaphoric meanings are more immediately political, or even different from Lawrence's. Sequences such as the one involving Gikonyo and Mumbi in *A Grain of Wheat* have regional levels of significance that may hide their Lawrencean characteristics. At the mythological level, for instance, the scene refers to the Gikuyu myth of origins; accordingly, one of its key functions is to suggest that Kenya is the ancestral property of the Agikuyu. Also, at a more directly ideological level, it symbolises the hope for the (re)birth of a peasants-and-workers' nation in post-independence Kenya. Such agencies, usually put in the foreground by Ngugi's critics, may indeed conceal their Lawrencean implications.

Some of the most obvious resemblances between Ngugi and Lawrence from the point of view of the treatment of the theme of love are their concurrent beliefs in the mysteriousness of the concept, or, to be more precise, in its tenure of some great and unexplained power. Indeed, as with Lawrence, love constitutes a major driving force for Ngugi’s main characters, notably in *A Grain of Wheat*, *Petals of Blood*, and even in *Devil on the Cross*. In *A Grain of Wheat*, Gikonyo is totally conditioned by his devotion to Mumbi, and his repetitive symbolic deaths and resurrections all depend on the fluctuating states of their relationship. The significance of love

for Gikonyo and Mumbi is not in the least different from its meaning to, say, Kate and her two lovers Ramón and Cipriano in *The Plumed Serpent*. Gikonyo's confession to Mugo "[i]t was like being born again (…) I felt whole, renewed (…) Before, I was nothing. Now I was a man" (*A Grain of Wheat*, 97) alludes very directly to Kate's proposition concerning female power over men, and vice versa. It even seems to be a replica of Kate's thought that

Alone, she was nothing. Only as the pure female corresponding to his pure male, did she signify (…) To a great extent this was true, and she knew it. To a great extent, the same was true of him, and without her to give him the power, he too would not achieve his own manhood and meaning. With her or without her, he would be beyond ordinary men, because the power was in him. But failing her, he would never make his ultimate achievement, he would never be whole. He would be chiefly an instrument (*The Plumed Serpent*, Chapter 24).

The same is valid for Karanja whose major decisions, including that of becoming a home guard, are taken with regard to the possibility of winning Mumbi's attention or disarming her, and for Mugo whose confession of the 'un-avowable' secret of his betrayal of Kihika is made under the effect of the same woman's charm. Even Kihika's decision to become a Mau Mau fighter has to do with Wambuku who is a source of self-confidence and encouragement for him, since his face would "brighten" "at the sight of Wambuku" (*A Grain of Wheat*, 88). Wambuku's, and especially Njeri's, deaths are, on the other hand, direct outcomes of their romantic devotion to Kihika. In *Petals of Blood* equally, the characters remind us of Lawrence's in their fixations and dependence on love and sexuality. Munira is simply hypnotised by his infatuation toward Wanja, and Abdulla does not seem to do much better since his actions too are remarkably controlled by the same kind of drives towards the same woman. He, for instance, systematically resumes cursing Joseph as soon as he hears of Wanja's decision to leave Ilmorog. The significance of love for Karega (a remarkably romantic character indeed) is even greater as we can find out through Ngugi's especially powerful rendering of his double-romance with Mukami and Wanja. The same is true of *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*, where love and infatuation arguably constitute the origins of many of the characters' actions, decisions and changes – notably those of Gatuiria, Wariinga, the Rich Old Man and Kamiti.

What is more important here, however, is not so much Ngugi's resemblance to Lawrence in terms of focusing on this theme, or even on its significance as a drive for human conduct, as the ways in which it illustrates Ngugi's indebtedness to Lawrence in terms of an imagination rooted in both the world and the soul. In Lawrence's works, love is equally seen as an extremely powerful drive and temptation, but, more importantly, it is conceived as an edifying and sacred phenomenon. It is an archetype of a fact which – at the level of clichéd reality at least – seems wholly physical, while its 'essential nature' is bewildering in itself, and is illustrative of obscure corners of life of the kind discussed earlier. Because it involves physical entities – human bodies – while it stirs observable and yet phenomenal reactions, sexuality is used by Lawrence as an essential part of an overall imaginative scheme designed to explore "the microcosm." The sexual event in itself becomes both an exemplifier, and an inseparable part of a comprehensive imaginative structure whose ultimate agency is to put on view powers "that [move] the inner universe and [stir] mysterious, unknown, uncontrollable forces within us", to put it in William Johnston's words.[37] What the latter goes on to say sharpens the point:

Whatever way we envisage it, the microcosm or inner universe is investigated by psychologists and explorers in consciousness from Jung to Aldous Huxley and from D. H. Lawrence to Timothy Leary. What precisely it contains we do not yet know but one thing is

clear: the deep forces of the so-called unconscious are profoundly stirred by love. Love of man for woman or of woman for man, love of mother for child or child for mother – this is the power that moves the inner universe and stirs mysterious, unknown, uncontrollable forces within us.[38]

The self-same idea is expressed by Ngugi via the narrator's description of the consequences of Karega's union with Wanja in *Petals of Blood*:

But he is light, buoyant within. He feels in himself the power of an immense dewy down over Ilmorog. How is it that a certain contact with a woman can give one so much peace, so much harmony with all things, can open up this sense of immense promises and a thousand possibilities? He tries to sleep. His body is ready. But the mind races on, sailing swiftly but gently on low waves of memories of flesh in flesh. He is aware that he has only uncovered the first layer of a great, infinite unknown and unknowable, and yet he feels that he has known Wanja all his life, that what has gone before has a logic and a rhythm inevitably leading him to that moment of candour in the flesh (*Petals of Blood*, 234 - 35).

Ngugi's characters are not conditioned by love in the strictly psychosexual sense associated with Freud; as Lawrence does, he brings us to meditate not only at the hugeness of love's power over them but also at the mysteriousness of its nature and origin. In this way, love functions with Ngugi, as well, as part of an imaginative scheme whose purpose is to "capture the ineffable" and conciliate the world and the spirit. Love is, to Ngugi too, an archetype of a whole range of phenomena which are empirically incomprehensible, and are only approachable through such particular *means*.[39] Many of the passages quoted thus far show that Ngugi and Lawrence explore the obscure corners of their characters most often through this theme. A sense of incredulity is created in readers by both writers precisely by the practice of drawing attention to the irrepressible powers of love – more notably of sexuality – before, during and after physical contact. Thus, Ngugi reveals the power of love and sexuality and their ability to exemplify the existence of what Lawrence variously termed "old blood," "dark gods," and "vital flames" inside us. Also, both writers use the very moments of love-making to sustain their concordant outlooks on identity as something changeable by making the most of the 'transformative potential' of love. When depicting such moments, both of them tend to put the accent on the quick shifts in the characters' egos, from states of apparent self-control and self-consciousness, to ones of complete sublimity provoked by lovemaking. So far as Ngugi is concerned, the syndromes are due to what he very intuitively calls "the power of united flesh" (*Petals of Blood*, 229-30). This idea, which is fundamental to him, reoccurs in almost all his works, but it is perhaps most deliberately developed in *A Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood*, and the most illustrative example is again the description of Karega's and Wanja's communion:

She nestled closer to him, wanting to assuage him, to fight the enemy of life in that voice. Her warmth gradually powered his lungs ribs: life quickened in him. He felt this sharp pain of death-birth-death-birth and he tightened his left hand round her right hand fingers. He felt the prolonged shivering of her body thrilling into him, and now it was he who wanted to cry as he remembered Mukami (…) He felt the tip of his blood –Warmth touch her moistness and for a second he was suspended in physical inertia (…) And she clung to him, she too desiring the memories washed away in the deluge of a new beginning (…) and suddenly it was she who carried him high on ocean waves of new horizons and possibilities in a single ... of lightning illumination, oh the power of united flesh, before exploding and swooning into darkness and sleep without words (*Petals of Blood*, 229-30).

Lawrence had correspondingly declared such "ultimate and triumphant experience[s] of physical passion" equally powerful, mysterious and vital, so much so that he compares them to some "spell of life" which is as "inevitable as death." Hereafter, lovemaking makes Birkin realise a variation on his own self, while readers are invited, on the same occasion, to contemplate a typical imaginative incarnation of his philosophy on the multiplicity and perpetual flux of a single individual's ego:

He changed, laughed softly, and turned and took her in his arms, in the middle of the road (…). Then suddenly, to show him she was no shallow prude, she stopped and held him tight, hard against her, and covered his face with hard fierce kisses of passion. In spite of his otherness, the old blood beat up in him. / 'Not this, not this,' he whimpered to himself, as the first perfect mood of softness and sleep-loveliness ebbed back away from the rushing of passion that came up to his limbs and over his face as she drew him. And soon he was a perfect hard flame of passionate desire for her. Yet in the small core of the flame was an unyielding anguish of another thing. But this also was lost; he only wanted her, with an extreme desire that seemed inevitable as death, beyond question. / Then satisfied and shattered, fulfilled and destroyed, he went home away from her, drifting vaguely through the darkness, lapsed into the old fire of burning passion. Far away, far away, there seemed to be a small lament in the darkness. But what did it matter? What did it matter, what did anything matter save this ultimate and triumphant experience of physical passion, that had blazed up anew like a new spell of life. 'I was becoming quite dead-alive, nothing but a word-bag,' he said in triumph, scorning his other self (*Women in Love*, 218).

In the course of such sequences, we are continually brought to meditate as to how such apparently purely physical interactions can generate such radical transformations in the very identities of people. As is the case with characters, it is essentially the huge potentiality which these relationships represent in terms of their inherent ability to incarnate ego-alteration, and the phenomenal aspects of natural/physical entities that seems to make of them privileged areas of exploration and representation to both Lawrence and Ngugi. It would be inaccurate to conceive their concerns with love and sexuality otherwise, and James Wood's comment on Lawrence, in this context, is applicable to Ngugi: "[p]opular myth holds that Lawrence's prose is mimicking sexual desire or sexual activity; but it would be more accurate to say that for Lawrence all life possesses a findable ecstasy which, for many of us, is only discovered during sexual rapture."[40]

Notes:

1. See, for example, Ngugi's interview with Dennis Duerden: Dennis Duerden and Cosmo Pieters, *African Writers Talking*, London: Heinemann, 1972. See in particular pp. 122 - 24. Moreover, Ngugi suggests that the influence of this English background on him (and on other African writers) is of a tremendous and enduring nature, as he affirms for instance:

I was definitely a product of the Horton-Asquith model, as were indeed nearly all the pioneering writers of the fifties and sixties. They were products of the English Department and often their initial inspirations were triggered by the admiration or disagreements with the models they read, a practice Clark-Bedekeremo once again described as The Example of Shakespeare." A cursory glance at some of the early titles of African fiction tells the story. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and also *No Longer at Ease* from Yeats's *Second Coming* and Eliot's *Journey of the Magi*. The title of my own first published novel, *Weep Not, Child*, was taken from Walt Whitman. And I am sure that within the narratives or poetry it is possible to hear echoes of Thomas Hardy, Dickens, D. H. Lawrence, Joseph Conrad, T. S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound (...) But here I am not so much concerned with the impact of the models as the language in which we produced our reaction to those models.

Ngugi, "Europhonism, Universities and the Magic Fountain: The Future of African Literature and Scholarship." *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 31, N° 1, 2000, pp. 1- 11.

2. Dennis Duerden and Cosmo Pieters, *op. cit.*, pp. 121 – 24.

3. *ibid*., p. 123.

4. *ibid.*, pp. 123 - 124.

5. G. D. Killam, *An Introduction to the Writings of Ngugi*, London: Heinemann, 1980, p. 17.

6. David Cook and Michael Okenimkpe, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o: An Exploration of His Writings*, London: Heinemann, 1983, p. 193.

7. Simon Gikandi, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o* (Cambridge Studies in African and Caribbean Literature), Cambridge UP, 2000, p. 249.

8. Dennis Duerden and Cosmo Pieters, *op. cit*., pp. 122 - 24.

9. It is noteworthy that the Western writers who seem to have mattered most for Ngugi, mainly D. H. Lawrence and Joseph Conrad, but also American transcendentalists like Walt Whitman, William Blake and Herman Melville, are 'the most African' of British Writers, i.e. those among them who are interested most in the spiritual, or mystic, side of the world.

10. Harry T. Moore, *D. H. Lawrence: The Man and His Works*, Trenton, London and Sidney: Forum House Publishing Company, 1969, p. 207.

11. For more detail on the multiple origins of Lawrencean Romanticism, see Harry T. Moore, *op. cit*., p. 45.

12.13.14.15.16.17. *ibid.*, p. 44.

18. R. W. Emerson, *Nature* (1836), in *Concise Anthology of American Literature*, second edition (445 - 472). George McMichael (General Editor), Macmillan: New York and London, 1985, p. 466.

19. *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 198; quoted in F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition –George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad* (1948), London: Chatto and Windus, 1962, p. 24.

20. James Wood**,** *Heavenly Creatures;* quoted in *The Guardian* (Online), March 10, 2007, http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2007/mar/10/fiction.dhlawrence.

21. Wayne Templeton, *States of Estrangement: The Novels of D.H. Lawrence 1912 – 1917*, New York: Whitestone, 1989.

22. Ken Knabb, *The Relevance of Rexroth* (1990) (Chapter **2**: "Magnanimity and Mysticism")**,** reprinted in *Public Secrets*: (Bureau of Public Secrets, PO Box 1044, Berkeley CA 94701, USA); quoted online at www.bopsecrets.org, http://www.bopsecrets.org/PS/rexroth2.htm.
23. See the chapter entitled "Class-Room" in Lawrence's *Women in Love* (pp. 49 - 60).
24. E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, London: Penguin Books: 1990, p. 131.
25.26. According to David Cook and Michael Okenimkpe, "certainly Mugo is mentally ill, and we are given detailed insights into his childhood at the origin of his neurosis" (Cook and Okenimkpe, *op. cit*., p. 73).
27. *The Guardian* (Online), June 14, 2008, guardian.co.uk, http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/generalfiction/story/0,,2285537,00.html.
28. The concept of "dark god" often associated with Lawrence "embodied all that had been repressed by late civilization and the artificial world of money and industry" Kerry Bolton points out. See Chapter 1 of K. R. Bolton, *Thinkers of the Right: Challenging Materialism* (Luton, England: Luton Publications, 2003), published as an e-text, by the author, as "D. H. Lawrence," in Counter-Currents Publishing Ltd, http://www.counter-currents.com/2010/09/d-h-lawrence.
29. See Lawrence's definition of his own characters (Lawrence, *Letters*, *op. cit*., pp. 35-6).
30. Alexandra Leggat, "My Love Affair with D. H Lawrence," quoted in *The Danforth Review*, http://www.danforthreview.com/features/essays/dhlawrence.htm.
31. Jad Smith, *"Völkisch* Organicism and the Use of Primitivism in Lawrence's ***The*** *Plumed Serpent***" (**Republished by permission of *D.H. Lawrence Review 30:3, 2002),* www.eiu.edu/~agora/Dec03/JSmithall.htm.
32.33. Anders Breidlid, "Ngugi's *Matigari***,** a Non-materialist Discourse and Post-modernism**."** *The Australian Journal of Trans-national Writing*. Flinders University, http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/humanities/exchange/quodlibet/.
34. André Brink, "Interrogating Silence: New Possibilities Faced by South African Literature," in Derek Attridge and Rosemary Jolly eds, *Writing South Africa*: *Literature, apartheid and democracy, 1970-1995*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998; 25. Quoted in Anders Breidlid, *op. cit.*. The words are Brink's, not the idea.
35. Commenting on to the union of Karega and Wanja in *Petals of Blood,* Cook and Okenimkpe affirm that it is "explored with Lawrencean intensity." David Cook and Michael Okenimkpe, *op cit.*, p. 185.
36.37. William Johnston, *The Inner Eye of Love: Mysticism and Religion,* San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978, pp. 32-33.
38. These other phenomena include "language, sleep, madness, dreams [and] sex." According to Emerson, these phenomena are "not only unexplained but also inexplicable." Emerson, *op. cit*. p. 446.
39. James Wood, "Heavenly Creatures," *op. cit*..

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