

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF - M'SILA

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
N°:.....



DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES
STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE
OPTION: LITERATURE AND
CIVILIZATION

The Postmodernist Spirit in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood*

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English Language in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master

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2018 /2019

Contents

Table of contents	i
Dedication	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	iv

Introduction	1
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Chapter One: Theoretical And Socio-Historical Background

2.Postcolonialism	06
3.Postmodernism.....	14
4.The Intersection between Postmodernism and Postcolonialism	20
5.Socio-historical background of petals of blood	27

Chapter Two: The Postmodernist Spirit in *Petals of Blood*

1. Introduction.....	34
2.Homi Bhabha’s Postcolonial Discourse in Petals Of Blood	35
2.1.Hybridity.....	35
2.2.Ambivalence	42
2.3.Mimicry	46
3.Rewriting history and individual and collective struggle	51
4.The Postmodern Feminist Character in <i>Petals of Blood</i> : Wanja	63
Conclusion.....	68
Bibliography	71

Dedication

All praise and thanks are to Allah, the Almighty, who has enabled and guided us through this study
In recognition of their endless encouragement and support, we would like to thank our great parents
We are also highly indebted to our supervisor Dr. Mihoubi Houria for her guidance and continued
assistance towards the success of this work.

Houria and Hanane

Acknowledgment

We thank Allah for the strength and patience he has given us to accomplish this work, and to reach our goals in life

We would like to extend our profound thanks and gratitude to our supervisor Dr. Houria Mihoubi for her wise guidance and inspiration to complete this study

This work is gratefully dedicated to all our lecturers at the Department of English who taught us during our years in M'sila University. We say thank you very much.

Abstract

Deconstructing the hierarchical binary opposition of self and other, centre and the margin is one of the major particularities and the corner stone of both postmodernism and postcolonialism, and since Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Homi Bhabha are postcolonial and postmodern writers and their works share commonality with both postmodernism and postcolonialism, the present study aims at exploring the elements of postmodernism in Ngugi *Petals of Blood* from a socio-historical perspective. The appropriate approach for the research is the postcolonial theory. The study is an attempt to examine Homi Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry to highlight the cultural degradation in Kenya after independence, and reveal the ideological misconception of discourse to explicate the literary concern of postmodernism in Ngugi's novel. Thus, this research will focus on Homi Bhabha's theoretical framework of resistance premised in terms of cultural encounters and preferences and using a debate of complicating the cultural contact and interaction. Seen in this light, this dissertation will reach the point that Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* is a postmodern novel and epitomizes the postmodern transformation of Third World nations which resulted on the European colonialism in such countries, and how the colonial hegemonic power robs African cultures and history. The study will also offer a voluminous analysis of the intersection between two major theoretical frameworks; postmodernism and postcolonialism as necessary literary structures of this study.

Key Words: Postcolonialism, postmodernism, hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence

Introduction

Drawing a distinction between Postmodernism and Postcolonialism is a controversial notion in contemporary criticism. And the relationship between both theories is complex and based on epistemological, social and political paradigms. Particularly, the intersectional nature between postmodernism and postcolonialism is a central issue in postcolonial literature; of which it emphasizes on the portrayal of the impact of the European colonization on the Third World nations. In this context, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o has established as one of the leading second-generation African writers. His fourth novel *Petals of Blood* 1977 tends to be a postmodern novel that depicts the influence of the British occupation in Kenya, and how this experience has transformed Kenya's people and society.

The study of postmodernism in Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* is ultimately will depend on the postcolonial theories of Homi k. Bhabha; Hybridity, Ambivalence and Mimicry. In fact Bhabha's concepts may explain the effects of the colonial encounter in Kenya's identity and culture, and how Kenyan peoples became fragmented and Westernized as revealed In Ngugi's narrative. Therefore, the play of postmodern within postcolonial perspectives can be studied by emphasizing on Bhabha's postcolonial aspects . And Sherifa Akter's article which addresses the same subject of the present study.

Many researchers have shown interest to Ngugi Wa Thing'o's works, especially *Petals of Blood* for its rigorous portraying of the colonial subject, and revealing the misery of the marginalized people under the colonizer regime. Hence, exploring the postmodern elements in *Petals of Blood* and the confluence between postmodernism and postcolonialism is a new study and had only few researches addressing this issue.

The subject of postmodernism in *Petals of Blood* has shown principally in the work of Ms. Sharifa Akter (2014), in her essay entitled "Postmodern Spirit in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* Based on the Concepts of Homi K. Bhabha". Akter, demonstrates the postmodern aspects in Ngugi's novel by investigating Bhabha's major theoretical models of hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry. The study focuses on the political disillusionment of post-independence Kenya, and shows the cultural, social and historical displacements through portraying the transformation of Ilmorog society to reflect the postmodern condition in the novel.

Additional work is in the context of examining the intersection of both postmodernism and postcolonialism as a fundamental theoretical models in regard to this research; is a thesis held by Jillian Anne Furness (2011) at Massey University “Where the Postmodern Meets the Postcolonial in I. Allan Sealy’s Fiction”. This research explores Allan Sealy’s fiction published after the Trotter-Nama; Sealy is a postmodern writer, in his fiction he examined the concept of hybridity in relation to the hierarchical binary logic of concepts within the experience of colonialism in British India and continued after independence, using postcolonial concerns with an explicit conceptualizing of postmodern condition; to depict the realities of the marginalized racially mixed Anglo-Indian community.

On the other hand, Kathy Kessler, in her best-known essay “Rewriting History in Fiction: Elements of Postmodernism in Ngugi Wa Thiong’o’s Later Novels”. Kessler, shed lights on postmodernism in Ngugi’s novels; and how Ngugi in his fiction calls for the remaking and revising Kenya’s history far from the colonial historical narratives. According to Kessler, engaging in a similar questioning and rethinking processes are essential in postmodern discourse.

Another prominent work in postcolonial literature is that of Homi K. Bhabha’s most influential book *The Location of Culture* , by which he provides a theoretical structures based on cultural dichotomies in the colonized nations, and how the colonial encounter in these lands created hybridity and diversity of cultures which, in turn creates an ambivalent position on the colonized people minds, and causes what he calls a mimetic state and a blind imitation of the colonizers’ ways and culture. In short, Bhabha’s theories of hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry are appropriate and essential in investigating the postmodernist spirit in Ngugi’s *Petals of Blood* , also represent the cultural diaspora in Kenya after the British colonial departure.

This study, therefore, aims at exploring the postmodern elements in Ngugi Wa Thiong’o’s *Petals of Blood* ; based on Homi K. Bhabha’s cultural models of hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry to demonstrate the influence of British colonialism in Kenya’s history and identity, which emphasis the postmodern debate in the novel. On the other hand, this dissertation attempts to determine the confluence between postmodernism and postcolonialism and the seeks of both theories as well as, the ways meet each other.

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o is one of the foremost writers in African literature. He advocates Africa's historiography and portrays the tragedy of colonialism in Kenya, he problematizes issues of the marginalized peoples and dramatizes the British colonial discursive practices in Kenya. His fourth novel *Petals of Blood* considered as a master piece in African literature; for its valuable treatment of the colonial narratives in post-independent Kenya. As well as, broaden the readers' understanding of Homi Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry; which would be a corner stone to investigate the subject of postmodernism in Ngugi's novel. Additionally, this dissertation will offer a significant explication about the confluence between postmodernism and post-colonialism which is a necessary and a needed subject in academic research.

Thus, the main questions that we will try to grapple with in this dissertation are: How does Homi Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry expound postmodernism in Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*? What traces have been left by British colonialism in post-independence Kenya? Does Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* embodies the postmodernist discourse? Is the "post" in postmodern means the same as the "post" in postcolonial? To put it another way: What is the ways in which postmodernism meets postcolonialism?.

The present dissertation will deal with the post-colonial approach. In the light of this theory, the study aims at identifying the postmodern elements in Ngugi's novel; based on Bhabha's postcolonial theories of hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry in order to present the effects of colonialism in Kenya. Thereby, this research will focus on analysing the postcolonial discourse in Ngugi's text, and hopes to answer the research questions and discover the postmodernist spirit in *Petals of Blood*.

This study will be outlined into two chapters: The first chapter will be devoted to the Socio-Historical and Theoretical background of the study. Includes definitions, key concepts and major figures of both theories postcolonialism and postmodernism, and the intersection between the two theoretical frameworks. As well as, the socio-historical context of this research; portraying both neo-colonialism and post-independence in Kenya as the novel sets out.

The second chapter shed lights on examining the postcolonial discourse in *Petals of Blood* with a special reference to Homi K. Bhabha's tools; hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry to depict the loss of identity in post-colonial Kenya. And yet, this chapter will

explore the postmodernist discourse in Ngugi's novel; by emphasizing the notion of rewriting history, individual and collective struggle in Kenya during colonialism, also highlighting the postmodernist character of Wanjia and Ngugi's characterization of the female protagonist Wanjia as a postmodern woman. This elements will answer the subject of this study and achieve postmodernism in Ngugi's novel.

Consequently, the present research can be a starting point for other researches, especially on the intersection between postmodernism and postcolonialism in the African novel as well as in other academic works.

Chapter One :

Theoretical and Socio-Historical Background

Ngugi 's *Petals of Blood* is one of the most powerful and popular works in African literature, where post colonialism and postmodernism are displayed and their themes are integrated seamlessly. It is very important work because it can be considered as postcolonial and postmodern masterpiece, it deals with postmodern issues in the postcolonial Kenyan society. Therefore, This present study will provide a theoretical background concerning the fields of post colonialism and postmodernism, because both of them as literary theories engaged in examining the colonial legacies within post-independence societies. As well as , it will outline their main issues and pillars and their contribution to the fields . Moreover, it will investigate the confluence between the postmodern and the postcolonial frameworks based on Homi Bhabha's theory who re-evaluates one through the lens of the other. Also, this chapter will provide a historical background of Kenya, ranging from the British colonial occupation to the establishment of independent state .As well as, it will also shed lights on the effect of the British colonial legacy , especially Capitalism from which all Kenyan suffered from during the postcolonial era.

1. The Post-Colonial Theory

Post colonialism as literary theory deals with the literature that is written in English by writers from both colonized and colonizer countries. Traditionally, the term as an academic approach has been used to visit the location of colonial past, and depict its social , cultural , political consequences in the colonial territories. Quayson observes that postcolonial theory“ involves a studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects, both at the local level of Ex- colonial societies. As well as, at the level of more general global development, though to be the after effects of empire.”¹

Also, Martin Denyer in his essay“What and Where is Postcolonial Theory?”. Declares that postcolonial theory studies the European dominance of non _western culture , land, wealthetc. Also, it studies multiple imperial point of views of being superior and

¹ Ato. Quayson, *Post Colonialism : Theory, Practice or Process*, (US : Polity Press, 2000),p2.

describing the colonized people as being inferior, and how this harm change their identity. He gives a great emphasis on the issue of ethnicity, national identity and hybridity.²

Since 1970, the postcolonial theory took a new direction ,and become an umbrella term that covers a lot of means to resist the European dominant historiographies and Epistemologies ; throughout deconstructing the western knowledge and reconstruct those realities in a new way. In his essay "some issues in postcolonial theory", John Lye notes that postcolonial theory build on the concept of resistance and otherness ; its aim is to explain how the reality of the colonized is changed by the European discourse . As well as, how the colonial hegemonic discourse have distorted the image of the colonized .Simultaneously, how the colonized people attempt to restore their identity and recover their past through their literature .³ As Boehmer⁴ asserts in colonial and postcolonial literature, that postcolonial refers to " writing that sets out in one way or another to resist colonialist perspective"⁵.

According to Charles .E. Bessler post colonialism is mainly emphasis on representing the colonized culture that is suppressed by the European, and it attempts to give the voice to the marginalized people by ignoring the colonizer's writings, he argues that " Post colonialism is an approach to literary analysis that concern itself particularly with the literature written in English in formerly colonized counties".⁶

Moreover, postcolonial theory came out from "The inability of European theories" to deal with the complexities and cultural sources of postcolonial writing ; with another word, the mispresenting of Eurocentrism narratives led to the emergence of monocentric narratives ;

² Martin Denyer, " what and where is postcolonial theory", Athabasca university. <http://www.photoinsight.org/theory/theory.pdf>, accessed on: 28/08/2008

³ John Lye, " Some Issue in Postcolonial Theory ", brock university department of English language and literature . < <http://brocku.ca/English/courses/4f70/>, accessed on: aug4,2008.

⁴ Elleke Boehmer (born 1961) is Professor of Literature at the University of Oxford, and Fellow at Wolfson College. She is a novelist and have a great contribution to the field of Postcolonial Studies, she is well known for her works in colonial and postcolonial literature. Her main concern is the literature of empire and the concept of resistance to empire; African literature and South Asian literatures; and diaspora; feminism, modernism; migration , and identity; terrorism , Wikipedia , https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elleke_Boehmer, Accessed on: 17 February 2019, at 20:51.

⁵ Elleke. Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (Oxford: Oxford up,1995),p.3.

⁶ Charles.E.Bressler, *Literary Criticism : An Introduction to Theory and Practice* (jersey: prentice hall,1999),p.265.

the marginalized people of colour began to shift to the centre and this what Ashcroft named “identifiable indigenous theories.”⁷

Thus , the postcolonial theory deals with various set of terms which is related to the effects of the colonial legacy such as identity , ambivalence , language and how the European discourse through these concepts adopt the way of “knowing” the colonized , in this regard, Ashcroft notes in the postcolonial studies reader “to name the world is to understand it, to know it and to have control over it”.⁸

Also, postcolonial theory examines how the writers from the colonized countries put in their writing “The subjugation ,disillusionment , cultural conflict with the colorizer culture, the loss of identity, gender, race , changing in language....Etc”. of their societies in different periods ranging from colonial time to the postcolonial period. Likewise, G-Rai defined post colonialism as,“ Is enterprise which seek emancipation from all types subjugation defined in term of gender, race and class. Post colonialism thus, does not introduce a new world which is free from ills of colonialism it rather suggest both continuity and change.”⁹

Post colonialism is related to post structuralism¹⁰ , it studies the linguistic construction of European discourse of reality, and examines how the colonized is represented by the colonizer world through their literature , in like manner, it analyzes these representations , Leela Ghandi in this regard says:Thus , in shift from the predominately economic paradigms of Marxist thought , post colonialism has learnt_ through its poststructuralist parentage_ to diagnose the material effects and implication of colonialism as an epistemological malaise at the heart of western rationality”.¹¹ So postcolonialism is related to both postmodernism , And

⁷ Bill Achcroft et Al., *The Empire Write Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literature* (London: routledge,1989),p.11-13.

⁸ Achcroft et Al., *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* (London: Routledge ,1995),p.283.

⁹ G. Rai, “ Postcolonialism : its Meaning and Significance ”, *The Spiel Journal of English Studies*,vol.1,no.2(july2005):p.2.

¹⁰ Poststructuralism, is a literary and philosophical movement emerged in France in the late 1960s. based upon the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure, the anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss, and the theory of deconstruction of Jacques Derrida, it claims that “language is not a transparent medium that connects one directly with a “truth” or “reality” outside it but rather a structure or code, whose parts derive their meaning from their contrast with one another and not from any connection with an outside world”, Encyclopedia Britannica <https://www.britannica.com/art/poststructuralism>, accessed on:2019.

¹¹ Leela. Ghandi, *Postcolonial Theory : Critical Introduction* (Australia: Allen&Unwin,1998),p.25-26.

Marxism. Schwarz and Ray assert that "One of the claims frequently made about postcolonial theory is that it is, in one way or another, the child of postmodernism."¹²

Furthermore, the postcolonial theory is concerned with a historical period between the colonial and postcolonial eras ; therefore, it may be deal only with the national culture after the end of colonialism ,but Mukherjee has the following point of view about the postcolonial theory :

Post-colonialism is not merely a chronological label referring to the period after the demise of empires. It is ideologically an emancipatory concept particularly for the students of literature outside the Western world, because it makes us interrogate many concepts of the study of literature that we were made to take for granted, enabling us not only to read our own texts in our own terms, but also to re-interpret some of the old canonical texts from Europe from the perspective of our specific historical and geographical location.¹³

1.2The Major Figures of the Postcolonial Theory

Edward Said , Gayatri Spivak , and Homi Bhabha are among the major contributors to the post-colonial theory. Homi Bhabha's contribution focus on the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer. He develops a set of terms like hybridity , ambivalence and mimicry .As well as, asserts that there is a third space where two culture get together and co-exist in an individual human being . Said's contribution is based on the misrepresentation of the "Other" by the European discourse, he examines the misrepresentation of the orient by the west and argues that the aim behind these misrepresentation is to justify their tyranny over oriental peoples. Gayatri Spivak's work is about the issues of representation and gives a voice to the muted and subjugated peoples and to resist colonialism , she emphasizes on the subaltern and questions who will speak for whom, and all of that is questioned in her famous work "can the subaltern speak?

¹² Henry Shwarz and Sangeeta Rai , *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies* (UK: blackwell,2000) , p.431.

¹³ Mukherjee Meenakshi and Harish Trivedia, eds., *Interrogating Post-Colonialism : Theory, Text and Context,1996-2006*(Shimla :IIAS,1996),p.3-4.

Spivak is one of the most influential critics. In her work she traverses several critical approaches such as post structuralism, feminism and Marxism. Her contribution to the postcolonial theory focus on subaltern studies¹⁴. As well as, introducing the question of gender differentiation into the discussion of postcolonial field.

In her most famous essay : "Can the Subaltern Speak" she uses the word subaltern to refer to the oppressed people (women, blacks , third world ,orient) the term first used by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci . In this essay, she reveals the oppression that have done to women , she wants to make the voice of subaltern heard which is previously muted. As well as, recover the position of women which is disappeared under the presence of both colonialism and patriarchy¹⁵. Annia Loomba argues that Spivak's essay, " Can the Subaltern Speak " helps in presenting sacrifices of widows in the postcolonial theory , because women was also a victim of colonialism and colonial discourses.

Besides that, she adds that the term "silence " does not propose literal meaning . The subaltern could not speak .firstly, because their words misinterpreted and secondly, due to inability of the other to listen to them correctly . " it does not mean that subaltern did not speak , but rather that other did not know how to listen and enter into a transaction between speaker and listener. "¹⁶

Concerning the discourse and the knowledge that is produced by the west, For Spivak this knowledge is like any other production that is imported by the third world from the West . The knowledge of Western about the Eastern has been always presented by the Western scholars as objective, but in fact it is operated by political and economic benefits and interests of the West .¹⁷ In this context , Spivak accuses Foucault and other scholars in cooperating with both globalization and projecting the imperial epistemology . Because she considers

¹⁴ Subaltern Studies appeared in 1982 as a collection of journal articles produced by Oxford University Press in India. Some Indian scholars "trained in the west wanted to reclaim their history". Its aim was to restore history for the marginalized , for the muted voices that had not been heard before . Subaltern studies, <http://web.csulb.edu/~ssayeghc/theory/subalternstudies.htm>.

¹⁵ Raveen.V. Ambesange, 'Postcolonialism : Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak', *Research Journal of Recent Sciences* ,vol.5,no.8(august2016): 48-49.

¹⁶ Shrikant Sawant, " Postcolonial Theory: Meaning and Significance"(Proceedings of National Seminar on Postmodern Literary Theory and Literature. January 27-28, 2012)

¹⁷ Raveen.V. Ambesange op. cit.,p.48-49.

globalization and colonialism have a role in making the western interest universal and at the same time impoverishing the Third World .¹⁸

Said is an American Palestinian theorist, who contributes in the foundation and the development of the postcolonial theory through a set of works , mainly his pioneering book "orientalism" as Swant says: "If the origin of postcolonial aesthetic lies in Frantz Fanon's *the Wretched of the Earth* , its theory is found in said 's *orientalism* ”¹⁹ . Like Fanon, Said looks at the way of seeing the world in the discourse of colonialism and he pays more attention to the colonized more than the colonizer.

In his book ,Said defines *Orientalism* as “ Western style for dominating , restricting having authority over the orient”,²⁰ the term also refers to “ The historical and ideological process whereby false images of and the myths about the eastern or the orient world have been constructed in various western discourse , including that of imaginative literature”.²¹

For him, the West constructs the East through their discourse and narratives which are represented in the Western's journals, novels and academic institutions, and shows that these literary texts are fake and does not based on facts nor reflects the reality of the East .However, it is formed by Western imagination.

Said focuses on binary opposition that is constructed by *Orientalism* ,where the West represents the scientific progress and development ;coupled with the idea that, the Western peoples are,“ masculine , democratic , rational ,moral and progressive ” . While, the Eastern peoples as being “ voiceless , sensual , female , despotic , irrational and backward. ”²²

Another figure is Homi Bhabha, one of the most famous theorist in postcolonial studies, he is influenced by Sigmund Freud, Jack Derrida , he is well known for his works “ nation and narration” and *The Location of Culture* which are considered as milestones in the field . He has developed concepts of ambivalence, mimicry and hybridity. Bhabha unlike Said

¹⁸ Ibid.,

¹⁹ ShrikantB.Sawant op. cit.,p.120.

²⁰ Edward. Said, *Orientalism* (London : Penguin, 1995),p.3.

²¹ ShrikantB.Sawant op. cit., p.122.

²² Bart Moore. Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory : Context, Practice, Politics* (US:Verso,1997),p.39.

, he emphasizes on two aspect: culture and psychoanalysis ,which are the main reason in making binary opposition between the colonized and the colorizer.²³

Bhabha points out that the colonial discourse is contradictory, and its main purpose is to distort reputation of the colonized people; by describing them uncultured , uncivilized and so, they can control them. Bhabha writes :“The objective of the colonial discourse....is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin , in order to justify conquest and to establish system of administration and instruction ”.²⁴

Within this framework , he argues that the contradiction within the colonial discourse is apparent in describing the colonized once as a strange creature and “other” of the western , and once again contradicts itself through setting the colonized within Western knowledge. He argues“ Colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which at once an other and yet entirely knowable and visible”²⁵, this indicates that the colonized subject is unstable ; it is always in transaction between the similarities and the differences between the colonizer and the colonized that they experienced by each other.

Also, he declares that The purpose behind the repetition of stereotypes by the colorizer is mainly to maintain the colonizer in a fixed position he indicates, “An important feature of colonial discourse is its independence on the concept of “Fixity” in the ideological construction of otherness . “Fixity” , as the sign of cultural/historical/racial differences in the discourse of colonialism is a paradoxical mode of representation.”²⁶

Bhabha to assert the instability of the colonial discourse, he adds the concept of “mimicry” in his work *Mimicry and Man* , in which he confirms that the colonized consciously attempts to modify himself to look like as the image of the colonizer, especially those who were subservient to the British colonialist , the colonized are required to adopt other’s culture , education, religion , language...and behave like them . Bhabha asserts that

²³ John.K.cleod, *the beginning postcolonialism* (UK: Manchester University Press,2000),p.51-52.

²⁴ Homi. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge,1994.),p.70.

²⁵ Ibid.,P.70-71.

²⁶ Ibid.,p.95.

despite the colonized attempts to mimic the colonizer , he still not be European, he mimics and speaks in English, it is as a result of Western education.²⁷

So, both mimicry and ambivalence led to the collapse of the entire structure of colonial discourse . in its attempt to represent the colonized, Bhabha notes that the mimicry of the native internally hold both obedience and disobedience; the colonized apparently expressed submission and internally resistance, this duality is named by Bhabha 'hybridity' This hybridized people are in position of "in between".As well as, 'homeless'; being caught between adopting the western culture and the native culture, between choosing obedience or disobedience , this hybridity forms a 'third space'²⁸.Bhabha in interview with Gary and Lynn Horsham said "Hybridization is discursive , enunciatory , cultural, subjective process having to do with the struggle around authority, authorization, de authorization and the revision of authority , it is social process. "²⁹

Furthermore , Bhabha is of the view that there is no division or unidirectional construction between the colonizer and colonized ; rather both construct the image of each other in this regard ,Art Moore- Gilbert argues that Bhabha goes beyond Said who emphasizes on the colonizer ,and Fanon who emphasizes on the colonized to show the multitudes and to negotiate both the colonizer and the colonized .³⁰ And since Bhabha is well known from the postcolonial perspectives, and the one who has a great contribution in analyzing the colonial and postcolonial phenomena from a new perspective. Therefore ,this study will take his concepts such as mimicry , ambivalence and hybridity as core stone to fit its objectives while analyzing the postcolonial social changes in Kenya under the umbrella of postmodernism.

²⁷ . Nayar. Pramod, *Postcolonialism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Britain:MPG Books Groupe,2010),p.28.

²⁸ Ibid.,

²⁹ Lynn worsham and Gary A .Olson, *Race, Rhetoric; and the Postcolonial*(US: State University of New York Press,1999),p.39.

³⁰ Bart Moore Gilbert op. cit.,p.39.

2. Postmodernism

The term post modernism is a broad term, it is used first in the 1950 and 1960s, by French philosophers who produced poststructuralism in the 1960s, and 1970s. Poststructuralists adopted structuralist theory which supports the ideas that there is no "transcendental signifier" and that the source of the truth exists outside of the linguistic and cultural structures we repress.³¹

Consequently, this argument is the core issue of postmodern theory, in terms of considering "reality" as linguistically and culturally composed, and not fixed in stable and unique, or universal meaning.

Postmodernism can be studied as a political, without acknowledging the material, economic, and political impacts of the governmental systems and its conditions over peoples, such as capitalism, communism, socialism.

Frederic Jameson, expresses this lack of political arm, and locates post modernism within late capitalism; or what he calls third stage capitalism, the "world space of multinational capital (54)".³² He claims:

The argument for a certain authenticity in these otherwise patently ideological productions depends on the prior propositions that we have been calling postmodern (or multinational) space is not merely a cultural ideology or fantasy, but has genuine historical (and socioeconomic) reality as a third great original expansion of capitalism around the globe (after earlier expansion of the national market and the older imperialist system, which each had their own cultural specificity and generated new types of space appropriate to their dynamics).³³

Late Capitalism is often displayed in the emergence of the information society and high technologies which shape the postmodern world. Includes as Jameson notes:

³¹ Terry. Eagleton, 2nd ed., *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1996), p 112.

³² Jillian Furness, "Where the Postmodern Meets the Postcolonial: I. Allan Sealy's Fiction after *The Trotter-Nama*" (Master Diss., University of Massey, 2011), p. 6-7, <https://mro.massey.ac.nz/02/whole>.

³³ Fredric. Jameson, *Postmodernism Or the Cultural Logic Of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke UP, 1991), p 49.

Consumer society, media society, information society, electronic society or high technology and the like(3)... Besides the forms of transactional business(.....), (late capitalism's) features include the new international divisions of late or, a vertiginous new dynamic in international banking and the stock exchanges (including the enormous second and third world debate) new forms of media interrelationship (very much including transport systems such as containerization). Computers and automation, the light of production to advanced third world areas, along with all the more familiar social consequences , including the crisis of traditional labor, the emergence of yuppies and gentrification on a now-global- scale .³⁴

Jameson, combines both the theoretical side and the production of postmodern world, which requires a large space in the market place for the consumer. He uses the postmodern aesthetics, and emphasizes on its own position as contradictory to logical reasoning .He argues that postmodernism brought a new explication and different styles.³⁵

Similarly, history has a crucial relation with fiction and contributes in shaping facts and realities by providing, reliable record of what actually occurred , but history is always unavailable ³⁶ Jameson maintains, “In faithful conformity to poststructuralist linguistic theory, the past as “referent” finds itself gradually bracketed, and then effected altogether, leaving us with nothing but texts.”³⁷

Also,Jameson studies postmodernism from the historical context, but in an ambivalent state of depicting realities.³⁸

Jean Francois Lyotard, is another prominent postmodern theorist. He defines postmodernism as “incredulity toward metanarratives”. He refers to this as the Enlightenment

³⁴ Jameson, *Postmodernism Or the Late Cultural Logic Of Late Capitalism* , p. 19.

³⁵ Furness op. cit. , p. 8.

³⁶ Jameson ., p. 25.

³⁷ Ibid., p.18.

³⁸ Ibid., p.9.

narrative, “In which the hero of knowledge works towards a good ethico-political end - universal peace”.³⁹

Lyotard, is influenced by the terror of Auschwitz, and the notion of the common good of humankind. This appears in his belief of human race that involved in the Enlightenment society.⁴⁰ Interestingly enough, it is important to shed light on Lyotard’s perception that:

The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself(...)that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable. A postmodern artist or writer is on the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by pre-established rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. Those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for.⁴¹

The postmodern philosophy presents an understanding of the obscure meaning of fiction, yet the postmodern writers produce a philosophical works which require an efficient mediator to introduce the exact meaning of the message.

Lyotard argues that, there is no absolute truth. And that The local systems and ideologies distorted as a result of the world’s changes and the new orders have affected and weakened those prevalent discourses; such as Imperialism, Marxism, neo- Capitalism, and other Western forms. He states that:

Where after metanarrative, can legitimacy reside ? The cooperativity criterion is technological; it has no relevance for judging what is true or just(.....). Postmodern knowledge is not simply a tool of the authorities ; it refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the

³⁹ Jean Francois. Lyotard , *The Postmodern Condition: A Report On Knowledge* (Manchester: Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, 1984), p. 24.

⁴⁰ Furness op. cit.,p. 9.

⁴¹ Lyotard, p. 81.

incommensurable. Its principle is not the expert's homology, but the inventor's parology.⁴²

Lyotard adopts the innovative techniques of writing, which involves play of words and other experimental aesthetics that the postmodern text celebrates. For him, parology is the legitimating rule in the structure of knowledge.

2.1.Post-structuralism and Deconstruction

Deconstruction is a postmodern aesthetic, and a crucial technique used effectively by Ngugi in his novel *Petals Of Blood*. Especially through insisting on the notion of binary oppositions of centre and margins. According to MC Quillan, the main principle of the deconstruction theory is examining the relationship between words in accordance to its inferiority and superiority. Therefore, composing a hegemonic discourse. He points out, "The point of reading(the secondary term) would not be merely to reverse the operation of exclusion (...) . Rather it would be to interrogate the ways in which this act of exclusion structures the entire text (...)"⁴³

One needs to draw attention to the significant fact that the literary deconstructionism is a poststructuralist approach; developed by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida. As such, deconstruction explores the Western way of thought. This theory uses language systems as a significant factor in constructing human thinking and even defining their identities. The structuralists also assume that language structures function from outside the text in an objective way.

Paradoxically, poststructuralism profounds the idea of looking at the language structures from the outside, since the writer is already inside the language system and inside the text itself . In this regard, Derrida says, "There is nothing outside of the text"⁴⁴ He asserts that meaning is located in the text, thus the writer should emphasize on the word and the language structure.

Moreover, Derrida's notion of binary opposites represents a new way of thinking, basically by looking for dualities such as, Male/Female, Day/ Night, White/ Black. Which

⁴² Ibid., p. 25.

⁴³ Furness, p. 14. Martin. MC Quillan, ed., *Deconstruction: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2001), p 25.

⁴⁴ Ibid.,p 35-36.

reflect the Western culture in preferring the privileged. This paradoxical meanings is called Logo centrism (a Greek word ‘Logos’ meaning ‘word’, ‘ reason’ or ‘god’), and supports the idea of the universal meaning. Derrida premised the deconstructed binary of speech/ writing through exposing a criterion about presence/absence.⁴⁵

As mentioned earlier, this criteria based on the fact that meaning is produced in a direct flow, that it is on the periphery. Yet “presence” became privilege through speech, therefore it is on the centre, whereas writing comes after; and reflecting the “present” at the margin. Derrida, however, argues that both speech and writing are a linguistic units and produced through language; therefore, meaning is always representations, thereby both speech and writing are absent, making presence known through absence and vice versa .⁴⁶

Additionally, Roland Barthes’s work on *The Death of the Author* is a poststructuralist view in the use of binaries. Which exposed a different privileged authority. Barthes maintains that the meaning of the text determined according to the writers’ linguistic and cultural structures. Barthes takes into granted the role of the reader or the receiver who contributes through his/ her diverse imagination⁴⁷, and this appears in his statement: “The birth of the reader must be at the cost of death of the author”⁴⁸

2.2. Rewriting History

The attempt of revising history is a reaction against the colonial and the empiricist making of history. This strategy is a postmodernist thought, it focuses on the text itself ; in this context, history is a narrative that takes place, profoundly in literature; in a wider fictional interpretations which include the use of different stereotypes , metaphors and other structures. The author, however should be objective to construct a familiar fictional narratives.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Amanda Bell, “Absence/Presence”, *Theories of Media: Key Words Glossary*, 6 June, 2011, <https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/absence-presence/>, Accessed on: June 06, 2011.

⁴⁶ Ibid.,

⁴⁷ Furness op.cit., p.16.

⁴⁸ Roland, Barthes. David Lodge and Nigel Wood, eds ., *The Death of the Author*, (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 15.

⁴⁹ Christopher. Butcher , *Postmodernism , A very Short Introduction* (Oxford University press, 2002), p 32.

Interestingly, the fact of the rewriting of history impacted identity and culture of any nation. And yet if the work of literature fails in depicting evidentially the dominant realities of a certain history; then it cannot build any cure claims. The Postmodernist view here is that there is no precise evidence, and that the historians objectivity cannot reconstruct a realist view of history, and consider this claim as a myth, Alun Munslow explains this as “all meaning is generated by socially encoded and constructed discursive practices that mediate reality so much that they effectively close off direct access to it”.⁵⁰ Hence history is basically a socially constructed plots, aims at attracting the reader attention in a formal explanations that are designed as the fictional narratives are. As Hyden White comments: “Historical narratives...are verbal fictions , the contents of which are as much invented as found and the forms of which have more in common with their counter parts in literature then they have with those in the sciences”.⁵¹

Most of history writings relies on a more evidential facts in narrating a story, for example ‘Napoleon was or that‘ Cleopatra’s nose a beautiful one and not a centimetre too long’ Buther. This claims premised a debatable explanations, and generate other facts and probabilities , such as “.... And therefore Napoleon was compensatorily aggressive, and Cleopatra irresistibly attractive ”. and this actions may in their turn develop into other prototypal fiction.⁵²

In the context of this dissertation, rewriting history is a very prominent notion in *Petals Of Blood* , yet Ngugi is among the first writers who calls for the remaking of Kenyan history in his fiction. Especially after the British colonial departure in Kenya; and its impact on Kenya’s history and culture. Rewriting history, therefore is a direct index of emphasizing the postmodern aesthetics in Ngugi’s *Petals Of Blood* .

3.The Intersection between Postmodernism and Postcolonialism

Since this study is concerned with exploring the postmodern elements in Ngugi’s *Petals Of Blood* ; based on Homi K. Bhabha’s postcolonial concepts, it is useful to identify

⁵⁰ Ibid ., p 33.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

first the confluences between postmodernism and postcolonialism. As the basic theoretical models of this study and as two of the most influential frameworks in the contemporary critics. By analysing the postcolonial discourse in the selected text.

In this regard, Kwame Anthony Appiah's essay, 'Is the post on the postmodern a post in postcolonialism' ; he states that postcolonial theory is a product of a Western thought intelligentsia, that trades in intellectual commodities and introduced an image of Africa for the world, and for the Africans themselves:

Postcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously a compradoun Intelligentsia: a relatively small, Western-style, Western trained group of writers and thinkers, who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world Capitalism at the periphery. In the West, they are known through the Africa they offer; their compatriots know them both through the West they present to Africa and through an Africa they have invented for the world, for each other, and for Africa. (432)⁵³

Appiah assumes that in current literature "Postcoloniality has become a condition of pessimism", showing that the 'post' in both postmodernism and postcolonialism competes dominant fiction. And yet Postcoloniality competes these hegemonic narratives through its dramatized depict of human tribulation, and its reasons in the postcolonial countries. He calls it a human mission that is not universal but contingent, according to Appiah this is the idea where the two 'posts' radiate, pointing out that we could "recover within postmodernism the postcolonial writers' humanism" (438)⁵⁴. While he argues that the fact of human suffering is a human impulse, creating postcolonial politics, this concerns are able to change depending on the context. Postmodernism sees such concerns as socially constructed, paradoxical, and deliquescent.

Arif Dirlik, another postcolonialist critic, calls it a "Child of postmodernism" that commutate a new universal academic discover. Important is the idea that, postmodernism,

⁵³ Furness, p. 24. Kwame Anthony Appiah. A. MC Clintock, Aamir Muffi and Ella Shohat, eds., *Is the 'Post' in Postcolonial the 'Post' in Postmodern ?*. *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives*, (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1997), 432.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 438.

poststructuralism, and postcolonialism are Western epistemological knowledge, and are Eurocentric discourses underlying the Western European culture.⁵⁵

Similarly, Loomba suggests that literary writings are not just a prevalent cultural and political ideologies, “Literature is also an important means of appropriating, inventing or challenging dominant means of representation and colonial ideologies”⁵⁶. On the other hand, Ian Gregson in *Postmodern Literature* notes that postmodernism and postcolonialism are separated theoretical frameworks. He maintains that postcolonial fiction precedes postmodernism, and that postmodernism’s skepticism is a subject of the postcolonial politics. He explains, however, “ Postcolonialism has made a major contribution to postmodernist undermining of traditional hierarchies, and to its deconstruction of hegemonic assumptions and multiplying of alternative perspectives”.⁵⁷

Gregson invokes Said’s discourse of “ Orientalism”, and Bhabha’s postcolonial work on Hybridity and ‘Liminality’, which demonstrate the hegemonic Western colonialism; and its effects on the Eastern and marginalized other, which construct the postmodern discourse and identities that are multiple, fluid, and non-essentialist .⁵⁸

The ‘Posts’-post-structuralism, postmodernism and postcolonialism have had connections with different humanities and social disciplines, and have theoretical and historical intersections. These theories meet in various dichotomies and introduced diverse groups and hegemonic discourses in different natures, such as gender, race, class and the like. Determining therefore, the main confluences between postmodernism and postcolonialism is ultimately, important. With the postcolonial works of Bhabha, Said, Spivak, and Hall.⁵⁹

Apparently, the influence of postmodernism and poststructuralism on postcolonial literature had emerged through the initial ideas of Michel Foucault. By his influential analysis

⁵⁵ Ania. Loomba, 2nd., *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 2005), p205.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p 63.

⁵⁷ Ibid. (25-26). Ian. Gregson, *Postmodern Literature* (London: Arnold, 2004), p 91.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 92-94.

⁵⁹ Paul Tyambe Zeleza, “The Troubled Encounter between Postcolonialism and African History”, *The Canadian Historical Association* 17, no. 2(2016): 91, [https://doi. Org/10.7202 ar](https://doi.org/10.7202/ar).

on the concept of the epistemological discourse,⁶⁰ Foucault criticizes the idea that knowledge constructed by power; maintaining that the relationship (“power/ knowledge”) needs a deeper analysis and a transcendent subsistence, that may generate a valuable claims about the quality of truth and knowledge.⁶¹ Moreover, there are several claims arguing that postcolonial literature is not a deceptive rupture with Imperialist epistemology. But it concerns with the postmodern discourses and exposes the impacts of the European neo-colonialism. Indeed, for Bhabha, the broader prominence of the postmodern paradigm lies “ in the awareness epistemological “Limits” of those ethnocentric ideas which is also the enunciative boundaries of a range of other dissonant, even dissident histories and voices-women, the colonized, minority groups, the bearers of policed sexualities”.

Furthermore, the colonial rule procreates a hegemonic discourse that based on binaries to increase its power and influence, as Bhabha said “ Colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once an ‘other’ and yet entirely knowable and visible”.(The Other Question) Bhabha investigates the conceptual contradictories of binary and denies the Western politics, arguing that the imperial power attempts to draw an Eurocentric image that glorifies the Western binary superiority, and makes the native voices less authoritative.⁶²

From this view point, Bhabha’s postcolonial concept of hybridity is very important, and embodies the postmodern literary aesthetics; yet it is suitable to the poststructuralist campaign on essentialisms and other groups. “ Bhabha’s concept of hybridity fits the poststructuralist characteristics: surface instead of depth, the flattening of the sign , simultaneous doubleness of perspective, and the critical effects of parody”.(Woods 45) Homi Bhabha has invented eloquent theoretical models that helped in constructing culture. In his most influential book *The Location Of Culture*; Bhabha provides an exploration of the cultural concepts of hybridity, mimicry, and the duality of localities individual to ambivalence.⁶³

⁶⁰ Joan M Anderson , “ Lessons from a Postcolonial-Feminist Perspective : Suffering and a path to healing” , *Nursing Inquiry*, no. 4 (7 June 2004):238-246. [https:// www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/m/pub](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/m/pub)

⁶¹ Rachel. Adams, “ Michel Foucault : Discourse”, *Critical Legal Thinking*(2017) , [http:// Critical Legal Thinking . com /2017](http://CriticalLegalThinking.com/2017).

⁶² Sharifa Akter *op. cit.*,

⁶³ Ibid.,

As pointed out before, Bhabha, in his book *The Location Of Culture* introduces a vital definition of the concept of hybridity, he writes: “The colonial hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space, being the ‘third space’”.⁶⁴ According to Bhabha, hybridity is “in- between” space. It is the colonial attempt to dislocate history and putting new authorial systems and political structures., which create a new space the “Third Space” that bridges the colonial power with the colonized people, and which exposes a new cultural horizons. Additionally, the second concepts of Bhabha is mimicry. Basically, it refers to the gap between the Western criterion of civility and its disfigured colonial imitation. It is an ambivalent blended of difference and insurgence.⁶⁵

Whereas ‘ambivalence’ , refers to all of mental, social, cultural, or behavioural conditions of people which involve both positive and negative aspects of something. Bhabha expounds the concept of ambivalence from a cultural deconstructed perspective; influenced on Derrida’s discourse, that culture does not includes a single impact only; rather it involves multiple impressions, including habits, behaviours and the practices of the colonizers and its implications on the colonized culture and psychology. In this regard, Bhabha affirms:

It is the mark of the ambivalence of the nation as a narrative strategy — and an apparatus of power — that it produces a continual slippage into analogous, even metonymic, categories, like the people, minorities, or 'cultural difference' that continually overlap in the act of writing the nation. What is displayed in this displacement and repetition of terms is the nation as the measure of the liminality of cultural modernity.⁶⁶

Consequently, these postcolonial theories of Bhabha will explore and highlight the postmodern aspects in Ngugi’s *Petals Of Blood*.

⁶⁴ Rattcliffe. Alice , “ Exploring ‘The Third Space’ in Postcolonial Trinidadian Literature: Presentations of Hybridity and Assimilation in Merle Hodge’s Crick Crack, Monkey and Willi Chen’s ‘Trotters’”, INNERVATE, U of Nottingham. V6 (2013-2014): 4.

⁶⁵ Ignou, “ Unit 4 Postcolonial Theory : Said, Spivak and Bhabha”, Contemporary Literary Theory(2017), 25. [http://www. Egyankosh. Ac. In/ handle/123456789/22694](http://www.Egyankosh.Ac.In/handle/123456789/22694).

⁶⁶ Rahman. Voliur, “ Liminality, Mimicry, Hybridity and Ambivalent in Literary Speculations of Homi K. Bhabha”, Research Paper (Postgraduate) , (2010), English-History of Literature. Eras

On the other hand, Edward Said's analysis in his famous book *Orientalism*⁶⁷. He presents an ideological interpretation ; and intellectual discourse that explains the “non-Western other” in a form of paradoxical stereotypes that contradict the West.

Orientalism is an epistemological discourse designed to demonstrate the differences between the orient and the Occident; from the European perspective,⁶⁸ by which the orient is depicted as inferior, negative, immoral, and uncivilized. Said states that, *Orientalism* “is a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the orient” In short, Orientalism is an ideological discourse that exposes the Western discursive practices over the East, in order to extend its superiority and dominance politically, culturally and even economically.⁶⁹

Suffice it to say that Said's Orientalism is considered as fundamental discourse in postcolonial literature, Said shows the Eurocentric image of ‘others’ and the imperialistic discourse that aims at Westernizing cultural identities; and inventing binaries between the colonizer and the colonized; self and other, speaking centre and silent native.

More crucial, another intersection of the postmodernism and postcolonialism is in the words of Cameron Richards: “put another way, postcolonialism like postmodernism (and modernism functions in terms of sexual, racial, class, and economic and even stylistic differences,(and are) reducible to the special metaphor of a centre-margins opposition”. In this context, new ideas from Feminism and Marxism theories have been collaborated to bring out the intersectional nature of the relationship between the –posts- .⁷⁰

To put it bluntly, the Feminist movement arises issues of social gender, race and ethnicity in a theoretical structure. To put it in another way, Feminist theory is concerned with problems of difference, representation , power and knowledge in terms of gender. Particularly

⁶⁷ Edward. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 1973), p 3

⁶⁸ Anderson op.cit., p. 240.

⁶⁹ M.A. Gonçalves Arnaldo, “ Orientalism : Edward Said's Vision of the Clash of Cultures” , WWW.arnaldo-goncalves.Com/English

⁷⁰ Simi Merin Raj, “ Situating the Postcolonial in the Postmodern Postmodernism in Literature” (NPTEL Lecture, Indian Institute of Technology, Madras).

the role of women in society. Furthermore, the feminist theorists and thinkers investigate the paradoxes within colonial oppression in the process of othering.⁷¹

Gayatri Spivak, is one of the leading postcolonial theorist and a Feminist deconstructionist who celebrates the significant role of women in nation-making and decolonization process. She portrays the British colonial encounter in India as “White men saving brown women from brown men”⁷²

Curiously enough, the feminist theory is incorporated with the postcolonial literary aspects, particularly, in portraying issues of representation, minority voices and marginalization. Indeed, the feminist discourse addresses the theoretical analysis of such problems. Spivak represents this diaspora in her famous proclamation, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” She stressed the image of the “subaltern” woman; and the way it is constructed as marginalized and silent in the postcolonial nations, suffering from both the patriarchy societies and imperialism. Yet Spivak’s “Subaltern” comprises all minority categories; women, blacks, the colonized and the working class, depicting the violence and marginality of the imperial power in the Third World and the colonized territories.⁷³

To conclude with this, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” is a feminist critical discourse that adopts a representation of the under estimated women in political and social affairs. Spivak, concludes: “historically muted subject of the Subaltern woman is inevitably consigned to being either misunderstood or misrepresented through the self-interest of those with the power to represent (id-: 295) For Spivak, the problems and issues of the Subaltern woman and the question of women ‘muteness’ must be solved and presented in a hegemonic discourse.”⁷⁴

As mentioned earlier, the issue of class and the Marxist theory is another notion in the connections between postmodernism and postcolonialism. In this regard, the Marxist analysis provides a rigorous insight in the field of postcolonialism that critiques the racial ideas of Eurocentrism. The Marxist critics is associated with culture and political economy, and

⁷¹ Anderson. P 245.

⁷² Deepica. Bahri, “Feminism and Postcolonialism in a Global and Local Frame”, *Graduate Institute Publications*, (2016), p196. books. Open edition. Org /ihied.

⁷³ Ibid., p 199.

⁷⁴ Ibid.,

focuses on nationalism; also it concentrates on the anti-Capitalist resistance, and yet the effects of Imperialism on gender, cultural and economic identities and structures. Moreover, by 1970s, and in parallel with the wide spread of advanced Democratic capabilities, yet the increased militant ideologies and social movements; this epoch accompanied with a growing sense of pessimism about the development of the postcolonial lands. This modernization movement led to the emergence of new approaches based on the Marxist ideologies, which interested on the role of gender, social class and caste.⁷⁵

Interestingly enough, the Marxist scholars pay attention to the exploitative economic system of colonialism, Stuart Hall, is one of the foremost critic in postcolonial studies, he notes that, there has been “a massive, gigantic and eloquent disavowal” of the economic by discourses of the “posts,” “as if, since the economic in its broadest sense definitively does not, as it was supposed to do, ‘determine’ the real movement of history ‘in the last instance, ‘it does not exist at all! This is a failure of theorization so profound, and (with very few, still very sketchy, exceptions ...) so disabling, that in my view, it has enabled much weaker and less conceptually rich paradigms to continue to flourish and dominate the field”. (Hall, 258)⁷⁶

Hall argues that, as a result of the inevitable of the Marxist economism; and the denial of the postcolonial and postmodern discourses to such large diffusion of the educationist-Marxism, led to a sharp dimisution of the Marxist progress.

As a matter of fact, Imperialist and nationalist historiographies expound, entirely, the unfavourable standpoints of the effect of the colonial experience in African history. Whereas Marxism emphasizes on internal economic productive operations, and social relations, in addition to the role of colonialism in constructing Africa’s contemporary regimes ; which is an object of colonialism.⁷⁷

From the previous discussion, it becomes clear that postmodernism in its link with postcolonial thought ; is mainly a product of the commitment to ‘difference’ and diversity of

⁷⁵ Paul., p126.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 95.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 127.

views and “truths”, which form a moral bridge between postmodern, post-structural, and postcolonial discourses.⁷⁸

4.Socio-Historical Background of The Study

Petals of Blood reveals social and economic realities in the real era of postcolonial Kenya, these realities “No East African novelist has been able to ignore.”⁷⁹ .Therefore, to understand the text it is better to put the text within its historical and ideological context.

The colonial presence in Kenya dated back to the Berlin conference⁸⁰ in 1885 , when East Africa was shared out between the European countries , the British empire established the East African protectorate in 1895 ,and in 1920 Kenya became officially a British colony . According to the European modernist discourses , Britain occupied the East of Africa under the concept of " civilizing mission " to bring progress and development to the primitive natives . The foundation of Kenya colony brought with it racial hostilities and tension, it was first apparent in the political scene ; when settlers were allowed in participating and having voice in the government ,Whereas the Kenyan were prevented.⁸¹Also, during the colonial period the Kenyan people were deprived from their lands without giving them any choice. whereas, the new owner became white .Furthermore, the British did not exploit only the Kenyan's land but also their labour ; the economy at that time witnessed several changes due to the depression that has been caused by the two world wars in Britain .Therefore, the only solution was to exploit the natives by increasing native labour productions . Both land and labour could not be separated from each other because the land was the main basis to develop and provide any kind of labour .⁸²

⁷⁸ Anderson,. 240.

⁷⁹ Shatto Gakwandi, “*The Novel in East Africa*” , eds .S. O. Asein and A. O. Ashaolu (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1986), 186.

⁸⁰ “The Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 marked the climax of the European competition for territory in Africa, a process commonly known as the Scramble for Africa. During the 1870s and early 1880s European nations such as Great Britain, France, and Germany began looking to Africa for natural resources for their growing industrial sectors as well as a potential market for the goods these factories produced” ,oxford reference, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195337709.001.0001/acref-9780195337709-e-0467>,accessed on:2019

⁸¹ Embassy Of the Republic of Kenya in japan,“ A brief history on Kenya”, Embassy Of the Republic of Kenya in japan. http://www.kenyarep-jp.com/kenya/history_e.html

⁸²Shawna Davis, “colonialism and it effect on Kenya”, Odyssey .

<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/colonialism-and-its-effect-on-kenya>, accessed on:(nov.28.2016).

Socially, the British attempted to force their values and impose the idea of more civilized life style on the indigenous people of Kenya, and attempted to control them culturally as Mudimbe call " the colonizing structure" of Africa , this may contain the transformation of natives mind and integrating native economy into the western capital system⁸³ . Kenya at that time witnessed economic growth and this is apparent in the increased number of post offices ,companies and railroad. Despite there were benefits for Kenyan peoples from the capitalist system , the Kenyan's opportunities in services were lower than for the non-Kenyan . Also, there was no balance in educational opportunities (in amount of information, teachers, attendances.....).⁸⁴All of these features led to the increasing of tension in Kenya, and to the emergence of hostilities among the natives towards the local British authority , especially Kikuyu who formed Kikuyu Central Association to recover their lands from the British settlers. Despite there were protests , the Kikuyu Central Association was ignored by the British government which led to the outbreak of " Mau Mau " war⁸⁵. In 1952, they attacked colonial leaders and settlers , then directly the colonial government reacted and declared a state of emergency and arrested many Kenyan among them Jomo Kenyatta . By 1960, London conference gave Africans majority of seats in the council ,and in 1964 the independent republic of Kenya was formed .⁸⁶

The flag of independence brought no changes to Kenya , the dream of independence that build up on self-determination , development and ideal democracy disappeared and became elusive , due to the neo-colonial policies of the corrupt ruling elite who took over political and economic power from the colonizer , and exercised the same colonial practices on their people. As Allan argues in his article'Kenya ,The Barbaric consequences of

⁸³ V.Y.Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (London: Indian university press,1988),p.2.

⁸⁴ Davis Shannna, "Colonialism and it Effect on Kenya", Odyssey. <https://www.theodysseyonline.com/colonialism-and-its-effect-on-kenya>, accessed on: nov.28.2016.

⁸⁵ The Mau Mau war started in 1952 against the inequalities and injustices of the British in Kenya. the colonial administration's reaction was attempting to crush the rebellion , resulting in many victims. By 1956 the colonial power succeeded in crushing the uprising , "but the extent of opposition to the British regime had clearly been demonstrated and Kenya was set on the path to independence, which was finally achieved in 1963."

⁸⁶ South African History Online, "Kenya", South African History Online.

<https://www.sahistory.org.za/place/kenya> , accessed on: 25-Jul-2016

Capitalism” that ,“just as rapacious as the British , but even more corrupt inefficient and rotten , they were only the local office boys of the British and American imperialist” .⁸⁷

Moreover , this new ruling class struggled just to gain power and enrich itself at the expense of peasants and workers whom their average and situation did not change after independence . Allan asserts on this idea when he says “ the middle class leaders of independence struggle continued the oppressive and exploitative system as the British ”⁸⁸ . Kenyan's political and business elite 's desire to gain wealth and make huge profits and private ownership while they were in the governmental positions drove capitalism in Kenya; with another word , capitalism in Kenya build on personal connections to political and governmental positions . This capitalism led to the undermine of national cohesion in Kenya and to the fragmentation of Kenyan society .

The colonial time had left shattered economy and a wide gap between the elite and the local masses. In addition, there were ethnic and tribal hostilities and division . in her article “The problem of Post- Colonial Politics” , Amy Claire Thompson notes that :

the lack of state institutions was also a problem , given the fact that the majority of African state suffered from weak private sector which placed more pressure on the state . The gap between the elites and the masses was therefore widened significantly and the propensity of post- colonial states toward cultures of corruption is understandable .⁸⁹

In front of these changes, some African writers did not ignore what was happening around them, and since literature is the mirror of society , African writers such as Ngugi Wa Thiong’o who attempted brilliantly to foreground socio-historical and political realities of their nations in their literary texts . According to Ngugi, literature does not mirror imagination or unreal world ; rather it reflects what's happening in the society in the real world and share with the reader the ordeal of the masses , human misery ...etc. :

⁸⁷ Alan Wood, “kenya the barbaric consequences of capitalism”, Marxism.

<https://www.marxist.com/barbaric-consequences-capitalism.htm>, Accessed on:

05 feb,2008.

⁸⁸ Ibid.,

⁸⁹ Amy Claire Thompson, “the problem of post-colonial politics”. African history blog .

(www.AfricanHistoryBlog.net), accessed on: (2013).

Literature results from conscious acts of men in society. At the level of the individual artist, the very act of writing implies a social relationship: one is writing about somebody for somebody. At the collective level, literature, as a product of men's intellectual and imaginative activity embodies, in words and images, the tensions, conflicts, contradictions, at the heart of a community's being and process of becoming. It is a reflection on the aesthetic and imaginative planes, of a community's wrestling with its total environment.....⁹⁰

The Kenyan society is presented as faithful as possible to the reader by Ngugi who has been known as one of the best African writers, whose writing cover a lot of issues from his society (politics , economic , culture ,history and land). Thus , his first novel '*Weep not Child*' depicted the events of the "Mau Mau" emerging in Kenya in the nineteen fifties . His second novel, '*Grain of Wheat*' highlighted the background of the conflict between the Kikuyus and the Christian missionaries in the thirties . Besides, his third novel '*Grain of wheat*' pictured betrayal during the " Mau Mau "emergency. His fourth novel, '*petals of Blood* ' dramatized and condemned the cruel capitalist exploitation of the Kenyan people by those corrupt elite in post – independent Kenya (they exploited their people socially , politically and economically) . It also depicted how the transformation of Ilmorog into proto – capitalist society which changed completely the way of living in Kenya. According to Palmer, the novel depicted “ the most comprehensive analysis to date of the evils perpetrated in independent African society by black imperialist and capitalist”⁹¹. Capitalism led to the hybridization of people's identity which emerged from the interweaving of the colonizer 's culture . In addition to the concept of hybridity , Bhabha suggests other concepts like ambivalence and mimicry in one hand , to analyze the transformation of the individual .As well as, the complex and the varied cultural contact and interaction, and on the other hand “ to counter- narrative of the theoretical trap of the western theoretical system by a curious postmodern turn within postcolonial paradigm ”⁹² .

⁹⁰ Ngugi. Wa Thiong'o, *writers in politics*(London:heinemen,1981),p.5-6.

⁹¹ Eustace .Palmer ,*The growth of the African novel* (London: Heinemann Educational Books ,1979),p.288.

⁹² Sharifa Akter,“ Postmodern Spirit in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* based on the concepts of Homi K. Bhabha”, *American International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*,vol.7,no.2(2014):180.

From the foregoing analysis, it seems clearly that the two theories: postmodernism and postcolonialism are crucial theoretical frameworks of this research. And the intersection of these theories introduces the Postmodernist Spirit in Ngugi Wa Thiong's most influential novel *Petals Of Blood*.

In this context, one needs to draw attention first, to the authorial information and the biography of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. He is a Kenyan novelist, playwright and Literary critic. Born on January 5, 1938, Limuru, Kenya, East Africa's foremost novelist, his famous novel "*Weep Not Child*" (1964) was the first major novel. In addition to, *The River Between* (1965), *A Grain Of Wheat* (1967), *Petals Of Blood* (1977), and then *Devil On the Cross* (1980). In most of his fiction, Ngugi focuses on the legacy of colonialism, cultural nationalism, and the role of the intellectual in the post colony, he portrays the colonial and postcolonial contradictions of Kenyan and Gikuyu society.

He has also written various publications: *Homecoming* (1972), *Writers in Politics* (1981), *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986). Interestingly, Ngugi's decision to write in Gikuyu demonstrates the centrality of language in his thoughts. He considered it as a part of the anti-Imperialist struggles of Kenyan and Africans peoples.

Ngugi's latest publication has been *In The House Of The Interpreter* (2012) which contains a narratives about the years between 1955-1959, and his memories of being at the alliance High School.⁹³

Keeping this in mind, Ngugi's fourth novel *Petals Of Blood* (1977), demonstrates the post-colonial discursive practices in transnational Capitalism in post-independence Kenya. It tells the story of the transformation of a rural community named Ilmorog, and of the four major characters coming from outside yet playing vital roles in changing it: Munira, the school headmaster; Abdulla, the ex- Mau Mau fighter who broke up his leg in the war, a seller of oranges and sheepskins on the street; Karega, a former teacher and now a trade-unionist; and Wanja, a prostitute and a barmaid at Abdulla's old bar. The novel revolves around the mysterious murder of Mzigo, Chui and Kimeria, the most well-known businessmen in the community.

⁹³ Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, [https://globalsocialtheory.Org/thinkers/Wa-Thiong'o-Ngugi/? Print=pdf](https://globalsocialtheory.Org/thinkers/Wa-Thiong'o-Ngugi/?Print=pdf)

It is narrated through different points of view by the four main characters, and employs the flashback as one of its main techniques to give an over view of Kenyan histories from the pre-colonial to colonial and to post-colonial eras. *Petals Of Blood* is tended to be Ngugi's attempt to expose the exploitative features of neo-colonial Capitalism, and to speak as a representative voice of the marginal.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Ram Prasansak, "Imagining Kenya in Ngugi's Fiction" (Master Diss., University of Oregon State, 2004), 64-65, <https://www.coursehero.com/file/7449991/Ram-Prasansak/>.

Chapter Two:

The Postmodernist Spirit in *Petals of Blood*

After highlighting the theoretical and sociohistorical background of the study, the present chapter attempts to shed light on the analysis of the postcolonial discourse and loss of identity in *Petals Of Blood*, with a special reference to the postcolonial concepts of Homi K. Bhabha ; hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry. Bhabha's theories are appropriate in this chapter to explore postmodern aspects as a prominent notion in this study and in the novel as well. Also this chapter will present the impact of British colonialism in Kenya, by depicting the transformation of Ilmorog village as revealed in Ngugi's novel.

As mentioned earlier, and starting by Stuart Hall definition of identity and representation; the Imperialist hegemonic power in Kenya has brought many cultural, social and ethical problems. And yet it impacted Kenya's identity and history. In this regard, Ngugi is a master African writer who depicts such issues in his fiction. Particularly, his fourth novel *Petals Of Blood*.

To put it bluntly, in *Petals Of Blood*, Ngugi provides a rigorous portrayal of the effects of the British occupation in Kenya through his emphasis on the cultural diaspora in Ilmorog after the colonial departure, and the hybridized cultural practices which have been shown apparently on the protagonists 'attempt to imitate the colonizer culture and bring change in Ilmorog.

Furthermore, this new hybrid Ilmorog created an ambivalent space; people became a victims of this transformation, they adopted the imperialist culture and forgot their own original identity. Additionally, the colonial pressure influences the ambivalent people and resulted a mimetic position; by which the fragmented Ilmorog people perfect the process of imitation to the colonizer ways in all objects of their lives, and became blinded on its traditions and culture.

On the other hand, the second section of this chapter is a critical study of the postmodern framework in *Petals Of Blood*. Basically, the study will focus on Homi Bhabha postcolonial concepts of hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry, as well as the analysis of the protagonist Wanjira as a postmodern feminist character, and Ngugi's women representation through his characterization of Wanjira. In addition to that, to achieve postmodernity in Ngugi's *Petals Of Blood*; rewriting history and the individual and collective struggle is a prominent notion in the novel. Ngugi, in this text; he calls for the reinterpretation of Kenyan history yet the story of the Kenyan people resistance against the British colonial encounter.

This chapter, therefore, will provide a practical analysis of the postmodernist subject in Ngugi's *Petals Of Blood* by emphasizing on the postcolonial structural models of Bhabha.

1. Homi Bhabha's Postcolonial Discourse in *Petals of Blood*

Homi Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry are among the concepts that we will focus in this study to portray the cultural diaspora in Kenya after independence, and to investigate the postmodernism in the novel

1.1. cultural Hybridity

The reader of Ngugi's *Petals Of Blood* seeks to interrogate the postcolonial analysis of the social and cultural identities; emphasizing the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized which was extended even after independence. In *Petals Of Blood*, Ngugi represents the validity of Homi Bhabha's concept of "hybridity" ; of which he captures the critical mixed-cultures that emerged as a result of the transformation of Ilmorog society into a Capitalist⁹⁵ community.

In a broader sense, these changes have affected the lives of Ilmorog people and caused multiple problems such as social injustices, prostitution, the exploitation of the masses, violence and others. The Capitalist regime, therefore, influences the social, cultural, economic and political prototypes of the village. In this context, Bhabha assumes that the birth of a hybrid identity occurs as a result of the mixture, or intermingling of the cultural concepts of both the colonizer and the colonized ; attempting to challenge the legitimacy of any cultural identity. This can be seen clearly in the fragmented culture of the transformed Ilmorog.⁹⁶

There were several Ilmorogs: One was the residential area of the farm managers of Barclays, Standard and African Economic Banks, and other servants of state and money power. This was called Cape Town. The other- called New Jerusalem- was a shanty town of migrant and floating workers, the unemployed, the prostitutes and small traders in tin and scrap metal.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ The British colonial occupation in Kenya has brought a new political system with a Western ideas and thoughts. This European regime aims at Westernizing African culture and identities, and have caused many crisis in all domains, education, social, cultural, economic and political affairs.

⁹⁶ Sharifa. Akter, op. cit.,

⁹⁷ Wa Thiong'o. Ngugi, *Petals Of Blood* (New York: penguin, 1991),p333.

In this passage, one can observe the economic and social revolution in Ilmorog through the emergence of new institutions and modern cities. This ruptured and crumbled individualism affected their resistance processes against the imposition of British rule. Ilmorog peoples became “abstracted from the vision of oneness, of a collective struggle of the African peoples, the road brought only the unity of the earth’s surface: Every corner of the continent was now within easy reach of international Capitalist robbery and exploitation. That was practical unity.”⁹⁸

Interestingly enough, from the analysis of the protagonists in *Petals Of Blood*, one can observe the ambivalent position between their old traditions and culture; and the new post-Independence state with the capitalist hybrid identity and the disillusioned new Ilmorog. Following this line of interpretation, Munira gets envious of Karega because of his relation with Wanja; a beautiful and intelligent woman who became pregnant by Kimeria, the industrialist man who betrays her. This ugly experience turns her to prostitution. Hence, human relationships turns into merely a group of whims as Ngugi describes: “It was new Kenya. It was new Ilmorog. Nothing was free”⁹⁹ Moreover, Abdullah a Mau Mau fighter, he lost his leg in war against the whites colonialists, he is a symbol of the situation in the village and the peoples suffering after independence.¹⁰⁰

Consequently, this new hybrid culture distorts the colonized identity and replacing it with the imperialist culture. Ngugi asserts that “Imperialism can never develop a country or a people. This was what I was trying to show in *Petals Of Blood*; that imperialism can never develop us, Kenyans.”

This hybridized cultural practices brings out a new fragmented Ilmorog, and officiates a hybrid identity that integrated the Western Imperialist culture.¹⁰¹

Arguably, a recent research by Wood shows obviously the notion of hybridity in *Petals Of Blood*; he contends that Ilmorog people in the novel became influenced by the

⁹⁸ Wa Thiong’o Ngugi, 311-312.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 332.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.,

¹⁰¹ Ibid.,

Western culture they became dressing, drink and listen to European music and adopt the European culture at the extence of their identity and traditions. Ngugi writes:

Young men gyrating their bodies in front of the juke-box; Young men in tight American jeans and huge belts studded With shiny metal stars, leaning against the walls by the juk-Box...chewing gum or breaking match-sticks between their Teeth with the abandoned nonchalance of Cowboys in the American Wild West I once saw in a film; young men and Bar girls trying out the latest step. To hell with singers (Munira Ruminates). To hell with Wanjia and her stories... we were all Strangers...in our land of birth.¹⁰²

Ilmorog youth became Westernized and walked in the European culture in all aspects. Seen in this light, this multiculturalism in the city of Ilmorog creates a heterogeneous identity; people became frustrated and fragmented between their original culture and the colonizer Western identity.¹⁰³

Moreover, old Ilmorog loses its innocent image and turned into a new corrupted Ilmorog. There were exist two different entities integrated as the some equated and hybridized identity, this characterized by the emergence of new roads, shops, banks, companies which were accompanied with a moral and ethical deterioration. Hybridity, in *Petals Of Blood* , is determined in the aggressive antithesis of double-voicedness and double-wordedness of the characters. The native Gikuyu¹⁰⁴ and the Western English, this combination of discourses

¹⁰² Ibid., 101.

¹⁰³ Asma cheriet, "Postcolonial African Literature and the Identity Question- A Special Reference to Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's Ideological Pronouncements". (Magister diss., University of Biskra, 2015),135, thesis. Univ-biskra.dz< Ang_m3_2015.

¹⁰⁴ It is the largest ethnic tribe in Kenya since the early colonial times ,this tribe had a great economic, political and cultural influence. They speak the Kikuyu language. Most of the Gikuyu people live in Nairobi working in farming. Most of them are educated and adopted the modern culture; but they kept on relying on their Kikuyu culture and traditions first, they are conscious of their domination and leadership in Kenya. Ngugi , in this novel, contextualized the Gikuyu culture and depicted the kikuyu influence in his characters which was melted as a result of the colonial encounter.

asserts Westernization and the confirmation of European culture through the hegemony of the English foreign language.¹⁰⁵

Additionally, in-between position of the characters is featured in having two or more 'different' identities; they are different because they have multiple cultural and ideological hybridized identities. Respectively, in this novel, hybridity is the antagonistic incorporation of consisting Ilmorogians, Nairobians, politicians, peasants and elites. It is a way to achieve postcolonial subjectivity, and the effectiveness of the colonial hegemony. Yet the colonial existence in Kenya created hybridity more than any other oppression of nativism¹⁰⁶, because as Bhabha states "the display of hybridity- its peculiar 'replication'- terrorizes authority with the ruse of recognition, its mimicry, its mockery".¹⁰⁷ Indeed, the process of hybridization functions cognitively on the colonized peoples mind in a deceptive and ironic way.

According to Bhabha, the local culture did not dissolve during the colonial period but instead became, a "continued agony"; it is pursued in the postcolonial landscape. In *Petals Of Blood*, therefore, cultural hybridity continued even after independence as Ilmorog city signifies.¹⁰⁸ Thus, in Ngugi's novel, hybridity is a "partializing process...best described as a metonymy of presence".¹⁰⁹ In other words, it is inhomogeneous existence refers only to the colonizer dominance.

In a significant sense, the main characters in *Petals Of Blood* are ambivalent, and frustrated selves whose "culture, as a colonial space of intervention and agonism ...can be transformed by the unpredictable and partial desire of hybridity".¹¹⁰ This means that the colonial authority implanted an internal alterity and unstable desire of hybridity.

¹⁰⁵ Edward Wiston Babatunde Wood, "Alterity And Hybridity In Anglophone Postcolonial Literature: Ngugi, Achebe, P'Bitek And Nwapa". (PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 2001), 101-64, [https:// Shareok.org/handle/11244/33](https://shareok.org/handle/11244/33).

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Homi K. Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi", *Critical Inquiry*, Autumn 1985, 157. [https:// philopapers. Org< rec <BHASTF- 2](https://philopapers.Org/rec/BHASTF-2).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., Wood.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., Homi Bhabha.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Furthermore, in *Petals Of Blood*, the process of “otherness” is revolves around the major characters and appears in the political and social prototypes of Ilmorog and Nairobi; in addition to the most crucial and attached structure which is the cultural identity as a part of Kenya’s history, otherness here is represented by British colonialism. Cultural identity in *Petals Of Blood*, therefore, is a result of intercultural and artistic phenomenon produced by the Western culture , such as the Bible and Shakespeare. Unsurprisingly, Ngugi’s novel is thoroughly a Western ideology of difference which is a contradictory image to new Kenyan ideology.¹¹¹

The postcolonial encounter in *Petals Of Blood* revealed as a state of cultural differences, clash of Westernization and nationhood. In this context, Ilmorog society exemplifies the colonial denial, as Nairobi the new centre of “the colonial construction of the cultural, the site of the civilizing mission”.¹¹²

In a similar manner, hybridity is also found in the characters different identities; and coalition of their traditions, colonial and postcolonial identities. For instance, Ilmorog people favourite the concept of “iron house” referring to the American border’s ‘railroad’ to fit their use of bicycle, “metal horse”. And yet, the first encounter between the European education and tradition is the acacia bush, Ndemi’s legendary place, the religious saint of old Ilmorog.¹¹³

Interestingly enough, industrialization and modernism in post-Independence Ilmorog are seen as illnesses for those who have derelicted tradition. Ngugi says:

Our young men and women have left us. The glittering metal [m o n e y] has called them. They go, and the young women only rretum now and then to deposit the newborn with their grmndmothers ... They say: there in the city there is room for only one ... our employers, they don’t want babies about the tiny rooms in tiny yards ... The young men also. So#me go and never return. Others sometimes come to see tHie wives they left behind, make them round-bellied, and qfuickly go away as if driven from

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹² Homi Bhabha., 156.

¹¹³ Ibid.

Ilmorog by Uhere and Mmtungu'u [measles and smallpox] generation: for was it not the same skin disease and plagues that once in earlier times weakened our people in face of the Mzungu [whiteman] invasion?"¹¹⁴

From Ngugi's words, one can note the in-betweenness space of Ilmorog peoples; they submerged in the new Capitalist life, young men and women embraced the Western lifestyle and forgot their pre-colonial world and their original identity and traditional life. Additionally, even though life in post-independence Ilmorog was modern and witnessed many developments in all domains, but there was a kind of sensitivity towards foreigners and outsiders. For example, when Munira arrived to the village; his intention to be a teacher and to educate Ilmorog's children was welcomed, but Ilmorogans still view him as a stranger and an 'other' from Limuru¹¹⁵:

He became a daily feature in Umorog, a guardian knight of knowledge ... It was enough for him that to the old men and women aimed others in Umorog he was the teacher of their children, the one who carried the wisdom of the new age in his head. They appreciated it that he from the other world had agreed to stay among them. They could see his readiness to stay in his eyes, which did not carry restlessness: the others had always carried wanting-to-run-away eyes ...¹¹⁶.

While Munira was seen as a source of knowledge and a man of future for Ilmorogans children, he was also confused and asking himself his motives for staying in Ilmorog. Similarly, the coming of Ritho the engineer and his staff to the village to visit land for building the trans-Africa high way, Ilmorog people crowd around and control their work, though the road is a way of fraud:

... We are opening a highway

¹¹⁴ Ibid.,p7.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.,16.

Is it for good?

Is it for evil?

Is it for both .¹¹⁷

These new modern achievements in the village is in the context of globalization financed by foreign banks; it brings change for Kenyans, but at the same time the road symbolizes “hollowness and failed promises” because Ilmorog community did not benefit from this constructions economically.¹¹⁸ furthermore, the means of transportation in old Ilmorog rely on using donkeys; but in new Ilmorog it depends on what is so-called “Ford Anglia” used as “Matatu taxi”. New Ilmorog, therefore, serves as a site for hybridization and ideological dichotomies in a form of coexistence between both European and Nairobi identities. After Kenya’s independence , the novel’s deal with the Gikuyu identity came as a counter to other foreign identities, and other political, cultural and economic enforcements, in the context of the novel, Gikuyu identity is debatable.¹¹⁹

In a broader sense, Gikuyu characters do not drink only “Theng’eta”, the local wine; they also drink “Tusker” and “Pilsner”, the imported brews as well. Yet the names of bars influenced by the Western ways and traditions, such as “Mount Kenya”, “Muchoru-I”, “New Alaska Bar”, “paradise”, “Highlands”. This notion explicates the coexistence of the foreign and the indigenous native Ilmorog.¹²⁰

Admittedly, Ngugi, despite his extensive criticism of Western influence on African writers, he himself is impacted by the Western way of thought and considered as a Westernized writer.¹²¹ As James Ogude notes:

...is obviously trapped in the Christian moral vision that he has appropriated to explain the nature of the capitalist world. This moral stance also agrees with

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 265.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 262.

¹¹⁹ Wood op. cit., p.83.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

his epistemological outlook and historical sense, which defines people in terms of good and evil, patriots and traitors, fighters and liberators” .¹²²

In this passage, Ogude argues that Ngugi is a hybrid writer, he is influenced by the Western epistemology and imitated the imperialist culture in his fiction. And *Petals Of Blood* is an example of Ngugi's adequacy in constructing his characters in a culturally hybridized state.

Accordingly, Ngugi's *Petals Of Blood* is a symbol of the cultural diaspora in Kenya after independence. Ilmorog people impacted by the British colonizer culture and became fragmented between their old traditions and the new Western identity, and became culturally hybridized. Yet Ngugi mixes between the Nairobi and the European cultures making his characters in an in-betweeness space to depict Kenya's history and culture after the colonial departure.

1.2. Ambivalence

According to Bhabha, this hybrid third space¹²³ is an ambivalent position where representation and cultural meaning have no 'primordial unity or fixity'¹²⁴. The concept of ambivalence refers to a state of social, cultural, mental or people's behavioral condition that includes both positive and negative aspects. Again, the hybridized state of people under colonialism creates an ambivalent condition; in which people feel their cultural identity and behaviors belonging to no one's land.

Petals of blood attempts to resolve a complex ambivalence toward socio-cultural modernism, realizing its strong appeal at the same time criticizing it for its relation with

¹²² James. Ogude, *Ngugi's Novels and African History: Narrating the Nation* (Sterling, Virginia: Pluto,199),p123.

¹²³ The Third Space firstly emerged in the work of the post-colonial theorist Homi Bhabha,“ it refers to the interstices between colliding cultures, a liminal space which gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation.” In this ambivalence space, new identities are emerged and take a position of becoming. Amherst college, <https://www.amherst.edu/museums/mead/exhibitions/2008/thirdspace> ,Accessed on: February 28 - June 8, 2008

¹²⁴ In the words of Ilan Kapoor claims that the third space is a "non-dialectical space standing in between the binary structures of orientalist representations and imperial power" Kapoor, I. Ilan Kapoor, "Acting in a tight spot: Homi Bhabha's postcolonial politics." *New Political Science*, Vol. 25, no. 4. (2003):566.

corruption, and for its weakness and poor fit with traditional values and recent cultural needs. the duality of tradition and modernism is prominent feature in the novel¹²⁵ , Wanja can serve as practical example of ambivalent case “ the barmaid farmer”¹²⁶,who vacillated between a role of being agrarian woman who worked the fields with her grandmother Nyakinyua, and her role of being barmaid :

She had woken up early and accompanied her grandmother to the Shamba. It was always good to pull out beans in the morning before the sun became too hot. On this occasion they had additional shade from the maize plants which seemed too slow in maturing and ripening. There were not many beans plants to pull out and to thrash and by late the same morning they had finished winnowing. The beans could hardly fill up a sisal sack.¹²⁷

Notably, Wanja was depicted as an active agrarian women¹²⁸ who used to help her grandmother on the land every morning , and also of being a barmaid in Abdullah’s shop in the afternoon, by serving the new visitors and selling drinks to the workers and peasants of Ilmorog . She helps him to be successful “It was in the afternoon. She knew that no customers would have arrived yet . But she wanted to start her work as a barmaid in Ilmorog and also to kill time..... throughout the afternoon Wanja arranged and rearranged things and parcels on the shelves...”¹²⁹

In this context, James Ogudes argues that Wanja “express Ngugi ambivalent position on Feminist discourse in Kenya , on the other hand, Ngugi portrays Wanja as a woman who

125 Podis LEONARD A. Saaka Yakubu, “ Anthills of the Savannah and Petals of blood The Creation of a Unstable Past ”, Journal of Buck Studies , Vol. 22 ,No. 1(September 1991):p.108.

126 Ngũgĩ. wa Thiong’o, *petals of blood*(London: Heinemann,1977),p.61.

¹²⁷ Ibid.,65

¹²⁸ "Wanja" is adaptation of the Gikuyu word for "mother earth" or "spirit of the land"; suggesting that Ngugi intends Wanja as a metaphor for Kenya. If Wanja becomes a sullied prostitute, that is because it is the only option offered by the imperialist oppressors. "She is not the wicked and shameless woman, the Jezebel of Scripture, as Munira takes her to be. [...] (Wanja) is the spirit and earth of Kenya, humiliated, exploited and ill-used by the Kimeria, Chui and Mzigo, fighting for sheer survival and hungering for fulfillment, still retaining her beauty and kindness, dignity and decency." (Sharma, 302) *Turning Toward the World: Ngugi's Petals of Blood* By Paul Dorn

¹²⁹ Ngũgĩ. wa Thiong'o op. cit.,p.65.

transcends traditional limitations and , on the other hand, she is portrayed as the victim of colonial capitalist society”.¹³⁰

The new shattered Ilmorog, hybridized habitant’s cultural identity , but Ngugi puts all the protagonists of the novel to seek an answer for their transformation. This duality makes ambivalent state as Bhabha states in *The Location of Culture* that after “ traumatic scenario of colonial differences, cultural or racial, returns the eyes of power to some prior archaic image or identity. Paradoxically. however, such an image can neither be “original”- by virtue of the act of repetition that construct it- nor identical- by the virtue of the differences that define it”.¹³¹

Moreover, Ngugi represents ambivalence by placing older habitants of Ilmorog such as Wanja’s grandmother Nyankinyua¹³², who is committed to preserve Kenya’s traditional value by presenting heritage of the nation ,the remaining memories of the village’s former glory and traditional stories which evoke a sense of struggle against the thriving capitalism. As well as, her contribution in the richness of Kenya history throughout songs and dances which Ngugi deliberately involves them in the narrative:

She sang of other, struggles of other wars—the arrival of colonialism and the fierce struggles waged against it by newly circumcised youth. Yes, it was always the duty of the youth to fight all the Marimus, all two-mouthed Orges, and that was the meaning of bloodshed at circumcision. She stopped at the dramatic call and challenge. Then the women applauded with four ululations. Nyankinyua had made them relive their history.¹³³

Also ,Ngugi depicts Mwathi Wa Mugo, the mysterious and the invisible occult priest who was the spiritual power over both Ilmorog plains and ridges, and the one who regulated their lives. He used to advise the herdsmen on the finest day for planting seeds or for moving “With a rare double-edged irony, ambivalence and skepticism which call into question the validity of the fundamental metaphysical beliefs of the Ilmorog villagers, perhaps of Africa at

¹³⁰ James. Ogude, *Ngugi’s Novels and African History*(London: Pluto Press,1999),p.115.

¹³¹Homi .Bhabha ,*The Location of culture*(London and new York:routledge,1994),p.153.

¹³² Sharifa Akter op. cit.,p.65.

¹³³ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o op. cit.,p.250.

large.”¹³⁴ The formation of national identity and Kenya’s cultural past are in question. Throughout involving these two characters from the past, Ngugi portrays their contribution in the developments of national and revolutionary consciousness. As Nyankinyua a strong old women who argues that “our soil seems tired ”¹³⁵ and Njuguna said “ Mwathi Wa Mugo seems to be losing his power over the rain”.¹³⁶

The ambivalent state of the person is reassuring and at the same time threatening, the imitation of men is not quite but it is comparable. It led the colonial power to put the other as a “ difference”, this difference illustrates and renovates the notion of binary power play. As well as, assists the tropes of power. The mimic men’s position put him in the ambivalent position of the hybrid state who is neither colonized nor colonizer. However, this in – between portend the up-coming counter- attack that effectively displace social control of the center’s power which is exceptionally postmodern. ¹³⁷Wanja was back in her early days” “Her land would never be settled by strangers—she with her failing health and flesh trying to organize the dispossessed of Ilmorog into a protest. ”if she does not received the helps from the others, if the big city restricts her , she argues “I’ll go alone...my man fought the white man.He paid for it with his blood... I’ll struggle against these black oppressors...alone...alone...”¹³⁸

Furthermore, the most meaningful actions in the novel take place between two places and two cultures “ the countryside and the city”. It is a betweness that indicates several things . literally , it signals a journey between the two “ the country and the city ”that the space for renovated cultural and political struggle of the peoples is generated, a proliferation of other” betweeñ ,or intermediacy space is produced by greedy neo- colonial regime, while reinforcing materially and blurring experientially the distinction between the country and the city. However, if the way of national formation is one cognitive mapping, thereafter the journey to the city outline the postcolonial Kenya’s contours in vividly and importantly ways. For the citizens of Ilmorog, whose sons “ knew no world outside Ilmorog: they thought of Kenya as a

¹³⁴ Ibid.,

¹³⁵Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o op. cit. ,p.65.

¹³⁶ Ibid.,

¹³⁷ Sharifa Akter op. cit.,p.181.

¹³⁸ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o op. cit. ,p.328.

city or a large village somewhere outside Ilmorog”, it is a journey that differentiate the relation between community , spaces and the citizenship’s production that is deeply related to the appearance and the progress of capitalism ,both outside and with a national frame .¹³⁹

1.3. Mimicry

Ngugi critically exposes the dilemma of African nation in general , And the Kenyan in particular which absorbs the western values. In spite of their dark spots, the effects of westernization have created a separated area which impeded the compatibility of the tradition. Therefore, Ngugi puts his critical tools to protest against “hegemonic acculturation” which aims to dismantle the national fabric. He reveals the situation of Ilmorog society by manifesting both the past and the present of the town’s habitants in oppositional way, in which the past and the present are related to Africanization and westernization^{140 141}.

For instance, in pre-colonial time Ilmorog was a truly agrarian community. However , with the diplomacy of neo- colonialism, the glory of the town begin to decline ;The Africanism marginalized and suppressed, while the western life is encouraged, in other word, the habitants of Ilmorog touched ideologically and culturally by western value, this last has minimized their believes in every indigenous phase. With the diplomacy of neo-colonialism, the ambivalent people feel frustrated and dispossessed of their identities, destroyed and dissatisfied. Therefore, they start imitating the colonizer in all aspects; socially “ways of clothes, language”, politically “corrupt elite and their affiliation, economically “capitalism”. Bhabha notes that “..... The discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalent”¹⁴² that does not represent but repeat. Furthermore, Bhabha argues that the process of mimicry does not have an end (never complete), that there will be always something is missing.

¹³⁹ Varma. Rashmi, *The Postcolonial City and its Subjects* (New York and London : Routledge, 2012), p.98.

¹⁴⁰ Westernization is assimilation of Western culture; the social process of becoming familiar with or converting to the customs and practices of Western civilization. Vocabulary, (New York, Plumb Design, Thinkmap, 2019), S.v. “westernization” .

¹⁴¹ Alaa Abbas Ghadban, “A Study of the Cultural and Political Crises in the Postcolonial novel with Special References to Chinua Achebe ‘s Things Fall Apart. Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s Petals of Blood. Raja Rao’s Kanthapura and Gita Metha’s raj”(PhD diss., University of pune, 2014), Shodhganga(411007). <https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/98275/1/01>

¹⁴² Homi Bhabha op. cit., p.86.

The transformation to the new is always interrupted by cultural, historical and racial backgrounds. In *petal of blood*, the workers and peasant are identified as agent for a social transformation and political changes in the society. Some of the peasants had joined the worker's army and trading ,while others still working simultaneously on both lands and factory in the new Ilmorog :

Within only ten years ... how time galloped he thought - Ilmorog peasants had been displaced from the land: some had joined the army of workers; others were semi-workers with one foot in a plot of land and one foot in a factory, while others became petty traders... and behind it all, as a monument to the changes, was the Trans- African Road and the two-storied building of the African Economic Bank Limited¹⁴³ .

Clearly, here Ngugi seems to point out that after the peasants are deprived from their lands , they are forced to adopt new direction in which they start imitating others 's behavior and way of life through joining army and factories . the other aspect of imitation is manifested in the conversion of the workers into Christianity, they also enrolled in educational institutions, business, banks and high ways, the city vice is completely engulfed them¹⁴⁴. The existence of imperialist power that manifest themselves in a new form of transactional corporation and international institutions which are, of course, Governed by the corrupt elite and the bourgeoisie. These organization give loans and advances to the peasants and encourage them to use a various machine, they start reforming the imported fertilizers to be identifiable other . As Bhabha notes “..... as a subject of a difference that is almost the same , but not quite”¹⁴⁵. Therefore ,“ without much labour, without machinery, without breaking with old habits and outlook , and without much advice they had not been able to make the land yield enough to meet their food needs and payback the loans, some had used the money to pay school fees. Now the inescapable law of the metal power was driving the form the land ”, ¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o op. cit.,p302.

¹⁴⁴ Sharifa akter op. cit.,p.181.

¹⁴⁵ Homi Bhabha op. cit.,p.86.

¹⁴⁶ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o op. cit. ,p.327.

The imitation and the submission to the foreign culture did not affect only workers and peasant ,but further the new generation which gives up to westernization not only imitating the content but also the names, Karega noted to that while he was talking to Wanja:

it is not that I don't believe in names, for that could be a more ridiculous caricature of self than those of over African brothers and sisters proudly calling themselves Jane Philipson, Rispa, Hot-Tensiah, Ron Rodgeron , Richard Gluxo? Charity, Honey moon-snow Ezeriel, winter bottpmson-all the collection of names and non-names from western world .¹⁴⁷

The new life and behaviors that appear in the newly Ilmorog have made a cultural gap and mode of misunderstanding in the society. Imitating western modernization destabilizes the social fabric. Accordingly, Munira is reasonable of the Western mode that has shattered the interaction of community, he questioned the new mimic westernized youth who absorb and imitate the Westen life:

....young men in tight American jeans and huge belts studded with shiny metal stars, leaning against the walls by the jukebox or at the counter by the high stools, chewing gum or breaking matchsticks between their teeth with the abandoned nonchalance of cowboys in the American Wild West....To hell with Wanja and her stories. To hell with Abdulla, Nyankinyua, my family, everybody. We are all strangers...in our land of birth.¹⁴⁸

Here Ngugi depicts how the new generation imitates and adopts the western style of clothes and western habits . Moreover, the imitation was also in the educationl system, it was western based system which has reformulated the mindset of the new generation .It is known that education was an imperial instructive tool which is used to efface the indigenous culture and imposed the western imperial ideology instead. Therefore , Ngugi has seen education as a colonial and neo-colonial trick which attempts to misinterpret the knowledge of the colonizer. In like manner, the policy of colonialism which reset the colonial education has reformulated the colonized mindset to accept his marginalized position and approve the superiority of the colonizer. In this context, the lawyer states that the danger of the colonial education format

¹⁴⁷ Ibid,p151.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid,p120.

which attempts to approve their inferiority “The education we got had not prepared me to understand those things: it was meant to obscure racism and other forms of oppression. It was meant to make us accept our inferiority so as to accept their superiority and rule over us”¹⁴⁹

Ngugi criticizes the principles that organize the educational system in the colonial and the postcolonial eras, he brilliantly demonstrates how the government in post-independence era imitates the previous colonial values¹⁵⁰. For instance, “Chui” as a good practical example who attended a respected European school and received a merely colonial education “they used to take him for long rides in the country in their choking Bedford , they also took him into musical concerts and puppets shows in the city ”, Chui has imitated the culture of the western in both content and shape:

He was neat with a style all his own in doing things: from quoting bits from Shakespeare to wearing clothes, even the dark school uniform of the grey trouser , a white starched shirt, blue jacket and a carrying the school motto, for god and Empire, look as if it was specially tailor to fit him .¹⁵¹

In the process of cultural manipulation in his writing, Ngugi has incorporated tradition¹⁵² , history and education .He emphasizes on the colonialism, as well post-colonial and the aftermath of modernity crises. For challenging the colonial dominance, he criticizes the use of European language . According to him ,it is a spiritual subjugated tool and it does not differ from colonialism, it threatens the tradition and the culture of the country. In his following works, he starts writing in Gikuyu language. It is axiomatic that previously, imperialism attempts to repressed oral literature and songs and everything related to the indigenous culture; at the time of colonialism the African culture and languages were marginalized while the English and other western languages were preferred , this situation remained even after taking the independence ; the ruling elite and bourgeoisies gave supremacy to the English language to be used in both community and schools . so here the

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.,p197.

¹⁵⁰ Alaa Abbas Ghadban op. cit. ,p.102-103.

¹⁵¹ Ngugi wa Thiong’ o op. cit. ,p.33.

¹⁵² Ngugi includes in his writing African mythology, songs, stories , African orature. Through this inclusion he mirrors the culture of the African people, songs proverbs, myths and made his experience authentic . This ensure that including personal story and culture is part of the cultural imagination in the postcolonial discourses.

using of western language can be explained as a mimicry and mimicking the colonial rule and its subjugation . As a result , Ngugi as a writer based on the notion of Homi Bhabha ‘ mimicry has doubled the colonial discourse .In this respect, Bhabha [as quoted by Bart Moore-Gilbert et al,notes :

Consequently, mimicry is the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which "appropriates" the Other; mimicry also, however, constructs and depends upon a system of differences (or differentiations between colonizer and colonized) which poses an immanent threat to both "normalized" knowledge and disciplinary powers.¹⁵³

2. The Postmodernist Theory in *Petals of Blood*

Rewriting History and feminism are among the fundamental particularities of post modernism. Rewriting is symbolized as an initial literary technique, simultaneously lending it a critical feature that can be challenged within the context of postmodernism. Rewriting takes the status of anti- writing, since its aim is to change the text and relate it in an irony mode , under socio_ cultural demands. For this reason, feminism and post colonialism take benefits of the favourable framework developed by postmodernism and take critical writing as a weapon to reset and re-ensure their identities. As well as, changing the point of view of the reader from the centre ideology to the margin ideology ,throughout promoting the notion of alterity and pluralism.

2.1. Reconciliation, Rewriting History and Collective and Individual Struggle

Histographies, epistemological assumption and the colonial discourse suggested that the colonized as a person“ whose historical, physical and metaphysical geography begin with European memory”¹⁵⁴, led a writer like Ngugi to correct these point of views through rewrite the issues from his own perspective, and challenges“ the single narrative truth which was

¹⁵³ Moore-Gilbert, Bart, Gareth Stanton and Willy Maley, eds., *Postcolonial Criticism*,(London: Longman ,1997),p.35.

¹⁵⁴ Ngũgĩ. Wa Thiong’o, *Something Torn and New*(US: Basic Civitas Books, 2009),p28.

simply the closest possible representation of events”¹⁵⁵. Delivered from the empires perspective; in this way they contended and reviewed that views by providing alternative vision and other historical depictions of events. In what Walter Benjamin says“ the fight for the oppressed past”¹⁵⁶ . Both of postcolonial societies and writers want to oppose their distorted representation and exercise power over their own history. Therefore , writers undertake the responsibility of rewriting and revising the history and the past of the nation as a duty of every postcolonial writer. The process of revision ,however, produces its own challenges. In the muse of history , Derek Walcott¹⁵⁷ claims that :

In time every event becomes an exertion of memory and is thus subject to invention . the further the facts , the more history petrifies into myth. thus , as we grow older as a race , we grow aware that history is written , that it is a kind of literature without morality , that in its actualities the ego of the race is indissoluble and what everything depends on whether we write this fiction through the memory of the hero or the victim¹⁵⁸

Clearly , Walcott sees that historical documents are ideologically motivated and argues that history as a myth however fiction is related to memory , an understanding of history led to the re-examining and rethinking of all the details of the past. In *petals of blood*, the concepts of history and communal past are the most prominent themes in this writing, which they are inevitably interlace with the notion of national identity , in which he emphasizes more on the pressing problem of the post-colonial Kenya which, in his view, continue to be subjugated by neo_ colonial elite dominance .

Here, he criticizes through his harsh writing new political elites who ally themselves with ideology of neo_ colonialism , in that respect , the post-independence Kenya is depicted as a mere continuation of colonial subjugation rather than , it was expected hopefully to be

¹⁵⁵) bill, Achcroft and Gareth, Griffiths and Hellen tiffin, eds., *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*.,1995-2003(London and new York: routledge,2003),p 355.

¹⁵⁶ Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings: 1938-1940*,ed.eliandhowardaand Michael .w .Jennings(London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press,2003),p396.

¹⁵⁷ Derek Alton Walcott:(1930 – 2017) critic, teacher and journalist, specialized on the Caribbean studies and its history in a colonialist and post-colonialist context. Wikipedia contributors, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derek_Walcott, accessed on : 9 May 2019.

¹⁵⁸ Derek. Walcott, *what the Twilight Says*(new York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux,1998),p11.

associated with the optimistic vision of national regeneration. Clearly, his writing is deeply related to Kenyan social and political reality. As well as, it voices his perspective and opinion on national matters, thinking that the history of the postcolonial Kenya is distorted by the cultural needs of colonialism. Therefore, he insists on the need for a historical revision as a duty of every postcolonial writer¹⁵⁹ “For a long time African writer were seen _ or African as a whole_ were seen as having no vital culture and having no history. so the African writers first job was, I think to see the African society in the perspective of history ”¹⁶⁰. So, he emphasizes on the writers’s responsibility to reflect their culture and history and represent their nation’s reality throughout their writing, because their nation were expressed without culture and history.

Noticeably, Ngugi’s novels do not sought to be historically mimetic, rather than history is as a door that is opened for rewriting and revision. Firstly, redrawing and rewriting how individual and communal experience might be struggles, which is fundamental elements in postmodernism and it is very notable in *petal of Blood*, it redraws and re-narrates the story of the originally agrarian, rural community of Ilmorog and revolves around four main protagonists who are strangers to it; Munira, the new school teacher who is shown as a passive and in-betweeness, Abdulla, a brave fighter who participates in the Mau Mau war, handicapped man and new shop keeper who endures the very important of the disinheritance and dispossession; Karega (rebel), the idealist displaced person, later on become political activist, and Wanja, former barmaid and a victimized women of social exploitation. All of them have unresolved problem from the past which led them to come to Ilmorog. Their coming changes the community and within hybrid society of Ilmorog, they are being fragmented and selfhood collapsed and also being transformed with the monster of capitalism and “with the misuse and commodification of Theng’eta flower epitomize to grow invasion of capitalism”¹⁶¹ the real fight begins, the situation is getting worse and becomes” you eat or you are eaten”¹⁶².

¹⁵⁹ Simona Klimková, “Reclaiming the Past: Restoration of Personal and Communal History in *Petals of Blood*”, *Prague Journal of English Studies*, vol.7, no.1 (2018):

¹⁶⁰ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Ngugi wa Thiong’o Speaks*, eds. Sander Reinhard and Bernth Lindfors (Nairobi: James curry oxford, 2006), p39.

¹⁶¹ Ngũgĩ. wa Thiong’op.cit., 293

¹⁶² Ngũgĩ. wa Thiong’op.cit., 293.

The willingness to revise the Kenyan past is represented in Karega, whose initial idealism is mainly supported by his “vision of the future rooted in a critical awareness of the past”¹⁶³. A society which they were building since independence. “A society in which a black few, allied to other interest from Europe, would continue the colonial game of robbing others of their sweat, denying them the right to grow to full flowers in air and sunlight”¹⁶⁴. So, he firstly turns his vision to history book hopefully to find solution and answer to the gloomy current situation. Soon after, however, Karega understands that “He learned one never wanted to confront the meaning of colonialism and of imperialism”¹⁶⁵. Because of that political science does not give any comfort ideas and knowledge therefore he moves to imaginative literature.

The argument behind calling for rewriting by Ngugi is that Kenya history has not been well revealed by the colonial and by Kenyan writer; who had been educated and influenced by western values. Ngugi argues that colonialist writers like Ruark and Huxley whose their writing gives unfair account of the national history of Kenya, especially when they portrayed the ‘Mau Mau’ war. As well as, the marginalized peasants and workers who play great roles in anti-colonial struggle¹⁶⁶. These two marginalized classes are on the edge of disappearing in current Kenyan history. His involvement in the process of making history in the words of Cooper aims to “Recover the lives of people who are forgotten in narrative of global exploitation and national mobilization”¹⁶⁷.

the picture of past, present and future in this novel depicts the multiple changes that the characters denied to experience. and the story end with the idea that struggle continues by refusing one unified meaning or narrative, this classified the novel as postmodern.

In petals of Blood :

¹⁶³ *ibid.*,p,237.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*,p348-349.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*,p237

¹⁶⁶) Hocine Maoul, “ Re-Narrating the Past: Historical Reconstruction and the Postcolonial African Novel: The case of Ngugi and Armah”, *Revue El-Khitab*,no.10(January 2012):12-13.

¹⁶⁷) Frederick Cooper, “ Conflict and Connection: Rethinking African Colonial History,”by *American Historical review* ,vol.99,no.5 (Dec., 1994):15-16, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2168387>

For there are many questions in our history which remain unanswered. Our present day historians, following on similar theories yarned out by defenders of imperialism, insist we only arrived here yesterday. Where went all the Kenyan people who used to trade with China, India, Arabia long long before Vasco da Gama came to the scene and on the strength of gunpowder ushered in an era of blood and terror and instability-an era that climaxed in the reign of imperialism over Kenya? But even then these adventures of Portuguese mercantilism were forced to build Fort Jesus, showing that Kenyan people had always been ready to resist foreign control and exploitation. The story of this heroic resistance: who will sing it? Their struggles to defend their land, their wealth, their lives: who'll tell of it? What of their earlier achievements in production that had annually attracted visitors from China and India?"¹⁶⁸

Obviously , Ngugi rejects those historical archives ; he prefer resistance as the key in the African history , so these representation must be reconstituted as the story of workers and peasant. Therefore, he suggests that Kenyan history should focus on the struggle of the subaltern , and their resistance to colonial and neo-colonial dominance in the postcolonial area ,this struggle embodied in the Mau Mau war.

Ngugi renovates history where the past , present and the future are dynamically interrelated whether in the life of the community or character of the novel. Karega argues “ to understand and the present ... you must understand the past , to know where you are ,you must know where you came from ” .¹⁶⁹ This means that one must know the past to detect the lies of the neo_ colonialism. He dramatizes the old Ilmorog and how it changed into a new one:

Even Ilmorog Had not always been a small cluster of mud hut lived in only by old men and women and children with occasional visit from wandering herdsmen , it had its day of gloomy : thriving villages with a huge population of sturdy peasant who had tamed nature's forests and, breaking the soils between their fingers , had

¹⁶⁸ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o op. cit., p.67.

¹⁶⁹ ibid.,p.127-128.

brought forth every type of crops to nourish the son and daughters of men.¹⁷⁰

And then he presents how Ilmorog has changed into proto-capitalist community :

Ilmorog later become a great center of trade ; its market day were known from Gulu to Ukambani..... People came from all over with their different wares and took other's in exchange.... Their knowledge of metal became legendary, reaching the ears of Arabs and Portuguese marauders from the coast. Here the first European Foreigner pitched his tent and sought supplies for his journey across the plains.¹⁷¹

Kessler in her article argues that Ngugi rewrites history by problematizes the concept of historical meaning and by "blurring boundaries between national and individual events, between factual history and fiction , thus throwing into question the process by which subject position themselves in history and the way they might conceive and tell the story "¹⁷². That means he does not only rewrite the history of Kenya , but also, being free to transform and shape the historical narrative in a way that fit his political purposes.

She adds that the particularities of postmodern writer like Ngugi might narrate the story many time and in different ways by using many voices as well as different languages which discursively connect and reconnect images of the past, define and redefine how individual struggle denying one unified meaning.¹⁷³

Unlike the other novels where the woman is portrayed marginalized and not well developed in the plot of the novel, she often acts within the framework of being a wife or mother . Ngugi has involved the woman as a prominent feature in the process of revising history , he redefines the woman as a female who is playing an active role in the society. As Spivak notes "the historically muted subject of the subaltern woman is inevitably consigned to being either misunderstood or misrepresented through the self- interest of those with the

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*,p.120.

¹⁷¹ *ibid.*,p.121.

¹⁷² Kathy. Kessler, "Rewriting History in Fiction: Elements of Postmodernism in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Later Novels", *Ariel, Review of International English Lit*, vol.25,no.2(April2014):76

¹⁷³ *ibid.*,

power to represent”¹⁷⁴. Here, she emphasizes that the woman should be represented and should have a voice in her society. Like Wanjia in *petal of Blood* which is depicted as a woman that has “counter_sentence” and the “voice_consciousness” to speak about herself. in this context , Kessler claims Ngugi’s “position women in the narrative and in the historical context in ways that foster the renovation of identity and tradition and redefine their role in the development of a revolutionary consciousness”¹⁷⁵ he represents Wanjia who loves farming work and land, since land is part of tradition, and the one who help her grandmother to cultivate weed and land, helping other women in their working.

Also, he rewrites how the Kenyan women struggle which has been represented and embodied in the novel by Wanjia, who is forced by the circumstances to become a barmaid to support herself. Wanjia here acts for personal freedom, Ngugi obviously renovates and rewrites s feminism through depict Wanjia in the novel, that she “kindness , the nature lover ...etc. James Stephen rob stone argues:

Wanjia like her predecessor, Mumbi is the most resilient and the most victimized character in peats of blood. Her betrayal is the most complex of all the characters. Like Munira, she faces the memory of past recriminations concerning her father and Kimeria. Like Karega she leaves Ilmorog during crises situation. She abandons cooperative endeavours for the personal profit of Theng’eta and the Sunshine Lodge. Like Abdulla she is capable of neglect as in the case of Nyakinyua. Yet in spite of these betrayals, she is capable of regeneration. This is evident throughout the novel form personal sacrifices on the Journey to the co-operative farmer organization in Ilmorog to the elimination of Kimeria before the fire in Sunshine Lodge. Wanjia’s character is later proletarian further through Wariinga in Devil on the Cross, although in her case the possibility of a regenerated political environment is less likely.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Deepika Bahri,“ Feminism and Postcolonialism in a Global and Local Frame”, Graduate Institute Publications(2009):199.

<<http://books.openedition.org/iheid/6321>>.

¹⁷⁵ Kathy Kessler op. cit., p.79.

¹⁷⁶ James Stephen Robson, “Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Fight against Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism; an exploration”

likewise, Nyankinyua depicted the struggle of Kenyan women against colonialism, she has a strong desire to stop oppression and exploitation of the Kenyan society and bring a huge change to her society. Jennifer Evans state in Ngugi 's novel“ women are known to have a fundamental role on the struggle against oppression and exploitation and often courage and hope are ultimately found in their hands ”.¹⁷⁷

Kate full book in her book writing ;a women's business, women, writing states that:

Wanja in petals of blood, these female characters are represented as powerful women who, rather than become sexually and psychologically flattened by the African culture in which they live, choose to redefine their roles in supportive and mutual relation The character of Wanja , although the survivor of a society that forces her into contradictory roles with conflict expectation and values,.....,is allowed to emerge as that an autonomous, decision marking being .blaming the may images of her women hood, as granddaughter of Ny.a powerful women in love, a fighter and mother, Wanja interprets and reinterpret her position as a women in a rent and changing society.¹⁷⁸

Also Ngugi rethinks and renovates tradition through his novel *petal of blood* ,Kessler in her article argues that Ngugi multi layered narrative shows his primary concerns with blurring boundaries, rejecting the idea of unified self-restoration and individual and national histories , rethinking the tradition which is fundamental issue that is represented in Gikuyu values and their function in forming what Ngugi names “ the foundation of..... A truly national sensibility language”,thus asking of reconstitute national identity and questioning of myth making become apparent in the novel.

Also,She adds also that the Postmodern discourse problematizes the tradition's function since it interrogates the degree to which¹⁷⁹“ a tradition or story..... can speak with authority and certainty for all the humanity”¹⁸⁰ .paradoxically, when tragedy is informing and

¹⁷⁷ Jennifer Evans. “Women and Resistance in Ngugi's Devil on the Cross”. Women in African Literature Today. No. 15(1987):15.

¹⁷⁸ Judy Simons and Kate Fullbrook, *Writing, a Woman's Business: Women, Writing and the Marketplace*(US: Manchester university press,1998),p198

¹⁷⁹ Kathy Kessler op. cit., p.79.

¹⁸⁰ Henry Giroux, *Postmodernism as Border Pedagogy: Redefining the Boundaries of Race and Ethnicity*,eds.joseph Natoli (Albany: University of New York Press,1993),p231.

reforming “ the textual world through which people develop a sense of self and collective identity and relate to one another”. The postmodernist argues that tradition should not be seen as unified totalizing documents but they are not precious in the way they:

Demonstrate the importance of constituting history as a dialogue among a variety of voices as they struggle within asymmetrical relations of power. Traditions are not valued for their claims to truth or authority, but for the ways in which they serve to liberate and enlarge human possibilities. ... [They] serve to place people self-consciously in their histories by making them aware of the memories constituted form of counter-memory recovers complex, yet submerged identities that constitute the social and political construction of public life¹⁸¹.

Here, he emphasises on the idea that there is no tradition or story that can talk with certainty for all human. In contrast, postmodernism claims that tradition should be evaluated for their attempt to features and points the specific like memories. this can be practiced in Ngugi novel in different levels .Primary, by reviving the Gikuyu tradition to the reader; he creates link to the cultural past of Kenya and establishes for its national identity. Secondary, he involves women in the historical context of the novel *petals of Blood*. As well as, constructing his narrative in a manner that rejuvenate both tradition and identity, and redefining how they contribute in the creating and developing a revolutionary consciousness.

Ngugi through the characters of Nyakinyua and Ndemi renovates traditional cultures and revives ancient stories . Charles Nama in his work “daughter of Mombi Ngugi heroes and traditional Gikuyu aesthetic stories” rewrites Ngugi’s point of view that “ the unequivocal liberation of African lies not on westernization but in the resuscitation of traditional and cultural values that have been an intrinsic part of the people’s lives from ancient times”.¹⁸² Gikuyu identity and tradition are pivotal themes in his narrative he both celebrating its status and laments its disappearance under the feet if colonialism and capitalism . In this novel Ngugi makes good of various stories and myths of the Gikuyu culture to create a genuine depiction of his own culture, he devotes himself to create a sphere of cultural nationalism. Therefore, the manipulation of traditional mode is used to restore faith and confidence in the

¹⁸¹) ibid.,p.271.

¹⁸²) Charles Nama, *Daughters of Moombi: Ngugi's Heroines and Traditional Gikuyu Aesthetics* ,eds. Carole Boyce Davies and Anne Adams graves(Ngambica: African world press,1986),p140.

local tradition and as anti-colonial tools in *petals of blood*. He uses the Ndemi whose legendary and supernatural stories are stored as folklore¹⁸³ of Ilmorog community to celebrate local legendary:

Ndemi: he fashioned a tool with which he cut some of the trees and cleared the undergrowth. The beast of the earth with their forked tongues spat out poison at him....he had made the earth yield to the touch of his fingers and the wisdom of his head, and he now had more wealth in cows and goats on top of his numerous crops.¹⁸⁴

Ndemi here is depicted as legend who regulates and takes control of Ilmorog's community and nature. Moreover, Nyakinyua is another traditional character who contributes in presenting the national heritage and the traditional identity of the Kenyan nation, her re-telling of the traditional old stories and stories which are related to colonialism creates a sense of postcolonial resistance:

She sang of other, struggles of other wars—the arrival of colonialism and the fierce struggles waged against it by newly circumcised youth. Yes, it was always the duty of the youth to fight all the Marimus, all two-mouthed Orges, and that was the meaning of bloodshed at circumcision. She stopped at the dramatic call and challenge. Then the women applauded with four ululations. Nyakinyua had made them relive their history.¹⁸⁵

The last line in the previous quotation indicates that Nyakinyua plays a vital role in remembering,reviving and restoring again the Kenyan history to the new generation “postcolonial generation”. So, Ngugi through using those two characters from the past renovate the cultural image of African's national tradition in general and the Kenyan one in particular, and by doing so, he re-affirm that Africa has a rich heritage and debunks the colonial' s myth that Africa is continent where there is no history and tradition .In this context Ngugi affirms that notion through Abdullah 's saying :

¹⁸³ “Folklore is the expressive body of culture shared by a particular group of people; it encompasses the traditions common to that culture, subculture or group. These include oral traditions such as tales, proverbs and jokes. They include material culture, ranging from traditional building styles to handmade toys common to the group”. Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folklore> ,accessed on: 26 May 2019.

¹⁸⁴ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o op. cit., p.29.

¹⁸⁵ ibid.,p250.

That Africa is one of the richest continents with finite possibilities for renewal and growth is a fact....That our people fought against the Arab slave traders is a fact: that the Akamba people built formidable defenses against them even while trading with them in ivory is a fact. That our people resisted European intrusion is a fact: we fought inch by inch, ridge by ridge, and it was only through the superiority of their arms and traitorous actions of some of us that we were defeated. That Kenyan people have had a history of fighting and resistance” is therefore ,it is important to consider petals of blood as a means for inspiring a revolutionary consciousness . in which, Ngugi prevails his ideology of revolution through employing a fundamental number of characters and groups of peoples to portray the Kenyan struggle against the monster of capitalism and neocolonialism. Ngugi in his interview with Charles cantaloupe states that“ struggle has been developing, I like starting from my essays on writers and politics, one can see this theme become more and more dominant in my cultural theory. Struggle is central to nature, to human art and to my history”¹⁸⁶.

In the novel *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi portrays Wanja as the leading female of the struggle. By doing so, Ngugi seem to broke the myth of superiority of men and giving the chance to women to complete and support men’s role in the revolutionary struggle. He demonstrates that woman also must fight for taking freedom and corporate together with man to dismantle the neo- capitalist structure; Wanja is one of the major character who represents the struggle of Kenyan women who play an active role in the awakening of national consciousness . In spite of her hard life , she does not give up rather than, she devotes her life and interests for the sake of the country . she urges the other and Ilmorog’s resident to fight for national justice. She is presented as postmodern character by being free, an oppressed female. she embodied a cruel exploitation that the Kenyan women experienced ;uneducated, unemployed, without family. Here Ngugi depicts Wanja as a victim of capitalism, bourgeoisie

¹⁸⁶ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o *The World of Ngugi wa Thiong'o*, ed .Charles) Cantalupo (New Jersey: Africa World Press ,1995),p.222.

and economic exploitation. She worked as barmaid and being forced to sell her house to Mzigo and stop working in her mother business because it was without license.¹⁸⁷

Moreover, Nyakinyua a wise and old woman , her stories from the past, particularly in re -telling the stories of her husband, who fight against colonialism gives an authentic history of modern Kenya urges the other to imitate the earlier fighters ,who devotes their life to resist the oppression. Her working on the land demonstrate that fight against oppression it must be shared between the young and the old people, it is not exclusive and limited only to the young, her failure to restore her land demonstrates the ineffectiveness of the individual struggle and emphasizes on the effectiveness of the collective struggle.¹⁸⁸

Each character in the novel represent a certain group in the real Kenyan society. For example, the middle class is represented by Munira who during the struggle “ stood neutral” and he is struggling to “ fit into the rest of society by attempting to “pay back” through service but who still fear to explore the tough questions of the rampant inequality, as depicted by his anxiety in refusing to answer the children’s questions about the ‘flower with petals of blood.’ Furthermore, Karega, his name means “ the one who resist” in Gikuyu, is the one who represents the intellectual nation and who wants to comfort the nation history and the reality of his people ,and he is with the idea of collective struggle to make reform.¹⁸⁹

Abdulla is also another character who represents the fighters who has participated in the historical struggle of the country, he lost his leg during the Mau Mau war which can be considered as stump that sign his sacrifices for rising the flag of the independence of his country.

There was also a collective struggle which is embodied in the participation of workers and peasant in the Mau Mau war and after independence .In this context, James Ogude in his book *Ngugi Novels and African History* argues that the Mau Mau war was as unified umbrella

¹⁸⁷ Michael Otebo Osori1 and Emmanuel Agbu Envoh,“ CLASS Structure, Social Relations and Dialectics of the Class Struggle : A Marxist Reading of Ngugi Wa Thiong’o’s Petals of Blood” International Journal of Literature, Language and Linguistics,vol.1,no.1(2018):29.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid*,p.30.

¹⁸⁹ Mũturi wa Njeri,“ A Critical Analysis of Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s Petals of Blood”,medium.<https://medium.com/@muturi/a-critical-analysis-of-ngugi-wa-thiong-o-s-petals-of-blood-ba31051edc26> accessed on: Feb 21, 2015

that gathers workers and peasant to struggle against colonialism, and it continues to inspire them even after taking independence:

In his invention of the Mau Mau, Ngugi presupposes the existence of a collective consciousness among the peasantry and the working class in Kenya, the kind of consciousness that engendered their struggle against colonialism (Ngugi and Mugo 1976, Preface).”Thus, for Ngugi, all Kenyan peasants and workers had the same nationalist goals in their resistance to colonial rule, and the same interests continue to inspire their resistance in the postcolonial state. What we have is situation in which the intellectual writer subsumes what maybe local or regional interests of the peasants into national or class issues.¹⁹⁰

Here, Ogude emphasizes on the idea that through including Mau Mau war, Ngugi demonstrates that there is a collective struggle and consciousness which is presented on the workers and peasants.

2.2. Wanja: The Postmodern Feminist Character

The struggle of modernism is a central issue in Ngugi’s *Petals Of Blood*, and this appears apparently in his emphasis on portraying the significant contribution of women in the resistance process during colonialism and after independence. Most notably, Ngugi’s representation of the female character Wanja is depicted as a crucial postmodern character that contributes effectively in bringing out change in the city of Ilmorog.

Ngugi, employs the character of Wanja as a modern ideal women; celebrating women’s historical liberation and power. She is portrayed as a strong woman who breaks down the Gikuyu traditions and the male-dependent of African societies. As Judith Cochrane puts it, it is the Gikuyu women “rather than their menfolk who seem to have the better understanding of the needs of their own people and of the new Kenya, and who seem better able to reconcile those needs with traditional values and customs”.¹⁹¹ Women played a major role in handling social, political and economic diseases of the nation and keeping its traditions and rules, even more than men do.

¹⁹⁰ James. Ogude, *Ngugi’s Novels and African History*(London: Pluto Press,1999),p33.

¹⁹¹ Cochrane. Judith, “ Women as Guardians of the Tribe in Ngugi’s Novels”, *Critical Perspectives on Ngugi Wa Thiong’o*, (Washington: Killam, 1984), p19-100.

In this context, Wanja's experiences and her struggle for land demonstrates Ngugi's attempt to make his feminist protagonist a postmodern character. In the novel, as Wanja was recalling her beginnings, Ngugi wrote, "Her land would never be settled by strangers- She with her failing health and flesh trying to organize the dispossessed of Ilmorog into a protest".¹⁹² Whatever the circumstances and the pressures in her society, and without their supports. Wanja says, " I will go alone... my man fought the white man. He paid for it with his blood ...I will struggle against these black oppressors...alone...alone... ".¹⁹³ She wanted to participate in constructing Ilmorog and to fight the elite class corruption, and the Capitalist regime rubble in Ilmorog.

Unsurprisingly, Wanja is a very postmodern figure in the novel that signifies women's powerless. In other words, Wanja was exploited and wanted by all men in the village. She is desired by the industrialist man Kimeria, and became pregnant. But Kimeria refused this pregnancy, later on, she drops the baby into a drain. This bad experience makes her hunted by this past and the feeling of guilt has affected her present life, to forget her ugly memories; Wanja goes to Ilmorog to live with her grandmother, Nyakinyua and works in distiller business, she faced many problems then she turns to prostitution. She was indicted of the three business men murder.¹⁹⁴

In a significant sense, Ngugi represents Wanja as a valid African woman who struggles and contributes in nation-building also in the resistance process. "Her productive functions are being pressed into the service of a narrative that equates political resistance and revolutionary heroism with masculine virility." The representation of Wanja reflects the shift from masculine power and efficiency to the female hegemonic presence. Which expressed in Ngugi's postmodern skeptical close of his novel 'Woman and Tomorrow'.¹⁹⁵

More crucial, *Petals Of Blood* offers a tremendous example of the connection between the villagers and the land. This special link epitomizes in Wanja's character with the land; she founded a women's collective force to support farming process for the peasants and farmers,

¹⁹² Ngugi op. cit., p. 328.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁹⁵ Ibidem.

in order to ameliorate production; especially after a long time of drought. In this regard, Palmer has points out, Wanjia's "dynamism and vitality are suggested by her association with the fields and the plains" (287-79).¹⁹⁶ Wanjia played a great role in the progressive process by her contribution in working the soil. She became more strengthened:

Within a short time of her contact with the soil [. . .], her eyes had become less exaggeratedly bright, more subdued, with a different kind of softness, no longer caressing people in the first hour of contact. She had become a less fully fleshed beauty, more of an angular beauty of a peasant woman.¹⁹⁷

Wanja became a vital member in Ilmorog society, and works as a woman peasants like any other peasants.

Moreover, the rains came, it was the harvest season; Wanjia through her assistance in working the soil, she became desired by all. Ngugi claims, "Wanja was possessed of the rain-spirit. She walked through it, clothes drenched, skirt-hem tight against her thighs, revealing in the waters from heaven".¹⁹⁸ Wanjia was the most beautiful and attractive woman in the village and a sexualized earth mother. Her experience with the villagers makes her a purely Gikuyu peasant that exemplifies women's engagement in nation-making.

Seen in this light, Wanjia's dream of being a mother can also be seen as a description of the site of Africa and as a hint of women's history. In a broader sense, Wanjia's first child it is a clear reference to the death of Kenya's children. And the murder of the child at its mother hand, is a symbol of the growing independent Kenya, the state that was once created by the fighters' long struggle. Thus, Kenya and Africa have had a mutual history of "murdering" their children, like Wanjia. Furthermore, Wanjia's second pregnancy and her appearance after Karega's denial symbolizes new hope for new independent Kenya, yet a birth of new Ilmorog far from the old one.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Roos. Bonnie, *Re-Historicizing the Conflicted Figure of Woman in Ngugi's Petals Of Blood*, *Academia*, no.2 (Summer 2002): 156, <https://W.Tamu.Academia.Edu/BonnieL>.

¹⁹⁷ Ngugi, p.243.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p.196.

¹⁹⁹ Bonnie Roos, p 158.

Curiously enough, Ngugi portrays the character of Wanjia in a changing and a transforming society; of which he expresses his Marxist, political, social and economic ideology. Ngugi, uses literature to dramatize the exploitation of women, and the colonial savage and its effects on post-Independence Kenya. Following this line of interpretation, Kathy Kessler states that Ngugi “positions women in the narrative and in the historical context in way that foster the renovation of identity and tradition and redefine their roles in the development of a revolutionary consciousness”. Thus, Ngugi’s portrayal of women located in the cultural, political and historical contexts of a developed and a colonized country.²⁰⁰

In this regard, Ngugi’s female protagonist Wanjia is depicted as a woman who lost her innocence as a result of a sexual exploitation in post independent modern Kenya. She helps people and works to improve life condition in Ilmorog city despite her own social, ethical and personal troubles. She wanted to prove herself in Ilmorog society:

Wanjia had made a pact with herself. She would have a completely New beginning in Ilmorog. Since she had left Ilmorog she had had two Humiliating and shameful experiences. She would now break with that Past and make something of herself in Ilmorog. As an evidence of her cleansed Spirit, she resolved that she would not again obey the power of her body Over men; that any involvement was out until she had defeated the past Through a new flowering of self .

Also Munira describes the changed Wanjia as “It was a new youthful, life-full, luscious growth after the rains” .²⁰¹ Wanjia, signals the woman revolution and her effectiveness in society; she uses her body challenging the power of the corrupted men in postcolonial Ilmorog.

To conclude, Ngugi celebrates Wanjia as a representation of a modern and powerful woman who struggles as men in shaping and constructing new post-independent Kenya and Africa as a whole. Meanwhile, Ngugi’s use of prostitution is an attempt to challenge the

²⁰⁰ Cloete Nettie, “ Women and Transformation :A recurrent theme in Head and Ngugi”, *Literature*, vol 19, no2 (30 April 1998): 31-45.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p 39-40.

traditional thinking in a positive way; to reflect women's social condition after colonialism. He views Wanjia, or any African woman, as a critical figure of the nation not only in a historical context, but also as a fundamental figure in constructing Kenya's future.²⁰²

In the regard of political, social, and linguistic relations, Ngugi questions the concepts of submission and authority, individuality and community. This demonstrates disregarding and ignoring from the paradigm of binary opposition of the colonized and colonizer, that idea is what Bhabha illustrates from his postmodern location. Postmodernism emphasizes on the importance of micro-narratives, concerning the assimilation of minorities and marginalized groups into an organic wholeness which is certainly embodied in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's novel *Petals of Blood*.

Bhabha with his unique idea of mimicry, ambivalence and hybridity has attempted to reconfigure the postmodern from the perspective of the postcolonial. Bhabha attempts to do so "by deconstructing the old dichotomies of East/West, Self/Other, and Centre/Margin, and explores the increasing *hybridity* and *liminality* of cultural experience". By consistently disrupting these binary opposition in his narrative, Ngugi allows us to see relations that are unstable and not firmly attached to an ideology of unique self and the unified narrative. This deconstruction is the very notion of postmodernism. In the chapter named 'The Commitment to Theory', Bhabha shows his doubts about the ideological politics regarding the formation of 'Theory'. Bhabha says, "There is a damaging and self-defeating assumption that theory is necessarily the elite language of the society and culturally privileged" From this very notion of theory, Bhabha takes a curious turn towards the postmodern challenges that questions "Are we trapped in politics of struggle?" and "Can the aim of freedom of knowledge be the simple inversion of the relation of oppressor and oppressed, center and periphery, negative image and positive image?" Such questions and his concepts of mimicry, ambivalence and hybridity expound postmodernism from newer ground"²⁰³

Eventually, *Petals of Blood* demonstrates how capitalism and modernism bring radical change and newness in Ilmorog's people social life and how give rise to hybrid community and create a confusion of belonging and ambivalent state to the individuals. Is

²⁰² Bonnie Roos, p. 186.

²⁰³ Sharifa op. cit., p.182

a novel in which hybridity and ambivalent state of Ilmorog society dismantle the structure binary opposition of self and other, center and the margin, first and third world.

Moreover, this chapter have emphasized on the postmodern aspect in the novel and Homi Bhabha theory via which he constructs a critical rethinking about the nation in the postcolonial era, it have discussed his terms like hybridity and ambivalence and mimicry and apply them on the novel.

Clearly , postmodnism gathers under its large umbrella the process of rewriting and revising “ how individual and collective experiences might be struggled over understood, felt, and shaped” all of these processes they have been under the study in this chapter.

Conclusion

The idea of this thesis initially generated through a desire to investigate in brief the postmodernist spirit in Ngugi Wa Thiong’o’s *Petals of Blood*, in which he has created a new postmodern space, and draw a varied yet a cohesive picture of postmodern African literature in English that celebrates a happy wedding of postcolonial and postmodern discourses, which they work together to assert African identity . as well as , sounds the marginalized voices that have been historically muted in contemporary literature.

Petals of Blood classified Ngugi as postcolonial writer who tackled in this writing the issue of colonialism and the way it affected the African nation and created another way of life, culture and social ideologies. As a result, Ilmorogian identity shifted from its fixed position to a new one that is completely different. Actually, Ngugi provides a real image about the impact of colonialism and its legacies over his people and nation. He is in artistic way depicted the cultural struggle between the indigenous and modern life in postcolonial Kenya . Therefore, this study represented in chapter one the social, political and economic realities that surrounded and affected the writing of the novel of petals of blood.

As can be seen, the world in Ngugi’s narrative in *Petals of Blood* is postcolonial ,and also its themes are hailing from such world. However, the thing that differentiates this novel from his other works is the integration of postmodern touch in this novel. The postmodernist aesthetics are glaringly visible in his calling for historical and cultural repositioning and

reversing the colonial binaries , he rejects theses dichotomies and argues that the western ways of categorizations are at the basis of inequality and injustice .

This study opts for concepts of Homi Bhabha through which he builds a radical and critical thinking about the postcolonial nation. With his conceptual tools of hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry. This study dramatized the transformation of Ilmorog into proto-capitalist society and how the postmodern mood of capitalism maps sense of social fragmentation which caused a lack of clear identity. Moreover , it resulted social divisions and cultural changes which totally destroyed individual's identity and led the Ilmorogian people live in a dilemma of belonging . with applying Bhabha concepts of hybridity and ambivalence the study demonstrates how the seeds of capitalism create cultural struggle within individual and how it led to the appearance of hybrid and ambivalent identity.

In most instance, the analysis of *petals of Blood's* characters such as Wanja, Abdulla and Munira appealed to show how capitalism actually affects their way of living and thinking. This study constructs a clear picture about the way capitalism in Ilmorog makes the peasants and the protagonist of the novel waver between the indigenous identity and the new modern cultural identity.

The postmodern spirit that Ngugi emulates is analyzed in chapter two , detailing how Ngugi rewrites history in way he detects the lies and the contradiction within the European discourses , and he calls for historical and cultural repositioning ; he criticizes the colonial Histographies by arguing that it bears unequal and differential representation. Also, his redrawing of “ how individual and collective experiences might be struggled over, understood, felt and shaped”. Furthermore, he renovates the Gikuyu tradition through reviving the ancient stories and using characters such as Nyakinyua to emulate them to the new generation.

The representation of Wanja as postmodern character was also examined, which signals a departure from conventionally representational character of female of being a mother or wife. Wanja is portrayed as integral factor in the process of nation building; she is intelligent and brave woman who attempt to find her position in the new society of Kenya after taking its independence. and the female who breaks down the norms that gives the absolute priority to men and the one who lives in hybrid society that is lately affect her; she start imitating and take an ambivalent position that re-back to her own way of struggle.

By conducting this research, one came to conclude that *Petals of Blood* couched in postmodern mood to show the nature of the Kenyan postcolonial milieu. By reading *petals of blood*, it become evident that Ngugi could be considered a postmodern writer; his postmodern aesthetic are manifested through this novel. In artistic way he intersected the postmodern aesthetic with postcolonialism to represent African literature in a new dress.

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ملخص

تهدف كل من نظرية ما بعد الحداثة وما بعد الاستعمار إلى تقويض الميتافيزيقية الغربية، وتفكيك جملة من ادعاءاتها ومقولاتها المركزية، التي تبحث عن سبل للحفاظ على مركز الريادة على حساب الدول الأخرى. جاءت هذه النظرية كردة فعل على هذه المقولات التي تريد فرض الهيمنة والسيطرة لتعيد النظر في العديد من هذه المسلمات الميتافيزيقية المتعارف عليها في الفكر الغربي، وتكشف سوء فكرها الايديولوجي. يرجع البعد التاريخي لهذه النظرية الى تطور الرأسمالية التي أحدثت تغيرا جذريا في الهوية الثقافية لبعض دول العالم الثالث كدولة كينيا. لذلك تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى ابراز عناصر الحداثة في رواية أوراق الدم للكاتب الكيني نقوقي واث ينقو من منظور اجتماعي تاريخي، مستخدمة مفاهيم هومي بابا كالتهجي و التقليد و الازدواجية و ابراز مواجهته الثقافية لإيديولوجية الأفضليات ، لتسليط الضوء على تدهور وانفلات الهوية الثقافية للمجتمع الكيني بعد الاستقلال تحت مظلة الفكر الرأسمالي.