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## Marginalization, Lack of Agency and Subjectivity in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood*

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**Abstract:** *Petals of Blood* depicts the disparity, hypocrisy and infidelity of elite classes towards the poor peasants and the workers in post-independence Kenya. The work is a derogatory condemnation of corruption and gluttony of Kenya's political, economic and social elite, who even after regaining independence are perpetuating the social injustice and economic inequity, the very features of colonial repression. The novel is a bitter critique of the economic system of capitalism and its destructive, alienating effects on conventional Kenyan civilization.

**Index Terms – Capitalism, Post-colonialism, Neo-colonialism, Proletarian Revolution.**

### I. INTRODUCTION

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* (1977), received as a "political bombshell" in Kenya and elsewhere (Treister, "An Addition to the Genre of the Proletariat Novel" 267), is the first of Ngugi's novels which is "fairly and squarely about independent Africa" (*Ngugi wa Thiong'o* 90). The work is regarded as an important transitional literary work in Ngugi's career, where he moves out from his anti-colonialist critique of early works to "a condemnation of the neo-colonialist regimes of the African comrador bourgeoisie" (McLaren, "Ideology and Form" 78-79).

The novel portrays the inequality, hypocrisy, and betrayal of peasants and workers in post-independence Kenya. The work is a damning indictment of corruption and greed of Kenya's political, economic and social elite who, after the struggle for freedom from British rule, have not returned the wealth of the land to the natives but rather forward the legacy of colonial oppression. In addition to criticizing neocolonialism, the novel is also a bitter critique of the economic system of capitalism and its destructive alienating effects on traditional Kenyan society. *Petals of Blood* unfolds a human landscape that is both beautiful and horrifying; tribal village life is manipulated in the name of progress by the cynical bureaucrats who came to power as heroes of liberation.

### II. A DETECTIVE STORY

Highly political novel, *Petals of Blood* takes the form of what Killam calls a "detective story" ("*A Grain of Wheat*" 97). Set in a small remote village of Illmorog - a microcosm of Kenya, serves as a metaphor for developments throughout Kenya in the postcolonial era. Four protagonists - Munira, Abdulla, Karega and Wanja - each originally from the city of Limuru, make their way to the village. Each character comes to the village and is largely motivated by a desire to escape the pervasive malaise afflicting Kenya under Uhuru, the independence. Moreover, each of them serves to illustrate a different strategy to cope up with the oppressive conditions of the new black-run country.

The four protagonists are suspects in the murder of the three directors of Theng'eta Breweries and Enterprises - Chui, Kimeria and Mzigo - who were burnt alive. Police inspector Godfrey from Nairobi has been summoned to solve the case. Within the structure of a detective novel, the interrelated lives of the main characters and the people around them are recounted against the background of Kenya's past and present.

*Petals of Blood* begins with Munira, who is taken to Illmorog Police Station for routine questioning. He is the man who narrated all the major events and happenings and is asked to record all those moments right from the day he came to Illmorog. Later Abdulla and Karega come to the police station, while Wanja is admitted to the hospital for cure of severe burns. A newspaper report discloses the reason for calling these people to the police station.

MZIGO, CHUI, KIMERIA MURDERED [Capitals Original] A man, believed to be a trade-union agitator, has been held after a leading industrialist and two educationists, well known as the African directors of the internationally famous Theng'eta Breweries and Enterprises Ltd, were last night burnt to death in Illmorog, only hours after taking a no-nonsense-no-pay-rise decision. (4-5)

Munira, a déclassé bourgeoisie, the 'black sheep' of an otherwise successful Christian family, recalls the day when he arrived in Illmorog twelve years ago. Illmorog of that time was a sheer wasteland being in the strong grip of famine. The common mass seems to be hostile to an outsider and the youth is not at all interested in school and books. Munira's father - Brother Ezekiel Waweru - is a wealthy and pious landowner, a collaborator of the whites, who is attacked by Mau Mau rebels. The change of regime hardly affects his fortunes; in fact, he is bestowed with multiple opportunities. Ezekiel is very proud of his children's success except Munira, who is moving on the path of failure. After being involved in a student strike at the elite Siriana High School [modelled after Ngugi's Alliance High School], Munira is expelled from the institute. Subsequently several years as an itinerant educator, during which he marries Julia, a Kenyan pagan who converts to

Christianity to ingratiate herself to her powerful in-laws, Munira escapes to Illmorog as a headmaster of Illmorog Elementary School. His shame over his father's collaboration with whites in exploiting the poor in the name of God and Julia's taunts to this effect hurt Munira's consciousness. The condition is well stated by Smith:

... torn by loyalty to family versus loyalty to a cause [Mau Mau] Munira ends up ashamed of his past, longing to participate in Kenya's present but paralyzed by an alienation which results from his refusal to recognize any symbiosis between the personal and the political. The novel faults him for his quietism, revealing ... what Munira must face for himself: he has compromised. ("Rainbow Memories of Gain and Loss" 97)

Keeping the head down or 'quietism' has been adapted by Munira as an inevitable mode to cope with this brutally savage new Kenya. Munira is preceded by Abdulla - one more outsider - at Illmorog. He shares to a lesser degree the headmaster's demoralization and has come to this place to run a small store, a duka. He states: "I wanted to go deep into the country where I would have no reminder of so bitter a betrayal" (255). Munira does not want to share his past life with anyone, that's why, he offers Abdulla a false reason of his refuge in Illmorog, he maintains, "Some of us who had a schooling ... tended to leave the struggle of Uhuru to the ordinary people. We stood outside ... the song I should say. But now, with independence, we have a chance to pay back ... to show that we'd ... did not always choose to stand outside ... That's why ... well ... I chose transfer to this ... Illmorog" (10).

Abdulla who comes to this remote village with his brother Joseph and a donkey has a psychological advantage over Munira of being an active participant in liberation movement where he lost one of his legs. Very soon Munira and Abdulla are joined by Wanja, another refugee from the city. She is grand daughter of Nyakinyua, one of the elder matriarchs of Illmorog. Munira recalls the moments of detention cell where he and Wanja developed understanding without demands: "nothing deep, nothing to wreck the heart" (32). Wanja shares her childhood memories, especially of her love affair which results into her pregnancy with an old man who refuses to own her child as he believes that he is old enough to bear the child and also because he is a Christian. She terminates her pregnancy and since then she is leading a life on her own terms. Wanja persuades Abdulla to hire her as a barmaid and thus transforming the sleepy store into a lively watering hole to herald a beginning of a largely platonic partnership. She suggests Abdulla to send his brother Joseph to Munira's school. A once promising student Wanja has been shaken by this pathetic plight of hers' and the story of her broken school life.

A desire to conceive once again makes Wanja consult a diviner Mwathi wa Mugo who suggests her the night of the new moon. Wanja plans to celebrate many occasions on the same day - the beginning of the harvest, Joseph's return to school and her own expectations. She plans to celebrate the midnight celebrations with Munira, but Munira's failure to return from Ruwani in time makes her anxious. Not even a single event turns the way she wanted and she feels disappointed.

The final arrival in Illmorog is Karega, another one-time student rebel, expelled from Siriana after a second strike and a former student of Munira. He is the son of Mariamu, an ahoi - a wage labourer on the farms of Munira's father. The word strike makes Munira restless owing to an absurd feeling of his dead past that suddenly gets resurrected from which he is trying to run away. Munira recalls his own school days' strike, raised against discrimination between blacks and whites led forward by a student leader Chui, who along with other five pupils including Munira, was expelled from the school by a very ruthless headmaster Cambridge Fraudsham, a firm believer of "God and Empire."

Like others, Karega comes to Illmorog for seeking out answers to his situation amidst the ubiquitous national perplexity. He arrives on the very day which Wanja has chosen for her celebrations. Karega recalls his acquaintance with Munira's sister Mukami. His mother after separation from her husband starts working on Brother Ezekiel's farm who approaches her number of times, but gets straight forward denial. Karega's brother Nding'uri witnesses the negative intentions of Ezekiel towards his mother, and to make her move safely out of this situation, he suggests her to make up with her husband and Karega is the result of their brief union.

Karega is later introduced to Abdulla and Wanja by Munira who take him to Abdulla's duka, where Abdulla makes them peep into the past: "My real name is not Abdulla. It is Murira. But I baptized myself Abdulla. Now everybody calls [call] me Abdulla" (61). At this Wanja states further: "Did you know that he actually fought in the forest? He used to go for days and days without food and water; they had trained their bodies to accept little" (61).

Munira always feels uneasy to face situations related to life and society. Munira feels guilty over the very mention of the forest fighters but is rescued by Wanja who takes him for a walk on the ridge; on seeing the moon Wanja invites Munira to spend this fateful night with her in the hut and 'break the moon over her.' Munira accepts her invitation, however failing in conception after the union, Wanja feels utterly disgusted and abruptly she vanishes from the place. Initially Karega settles at Illmorog as an assistant teacher in Munira's upcoming school, but due to conflicting viewpoints he leaves the job, their joint venture thus comes to an abrupt end. Dismissed from his Illmorog teaching post by Munira's jealous machinations, Karega studies and travels, and eventually becomes a union organizer in the new Illmorog offering the clearest articulation of Ngugi's ideology.

All the three major characters once again return to Illmorog. A persistent drought threatens the survival of the residents; Karega suggests a delegation of villagers to visit M.P. Nderi in the city for presenting their plight and seek state redressal. Nderi, like other political officials, is only interested in acquiring wealth at the expense of his constituency. Karega, restless for executing this plan, begins its 'long trek' with a delegation comprising of Nyakinyua, Wanja, Joseph, Abdulla and Munira towards the city.

The details of this 'Long March' provide Ngugi with an opportunity to portray the glorious past of Illmorog, Limuru and Kenya in general. Picking up the threads of exodus to the cities by the young, Wanja narrates her own experiences as a barmaid in the cities. She once has been picked up by a German Pervert who wishes her to make sex with his dog, luckily she is rescued by Hawkins, the lawyer who states: "This is what happens when you turn tourism into a national religion and build it shrines of worship all over the country" (134). Nyakinyua recalls the residual memories of the village's former glory which was once a thriving commercial centre, now inhabited only by those old, young, feeble or tired ones, who are not in a position to move to a city to avail greater and marvellous opportunities. At this moment Ngugi links up the present scenario of Kenya with its beautiful past. He wonders as to where had all those Kenyans vanished who used "to trade with China, India, Arabia, long-long before Vasco da Gama came to the scene and [who] on the strength of gun powder [had] ushered in an era of blood and terror and instability - an era that climaxed in the reign of imperialism over Kenya" (67). He remembers the historical struggle of the Kenyans to defend their motherland. In the recent scenario, "Lord Freeze-Kilby" (68) who had turned the peasants and herdsmen into Kipande carrying labourers in Illmorog had been avenged by the natives by hounding him out of Illmorog.

The four former city inhabitants leading a motley group of peasants on this pivotal trip that will change the fortunes of Illmorog forever, ultimately results in numerous difficulties. On the way Joseph suddenly falls ill. The delegation's reception in Nairobi is to reveal the hypocrisy of various elite run institutions in independent Kenya. Ngugi exploits this situation to critically examine, through the characters of Rev. Jerrod Brown - a wealthy priest and a church leader - who offers the ailing group mere spiritual sustenance instead of providing any food, shelter, or water to the weary travellers. Even Raymond Chui, an educational leader and now a rich businessman is interested only in elite groups instead of ailing poor. He is quite callous towards the problems of these poor villagers. The problems of the delegates aggravate

on the arrival of Kimeria, a wealthy businessman and friend of Nderi wa Riera, the M.P. He threatens the group to imprison them all unless Wanja agrees to submit herself to his lust. Despite protests from Karega and others, she agrees to give herself to Kimeria in the larger interest. The M.P. Nderi wa Riera meaning "vulture son of air" (Triester, "An Addition to the Genre of the Proletariat Novel" 268) in Gikuyu is not different than the others. He offers a reluctant welcome before unleashing the police on his raged constituents for disturbing his peace.

Hawkins, the lawyer whose amiable help once rescued Wanja from the clutches of a German maniac, saves the delegation from a number of problems. He is a liberal socio-democratic Kenyan who attempts to uphold the grand vision of Uhuru through his education and is thus aiding the poors of Kenya. According to Cook and Okenimkpe, the character sketch of Hawkins is based on the real-life Kenyan activist Josiah Mwangi. The most propitious event of the villager's urban sojourn is their connection with Hawkins. He becomes Illmorog contingent's chief benefactor in Nairobi, providing them shelter and becoming their advocate and spokesperson. The lawyer also benefits from the publicity accompanying the delegation's visit to Illmorog and eventually he himself contests the parliamentary election and surprisingly wins it.

After the arrival of the delegation protests and rallies were raised landing Munira, Abdulla and Karega in jail. They could be released only after the intervention of Hawkins. This long march and the publicity destroy the culturally rich Illmorog. The village perceives increasing intrusion from the city in the form of a church, a police station, the African Economic Bank and eventually the Trans African Highway. The new Illmorog by means of so called 'progress' becomes a better town, complete with all urban vices, led by the most despicable selfish exploiters like Chui, Mzigo, Kimeria and Nderi wa Riera, who open a private company, Illmorog (KCO) Investment and Holdings Ltd. to develop the area. This results into the exploitation of the village through the combined forces of private and political institutions sustained by religion and the so called law enforcing agencies. The lawyer directs Karega into class conscious political activism with verbal and non-verbal assistance. Later Hawkins is assassinated because of his reformist efforts in Parliament. This makes Karega learn a lesson that the elite institutions such as Parliament do not offer any relief to anyone from the neocolonial exploitation. Thus, the reformist stance of Hawkins has close affinity with Ngugi's own political views.

After the return of the delegation, for a brief period the rains and optimism return to Illmorog. After harvesting the crops, the villagers decide to celebrate by brewing Theng'eta, a traditional drink brewed on celebrations. Under Nyakinyua's supervision the drink has been brewed this time. The drinking is related to recalling the dreams and yearnings of a person taking part in it. Nyakinyua yearns for a glorious future for the country; Munira wishes Wanja to be with him but lacks courage to ask for it; Karega briefs them about his mother Mariamu, his brother Nding'uri and his association with the Mau Mau movement and his responsibility in cutting Ezekiel's ear. He further admits his sexual intimacy with Mukami, Munira's sister. This places Karega in a different relationship with Munira as he is Mukami's brother and Abdulla, who has been a comrade in arms of Nding'uri, his brother.

Abdulla speaks of "Nding'uri, the bravest of them all... The unknown unsung soldier of Kenya's freedom" (221). He also recalls their last meeting on the fateful day when the man who used to supply them bullets betrays them. Luckily Abdulla manages to escape but unfortunately Nding'uri has been caught and hanged a week later at Githunguri. Wanja narrates the story of her first love, her maltreatment by her parents, and her seduction by Kimeria. The Theng'eta however has numerous impacts on different people. Wanja and Karega find a string of harmony and peace in each other's company now which they can't make out earlier - whether it is so because of the effect of drink, or their first sexual encounter or to their similar suffering in the past because of their rebellious nature.

Munira however feels outraged and even more alienated by Karega's truth. He accused Karega of forcing Mukami to commit suicide and of being the brother of Nding'uri who cuts off his father's ear. He calls Wanja a prostitute which provoked Karega, who in turn states that all those people who collaborate with their imperialist bosses in this neocolonial world is no better than a prostitute. Karega even refuses the charges of Munira about his resigning from the school. According to Munira, Karega resigns from his position because he wants to be with the people of Illmorog in their struggle against the new onslaught of priests, politicians as well as the policemen. But the real reason for Karega's dismissal is his intimacy with Wanja which outrages Munira who dismisses Karega with false charges of indulging in political propaganda in the school. Karega's dismissal from the institute makes Wanja angry and uneasy, "With him it has been different. I want ... really want him.... For the first time, I feel wanted ... a human being ... no longer humiliated ... degraded ... and I feel I am about to flower" (251).

Karega leaves the place despite entreaties of Abdulla and Wanja, for he accidentally discovers that it is Kimeria who is responsible for Wanja's seduction as well as Nding'uri's betrayal and death. After Karega's departure Theng'eta as a drink is commercialized by Wanja and Abdulla and plans are launched by the government to make Illmorog a tourist place. The old Illmorog is destroyed by progress and Nyakinyua laments the old Illmorog's glorious past. The capitalists and their agents, Chui, Mzigo and Nderi, move in their development projects like roads, banks, factories, distilleries and housing estates, which quickly destroy the fabric of traditional Illmorog. The destruction of the mysterious spirit - Mwathi by a giant built bulldozer - and crushing of his abode by the Trans-African Highway are the concrete symbols of annihilation of a once proud society by a ravaging force of modernization, and the deceived peasants lose their land and their possessions to the local profiteers and their international collaborators. The general mass has always been subjugated by the so called elite class because of the division of the local public on regional, linguistic and ethnic basis. The public wait for 'flowers to bloom' as promised by the deceitful politicians, and thus, cast their votes in favour of Nderi wa Riera once again. After Karega's departure Wanja plans to take revenge, she rebukes and tortures Munira to his ruin.

Wanja is a Gikuyu word denoting 'mother earth' or 'spirit of the land,' and is used as a metaphor for Kenya by Ngugi. If she turns into a sullied prostitute it is so 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 Kimerias, Chuis and Mzigos, fighting for sheer endurance and hunger for fulfillment, still retaining her beauty and kindness, dignity and decency" (Sharma, Govind Narain, "Ngugi's Apocalypse" 302). Wanja has been shaken by a disastrous affair with Kimeria, the unscrupulous businessman. However she is not one to submissively take life's puff and survive by constantly metamorphosing into new roles. She abandons the infant child resulting from the affair and after a brief career in the city as a barmaid, arrives in Illmorog to begin life anew. As the place is completely ruined by progress, Wanja finally succumb to the clear national creed of this new independent Kenya:

This world ... this Kenya ... knows only one law. You eat somebody or you are eaten.... Kimeria, who had ruined my life.... Nothing would I ever let for free ... No, I will never return to the herd of victims. (291-294)

Soon Illmorog is transformed into a proto-capitalist society with all the attendant problems of prostitution, social inequality, misery, uncertainty, and inadequate housing. Globalization exploits, denigrates and humiliates Africa in the similar vein as slavery and colonialism did. Foreign companies exhaust resources and leave when they find no more use, thus plundering the natural resources in Africa.

The bourgeoisie represent the reactionary forces set to kill the people's initiatives. With high spirits Wanja and Abdulla start brewing Theng'eta business but Nyakinyua, the grandmother of Wanja, is highly lured to accept loans promised by the deceitful government and the



failure to repay it leads to the confiscation of land and for that Wanja has to sacrifice her roaring business. Later Nyakinyua dies; Wanja sets up a brothel "Sunshine Lodge" (281) near her shamba; Abdulla starts selling sheep skins to the tourists; while Munira moves to and forth in search of peace.

### III. EAT OR BE EATEN

Wanja now is the successful lady of the place. After a long gap of years Munira and Karega call on Wanja. For last five years Karega was working with Hawkins but had parted because he was utterly disillusioned with the ways of Hawkins's solutions for the problems of the poor. Moving to Mombassa later, he sees how Europeans still have a strong hold over Kenyan economy by way of technical expertise. He refuses to give high privilege to the whites over Blacks, for which he is fired from his job and Karega eventually makes his mind to move back to Illmorog.

Wanja recalls her own moments when lured by western values she embraces prostitution to acquire dignity and wholesomeness but returns to be a peasant at the end. The Chuis, the Kimerias and the Mzigos, who are agents of imperialism, control the important spheres of life in Illmorog. In order to redeem her grandmother's mortgaged land, Wanja is forced to sell her business. The license, the directorship of Theng'eta Breweries and Enterprises Ltd. has been taken into possession by Nderi wa Riera. The government through its agents hand it over to a multinational corporation. The economic deprivation and ruthless dispossession of the peasants find its most effective symbol in the degradation of Wanja, the barmaid, who rises from prostitution to economic independence and womanhood, but is forced back to the humiliating status of a prostitute who sells her body because nothing is obtained free, and the slogan "Eat or be Eaten" becomes operative in Kenya. Wanja now opens a brothel in order to exploit her sexual powers once again, "It has been the only way I can get my own back on Chui, Mzigo and Kimeria ... I go with all of them now ... I play them against one another. It is easy because I only receive them by appointment ... each wants to make me his sole woman ... As for me, it's a game ... of money ... You eat or you are eaten" (293).

The governments and global financial institutions claim that globalization will definitely improve the lives of the people throughout the world; especially the developing countries will march on the road of prosperity. It promises a better tomorrow and harmony between the people of the world who will be benefited from this greater economic sufficiency. All these worthy assumptions are refuted for promising empty shells as is evidenced in *Petals of Blood* where in the guise of prosperity and progress peasants are lured into taking loans to fence their lands and to buy imported fertilizers. The majority of the rustics are not able to pay off their loans leading to the confiscation of their land leaving the poor landless.

Karega recalls his past associations, especially with the lawyer Hawkins, who tells him about the betrayal of Kenyans by their own political masters. He reminisces the days when he used to work as a counting clerk in Riera's Theng'eta Breweries, where he forms 'The Theng'eta Breweries Worker's Union.' After dismissal from the brewery Karega becomes the secretary general of the union and raises his voice against the low wages of the workers. He also recalls the moment when Munira along with a lady named Lillian sets forth a religious offensive against workers' union but could not make an effective attack on the union's working.

Abdulla is pressurized for details by the investigating officer. He recalls the events of his coming to Illmorog with his adopted brother Joseph, whom he has rescued from the Limuru streets; Joseph's schooling at Siriana, his happy association with Wanja, their business and sacrificing of the business, setting up of a brothel by Wanja and his proposing Wanja for marriage, and rejection by her. Disappointed, Abdulla turns into a drunkard. On the fateful Saturday, he recalls of being summoned by Wanja to a new place besides the hut. Before moving to her place, he goes to Illmorog. On seeing the cars of the demonic trio - Kimeria, Mzigo and Chui - Abdulla comes to know about the meeting of board of directors of Theng'eta Breweries for plotting their response to Karega's successful union agitation. Abdulla desires Kimeria to go to Wanja's place so that Abdulla can get a chance to kill him. Soon he confronts Kimeria and nags him for his tortures, exploitation and past collaborations. Later he reaches Wanja's place to find it was set on fire and everything was burnt to ashes.

It is now Wanja's turn, who is recovering in the hospital to recall the events of the fateful day. She recalls that a week before that fateful Saturday she called both Abdulla and Karega to her place but at different times. She warns Karega of his dismissal from the Brewery. Being confident he states:

They are bound to fail. Can't you see: we, the workers, the poor peasants, ordinary people, the masses are now too awake to be deceived about tribal loyalties, regional assemblies, glorious pasts ... No ... it is too late, Wanja ... we shall no longer let others reap where they never planted, harvest where they never cultivated, take to their banks from where they never sweated ... Tell them ... There are a million Karegas for every ten Kimerias ... The workers and the peasant farmers of Kenya are awake. (326-327)

Ngugi comes down heavily on the Africans ruling elite and celebrates the renewed struggles of the people against repression and oppression implemented by local colonialists. *Petals of Blood* exposes the ills of the society and emphasizes the collective struggle of the exploited in Africa who oppose the neocolonial class structure which has thrown up poverty and privation that often define present life in number of neocolonial modern states in Africa.

Wanja further recalls the refusal of Karega to stay back with her as he feels that Wanja is now more with these unscrupulous trios and thus leaves her lonely. After her union with Abdulla she feels guilty and plans to invite all the three directors separately to her place without each other's knowledge. She tells the police officer that when she was receiving Kimeria - the last to arrive - she saw her place being set on fire. Shrieking, screaming, she passed out. But one thing which Wanja hides has been narrated by Ngugi, that before seeing the flames, she kills Kimeria and all the evidences of it has been burnt by the engulfing fire.

By assembling all the evidences together, Inspector Godfrey holds Munira responsible for making the three selfish exploiters consume in a fire at Wanja's brothel. Munira, a recent convert to fanatical Christian Evangelicalism confesses the crime on the plea that he wants "to save Karega" by "not just passive obedience to the law but active obedience to the universal law of God" (332). As he has discovered a secret meeting between Karega and Wanja in her hut, "Munira had been so convinced that this world was wrong, was a mistake, that he wanted all his friends to see this and escape in time" (332). Eventually, the hesitant, shy and alienated Munira, once in his life determines to burn this whorehouse "which mocked God's work on earth" (333) by pouring petrol on it and putting it to flames, and thereafter he moves ahead towards the Illmorog Hill.

Finally the murder mystery is resolved by Inspector Godfrey, an apt representative of the system. He however dislikes Karega's interests - 'destroyers of order' - but is very much fascinated by Munira's character and doings as he has "never before come across a Munira who was prepared to murder in the name of moral purity" (334). He feels that it is unworthy to run centers like Utamadun Cultural Tourist Centre where unlawful business of "smuggling of gemstones and ivory plus animal even human skins" (334) is running at an easy pace and where "women, young girls, were being recruited to satisfy any watalii's [tourists] physical whims" (334), still he feels to ignore everything filthy around as "Tourism was after all one of the biggest industries in the country and there was nothing good that did not carry with it a few

negative things. His duty as a policeman was to help maintain stability, law and order, upon which depended the successful growth of all the industries and foreign investments" (335).

After meeting Munira in the jail, his father Waweru considers himself responsible for his son's sufferings. He feels that it is because of his sins of trying to commit adultery with Mariamu and of mistreating plenty of rustics that God has punished his son in this manner. But soon he dismisses such thoughts by realizing that he could not question God's wisdom. Thus, according to Palmer of all the African novels, *Petals of Blood* presents the most comprehensive analysis to date of the evils perpetrated in independent African society by "black imperialists and capitalists" (*The Growth of the African Novel* 228).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The novel ends with a strong hope of a proletarian revolution and with the realization on the part of the Kenyan workers and peasants of the possibilities of overthrowing international capitalism and its neocolonial agents. In the end Akinyi, a little girl, infuses a zeal of strength in Karega for a renewed struggle by telling him that all his co-workers and friends are working effortlessly to emancipate themselves from the tyrannical rule of the local administrators which will eventually bring serenity and concord in their state. The little girl offers a ray of optimism in the lives of these disheartened natives. In Africa, as elsewhere, the genuine African tradition has been marginalized in the literary discourse. Immersed in the postcolonial African society *Petals of Blood* is a call for an international struggle necessary to achieve democratic, egalitarian society in Kenya.

The work portrays a clear demonstration that imperialism can never develop Kenya in particular and Africa in general. According to Ngugi, in writing *Petals of Blood*, he was only trying to be faithful to the realizations of Kenyan workers and peasants as shown by their historical struggles since 1895. The spokespersons for Ngugi's socialist solution are Karega, Hawkins, Abdulla and Munira. Through Karega, Ngugi presents concretely that socialism is a natural way of life in traditional African society and now for a prosperous and happy life the natives have to move back to their past immediately so that the imperialist capital, the real enemy of Africa today, may not exploit the society. The struggle against this greedy and corrupt community is still in progress and it will continue till all the evils will be abolished from the nation on the whole.

The title of *Petals of Blood* is therefore equally significant. Ngugi shows how within no time of attaining sovereignty Kenyan society has decomposed and rotten at the core represented in the novel by a worm, who has eaten the bean flower. The worms in the text symbolize the shrewd politicians who are eating into the roots of the very fabric of rich African cultural heritage. The African community represented by the bean-flower has been thoroughly destroyed by these hazardous worms who though promise bright future in days to come, but contrarily they themselves are busy in aggrandizing their personal promotion. Superficially Kenyan society seems to be healthy and vivacious represented through the red petals of the bean-flower but when scrutinized carefully from a specific viewpoint it appears to be overflowing with life giving blood suggesting that out of these 'Petals of Blood,' Kenyans and Africans on the whole, might gather 'petals of revolutionary love,' which will help the natives uplift themselves and their rich conventional community to neo-heights.

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