

**THE FIGURE OF POSTCOLONIAL WOMEN IN NGUGI WA THIONGO'S
*PETALS OF BLOOD AND A GRAIN OF WHEAT***

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Yüksek Lisans Tezi

İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı

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PREFACE

This study mainly focuses on the female characters in the Works of Ngugi wa Thiongo, *Petals of Blood* and *A Grain of Wheat*. The reason of choosing this subject is to draw attention to the condition and problems of postcolonial women, which is an unstudied subject in Turkey. This study helps to critically analyze the figure of postcolonial women in the mentioned works of Ngugi. Thus, it creates awareness on the condition of oppressed women. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the area of feminism and postcolonial feminism. On the whole, it can contribute to the researchers studying in the fields of postcolonialism, feminism and postcolonial feminism.

I would like to express my gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Assist. Prof. Dr. Ahmet KAYINTU for his encouraging support and guidance throughout handling this research.

I also wish to express my special gratitude to my wife, and my friends.

Eren BOLAT

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ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Ngugi wa Thiongo'nun *Petals of Blood (Kan Çiçekleri)* ve *A Grain of Wheat (Bir Buğday Tanesi)* adlı eserlerindeki sömürgecilik sonrası kadın figürlerini incelemektir. Bu iki roman sömürgecilik sonrası Kenya'nın durumunu yansıtmaktadır. Bu çalışmada bahsedilen romanlardaki kadın figürlerine odaklanılmış ve bu karakterler ırk, sınıf, cinsiyet, sömürgecilik, sömürgecilik sonrası feminizm bağlamında incelenmiştir. Kitapların derinlemesine okuması yapıldıktan sonra, Ngugi'nin, eserlerinde çeşitli kadın figürlerine yer verildiği görülmüştür. Her iki eserde kadınları sömürgeciliğin kurbanı, anne, ezilmiş ve özgürlük savaşçısı gibi çeşitli şekillerde görmekteyiz. Bunların dışında, *A Grain of Wheat (Bir Buğday Tanesi)* adlı eserde beyaz kadın figürüne ve onların siyah kadınlara karşı tutumundan da bahsedilmiştir. Kısacası, bu çalışma çeşitli kadın figürlerini çeşitli açılardan incelemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sömürgecilik, Sömürgecilik Sonrası, Feminizm, Sömürgecilik Sonrası Feminizm, Kadın, ırk, Sınıf, cinsiyet, Ataerkillik

ABSTRACT

The Figure of Postcolonial Women in Ngugi Wa Thiongo's

Petals of Blood and A Grain of Wheat

The purpose of this study is to examine the figure of postcolonial women in Ngugi wa Thiongo's *Petals of Blood* and *A grain of Wheat*. These novels deal with the condition of Kenya after the colonial period. In this study, the women figures of the novels have been focused on and analyzed in the light of race, class, gender, colonialism, and postcolonial feminism. After a profound reading of the both books, it has been understood that Ngugi portrays various types of women characters in his two books. We see women characters as victims of colonialism and patriarchy, mothers, oppressed figures, and also freedom fighters. Apart from this, *A Grain Wheat* also includes white women characters and deals with the attitudes of them against black women. And, this study analyzes various postcolonial women characters from various aspects.

Key Words: Colonialism, Postcolonialism, Feminism, Postcolonial Feminism, Women, Race, Class, Gender, Patriarchy

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Ahmet KAYINTU danışmanlığında, Eren BOLAT' ın hazırladığı “The Figure Of Postcolonial Women in Ngugi Wa Thiongo’s *Petals of Blood* and *A Grain of Wheat* konulu bu çalışma/..../..... tarihinde aşağıdaki jüri tarafından İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı’nda yüksek lisans tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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Bu tezin İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı’nda yapıldığını ve Enstitümüz kurallarına göre düzenlendiğini onaylıyorum.

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INTRODUCTION

The figure of woman and her position in the society have changed drastically throughout the human history. Towards the end of 21st century feminist activists have made great contributions to arouse the interest of people on the women's right that they have not obtained throughout the history. Feminist theory generally touched on the subordinate position of the women in the society, and also tried to obtain the same rights that men have. In this process of searching for the equality, it also examined the intermingled relation between women and society. However, in feminist theory, middle-class white women took place on the basis of the theory, which is the most important lack of the theory. As a result; racial, social, economic, and cultural differences of the women were underestimated. And especially, third world women stayed out of the theory.

The problem of the third world women has not been solved even after the proposals of the postcolonial theory. In spite of the fact that theory concerns with the problem third world people, women again remained outside. The reason of this problem is that the theory has a male dominant attitude towards the problem of the colonized people.

Postcolonial theory has begun to go side by side with the feminist theory after 1980s. The main concern of both these theories is to show the problems of colonized women who are under the exposure of both colonialism and patriarchy. That is, double-colonization of the third world women torn between patriarchy and colonialism has started to be questioned. Postcolonial feminist critics have begun to deal with the colored women suffering and examined the race, class and gender in relation to the problem.

Postcolonial writers, especially postcolonial feminist writers, have placed emphasis on the problem of non-white women, and draw a picture of the colored women, which is unlike the depicted ones in the white centered works. That is, the figure of postcolonial women has been reflected through the race, gender and class because their blackness and female identity has been determined by the man and white colonizers. Ngugi wa Thiong'o is one these writers who mentioned the problem of colored women and their position in the society. In his works, *Petals of Blood* and *A Grain of Wheat*, he depicts the figure of colored women living in an African society. The main purpose of this study is to reflect

the figure of postcolonial women in the works of Ngugi wa Thiong'o: *Petals of Blood* and *A Grain of Wheat*.

In consideration of Ngugi and his literary career, the figure of the postcolonial women is examined in *Petals of Blood* and *A Grain of Wheat*. To this end, the study consists of three chapters. In the first chapter of this study, race, class and gender are analyzed thoroughly in their relation to the postcolonial female condition. These three concepts are fundamental for a deep analysis of the woman figure of the postcolonial world.

In the following part of the first chapter, postcolonialism and postcolonial feminism, are examined deeply, with their relation to the novels, *Petals of Blood* and *A Grain of Wheat*, has been discussed. In this part, through the lenses of these theories, both works are analyzed from the aspects of postcolonialism and postcolonial feminism. Firstly, theoretical backgrounds will be given, and then all concepts will be examined in the light of the novels. At the end of this chapter, the position of colored woman in the third world will be depicted.

In the second chapter of this study, I will focus on the figure of women in pre-colonial societies and in Kenya. The changing position of the women in those regions has been reflected in its historical context. Then, the women, torn between colonialism and patriarchy, have been dealt with. With the extracts taken from the novels, the condition of the oppressed women has been mentioned.

In the final chapter, the postcolonial women figures in *Petals of Blood* and *A Grain of Wheat* will be focused on. The statues of the non-white women will be given, and then the condition of them, and especially main female characters of the novel, will be reflected.

Before focusing on my study, I will mention Ngugi briefly, because his experiences have made a great impact on his works.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o is a distinguished Kenyan writer born in 1938, Kamiriithu, Kenya. He was baptized as James Ngugi, which is the direct effect of colonialism on black people. But upon realizing during his high school period that his Gikuyu values and culture were underestimated and began to disappear, he changed his Christian name as Ngugi wa

Thiong'o, which means Ngugi, son of Thiong'o. He wrote *Weep not child, A River Between*, and *A Grain of Wheat* and published the three novels under the name James Ngugi. James is the name which he adopted when he was baptized into Christianity in primary school, however later he refused the name because he realized that it was a part of the colonial naming system when Africans were taken as slaves to America and were given the names of the plantation owners. That is, when a slave was bought by Smith, that slave was renamed Smith. This meant that they were the property of Smith or Brown and the same thing was later transferred to the colony. It means that if an African was baptized, as evidence of his new self or the new identity he was given an English name. Not just a biblical, but also a biblical and English name. It was a symbolical replacing of one identity with another. So the person who was once Ngugi is now James Ngugi, the one who was once owned by his people is now owned by an English naming system. So when he realized that, he began to reject the name James and to connect himself to African name which was given at birth (Reinhard and Lindfors, eds., 35).

Ngugi and his family suffered so much during the Mau Mau War, a resistance action towards to the colonizers. Even his mother was tortured at the Kaniriithu home guard post. Ngugi mentions his and his family's sufferings in his work *Secret Lives*. He points out that nearly all of his family members suffered during the colonial period.

Ngugi got his B.A. degree in English, from the Makerere University College in Uganda. Formerly, he was writing in English but now writing in Gikuyu, his mother language which is spoken by the Kikuyu people of Kenya. Ngugi has bad memories about his native language that he experienced when he was in high school.

The culprit was given corporal punishment three to five strikes of the cane on bare buttocks or made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM DONKEY or I AM STUPID. Sometimes the culprits were fined money they could hardly afford. And how did the teacher catch the culprit? A button was initially given to one pupil who was caught speaking his mother tongue. Whoever had the button at the end of the day would sing who had given it to him and the ensuing process would bring out all the culprits of the day. These children were turned into witch hunters and in the process were being taught the lucrative value of being a traitor to one's immediate community (Thiong'o, 11).

Ngugi's works contain novels, essays, plays and also short stories. He published *Weep Not Child*, his first novel, in 1964. The main characteristic of this novel is that it is the first

novel in English to be published by an East African writer. In his second novel, *The River Between*, he mentioned Mau Mau rebellion, and it was included in Kenya's national secondary school syllabus. After his novel, *A Grain of Wheat*, he changed his writing language and began to write in Gikuyu. In 1977, *Petals of Blood* was published. It depicts a harsh and lavish picture of life in neo-colonial Kenya. It aroused great interest in Kenya and also throughout the world. He explains the atmosphere in Kenya:

... I came to realize that Kenya was poor, not because of anything internal, but because the wealth produced by Kenyans ended in developing the western world... Their aid, loans, and investment capital that they gloat about are simply a chemical catalyst that sets in motion the whole process of expropriation of Kenya's wealth, with, of course, a few leftovers for the 'lucky' few...

This was what I was trying to show in *Petals of Blood*: that imperialism can never develop our country or develop us, Kenyan. In doing so, I was only trying to be faithful to what Kenyan workers, peasants and workers have always realized as shown by their historical struggles since 1895 (Thiong'o, 96-97).

Because of his writings on the injustices of the dictatorial government of the time, Ngugi and his family were forced to live in exile. He lives in America now. He is a professor of English and Comparative Literature at University of California. First of all, He can be called as an activist, who has various professions. Apart from this, he is a novelist, playwright, essayist, journalist, filmmaker and academician.

1. A CRITICAL APPROACH TO RACE, CLASS, AND GENDER

1.1. Race

Before 1980s, feminist theory basically dealt with the gender as the primary source of the women oppression. Gender took place at the center of the theory. However, after 1980s, it is realized that gender is not the sole cause of the oppression that women lived. “The need to reassess the salience and influence of race and class, as well as gender, in all spheres of social life” has been understood (Chow, xiii). That is, these three concepts are intermingled and should be analyzed together in order to understand the social, cultural and economic characteristics of a society. For this reason, race has been examined firstly.

To define the concepts race and racism is not an easy work. Because, no stable and absolute definition of the terms can be done. no matter how slippery concept it is, *Webster’s Dictionary* describes racism as “a belief or doctrine that inherent differences among the various human races determine cultural or individual achievement, usually involving the idea that one’s own race is superior and has the right to rule others” (Webster, 1591). In its strict sense, race can be defined as physical appearance of a person, which includes skin color, eye color, hair color, body structure etc. William Z. Ripley points out in his book *The Races of Europe* (Ripley, 37) that the shape of the human head by which we mean the general proportions of length, breadth, and height, irrespective of the “bumps ” of the phrenologist is one of the best available tests of race known. That is, race means dividing people into groups in according to their physical structures and characteristics.

George Fredrickson has a different understanding of race and racism. He states that racism is not merely an attitude or set of beliefs; it also expresses itself in the practices, institutions, and structures that a sense of deep difference justifies or validates. He makes it clear that racism is more than categorizing people just only according to their physical differences (Fredrickson, 6). That is, race is independent of skin color in today’s world and examined from the various aspects, including social factors.

David Theo Goldberg stresses another point of racism. He states that “the shift from medieval pre-modernity to modernity is in part the shift from a religiously defined to a

racially defined discourse of human identity and personhood” (Goldberg, 286). Oliver C. Cox also asserts that “racial exploitation and racism developed among Europeans with the rise of capitalism” (Cox, 72). He stresses that the need of labor caused to slavery and racism. Eric Williams also supports this idea and mentions that racism was a consequence of slavery: the outcome of the need to legitimize the institution of slavery and the means of exploitation, subjugation and coercion on which it rested.

Michael Omi and Howard Winant define the meanings of race and make a broader definition of it. They define it as follow:

The sociohistorical process, by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed. Our attempt to elaborate a theory of racial formation will proceed in two steps. First, we argue that racial formation is a process of historically situated projects in which human bodies and social structures are represented and organized. Next, we link racial formation to the evolution of hegemony, the way in which society is ruled and organized (Omi and Winant, 55-56).

As it is clearly seen, race has always been a complicated concept. It is always discussed whether it has a direct relation with gender roles, class differentiation, and society or not. Ania Loomba points out that race has been the most powerful but at the same time the most fragile determinant of human identity. A general consideration of race is that it is a biological concept and the skin color of the people lies on the basis of the categorization of the races. But, some writers like Loomba think that “it is not a biological phenomenon on the contrary races are socially imagined rather than biological identities” (Loomba, 121). That is, race is constructed by people taking into consideration economic, social, cultural, and political conditions.

The roots of racism go back to the ancient times. “Racial stereotyping is not an outcome of modern time colonialism only, but dates back to the Greek and Roman periods, yet along with European colonization, racial, cultural and ethnic classification among people as the white and the black came to be far more dominantly and intensely used” (Loomba, 105-106). Although their perception and applying of colonialism were different, they have similar conception of the “outsiders.” Ania Loomba asserts that:

Despite the enormous differences between the colonial enterprises of various European nations, they seem to generate fairly similar stereotypes of outsiders- both those out- siders who roamed far away on the edges of the world, and those who

(like the Irish) lurked uncomfortably nearer home. Thus laziness, aggression, violence, greed, sexual promiscuity, bestiality, primitivism, innocence and irrationality are attributed to (often contradictorily and inconsistently) by the English, French, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese colonists to Turks, Africans, native Americans, Jews, Indians, the Irish and others. It is also worth noting that some of these descriptions were used for working class populations and women in Europe (Loomba, 106-107).

That is the colonized people are seen as subaltern when compared with the whites. “Science also claimed to demonstrate that the biological features of each group determined its physiological and social attributes” (Loomba, 115).

In the first half of the 19th century, social theorists started to question race and racism. After 1920s, an awareness of racism began to rise in America and other parts of the world. The immigration problem in England, for instance, was examined in the light of racism. Social critics and theorists began to question the relation between race and class and as a result, their relation with colonialism, imperialism and slavery. Ralph Waldo Emerson draws attention to this issue: “It is race, is it not, that puts the hundred millions of India under the dominion of a remote island in the north of Europe”. He emphasizes the direct result of racism is the oppression of the others.

Socially constructed racism is not so clear in the local area and cannot be felt heavily. But when a black goes to a European country, s/he can witness social pressure on the non-whites. S/he experiences the grief categorization which was constructed socially and economically. Fanon points out that:

As a school boy, I had many occasions to spend whole hours talking about the supposed customs of the savage Senegalese. In what was said, there was a lack of awareness that was at the very least paradoxical. Because the Antillean does not think of himself as a black man; he thinks of himself as Antillean. The Negro lives in Africa. Subjectively, intellectually, the Antillean conducts himself like a white man. But he is a Negro. That he will learn once he goes to Europe; and when he hears Negroes mentioned he will recognize that the word includes himself as well as the Senegalese (Fanon, 148).

On the other hand, if you are a woman the oppression you experience is more intensive than man. It is evident that women feel oppression because of the social categorization. Marilyn Frye points out the socially constructed differentiation between man and women:

One is marked for application of oppressive pressures by one’s membership in some group or category... In the category, woman...If a woman has little or no

economic or political power, or achieves little of what she wants to achieve, a major casual factor in this is that she is a woman. For any woman of any race or economic class, being a woman is significantly attached to whatever disadvantages and deprivations she suffers, be they great or small...[In contrast,] being male is something[a man] has going for him, even if race or class or age or disability is going against him (Frye, 15-16).

It is understood clearly that racism is a socially constructed phenomenon that especially women have to bear. If you are black women the degree of your inferiority increases. The exposure of the society reaches a higher level, which makes you more subaltern in their eyes. And also, racism is relevant with the other social power structures in the society. As a direct result of the colonialism, the concept of race is highly related to the class. Hence, in the following part, an examination of race and class will be done thoroughly.

1.2. Class

The concept of class takes place generally in the field of sociology, but on the other hand it is also related to other social sciences. In its strict sense, class is defined as a group of people sharing a similar social position and certain economic, political, and cultural characteristics. Class can be defined as a large-scale grouping of people who share common economic resources that in turn influence their lifestyle (Sutton, 485). That is, we can call a group of people sharing some common features as a class. The classification is determined according to economic, social and cultural conditions of the people.

For a full understanding of society, the analysis of the class should be made firstly. The groups in a society such as farmers, workers, merchants, etc. compose different classes in consideration of their economic status in the society. The statements of Friedrich Engels support this condition:

All the history, with the exception of its primitive stages, was the history of class struggles; that these warring classes of society are always the products of the modes of production and of exchange, in a word, of the economic structure of society always furnishes the real basis, starting from the which can alone work out the ultimate explanation of the whole superstructure of juridical and political institutions as well as of the religious, philosophical, and other ideas of a given historical period (qtd. in Berger, 42).

Engels points out that the mode of the production shapes and affects the various institutions of a society, and we understand that law system, religious institutions, education system and even art nature are determined by the product modes.

On the other hand, Ania Loomba analyzes race and ethnicity in relation to colonialism and capitalism. She states that “Colonialism was the means through which capitalism achieved its global expansion. Racism simply facilitated this process, and was the conduit through which the labor of colonized was appropriated” (Loomba, 124). And also she utters that from the aspect of the sociological approach “economic explanations are insufficient for understanding the racial features of colonized societies” (Loomba, 124).

The classification of people under the influence of racist ideologies caused them to have certain jobs, which was seen appropriate just only for them. Loomba benefits from Ernst Renan in her books. Renan says that,

Nature has made a race of worker, the Chinese race, who have wonderful manual dexterity and almost not sense of honour; govern them with justice, levying from them, in return for the blessing of such a government, an ample allowance for the conquering race, and they will be satisfied; a race of tillers of the soil, the Negro...; a race of masters and soldiers, the European race. Reduce this noble race to working in the ergastulum like Negroes and Chinese, and they rebel... But the life at which our workers rebel would make a Chinese or a fellah happy, as they are not military creatures in the least. Let each one do what he is made for, and all will be well (qtd. in Loomba, 126).

Alex Callinicos claims that “racism is inscribed within capitalist modes of production, and that it helps to keep capitalism going, and it is thus in the interests of the capitalist class” (Callinicos, 40). In the same way, Robert Miles regards racism as main factor to the process of capital accumulation and class relations in capitalist societies. In his essay *Apropos the Idea of ‘Race’ . . . Again*, Miles argues that racial differences resulted in class distinctions. He proposes that “Here then are race relations; they are definitely not caste relations. They are labor capital-profit relations; therefore, race relations are proletarian bourgeois relations and hence political-class relations” (Cox, 336). In *The Declining Significance of Race*, (1980) William Julius Wilson evolves a class conflict model of U.S. racism. He sees slavery and plantation economy, segregation and the rise of the white working class, and finally industrial expansion and dispersed racial conflict as the three historical stages in the United States marked by three different modes of economic relations. Wilson states that different systems of production and state laws and policies affects race relations in each stage.

Stuart Hall utters that “No one can explain racism in abstraction, separate from other social relations such as class, sexuality or gender. Nor can one explain it by reducing it to these relations” (Hall, 59).

It is clearly seen that because of the racist ideologies racial superiority turned into class superiority. Hence, black races remained as subaltern, and generally took place in the working class and slave group. On the contrary, as it is throughout the human history, white races have become the masters of the blacks and took the control of them.

1.3. Gender Analysis Through Race and Class

Gender is a concept which is related to race and class. And, it is defined as the state of being male or female. Before mentioning their relation, the difference between sex and gender should be debated. The difference between sex and gender is that sex is biological and gender is cultural and social. That is, “the word gender refers not to our anatomy, but to our behavior as socially programmed men and women” (Tyson, 92). But some theorists argue that both concepts are not separable. Judith Lorber asserts that:

[n]either sex nor gender are pure [separate, autonomous, discrete] categories. Combinations of incongruous genes, genitalia, and hormonal input are ignored in sex categorization [as male or female], just as combinations of incongruous physiology, identity, sexuality, appearance, and behavior are ignored in the social construction of gender statues [masculine or feminine] (qtd. in Tyson, 112).

Kinnear asserts that “gender roles are behaviors that are determined by the social and cultural context in which people live and how they define femininity and masculinity” (Kinnear, 4). They can change in terms of cultures and societies, that is, no absolute definition of gender can be given. Gender roles are not always directly related to the sex. There is a common consideration of women roles that they are responsible for childcare, and their exact place is their home, not outside. But on the other hand, in some American Indian tribes, people have the chance to choose their duty, that is, women can do a job which is normally regarded as men’s work. This situation supports the idea that gender roles are not stable, but rather “socially constructed,” and therefore cannot be examined separately from the race.

In his book *The Second Sex*, French feminist academician Simone de Beauvoir explains how gender occurs. He emphasizes that a woman is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. It is not biology, psychology, or economy deciding the figure that the human presents in society; on the contrary civilization produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine (Beauvoir, 9). Marie Richmond-Abbott also defines it as follow: “gender roles has come to mean entirely socially created expectations of masculine and feminine behavior and the biological factor of sex is used to construct a social category of gender” (Richmond-Abbott, 4-5). The duties are shared between men and women, and they play their roles which are determined socially. “Men are commonly held to be more ‘naturally’ domineering, hierarchically oriented and power-hungry, while women are seen as nurturing, child rearing and domestically inclined” (Barker, 231). That is, it should be highlighted that being a woman is not biological but rather social and cultural.

The relation between race, class, and gender is an issue which is discussed by social scientists. For many years, it has not been questioned how race is gendered, and black women were ignored in the academic studies of racism. A great importance has been given mainly to black men, so that, no deeply examination of the black women racism has been done.

Today, many critics point out that gender roles are highly affected by racism. For instance, Karen Dugger asserts that, “racial oppression has devastated and exploited black women’s productive and reproductive roles seriously” (Dugger, 34). We see this oppression in the 19th century America. While white women were considered as fragile and sensitive, black women were overburdened, and worked under heavy physical conditions as black men, which is normally not expected to be made by white women. Guida Lerner mentions this situation in the following lines:

There is much to be learned concerning the relationship between the ideology of woman’s place and the reality of woman’s place by examining the history of Black women... Women, as all oppressed groups, perceive their status relatively, in comparison with their own groups, with previously known conditions, with their own expectations. White society has long decreed that while woman’s place is in the home, Black woman’s place is in the White woman’s kitchen. No wonder that many black women define their own liberation as being free to take care of their

own homes and their own children, supported by a man with a job (qtd. in Barnett, 267).

It is evident that black women suffer from racism and have a different woman figure and gender role than white women. On the other hand, class discrimination is also seen among the women. The main focus of the feminist theory is on the middle-class women and her working condition. It questioned the barriers and obstacles that make women stay out of working life. Feminist critics try to give economic freedom to the women, which is regarded as the main criteria of supporting women rights. They tried to liberate the women and let them take part in social life. But the condition and position of the upper-class women render this endeavors void in some ways. Because, upper-class women have no necessity to work since they are rich and have a comfortable life, on the contrary low-class women work for them and take care of all their duties to live off. That is, working out is not the basis of being free of women, or do not give them freedom. Some women work because of the economic problems and poverty of them. So, working out does not make them free, they are again bounded to another thing, such as white women.

Class discrimination and division is the result of racism in some cases. Even in modern times, it is clearly understood and recognized that black people have some problems in finding jobs, and as a result they cannot afford their needs. When black men are hired, they work in low paid jobs. On the other hand, black women also have to work for economic reasons, not for being free. Besides working outside, they are also responsible for their housework and childcare. Karen Dugger mentions that,

Black women's conceptions of womanhood emphasize self-reliance, strength, resourcefulness, autonomy, and the responsibility of providing for the material as well as emotional needs of family members. Black women do not see labor force participation and being a wife and mother as mutually exclusive; rather, within Black culture, employment is integral, normative, and traditional component of the roles of wife and mother (Dugger, 35).

All in all, it is evident that race, class and gender are social structural categories. That is, they are embedded in the institutional structure of society. To understand these terms, a social and structural analysis should be done (Andersen and Collins, 16). Because, race is a social construction, and similar to race, class is also related to social structure, it organizes material, ideological, and interpersonal relations in a certain society. Gender, on the other

hand, is a matter of interpersonal relations, but it cannot be separated from race and class, because it also deals with social identities and group relations (Andersen, ix).

The metaphor of a bird cage, generated by Marilyn Frye, effectively illustrates the penetration of race, class and gender into the social institutions. Frye states that when we come closer to just one wire in the cage we cannot see the other wires. If our conception of what is before us is determined by this myopic focus, we could look at that one wire, up and down the length of it, and cannot see why a bird would not just fly around the wire any time it wanted to go somewhere. But, if we move away a little bit, and get a macroscopic view of the whole cage, we can see why the bird does not go anywhere. That is, while the birdcage is a macroscopic phenomenon, the oppressiveness of the situations in which women live our various and different lives is a macroscopic phenomenon. If we look from a wider perspective we can see various barriers that women faced up (Frye, 40-41). Through this metaphor, Frye also shows us that white feminists see only one wire, and that is patriarchy, and black anti-racists see only the wire of racism. However, they underestimate the wires of race and class in the oppression of black women.

Finally, gender, race and class are not biological, on the contrary, they are constructed socially, and even, they are the social categorizations of people. With the consideration of this, it would be unsuitable to examine them separately. It can be thought that they are free from each other, and should be analyzed by one by. However, these three concepts, - race, class and gender- are interlinked and concurrent categorizations which differ from one society and culture to another. That is, it can be concluded that racism should be taken into consideration to fight against sexism by white feminists, and a great importance should be given class fact to analyze and understand the problem of women oppression fully.

1.4. Postcolonialism and Resistance

“I am talking of millions of men who have been skillfully injected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair, abasement” Aimé Césaire, *Discours sur le Colonialisme*.

Postcolonialism is a concept which is commonly used to describe the period after colonization of imperial and powerful countries and has gained importance during the modern period. Postcolonialism is a complicated term, although many definitions of it have been made several times by the theorists and critics. Generally, as I have mentioned above, it is used to define the period after the colonialism and its effect on the colonized people, however, some critics assert that colonialism has never ended, but it is camouflaged. They also believe that postcolonialism is some other kind of colonialism, and it investigates the relations between colonized and colonizer nations. John McLeod utters that,

The term post-colonialism is not the same as after colonialism, as if colonial values are no longer to be reckoned with. It does not define a radically new historical era, nor does it herald a brave new world where all the ills of the colonial past have been cured. Rather, post-colonialism recognizes both historical continuity and change. On the one hand, it acknowledged that the material realities and modes of representation common to colonialism are still very much with us today, even if the political map of the world has changed through decolonization. But on the other hand, it asserts the promise, the possibility, and the continuing necessity of change, while also recognizing that important challenges and changes have already been achieved (McLeod, 33).

From the statements of McLeod, we deduce that postcolonial period is not a new era which is remarkably different from the colonial period. However, it draws attention to the need of a change in the modern period, which will break the chain bounding colonized people to the colonizers. Like McLeod, another important writer Bill Ashcroft defines post-colonialism in a similar way. Ashcroft points out that the oppression and impact of the colonizer countries still go on although they guised this condition changed its name. He states that,

Post-colonial analysis increasingly makes clear the nature and the impact of inherited power relations, and their continuing effects on modern global culture and politics. Political questions usually approached from the stand points of nation-state

relations, race, class, economics and gender are made clearer when we consider them in the context of their relations with the colonialist past. This is because the structures of power established by the colonizing process remain pervasive, though often hidden in cultural relations throughout the world (Ashcroft, 1).

Peter Childs also holds the same opinion with McLeod. He thinks that the dominance of the colonial power is still seen once colonized nations. The impact of colonialism on the culture, tradition, language and also economy of the colonized nations still exists in today's world. Although we witness no army of the colonizers on the colonized regions, their oppression is felt in various parts of the colonized societies. For instance, England withdrew its military units from India, however, the impact it made on the language of Indian people is still going on. Approximately eighty percent of Indian people speak in English.

In the period after decolonization, it rapidly became apparent that although colonial armies and bureaucracies might have withdrawn, Western powers were still intent on maintaining maximum indirect control over erstwhile colonies, via political, cultural and above all economic channels, a phenomenon which became known as neocolonialism (Childs, 5).

Ngugi wa Thiong'o is one the most important postcolonial writers who shows his protest against the colonizers in his works. In *Decolonizing the Mind*, he stresses how the colonizers exploited Africa, and its people. He asserts that,

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Europe stole art treasures from Africa to decorate their houses and museums; in the twentieth century Europe is stealing the treasures of the mind to enrich their languages and cultures. Africa needs back its economy, its politics, its culture, its languages and all its patriotic writers (eds. Parker and Starkey, 125).

In *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi remarks the postcolonial consciousness, and through his novel supports the resistance of native people. We see the protest of Karega at the beginning of the novel, he says "Disband yourself... disband the tyranny of foreign companies and their local messengers! Out with foreign rule policed by colonized black skins! Out with exploitation of our sweat!" (Thiong'o, 4). In spite of the oppression and exploitation they suffer, native people still have hope to gain their independence. Munira asserts that "I cannot speak for everybody- but it seems that there is still enthusiasm and belief that we can all do something to make our independence real" (Thiong'o, 10). And, "a few had to die for freedom" (Thiong'o, 50). Ngugi believes the power of Kenyan people:

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 will tell of it? What of their achievements in production that had annually attracted visitors from ancient china and India?” (Thiong’o, 1991).

Throughout the novel, we see the courage and belief of Karega, who strongly struggles for the freedom of his country, in every case; he tries to motivate native people, especially children, because he believes that children are the hope of Kenya, who will get the freedom of their own people.

Here is our hope... in the new children, who have nothing to prove to the white man... who do not find it necessary to prove that they can eat with knife and fork; that they can speak English through the nose; that they can serve the monster as efficiently as the white ministers; and therefore can see the collective humiliation clearly and hence are ready to strike out for the true kingdom of black god within us all (Thiong’o, 167).

Karega never stops telling the truths to his students, he always mentions the honorable resistance of Kenyan people. That is, through the character of Karega, Ngugi reflects the belief and hope of Kenyan people for the independence, which have never died. Karega explicitly depicts the history of Kenya to awaken people. He believes that the oppression of black people is an undeniable fact. He mentions how his people resisted against colonizers: “That our people fought against the Arab slave raiders is a fact: that Akamba people formidable defenses against them even while trading with them in ivory is a fact. That our people resisted Europeans intrusion is a fact” (Thiong’o, 246). He believes that Kenya has an honorable history since it has always resisted against the others who want to colonize their land. He says “That Kenya people have had a history of fighting and resistance is therefore a fact” (Thiong’o, 247). He thinks that Kenyan children must be aware of the things that deformed them yesterday, that are deforming them today. They must also look at the things which formed them yesterday, that will creatively form them into a new breed of men and women who will not be afraid to link hands with children from other lands on the basis of an unashamed immersion in the struggle in the struggle against those things that dwarf us (Thiong’o, 247).

Karega believes that “Phrases like democracy, the free world, for instance, are used to mean their opposite. It depends of course on who is saying it where, when and to whom” (Thiong’o, 57). That is true for the condition of the Kenyan people. Since the white man

came for the first time to their land to bring democracy and civilization, the oppression and exploitation of the native people have never ended. They were “compelled to work for these oppressing Foreigners” (Thiong’o, 82). The lawyer mentions this oppression not only in their own land but also in other parts of the world:

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 accept our inferiority so as to accept their superiority and their rule over us. Then I went to America. I had read in a history book that it was a place where they believed in the equality and freedom of man. While I was at a black college in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, I saw with my own eyes, a black man hanging from a tree outside a church. His crime? He had earlier fought a white man who had manhandled his sister (Thiong’o, 165).

The non-white people are not safe abroad, even, they are in danger in their own region because of the colonizers. The lawyer continues: “Is this not what has been happening in Kenya since 1896? So I said to myself: a black man is not safe at home; a black man is not safe abroad” (Thiong’o, 1991). And as a result, many people have gone to various parts of the world. Karega’s song remarks this:

I live in ILmorog Division which is in Chiri District; Chiri which is in the republic of Kenya; Kenya which is part of East Africa; East Africa which is part of Africa; Africa which is the land of African peoples; Africa from where other African people were scattered to other corner of the world (Thiong’o, 109).

In spite of all these hard conditions, colonized people never stop to fight against, and the story of Ndinguri shows their protest: “Why do you take our land? Why do you oppress black people? Why do you take our land? Why do you take our sweat and ruin our women? Johnnie boys, red men, say your last prayers to your gods” (Thiong’o, 223). Their enthusiastic song proves their love for the freedom:

Our flag. It is of three colors,
Rightly sang the poet: Green is our
Land; black is Black people; and
Red is our blood (Thiong’o, 53).

In *A Grain of Wheat*, we again see the awakening and resistance of native people, who go to the forest to fight against the colonizers. It can be said that that resistance is more apparent in *A Grain of Wheat* than *Petals of Blood*. All of the characters look forward to

freedom. Warui's expressions show their love for freedom: "Our people, is there a song sweeter than that of freedom? Of a truth, we have waited for it many a sleepless night. Those who have gone before us, those of us spared to see the sun today, and even those to be born tomorrow, must join the feast" (Thiong'o, 19). Gikonyo also thinks that his country is ready for freedom. "For a time Gikonyo forgot his mission to the city as his heart fluttered with the flags. He got out of the bus and walked down Kenyatta Avenue feeling for the moments as if the city really belonged to him... to Gikonyo Nairobi seemed ready for Independence" (Thiong'o, 59-60).

Ngugi, by means of Kihika, expresses his thoughts about freedom. In every case, Kihika tries to motivate his people for the independence. Kihika says "Choose between freedom and slavery and it is fitting that a man should grab at freedom and die for it" (Thiong'o, 186). Kihika also believes that black people are the owners of Kenya. It does not belong to the whiteman. This soil belongs to Kenyan people. Thus, nobody has right to sell or buy it. He sees Kenya as their mother and also thinks that all her children are equal before her. She is their common inheritance (Thiong'o, 96). He continues his speech by giving the example of India and Gandhi to encourage his people. Because, he believes that if they never stop fighting against the colonizers, freedom will come so soon. With the story of Gandhi, he also stresses the importance of togetherness.

It is a question of unity, the example of India is there before our noses. The British were there for hundreds and hundreds of years. They ate India's wealth. They drank India's blood. They never listened to the political talk-talk of a few men. What happened? There came this man Gandhi... they say with one voice: we want back our freedom. The British laughed, they are good at laughing. But they had to swallow back their laughter when things turned out serious (Thiong'o, 86).

We also see why native people went to the forest. The only reason of this is the increasing oppression of the colonizers. They went into the forest because whiteman never behaved them in a good way as he declared. "He ruled with the gun, the lives of the all black people of Kenya" (Thiong'o, 95). General R. talks to the public to make them aware about the colonizers and why they chose to live in the forest:

The whiteman went in cars. He lived in a big house. His children went to school. But who tilled the soil on which grew coffee, tea, pyrethrum, and sisal? Who dug the roads and paid the taxes? The whiteman lived on our land. He ate what we grew and cooked. And even the crumbs from the table, he threw to his dogs. That is why we went into the forest" (Thiong'o, 216)

The speeches of Kihika and General R. were impressive, because they talked about the thing that many people were waiting for hundreds of years. Anyway, Kihika became the glimmer of light and freedom for the colonized people. All people believed the importance of resistance, which would bring freedom. Native people of the novel spoke to each other as follows:

They talked of suffering under the whiteman... People would sing: Kenya is the country of black people... What thing is greater than love for one's country? The love that I have for Kenya kept me alive and made me endure everything. Therefore it is true; Kenya is black people's country (Thiong'o, 64).

Harry is also another character who fights against the colonizers. He was an effective man, who was good at public speaking. He mentioned all the sufferings and dissatisfaction of the native people:

Harry denounced the whiteman and cursed that benevolence and protection which denied people land and freedom. He amazed them by reading aloud letters to the whiteman, letters in which he set out in clear terms people's discontent with taxation, forced labor on white settler's land, and with the soldier settlement scheme which after the first big war, left many black people without homes or land around Tigoni and other places" (Thiong'o, 12).

Finally, it can be said that colonialism is a kind of monster for the native people of Africa. Ngugi also points out this disaster in his novels. We see the resistance of the colonized people against the colonizers in these two works, *Petals of Blood* and *A Grain of Wheat*. That is, in the second half of the 19th century, African people have started to become conscious of the disastrous face of the colonizers. Their entire struggle for the freedom has been reflected in the novels of postcolonial writers.

2.3. Postcolonial Feminism

In the first chapter, the relation between race, class and gender is analyzed thoroughly and it is pointed that all these three concepts are essential for the formation of identity. And, feminist theory also should include analysis of race, class and gender. All these things are needed for the analysis of postcolonial women, too.

In recent years, postcolonial writings and analysis have become popular, and as a result, a number of works have been published, dealing with the post-colonial people. However, the position of women in these works was still so slight and not clearly depicted.

For this reason, in this part I will try to analyze why women were ignored and what is the relation between postcolonial theory and feminism.

Both postcolonial theory and feminism deal with the problem between oppressed and oppressor, that is, colonized versus colonizer, woman versus man. As I have mentioned in the first chapter, the root of these differences and discriminations stem from racial and sexual conditions. Both colonized people and women are seen as other. While postcolonial theory seeks to demonstrate the problems of colored people and try to gain an identity, feminist theory aims to make women free from the male oppression and make them have the same position as men in the society. So, they have common points and follow a similar way. That is, we can define postcolonial feminism “as a new feather wishes to bring into light the typicality of the problems of women of the Third world nations” (Mishra, 129). Robert Young also encircles the boundaries of postcolonial feminism as follow:

Postcolonial feminism has never operated as a separate entity from postcolonialism; rather it has directly inspired the forms and the force of postcolonial politics. Where its feminist focus is foregrounded, it comprises non-western feminisms which negotiate the political demands of nationalism, socialist feminism, liberalism, and ecofeminism, alongside the social challenge of everyday patriarchy, typically supported by its institutional and legal discrimination: of domestic violence, sexual abuse, rape, honour killings, dowry deaths, female foeticide, child abuse. Feminism in a postcolonial frame begins with the situation of the ordinary woman in a particular place, while also thinking her situation through in relation to broader issues to give her the more powerful basis of collectivity. It will highlight the degree to which women are still working against a colonial legacy that was itself powerfully patriarchal - institutional, economic, political, and ideological (Young, 116).

Firstly, the identification problem of third world women should be focused on, because the figure of colonized women is a little bit blurring, and generally excluded from the feminist theory. Gayatri Spivak, who is considered as the first major critic mentioning postcolonial theory with feminism, points out that western feminism has failed to “dehegemonize” woman figure all over the world. That is, black women, in other words non-white women, were ignored. In addition, the concept of woman was narrowed to the white, heterosexual and middle class woman. On the other hand, Chandra Talpade Mohanty asserts that “white woman image is always depicted as chaste, domesticated, and morally pure and black woman is regarded as promiscuous, available plantation workers. And also, she points out

that “it is the intersections of the various systematic networks of class, race, (hetero) sexuality, and nation, then, that position us as women” (Mohanty, 13). Mohanty also asks whom we call “Third World Women.” In its strict sense, this term is generally used to define underdeveloped regions such as Africa; some parts of Asia, Latin America, and third world women are living in these regions. However, Mohanty uses this concept for the all colored nations who experienced the harsh side of racism, colonialism and imperialism. That is, all black people living in those regions can be included in the concept of Third World People.

Third World Feminism mentions the problems and sufferings of non-white women who are exposed to racism, sexism, colonialism, imperialism and capitalism in not only Africa or Asia but also in a wider range (Mohanty, 4). Mohanty also explains like this:

What seems to constitute “women of color” or “third world women” as a viable oppositional alliance is a common context of struggle rather than color or racial identifications. Similarly, it is third world women’s oppositional political relation to sexist, racist, and imperialist structures that constitutes our potential commonality. Thus, it is the common context of struggles against specific exploitative structures and systems that determines our potential political alliances (Mohanty, 7).

As it is clearly stated above, the concept of Third World women is not a biological phenomenon; on the contrary, it is a political and social issue. Third world women do not include just only a nation or region, but also it includes all colored women dominated by racial, class and colonial oppression.

Non-white women generally face up with marginalization in the white institutions. Mohanty explains this condition by mentioning immigrant colored women in the U.S. academy:

As “immigrant” women of color, we were neither the right color, gender, or nationality in terms of self-definition of the U.S. academy, or by extension of the Women’s Studies establishment. In women’s Studies contexts, the color of our gender mattered. The citizenship machinery deployed by the state which is positioned us as resident aliens (“deviant” non-citizen; “legal” immigrants) operates similarly within Women’s Studies: it confides as outsider status (Alexander and Mohanty, xiv).

Another postcolonial feminist critic Trinh T. Minh-ha points out that the differences of non-white women from the white are always expected to be mentioned in every situation such as in conferences, workshops, texts. She asserts that,

I am not only given the permission to open up and talk, I am also encouraged to express my difference. My audience expects and demands it; otherwise people would feel as if they have been cheated. We did not come to hear a third world member speak about the first (?) world, we came to listen to that voice of difference likely to bring *us what we can't have* and to divert us from the monotony of sameness... no uprooted person is invited to participate in this "special" wo/man's issue unless s/he makes up her/his mind and paints her/himself thick with authenticity (Ashcroft, 266).

From these lines we deduce that third world women are always seen as subaltern when compared with the white women. Mohanty also stresses that white western women call non-white women as "underdeveloped, oppressed, illiterate, and rural" (Mohanty, 259). On the other hand, white women are "educated, modern, free, and civilized" (Mohanty, 261).

Gayatri Spivak also mentions the inferior position of third world women, and she uses the term "subaltern" to describe them. She focuses on mainly colonized females who are double-colonized economy and gender. And, she makes it clear that there are not two basic categorizations of people and nations as colonizer and colonized, but there is another group except for this, and it is colonial women oppressed by both the colonizer and colonized. In her most famous work, *Can the Subaltern Speak*, she points out that:

Within the effaced itinerary of the subaltern subject, the track of sexual difference is doubly affected. The question is not of female participation in insurgency, or the ground rules of the sexual division of labor, for both of which there is evidence. It is, rather, that, both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the context colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern female is even more deeply in shadow (Spivak, 28).

That is, the oppression of colonialism and patriarchy makes it unbearable for the females, for this reason non-white women were silenced and nobody can hear them. Feminist theory misses this important point by focusing on only gender. Many critics think that gender should be analyzed together with race and class. Cherrly Johnson Odim mentions in her essay that:

Gender oppression cannot be the single leg on which feminism rests (in the case of third world women). It should not be limited to merely achieving equal treatment of women vis-à-vis men. This is where feminism as a philosophy must differ from shallow notion of "women's rights". Although on a theoretical level, women in the industrialized societies of the west can achieve a semblance of parity with men through legal and moral challenges to patriarchal systems, issues of race and class

undermine the potential success of such a movement for all women (qtd. in Mohanty, 320).

Most critics believe that a broader and complicated definition of feminism should be done, which includes all women not regarding with their color, nation, and class. Eshter Ngan-Ling Chow supports this:

Basic to a feminist transformation of knowledge is not only the discovery of the significance of gender but also the incorporation of race and class as central foci of analysis. Race, class, and gender are basic principles of social organization and of human interaction process. An inclusive feminist vantage point sees gender not through one lens but through a multiplicity of lenses that form a prism for analyzing the social construction of race, class and gender (Chow, 19).

For a full understanding of the Third World Women, all these interrelated subjects, race, class and gender, should be analyzed in an intermingled way. Starting from the modern world, postcolonial feminist theory tries to explain and reflect the position and condition of non-white women.

3. COLONIALISM, AFRICAN AND KENYAN WOMEN

3.1. Colonialism

Colonialism is a term which is generally related with imperialism, and for many critics, it is the direct result of imperialism. Colonialism has a broad definition, and it is defined as “the system in which a country maintains foreign colonies for their economic exploitation” in *Webster’s*. Ania Loomba also asserts that “colonialism and imperialism are used interchangeably” and accordingly, *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term as:

A settlement in a new country... a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up (qtd in Loomba, 1).

Colonialism is a multifaceted concept, which has a direct impact on the colonized society and its culture, tradition, and even religion. Colonizers generally control the resources, labor, and markets of the colonial regions and also inflict sociocultural, religious and linguistic structures on the colonized people. It can be defined as “the system of domination put in place to serve the interests of empire, and as such is to be understood as the operational dimension of imperialism” (Osterhammel, 145).

As a matter of fact, we can define colonialism as the “conquest and control of other people’s lands and goods” (Loomba, 2). When we penetrate into the concept of colonialism, it is evident that colonialism aims to “represent true European civilization in a distant territory, but practically there has always been a conflict between the colonial deeds and the imperial ideas” (Hobson, 6). Hobson defines colonialism as an “attempt to overflow its natural banks and absorb the near or distant territory of reluctant and inassimilable peoples” (Hobson, 6).

It may not be easy to assimilate the nations and their people, but, colonizers do their best to control them. They see themselves as having the right to overrule other people. “It operates by persuading people to internalize its logic and speak its language; to perpetuate the values and assumptions of the colonizers as regards the ways they perceive and represent the world”(McLeod, 18). They give great importance to the language, because,

by means of language they constitute a new world-view. For them, language is not a simple way of communication.

After the colonization, colonized people see themselves as inferior; on the other hand colonizers make them feel that colonizers are civilized, rational, and intelligent. This is related to the psychological impact of colonizers on the colonized. Frantz Fanon, one of the remarkable postcolonial writers, asserts that the end of colonialism meant not just political and economic change, but psychological change too. So, “freedom from colonialism comes not just from the signing of declarations of independence and the lowering and raising of flags” (McLeod, 22). There should be a radical change in the minds and psychology of the colonized people.

In *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi stresses the effect of colonialism and its results in the colonized regions. After the colonization, people were defrauded, and deprived of their own land. They became workers in the lands, which once upon a time belong to them. Ngugi asserts in the novel: “The land seemed not to yield much and there was now no virgin soil to escape to as in those days before colonialism” (Thiong’o, 9). That is, colonizers firstly exploited the lands of the native people. Until colonizers come to their land, native people have a simple and comfortable life, “cattle were wealth- the only wealth. Was it not the ambition of every real man, especially before the white man came, to possess cows and goats?” (Thiong’o, 17). They were happy before the arrival of colonizers came, and could earn their life by themselves working on their own lands and grazing. However, once the colonizers came, they all lost their properties, even, “people sold their daughters for goats” (Thiong’o, 18). The conversation among the native villagers shows the real face of the colonizers and the distortion colonizers caused in their life:

Look at white people; they first took our land, then our youth, only later, cows and sheeps. Oh no, the other side would argue: the white man first took the land, then the goats and cows, saying these were hut taxes or fines after every armed clash, and only later did he capture the youth to work on land... the foreigner from Europe was cunning: he took their land, their sweat and their wealth and told them that the coins he had brought, which could not be eaten, were the true wealth’ (Thiong’o, 18).

Ngugi reflects the fear of colonized people of the colonizers. When a white man comes to their land, he absolutely gets something from them. The following statements are taken from the *Petals of Blood*, ‘I hope they will not take our lands away,’ Njuguna voiced their

fear after Munira had talked about the road. ‘They would only take a small piece’ Abdulla suggested, ‘and they would pay compensation’. ‘A lot of money and other lands’ somebody added” (Thiong’o, 35). These expressions demonstrate how the colonizers affected native people psychologically. Muturi, a character of the novel, expresses the destructive effect of colonizers explicitly:

You forget that in those days the land was not for buying. It was for use. It was also plenty, you need not have beaten one yard over and over again the land was also covered with forests. The trees called rain. They also cast a shadow on the land. But the forest was eaten by the railway. You remember they used to come for wood as far as here, to feed the iron thing. Aah, they only knew how to eat, how to take away everything. But then, those were foreigners, white people” said Muturi (Thiong’o, 82)

Ngugi draws attention to the better condition of Kenya before colonialism. He says that “the history of the Kenya before colonialism was one of the wanderlust and pointless warfare between peoples. The learned ones never wanted to confront the meaning of colonialism and of imperialism” (Thiong’o, 199).

Ngugi stresses the sufferings of Kenya throughout the history, which was exploited by several nations. He says:

Before 1895 it was Arab slavers disrupting our agriculture. After 1985 it was the European colonists: first stealing our land; then our labor and then our own wealth in the way of cows and goats and later our capital by way of taxation... so we built Kenya, and what were we getting out of the Kenya we had built on our sweat?” (Thiong’o, 289).

Karega was an idealistic teacher who tried to teach his students the facts. “During the colonial days African teachers could only teach in African schools. All the African schools were of much the same standard: poorly equipped, poor houses, and limited aids. But at least they got the best African teachers available” (N’gugi 107). Karega tells his students how the colonizers stole their lands, and even, how they used bible to get the lands of pure native people.

Today children I am going to tell you about the history of Mr. Blackman in three sentences. In the beginning he had the land and the mind and the soul together. On the second day, they took the body away to barter it for silver coins. On the third day, seeing that he was still fighting back, they brought priests and educator to bind his mind and soul so that these foreigners could more easily take his land and its produce (Thiong’o, 236).

They used the Bible to steal the souls and minds of ever-grinning Africans, caps folded at the back, saying prayers of gratitude for small crumbs labeled aid, loans, feminine relief while big companies are busy collecting gold and silver and diamonds, and while we fight among ourselves saying I am a Kuke, I am a Luo, I am Luhya, I am a Somali, and... and... there are times, Joseph, when victory is defeat and defeat is victory (Thiong'o, 238).

In *A grain of Wheat*, the effect of colonialism is also seen from the beginning of the work to the end. In the novel, the beginning of colonialism is demonstrated vividly, and how native people are restrained in their own land is reflected remarkably.

One day people in Thabai and Rungei woke up to find themselves ringed round with black and white soldiers carrying guns, and tanks last seen on the road during Churchill's war with Hitler. Gunfire smoked in the sky, people led their stomachs. Some men locked themselves in latrines; others hid among the sacks of sugar and beans in the shops. Yet others tried to sneak out of the town towards the forest, only to find that all roads to freedom were blocked (Thiong'o, 4).

The most grief oppressions were generally experienced by the women. They were seen as sex tools for the colonizers. Ngugi mentions an event in which Mugo also takes place, "Mugo had been arrested during the Emergency for intervening to stop a policeman from beating up a woman who, it was said, had refused him sex" (Thiong'o, ix).

Emergency is the other name of Mau-Mau rebellion, and during this movement a lot of people suffered so much. Githua is one of these sufferers, who lost one of his hands. He says "I tell you before the Emergency, I was like you; before the whiteman did this to me with bullets, I could work with both hands, man" (Thiong'o, 3). Kihika, one of the main characters of the novel who died for his own country, was also excruciated by the colonizers. "Kihika was tortured. Some say that the neck of a bottle was wedged into his body through the anus as white people in the Special Branch tried to wrest the secrets of the forest from him" (Thiong'o, 17). His sufferings ended with death. He "was hanged in public, one Sunday, at Rungei Market, not far from where he had once stood calling for blood to rain on and water the tree of freedom" (Thiong'o, 17). Waiyaki is also one of the sufferers, who was killed brutally by the colonizers. As narrated by Ngugi:

Waiyaki had been arrested and taken to the coast, bound hands and feet. Later, so it is said, Waiyaki was buried alive at Kibwezi with his head facing into the center of the earth, a living warning to those, who, in after years, might challenge the hand of Christian woman whose protecting shadow now bestrode both land and sea (Thiong'o, 12).

In spite of these deaths, nobody stepped back. “The movement remained alive and grew, as people put it, on the wounds of those Waiyaki and Kihika left behind” (Thiong’o, 17). And the deaths of these people were the grains of wheat, which led to freedom. Especially, Ngugi stresses the death of Waiyaki: “Then nobody noticed it, but looking back we can see that Waiyaki’s blood contained within it a seed, a grain, which gave birth to a movement whose main strength thereafter sprang from a bond with the soil” (Thiong’o, 12).

The colonizers showed no mercy to the native people during the emergency. But in the beginning, the colonizers were not as hard as during the emergency. “... whiteman came to the country, clutching the book of God in both hands, a magic witness that the whiteman was a messenger from the lord. His tongue was coated with sugar; his humility was touching” (Thiong’o, 10). By using the Bible and mild language, they attracted several people. But their attitudes changed day by day, they threw the Bible and used sword:

The few were converted, started speaking a faith foreign to the ways of the land. They trod on sacred places to show that no harm could reach those protected by the hand of the Lord. Soon people saw the whiteman had imperceptibly acquired more land to meet the growing needs of his position. He had already pulled down the grass-thatched hut and erected a more permanent building. Elders of the land protested. They looked beyond the laughing face of the whiteman and suddenly saw a long line of other red strangers who carried, not Bible, but the sword” (Thiong’o, 11-12).

Kihika also deals with the colonizers’ use of the Bible. He is aware of the fact that the colonizers benefited from the Bible just to get the lands of the native people. He makes it clear that:

We went to their church. Mubia, in white robes, opened the Bible. He said: let us kneel down to pray. We knelt down. Mubia said: let us shut our eyes. We did. You know, his remained open so that he could read the word. When we opened our eyes, our land was gone and the sword of flames stood on guard (Thiong’o, 14).

The colonizers also benefited from science and technology to attract people, but, they all did this just only to make their colonial regions wider. Ngugi draws attention to the disguised plan of the colonizers: “Mad they thought him: science in dark Africa... later a foster research station was set up in the area, not as a tribute to his martyrdom, but as part of a new colonial development plan” (Thiong’o, 33). Apart from this, they use very ornamental language to impress native people; Thomson is one of these people, who

speaks very mildly. He tries to show how British Empire and its control of the Africa are very nice. Thompson expresses his feelings

In a flash I was convinced that the growth of the British Empire was the development of a great moral idea: it means, .t must surely lead to the creation of one British nation, embracing peoples of all colors and creeds, based on the just proposition that all men were created equal (Thiong'o, 52-53).

He continues his statements with a warning, which makes his real thought more explicit. From the expressions of him, it can be clearly deduced that all colonizer nations try to assimilate native people, and also their unique aim is to make all people like themselves. Thomson asserts that,

We must avoid the French mistake of assimilating only the educated few. The peasant in Asian and Africa must be included in this moral scheme for rehabilitation. In Great Britain we have had our peasant, and now our worker, and they are no less an integral part of our society (Thiong'o, 53).

Wanja summarizes what actually imperialism and colonialism do. She says “KCO and imperialism stand for the rich against the poor. They take from the poor and that is why they hate to see the poor organize and you are helping them” (Thiong'o, 327).

3.2. Women in African Societies and Kenya

Since this thesis study aims to portray the figure of postcolonial women in *Petals of Blood* and *A Grain of Wheat*, postcolonial feminist theory has been analyzed and now, as I deal with the condition of women in colonized Africa, especially Kenya, firstly I will mention the figure of women in African societies and Kenya.

Generally the position and condition of a woman in an African society are determined according to the familial system that the society constructed, in which they live in. In its common sense, African families are composed of extended families, in which the dominance of man is clearly seen. This type of family is ruled by a man with many wives and unmarried males such as brothers. That is, polygamy lies on the basis of these extended families.

In African societies, both patrilineal and matrilineal family types can be seen. Patrilineal family was a common family type in African societies. In this family system, a person's rights and responsibilities are dependent on who his/her father and men were

always seen as permanent figures of households (Koopman, 10). Children are thought to belong to their father (Potash, 70). In this type of family, women have a more passive role in the rule of the family and have fewer rights when compared with the matrilineal family. When a woman marries to someone, she has to go her husband's region and live there for the rest of her life. To be a real member of the family, she has to show her fidelity and endeavor to her husband's relatives. Bearing many children and working on land are the key factors to be accepted by the other members of the family.

On the contrary, in matrilineal societies, extended families depend on the mother, sister and daughter. In this type of families, rights and properties are given in a matrilineal line, that is, there is a female based process. When a woman marries in such a society, she can stay in her own village, and she sometimes visits her husband's village. However, that does not mean women have the right to control the family. As it is in patrilineal societies, family is ruled and controlled by the men. The only difference is that it is not fathers who rule the family but uncles and brothers.

In pre-colonial African societies, economy mainly depended on agriculture, so that, the number of people working on the land was so important for the production. That is, the more people worked, the more production they would get. For this reason, women had an important place in the society because of their bearings. Jane Bryce Okunlola mentions the position of women in pre-colonial African societies:

African woman has long held a position of power in society; she has long been an integral part of the struggle for survival; she has ruled millions of people successfully. She is respected for her qualities and treated as a human-being. She is the mother, she from whom all life emanates; she is indeed the most important element of survival and continuity (Okunlola, 202).

In many African societies, women are valuable because they work on the land also they give birth, which means more people to work on farms. Cindy Courville points out the productive power of women in African societies:

Women's productive and reproductive capacity made their social and economic resource, which provided men with political leverage. African women were primarily responsible for their economic, social, and political reproduction of the household; the bearing of and caring for children, the production, storage and preparation of food. As well, women had exchange value within the context of

marriage, forming alliances between households, clans and nations (qtd. in Schipper, 2).

In African societies, women are expected to bear children, and while the number of children they are bearing is increasing, they become more secure in the society, because of their productivity. However, bearing child is not the only duty of women; they also have some other duties. Waruhiu makes this situation with these lines: “early images of the African woman south of the Sahara depict her with a heavy load on her back, a back straddles on top and hands left free to wieve a kiondo or shell maize as she walks. Her back is bent over; she is fulfilling three roles at once: work-provider, manager, mother” (Waruhiu, 136).

After mentioning women in African societies, now I will focus on the position of women in Kenya. It can be said that approximately fifty percent of Kenya’s population is constituted by women, most of whom are illiterate and poor, and several of them are still affected by the customs and traditions.

Prior to the colonization of Kenya by the English, the society was controlled and ruled by the elderly men of the society. The duty of the women and girls is to take care of children, harvest, farm and serve to their husbands. Girls were generally regarded as lady of the house and raiser. Since some women were let to sell their farm products, they had a bit economic security, but on the other hand, in some societies, this decision was given by the elders of the society or by the men.

During the colonial period, women were affected in a great way, because they lost their control on their lands and had no right to farm or earn money. As a result, they became dependent on the men from the economic aspect. This situation made the patriarchy more intensive. As the colonization was going on, the role of the women in the society, especially on the land, declined day by day. As a matter of fact, women were locked into the house. And, the dominance of the men in the society started to rise.

After the end of colonization, that is the period after independence of Kenya, some girls had to chance to go to school, but these were a minority of the community. These girls were the daughters of families who had good relationships with colonizers during the colonial period. Most of the girls were not as lucky as these girls, because they were not

sent to school. More dramatically, these young girls forced to marry in early ages. Moreover, the age of marriage fell to twelve. After that, many social groups have started to fight against this plight of young girls. At the beginning of the 21st century, female consciousness has started to rise. From now on, women struggle for the injustice that Kenyan women faced with. To our surprise, women have shown great improvement, even today, we see the women in the Kenyan parliament. And also, they have the highest number of female in the parliament after the independence.

3.3. The Women Torn Between Patriarchy and Colonialism

Women are generally ignored in postcolonial writings, because early postcolonial writers were mainly male. So, postcolonial texts were male based works. Therefore, we never witnessed women figures and their sufferings so much in early postcolonial writings. Many critics argue that western patriarchy is the main cause of this situation, which is penetrated into the colonized regions and societies with the colonization. Tony Affigne mentions this problem: it is a kind of system which is “deeply embedded pattern of social hierarchy—a Western system of patriarchal power, in the family, community, and polity, perpetuated through socialization, law, and physical force” (Affigne, 10).

The women in colonized societies have experienced oppression from the colonizers and patriarchy. This “double colonization” is a basic concept which should be analyzed in postcolonial theory. The term “double colonization first used by Kirsten Holst-Peterson and Anna Rutherford in their works *A Double Colonization: Colonial and Post-Colonial Writings*. This theory points out that the native women in colonized societies are oppressed doubly by the colonization and patriarchy, because of their womanhood. Combahee River Collective points out that,

We believe that sexual politics under patriarchy is as pervasive in Black women's lives as are the politics of class and race. We also often find it difficult to separate race from class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously. We know that there is such a thing as racial-sexual oppression which is neither solely racial nor solely sexual, e.g., the history of rape of Black women by white men as a weapon of political repression.

Although we are feminists and lesbians, we feel solidarity with progressive Black men and do not advocate the fractionalisation that white women who are separatists demand. Our situation as Black people necessitates that we have solidarity around the fact of race, which white women of course do not need to have with white men,

unless it is their negative solidarity as racial oppressors. We struggle together with Black men against racism, while we also struggle with Black men about sexism (Collective, 2013).

The women in colonized societies are exploited by both colonizers and indigenous people. That is colonized women are double exploited by the patriarchy and colonial powers; Young mentions this situation with these lines:

For women, the problem centered on the fact that the conditions against which they were campaigning were the product of two kinds of oppression which put the antagonists of the nationalist struggle in the same camp: patriarchal systems of exploitation were common to both colonial regimes and indigenous societies. Women therefore had to fight the double colonization of patriarchal domination in its local as well as its imperial forms (Young, 379).

Colonialism is a male based plan, to which patriarchy contributed so much. That is, they are intermingled and cannot be separated easily. Val Kalei Kanuha explains this:

We need to counter claims that colonization has not led to violence against women, by pointing out that there is in fact a tight connection between colonization and patriarchy. Some would even say that you could not have colonization without patriarchy. [...] They were mostly men (that is not to say women cannot be colonizers). [...] Patriarchy and colonization go hand and hand. It is this nexus that keeps the structures of gender violence so well entrenched (Kanuha, 4).

After the colonization, family structures of the colonized societies also changed. Instead of extended families, nuclear family became dominant. And as a result, the power of the women in the family diminished slowly. When a woman did not become pregnant, she lost all her value in the family. We see this in Buchi Emecheta's *Joys of Motherhood*. After learning his wife is not pregnant, Amatokwu says:

What do you want me to do?" Amatokwu asked. "I am a busy man. I have no time to waste my precious male seed on a woman who is infertile. I have to raise children for my life. If you really want to know, you don't appeal to me anymore. You are so dry and jumpy. When a man comes to a woman he wants to be cooled, not scratched by a nervy female who is all bones (Emecheta, 32).

As it is clearly seen, if a woman cannot bear a child, she has no value for the family. The main reason of this the colonization and its effect which made man more dominant in the colonized communities. Because, before the colonization, women were more productive, they could work on the land and farms even if they could not bear children. In any way, colonization made them disabled and helpless. On the contrary, patriarchy gained power

and men became more dominant. That is, the oppression that women suffering was doubled. Women had to struggle with both colonialism and patriarchy. They became more dependent on the male, and could not struggle for their rights. Women were started to be seen as a sexual object by the colonizers and native man of the society. And also, some women were forced to earn money by means of their body. We see this situation in *Petals of Blood*. The main character of the novel, Wanja, becomes a prostitute as a result of the patriarchal and colonial problems. Traditions and also social structure plays an important role in his sufferings. Wanja explains her sufferings: “In the evening you are supposed to give them yourself and sighs in bed” (Thiong’o, 76). “Them” refers to the colonizers in this line; she points out the problems of all oppressed women in a colonized community.

In *A Grain of Wheat*, we see the effect of patriarchy in the marriage of Mumbi. Although she has some problems in her marriage, she cannot tell her family, and also though she wants to go her parents’ home, she cannot do this because of the patriarchal ideology, because in such a society, her parents take sides with her husband. Her mother’s statements upon Mumbi’s decision to go home demonstrate the power of patriarchal ideology. Wanjiku, Mumbi’s mother, says Mumbi “The women of today surprise me. They cannot take a slap, soft as a feather, or the slightest breath, from a man. In our time, a woman could take blow and blow from her husband without a thought of running back to her parents.” (Thiong’o, 176)

In a patriarchal society, women are seen as properties. Ngugi points out this situation in “*A Grain of Wheat*”. For instance, Karanja’s father sees his mother as property and even we can say that he buys her. And, he has four wives, when he is bored of them and find more beautiful girl, he sends them away. That is, women are the victims of Karanja’s father. Following lines support these statements: “She was the third of the four wives that Karanja's father had acquired by paying so much bride price in goats and cattle. He acquired them, yes and then left them to their own resources” (Thiong’o, 220).

Gikonyo’s mother, Wangari, also suffered from the patriarchy. Her husband beat her several times and forced her to leave home. Since he is not pleased with her wife’s sexual conditions, he falls out of love with her wife. Following extract expresses the thought of him about her wife:

He got new brides and complained that the thighs of the first wife did not yield warmth any more. He beat her, hoping that this would drive her away. Wangari struck on. Eventually, Waruhiu ordered her to leave his home and cursed mother and son to life of ever wandering on God's earth (Thiong'o, 71-72).

Ngugi also calls attention the lack of romanticism and shyness of women in postcolonial period. Because of the traditions and rough conditions of the period, women do not have enough courage to tell their feelings. In such societies, in which gender discrimination is highly seen, women cannot declare their love. If they behave in this way, they can be seen as abnormal. For instance, the conversation between Njeri and Wambuku shows the love perception in a postcolonial society. It also draws attention to the attitudes of men towards love. "Don't you love him? Njeri asked. I do-I did-I kept myself from other men for his sake. At night I only thought of him. I wanted him. I could have saved him. He was a man, Njeri, strong, sure, but also weak, weak like a little child" (Thiong'o, 100).

To sum up, the oppression felt by the postcolonial women is not only caused by the colonialism, patriarchy also affects their lives deeply. In the works of Ngugi, the hard conditions, in which they live, have been emphasized. That is, the double-colonization of the women is an undeniable fact of the postcolonial world, and Ngugi is good at depicting their problems in a clear way.

3. THE FIGURE OF POSTCOLONIAL WOMEN IN *PETALS OF BLOOD* AND A *GRAIN OF WHEAT*

3.1. A Brief Account of the Works

3.1.1. *Petals of Blood*

Petals of Blood is Ngugi wa Thiongo's fourth novel, which was published in 1977. The composition of the novel starts after the Independence of Kenya. The story is based on four major characters; Munira, Abdulla, Wanja, and Karega, all of whom are living in Ilmorog a small village in Kenya. I will make an analysis of the Wanja profoundly, who is the dominant female character in the novel.

Throughout the novel, we see a concentration on the change of Kenya after the independence. That is, Ngugi questions the freedom and oppression, which is still going on. He depicts a clear picture of capitalism, politics, modernization, which affected the lives of the Kenyan people deeply. Apart from these, the education system is also pointed out, the sufferings of children, who have many difficulties to receive education, are mentioned.

Novel starts with the Munira's return to Ilmorog, in which he works a teacher for the Kenyan children. When he arrives in the village, villagers think that he will escape soon as the other teachers do. However, Munira stays and try to do his best to teach children. That is, in the novel Ngugi portrays an idealist teacher who endeavors for his people. After a while, Wanja arrives in the village. She is a charming woman who has worked as a barmaid. Because of her attractiveness, Munira falls in love with her even though he is still married. Another major character Karega comes to the village to find Munira and ask him about their old school Siriana. Then, Karega also start to work as an untrained teacher in Ilmorog together with Munira. Both of them were students at Siriana, from which elite high school they were expelled for opposing the colonialist headmaster, Cambridge Fraudsham. Munira comes from a wealthy family, whose father prospered as a colonial chief. On the contrary to his other siblings, he denies to pursue elite education and prestigious careers. In spite of his father's opposition, Munira decides to teach at New

Ilmorog Primary School, which is a deprived school and as a result the inspector has some problems to find teachers and conducting regular classes. Although he criticized his father's approach to the condition of the Kenya, Munira is an inactive and apolitical man (Amoko, 67). Contrary to Munira, "Karega is unapologetically militant. An autodidact, he remains remarkably well read due to the library that he acquires from a wealthy but conscientious Nairobi lawyer. The moral conscience of the novel, Karega seems to speak on behalf of the author" (Amoko, 68). In the work, we witness a speech of Karega, which clearly reflects the thoughts of Ngugi. Karega says that: "Our children must look at the things that deformed us yesterday, that are deforming us today. They must also look at the things which formed us yesterday, that will creatively form us into a new breed of men and women who will struggle against those things that dwarf us" (Thiong'o, 246-247). "He is sharply critical of elite educational institutions in postcolonial Kenya, specifically Siriana and the university. He feels these institutions help perpetuate neocolonial exploitation and oppression" (Amoko, 68).

Karega develops an alternate politically engaged pedagogy at school but also seeks to empower the starving residents of Ilmorog. When the villagers experienced a high level of starvation, he manages to organize a heroic journey by Ilmorog residents to seek redress in the capital, Nairobi. During this journey, he happens upon the revolutionary lawyer. In the beginning, they reach their goal as embarrassed government officials—including the corrupt Ilmorog Member of Parliament, Nderi wa Riera—strive belatedly but conspicuously to help the suffering masses. However, at the end of the march, they face with a disastrous fact as the once forgotten village is opened up for rapacious capitalist exploitation in the name of renewed development.

The major woman character of the novel, Wanja, was obliged to drop out of school because of her unexpected pregnancy. She works as a barmaid, a gendered menial job rife with exploitation and abuse. Having lived under hard and humiliating conditions in the capital, she comes to Ilmorog to live with her grandmother Nyakinyua, a venerable peasant woman. After staying for some months in the village, Wanja sleeps with Munira but it is not a love relation. Later, she starts to flirt with Karega. She was attracted by his idealism and militancy, and on the verge of productively transforming her life. After realizing that, Munira is jealous of Karega, and this causes the disastrous end of the novel (Amoko, 69).

Through the story of Wanja, Ngugi tries to record the plight of women in a violently sexist postcolony. Undeniably, as Florence Stratton utters, Wanja is “an index of the state of the nation” (Stratton, 31). Her decline into prostitution allegorizes the prostitution of the entire postcolonial polity since, as Ogude suggests the portrait of her abuse and degradation parallels that of the postcolonial nation itself (Ogude, 32).

Ngugi also asserts his thoughts about *Petals of Blood* in his work *Decolonizing the Mind* that:

Petals of Blood had taken a stage further the techniques of flashbacks, multiple narrative, voices, movement in time and space and parallel biographies and stories.. The technique allowed me to- move freely in time and space through the centuries and through all the important landmarks in Kenya's history from the early times and back to the twelve days duration of the present of the novel (Thiong'o, 77).

Petals of Blood records the disenchantment of Kenyan people during the 1970s in broad areas of postcolonial Kenya and especially among the masterminds and the bourgeoisie. After colonialism and capitalism in Ilmorog, economic deprivation of peasants and workers can be seen clearly. “They are obliged to live off the slave wages of African landowners and African businessmen in partnership with multinational companies that have recently taken over Ilmorog” (Ogude, 7). While native people of Kenya become poorer, the African landowners and colonialists become richer. “Independence does not usher in any comfort or economic gains for peasants and workers; it is the same group of loyalists, otherwise called ‘home guards’ by Ngugi that emerges as the beneficiaries of Uhuru” (Ogude, 7). That is, Ilmorog is a physical manifestation of the contradictory presence of poverty and capital in Kenya. Thus the ills of the colonial state are simply reproduced in the postcolonial state. For instance, Kimeria, who betrayed Abdulla and Ndinguri during the Mau Mau war, is the new hero of political independence (Ogude, 8).

3.1.2. A Grain of Wheat

A Grain of Wheat is Ngugi's the third novel, which mainly focuses on Uhuru, Independence. It points out the need for a continuing struggle and suffering for Kenyans' independence. Ngugi, by means of his novel, restates the history of Kenya from a different angle, and praises the resistance against British imperialism and colonialism. The people

taking place in the Mau Mau movement are pulchritudiously represented as brave freedom fighters, rather than as rebels or terrorists.

On the other hand, Ngugi reflects the betrayal of the native people, like Karanja, who betrays to their own people during the Mau Mau war. And, we see the concept of betrayal as the main theme of the novel. David Cook and Michael Okenimpke point out that the novel of Ngugi is a “heroic corporate effort towards an evenhanded society and betrayal; individual’s betrayals are representative of the vast betrayal of the whole society by its power elite” (Cook and Okenimpke, 69). However, that does not mean that Ngugi portrays only betrayal. He also gives importance and draws attention to the struggle and resistance of Kenyan people for the independence.

Ngugi tells the story of people fighting for freedom in *A Grain of Wheat*. These people sacrifice themselves for the Uhuru, the Swahili word for freedom. The title of the novel also conveys the idea of sacrificing. It is taken from the Bible, “Unless A Grain of Wheat die” (John, 12:24). That means, if a grain of wheat falls to the ground, it will remain just only a single seed. But if it dies, it can produce many seeds.

The novel includes four main characters, who are all from the Gikuyu village of Thabai. These characters are Mugo, Gikonyo, Mumbi and Karanja. Mugo is a heroic person, who started hunger strike in detention camp and also he resisted against a village guard to protect a pregnant woman from beating. Although he is considered to be a hero throughout the whole novel, at the end of the story it is understood that Mugo is the traitor of Kihika, who was a freedom fighter hanged after being betrayed by Mugo. That is, Mugo is the symbol of betrayal in the novel. Apart from Mugo, Karanja is also betrayer who collaborated with the British and considered to be the traitor of Kihika. Karanja opts for joining the government guards instead of fighting for his own people. He also betrays his close friend, Gikonyo, by sleeping with Gikonyo’s wife, Mumbi.

Another main character, Gikonyo, is a competitive carpenter and businessman who is husband of Mumbi. He loves his wife so much, and even in detention camp, he swears to return his wife under any circumstances. However, when he succeeds to return to his village he sees that his wife has a child, whose father is Karanja. He does not know that his wife, Mumbi, was forced to sleep with Karanja, who later appointed as the village chief by

the colonial power. No matter many problems Gikonyo and Mumbi have suffered, they still love each other. In fact, Mumbi slept with Karanja to rescue his husband. She sacrificed herself for the sake of her husband.

Helen Hayward points out the effect of Ngugi's novel, and stresses the importance of Ngugi and his works for the portrayal of postcolonial oppression felt in colonized regions. *A Grain of Wheat*, *The River Between*, and *Petals of Blood* are important works for understanding post-colonial African writing, notable for their political nature as well as their emphasis on subtleties within historical events" (Hayward, 25). Hayward also adds that his early novels act as "important documents in the history of postcolonial writing distinguished by the urgency of their political engagement and the subtlety of their historical grasp."

4.2. The Figure of Postcolonial Women in *Petals of Blood*

Petals of Blood is the fourth novel of Ngugi, and in this novel, he concentrates on the status of women in postcolonial Kenya. To reflect the condition of women, he chooses the character of Wanja, who is a prostitute. He makes it clear that she is the product of all combined forces.

Prostitution as a system became dominant during the colonial period. Native women were oppressed and humiliated by the white colonizers, such as polices, soldiers and officers. Prostitution started to be seen in bars throughout Kenya. It became a different kind of tourism. Wanja tells one of her experiences:

He took me to a house in Nairobi west. He made me some coffee and gave me some tablets and showed me a place to sleep. I must have slept through the night and through the following day. He let me stay for another night and I told him my story and he asked me a few question: would I know the house? Would I recognize him? Then he looked at one place and said: It is no use. This is what happens when you turn tourism in to a national religion and build it shrines of worship all over the country. I did not ask him what he meant, but I know he sounded angry. The following day he took me to Machacos bus stop and I felt like crying now with gratitude because he had not so much as tried anything on me, and had treated me without any contempt (Thiong'o, 134).

Wanja is a barmaid, who works under bad conditions and experiences the harsh sides of this disgusting system. One day, she exposed to the bad behaviors of a German man, who wants to have sexual relation with her. Wanja tells:

And the man was now fumbling with my clothes and the animal was growling and wagging its tail and the man was trembling. The watchful feeling became stronger and stronger, struggling with the deathless, and the animal was about to lick my fingers when somewhere inside me I heard my own voice exclaim: "Oh, but you know I left my handbag in your car". The moment I heard my voice I knew that the deathless was defeated and I was returning to life. He remarks: "Don't worry; I will get it for you". I said: "No, a woman's bag contains secrets, so could he take me to the car?" It was my voice all right but commanded by I didn't know who inside me..... I stood up. He led the way to the door. The animal followed behind. And now I was silently praying: give me more strength, give me more strength. He went out first and I quickly shut the door so that the animal was shut in. Even now I can't tell where I got strength from. I flew and flew through the trees and the grass undergrowth and I only looked back once when I reached the main tarmac road... (Thiong'o, 133-134).

From the expression of Wanja, the exploitation of women by the white settlers is clearly understood, and this has been done under the name of tourism. This can be called as the victimization of the colonized women. To reflect this humiliation, Ngugi chooses the profession of barmaid consciously. By doing this, he shows the lives of barmaids suffering from the colonizers and their own people. Related to this, Wanja says:

We barmaids never settle in one place. Sometimes you are dismissed because you refused to sleep your boss. Or your face may become too well known in one place. You want a new territory. Do you know, it is so funny when you go to a new place the men treat you as if you were a virgin. They will outdo one another to buy you beers. Each wants to be the first. So you will find us, barmaids, wherever there is a bar in Kenya. Even in Ilmorog (Thiong'o, 100).

This shows the anguish of the barmaids who are exploited by both customers and owners of the bars. They have no value for anybody, and they are seen as a tool for the owners. Moreover, the police, who have to protect people, exploit women. Wanja mentions an exploitation of her by a police officer: "He was a police inspector. He arrested us because we were selling beer late at a bar in Kikuyu town, and when he searched boys he found they had bhang. I was frightened. He put the boys in the jail. He took me to his house. Well, I saved myself that way" (Thiong'o, 130). Through these lines, Ngugi also criticizes the wrong deeds of the state.

Although Ngugi reflects Wanja as a strong and successful woman in some cases, she thinks her femininity as a handicap, because, in her society, which is dominated by males, women are seen as objects and subaltern creatures. Wanja thinks that if you are a woman your fate is to marry someone or be a whore. She asserts that "If you have a cunt, if

you are born with this hole, instead of being a source of pride, you are doomed to either marrying someone or else being a whore” (Thiong’o, 293). Ngugi points out the factors which force Wanja to the prostitution. Through the image of Wanja, Ngugi stresses the condition of all exploited women in Africa, especially in Kenya. Though prostitution is seen as a humiliating job, it is the final destination of many women in postcolonial regions. Even Wanja thinks that there is no difference between a worker and prostitute. She says “What is the difference whether you are sweating it out on plantation, in a factory or lying on your back, anyway?” (Thiong’o, 293). With the statements of Wanja, Ngugi calls attention the destructing effect of capitalism, that is, for him, there is no difference between the exploitation of women as a prostitute or men as worker; they are victims of the capitalism. The only difference is that women are exploited because of their sex.

Through the character of Wanja, Ngugi draws the picture of postcolonial Kenya and Africa. The story of Wanja is a kind of apologue, which tells the story of Kenyan people, especially the Kenyan women. Govind Narain Sharma says that “Wanja “is the spirit and earth of Kenya, humiliated, exploited and ill-used” (qtd. in Killam, 302). Eustace Palmer also points out that,

The drought is also political, spiritual, economic and emotional, as with Wanja who, yearning after a release from barrenness, becomes restless and moody in proportion to the aridity of the environment. The drought generally refers to the people’s deprivation of all those things that should make life meaningful (qtd. in Killam, 273).

We see the impact of oppression that Wanja suffered while she was working as a barmaid. When Munira meets Wanja he thinks that “How could a city woman so dirty her hands? How could she strap a tin of water to a head beautifully crowned with a mass of shiny black hair” (Thiong’o, 31). This shows the condition of all oppressed women in the cities. Working as a barmaid affects all women not only psychologically but also physically.

Wanja also clearly shows the injustice and inequality between men and women. She is aware of what will happen to her in a colonized and patriarchal society. The gendered discrimination is clearly understood from the lines of Wanja. She says:

...but boys were always more confident about the future than girls. They seemed to know what they wanted to become later in life: whereas with us girls the future

seemed vague... It was as if we knew that no matter what efforts we put into our studies, our road led to the kitchen and to the bedroom” (Thiong’o, 37).

In a patriarchal society, women are not regarded as equal to the men. Njuguna says that “But a man is more important than a woman” (Thiong’o, 162). Ndemi also shares the same thoughts with Njuguna: “For a woman alone can never do all the work on the farm. How could she grow sugar cane, yams, sweet potatoes which used to be man’ domain? How break new ground? And how could she smith, make chains, pull wires, make beehives, wicker work for barns?” (Thiong’o, 213). They think that women are nothing without men, and women cannot live without the aids of men.

Patriarchy also makes a great impact on the lives of postcolonial women. Even in their homes, women are oppressed by their fathers or the others. When Wanja was a young girl, she was beaten by her father since she came home late and spoke to her mother in a different way that her parents did not expect.

My father said: she is now a woman; she even talks to her mother as equals. They locked me in my room and they both beat me, my father with his belt and my mother with a cowhide strap we used for trying and carrying things. This will teach you to come home holding hands with boys! This will teach you be talking like equals to your mother. It was no unfair and I was determined not to cry. This seemed to add to their anger. They were now beating to make me cry (Thiong’o, 38).

In this condition, Wanja also stresses the class discrimination and the importance of economy in Kenya. She says that “I felt then that they were beating me not just because I was with a boy, but because he came from a family even poorer than ours” (Thiong’o, 38). With these statements Ngugi criticizes the oppression that poor experienced, because if you are a poor man you are always underestimated and oppressed by the rich. And also he questions this with Wanja’s thoughts: “My parents had often beaten me, but, it was the first time I was so rebellious in my thoughts. How could I get my own back? Was it a sin to be poor? We ourselves were not rich: were we sinners?” (Thiong’o, 38).

After all her suffering in her home, Wanja becomes miserable again because of her pregnancy. She became pregnant after her affair with a sugar-daddy. This is the turning point in Wanja’s life, which causes her to be a prostitute. Furthermore, she faces up with the loose behaviors of her sugar-daddy, which makes her disappointed. She says “... but the results of my vengeance also followed me. I started vomiting and feeling a little tired.

So I was pregnant? I ran back to my lover. I will marry you all right, he assured me, if you don't mind being a second wife, and my first is so harsh she will make you her slave" (Thiong'o, 40). We also become aware of the polygyny problem in colonized communities. Wanja's lover offers her to be his second wife, which shocks Wanja deeply. That is, being a woman in a patriarchal and colonized society is very hard. If you are a woman you are generally regarded as subaltern and inferior. The suffering of Wanja's cousin shows this inferiority clearly:

She had married a man who kept on beating her. There was nothing that she could do right. He would always find an excuse to beat her. He accused her of going about with men. If she had money through working on the land he would take it away from her and he would drink it all and come to beat her. So one day she just took her clothes and ran away to the city (Thiong'o, 64).

Wanja is also a sufferer woman in colonized society. Her mortification goes on more deeply after her downfall with the pregnancy of her. She started to use her body and sexual power to live off. She tells her condition and how she attracts men:

Well, that is how we used to lure men. It was our only minute of glory. Two girls could be dancing together on the floor. Men would beg with their eyes and beg with their hands and in the end with their drinks and money. I am really wicked. I hate a man thinking he can buy me with money. I once made a man spend over two hundred shillings buying me imported cider. Cider can never make you drunk you see. I simply walked out on him. I went with another who had not spent a cent on me. It felt good (Thiong'o, 77).

Wanja also sees prostitution as a business; she behaves men in a serious way as if she was working. She says to Mwalimu "No, Mwalimu. No free things in Kenya. A hundred shillings on the table if you want high-class treatment" (Thiong'o, 279). She also treats Munira in this way. "This is New Kenya. You want it, you pay for it, for the bed and the light and my time and the drink that I shall later give you and the breakfast tomorrow. And all for a hundred shillings. For you. Because of old times. For others it will be more expensive" (Thiong'o, 279). From the speech of Wanja, we also understand the merciless sides of Kenya, and also all colonized communities. After colonialism and capitalism, everything changes in Kenya. Wanja summarizes this harsh face of the Kenya with these lines: "This world... this Kenya... this Africa knows only one law. You eat somebody or you are eaten" (Thiong'o, 291). And as an example of new Kenya, she establishes her own

system in Ilmorog. Prostitution becomes a source of money. Here is what Wanja explains about prostitution:

I have hired young girls. It was not hard. I promised them security, and for that they let me trade their bodies. What is the difference whether you are sweating it out on a plantation, in a factory or lying on your back, anyway? I have various types for various types of men. Some prefer short ones, tall ones, motherly ones, religious ones, sympathetic ones, rude ones, tough ones, a different nationality. I have them all here. And me? Me too! I have not spared myself. It has been the only way I can get my own back on Chui, Mzigo, and Kimeria.... They pay for it. They pay for their rivalry to possess me. Each wants to make his sole woman” (Thiong’o, 293).

Although Wanja accepts her condition, and her prostitution, she has heartbreak in her innards. In spite of the fact that she has many wounds, she is waiting for to be healed with love. The hard conditions that she lived did not make her hopeless. Her affair with Karega makes her feel good and better. She confesses this:

For the first time, I feel wanted...a human being...no longer humiliated...degraded...foot-trodden...do you understand? It is not given to many: a second chance to be a woman, to be human without this or that “except”, “except”...without shame. He was reawakened my smothered woman-ness, my girlhood, and I feel I am about to flower (Thiong’o, 251).

The hope of Wanja is also the hope of Kenya. Ngugi uses the hope as an allegory to mention all people’s hope for the Kenya. The whole country is waiting for absolute freedom and to become free from the chains of the colonizer, and also to rule their own country without any interference of the colonizers. Ngugi especially focuses on women who are resisting against the colonialism and imperial powers. He reflects Wanja as a strong woman figure in spite of her hard experiences. Wanja says, “I nursed the pain in my soul. I am a hard woman and I know I can carry things inside my heart for a long time” (Thiong’o, 38). She is the hopeful woman figure who endures rough and tough living conditions. Munira also sees Wanja as a strong character. He says, “She is the most powerful woman in all Ilmorog. She owns houses between here and Nairobi. She owns a fleet of matatus. She owns a fleet of big transport lorries. She is that bird periodically born out of the ashes and dust” (Thiong’o, 281).

Ngugi also stresses the importance of women in the resistance period of women. Colonized women protest against the social injustice and search for right for women. “Housewives holding processions and shouting obscene slogans in protest against the high

food prices; armed robbers holding up banks in daylight with crowds cheering; women refusing to be relegated to the kitchen and bedroom, demanding equal places in men's former citadel of power privilege" (Thiong'o, 42). They also show reaction against the colonizers. A woman in *Petals of Blood* shouts to the colonizers "Let us pull out their penises and see if they are really men" (Thiong'o, 86).

Munira also compares himself with the resisting women. He thinks that "I had not shown the courage shown by Ilmorog women, or by the worker who protested, or by all those men and women in the country who were openly criticizing the whole thing at the risk of their lives" (Thiong'o, 106).

All in all, we see a different type of woman character in *Petals of Blood*, who is courageous, active, and strong in spite of all his deep sufferings. Wanja, the main female character of the novel, can be regarded as the hope of Kenya, which has never died.

4.2. The Figure of Postcolonial Women in *A Grain of Wheat*

A Grain of Wheat is Ngugi's third novel, in which he stressed the struggle of the Kenyan people, and their fight against the colonizers. These people live in the forests and fight for the freedom of their land and country. The movement they started is called Mau-Mau rebellion. Their main purpose is to kill colonialists who stole their land from them. On the other hand, they suffered from the colonizers so much, by deceiving native people; colonizers also killed many forest fighters. A great number of colonized people betrayed their own people. Those who betrayed had great opportunities such as having a good education in Britain.

In this chapter, the figure of postcolonial women will be portrayed thoroughly. First of all, I will mention the women who struggled for their freedom and supported Mau-Mau movement. Several women fought against the colonizers, and they were excruciated, suffered, and even died during this resistance movement. In the novel, Ngugi mentions a woman fighter who died during the fighting, and we witness a morning for this brave woman:

When I remember Wambuku

A woman who was beautiful so...

Who will forget the sun and the dust today
And the trench I dug with blood!
When they pushed me into the trench,
Tears from my heart freely flowed (Thiong'o, 140).

Many female characters in the novel suffered from the oppression of the colonizers. They were tortured, mistreated, left hungry all during their life. For instance, after Gitogo was killed by the colonizers her mother was alone in this harsh world. As a result, she could not resist anymore and died of severe hunger. Like Gitogo's mother, mother of Mugo also died as a poor woman. Mukami, wife of Warui, also died of poverty. Miserable lives of Mugo's and Gitogo's mother were mentioned in the novel. "She (Gitogo's mother) had a small face grooved with wrinkles. Her eyes were small but occasionally flashed with life. Otherwise they looked dead... It was her eyes that most disturbed Mugo...her loneliness struck a chord of pity in him" (Thiong'o, 5). Mugo's mother also suffered from poverty. "Mugo's mother had died poor, leaving him, an only child in the hands of a distant aunt. Waithereo was a widow with six married daughters. When drunk she would come home and remind Mugo of this fact" (Thiong'o, 6).

Njeri is also a victim of the white colonialists, who died in a battle during Mau-Mau rebellion. She lived in the forest with the other freedom fighters, and took sides with Kihika, a patriot who also died for his country. She faced up with hunger and hard conditions, but never gave up. But her inevitable end was dying for freedom. With the character of Njeri, Ngugi expresses the lives of women fighters and the plight they suffered during their struggle. Following lines reflects the sufferings of Nijeri: "A sacrifice ...and then was Njeri...She was a friend, my friend... She often quarreled and fought with both men and other girls. Anyway, not until she ran away to the forest to fight at Kihika's side. She was shot dead in a battle, soon after Kihika's death" (Thiong'o, 134).

Mumbi can be seen as the main female character of the novel. Ngugi shows the African women's suffering through Mumbi. She is oppressed, disdained, and humiliated by the colonizers. Even, she was desolated after her husband, Gikonyo, was sent to detention camp. Because of this, she suffers so much from poverty, living in a simple cottage. The colonizers spread fear to her heart when her husband was arrested. Following lines show her fear:

One day the arm of the white man touched Mumbi's door. She had fearfully waited for the day, indeed had armed herself against its deadlines. But when the time came, she found herself powerless to save her man. She collected all her will and strength into a cry that went to the hearts of many present: Come back to me Gikonyo (Thiong'o, 101).

Mumbi's husband stayed at detention camp for six years, because of her relation with the Mau-Mau rebellion. During this period, Mumbi lived very harsh days. She even slept with Karanja, because he promised her to release her husband if she slept with him. That is, she sacrificed herself for her husband, Gikonyo. However, when Gikonyo returned, he saw the child with Mumbi, and mistreated her. The sufferings of Mumbi never stopped even after the arrival of Gikonyo. Gikonyo even thought that of "killing her and the child, and ending all misery"(Thiong'o, 112). After a while Gikonyo thought about Mumbi that "she had betrayed the bound, the secret between them" (Thiong'o, 114). As a matter of fact, Mumbi has an extensive love for her husband and never betrays him. Mumbi tells her love for Gikonyo "I hung on to Gikonyo with all my heart. I would wait for him, my husband, even if I was fated to rejoin him in the grave" (Thiong'o, 145). She behaves her husband as if he was her master. Following lines show her dependence on her husband. "Mumbi brought back the fire. She put the pot, full of water, on the fire, and sat again to watch her husband. She appeared expectant, a bird ready to fly at the first sign or word from the master" (Thiong'o, 29).

Mumbi clearly depicts the figure of postcolonial women in the novel. From the statements of her, it is understood that women have a low position in the colonized society. Mumbi says "I had forgotten that I am a nobody" (Thiong'o, 29). Even her husband behaves her in a bad way without knowing Mumbi's sacrificing for him. Gikonyo says to Mumbi "I will make you shut this mouth of a whore" (Thiong'o, 163). He does not show respect to her wife.

Although Mumbi suffered so much, she is a strong woman. She does the duties actually men do. "Mumbi tied a belt around her waist and took on a man's work" (Thiong'o, 136). We also understand that she is a brave woman as she says "I may be a woman, but even a cowardly bitch fights back when cornered against a wall" (Thiong'o, 176). She is also a proud woman. When Gikonyo kicks her out of the home, she never

returns. She says “I will not go back to his home, not if he kneels before me” (Thiong’o, 228).

During the colonial period, women’s suffering reached a high point. They were humiliated and seduced by the white colonizers. Mumbi tells the hard conditions of the colonial period and reflects the merciless face of poverty:

We are prisoners in the village, and the soldiers had built their camps all around to prevent any escape. We went without food. The cry of children was terrible to hear. The new DO did not mind the cries. He even permitted soldiers to pick women and carry them to their tents. God! I did not know how I escaped from that ignominy. Every night I prayed that such a thing should never happen to me (Thiong’o, 139).

Women were also forced to sleep with the colonizers just only for a piece of bread. Mumbi tells that “a number of women secretly and voluntarily offered themselves to the soldiers for a little food, and I felt no different” (Thiong’o, 142). People of their community also behave women in this way, and exploit them.

The men organized themselves in groups according to the ridges of origin. Thabai was famous because men from there successfully fought other groups and took away their women ...the man who beat you the pervious Sunday and took away your woman, was a friend but he knew later in the wood you would look for a chance to stay him and took away his women (Thiong’o, 71).

Woman offered their naked bodies to him, even some of the most respectable came to him by night. But Mumbi, his Mumbi, would not yield, and he could never bring himself to force her (Thiong’o, 205).

That shows the bitter lives of colonized women in a wretched society. Even they were enjoying with themselves, women have the fear of humiliation. Ngugi says in the novel “Mothers warned their daughters to take care not to be raped in the dark” in the festival of celebration (Thiong’o, 199).

Ngugi portrays strong women figures, too. Wambui is one these women, who successfully struggled for her country. Ngugi describes her: “Wambui was not very old, although she had lost most of her teeth. During the emergency, she carried secrets from the village to the forest and back to the villages and towns” (Thiong’o, 19). She helped to the freedom fighters by giving messages from their compatriots. Although she was an old woman, she never lost her power to fight against the colonizers. She believes that women have to take an important place in the resistance movement. She tries to make women

conscious; “she went around the market place determined to put her secret resolve into practice. Women had to act. Women had to force the issue... she believed in the power of women to influence events, especially where men had failed to act, or seemed indecisive” (Thiong’o, 175). Ngugi gives a nationalistic role to Wambui; following lines express her thoughts on the necessity of women for the freedom of their country:

Wambui suddenly broke through the crowd and led a group of women to the platform. She grabbed the microphone from the speaker. People were interested. Was there any circumcised man who felt water in stomach at the sight of a white man? Women, she said, had brought their Mithuru and Miengu to the platform let therefore such men, she jeered, come forward, wear the women’s skirts and aprons and give up their trousers to the women. Men sat rigidly in their seats and tried to laugh with the crowd to hide the inner discomfort (Thiong’o, 175).

Wambui also tries to raise consciousness of men for the freedom of their country. One day a policeman stopped and searched her. “He started from her breast towards the vital spot” (Ngugi 19). But Wambui screamed and resisted her. Upon this event, she spoke to her village men to activate them against the colonizers. She said: ““The children of these days’, she began. ‘Have you lost all shame? Just because the white man tells you so, you would actually touch your own mother’s...the woman who gave you birth? All right, I’ll lift the clothes and you can have a look at your mother...” (Thiong’o, 19).

Many women also started to demand justice. For instance, in the novel, a woman complained to the MP “Last Saturday, they came and arrested my man because he has not paid taxes. But how does he pay poll tax? He has no job. Our two children have had to leave school because no money” (Thiong’o, 60). This is not a common situation during the colonial period, because women were silenced in that period; however a glimmer of light appeared among the women to resist against the colonizers.

Ngugi also reflects the condition of pre-colonial society, in which women were dominant. The process of women position in the society has undergone a drastic change throughout the history of Kenya. Although women had the control of the society in some periods, it did not continue so much, again, men took the control. He argues in the novel that once upon a time woman had the power the country, but because of her sexuality she lost her ruling power. When she became pregnant, man took over the control.

Women had a low position in the postcolonial society, and seen as a subaltern creature. For instance, Karanja thinks that “women are cowards” (Thiong’o, 87). They are not as brave as men. In fact, he has no courage when compared with Wambui. And also, the story of Gatu shows the status of women. Gatu tells a story about queen of England: “she said if you sell me your valley, I will let you...once. Women are women you know. In my country, I told her, we do not buy that thing from our women. We get it free” (Thiong’o, 96). Mwaura also agrees with Gatu, he says Karanja “There will be plenty of women. You know how they go free (even married ones) on such occasions” (Thiong’o, 155). Because of the traditions and common thoughts of the society, they think in this way.

The conversation between Gikonyo and his mother reflects the general thought of men on the duty of women: “whatever we say, these people are truly clever. How did they think of such tools which can cut anything?” Wangari always referred to white men as these people. ‘Go and cook. These things are beyond women’” said Gikonyo (Thiong’o, 73). As it is clearly understood, the only duty of women is to cook, and also take care of children. That is, women were passivized during the postcolonial period because of the colonization. On the other hand, there were certain jobs that men could do. When they try new things, they are criticized by the society. For example, Gikonyo experienced such a thing. People criticized Gikonyo because of his job “At first other men deride him for doing a woman’s job. Brushing sides with women’s skirt. But when his fortunes changed, they started respecting him” (Thiong’o, 57).

Except for native Kenyan women, we also see white female characters in *A Grain of Wheat*. These women are reflected as superior to the native women. While native women have a hard life, white women have nice and luxurious life. Mrs. Margery, Dr. Lynd, and Mrs. Dickinson are some of these white women. They spend their time for pleasant things while native women were suffering in their own land. Ngugi portrays Mrs. Margery as follows: “Mrs. Margery Thompson had cultivated red roses, white roses, and pink roses- roses of all shades. Now she emerged from this garden of color and came to the door. She was dressed in thin white trousers and a blouse that seemed suspended from her pointed breasts” (Thiong’o, 36).

On the other hand, we witness the luxurious life of Mrs. Dickinson. While native women cannot find anything to eat, and even they sell their bodies just for a loaf of bread, Mrs. Dickinson spends a lot of money for her dog.

Mrs. Dickinson was the librarian.... An enthusiast for the east African safari, she always took part, co-driving with her boyfriend, but she never once finished the course. Her missions were the ones Karanja hated most: often she sent him, for instance to the African quarters to buy meat for two dogs (Thiong'o, 36).

They see their animals more worthy than the native people. Dr. Lynd is also such a woman who behaves native people in a rough way. Her attitudes towards Karanja show her rough behaviors. "Dr. Lynd, a plant pathologist at the station cross the tarmac road.... she held her dog by the collar with the left hand and pointed an accusing finger at Karanja... 'I am ashamed of you, utterly ashamed of you'" (Thiong'o, 41-42). For the sake of her dog, she behaves people in a bad manner. That is, they see animals more important than native people.

All in all, in *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi portrays various types of women figures. Postcolonial women are sufferers; on the other hand, white women have a good life. While white women are sitting their cosy houses, postcolonial women live in the forest to fight against the colonizers.

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study is to examine the figure of postcolonial women in the works *Petals of Blood* and *A grain of Wheat* by Ngugi. These two works are the examples of postcolonial literature, which explicitly reflect the condition of women in the colonized societies.

In his novels, besides the concepts such as nationhood, betrayal, and resistance, Ngugi portrays the postcolonial women figures in various types of characters. In *Petals of Blood*, we see a strong character with her wounds in her heart. Wanja is the major female character of the novel, who is a barmaid and also a prostitute. Ngugi depicts her as an intelligent woman figure, who is admired by all men. She has the capacity to overcome all difficulties, even after she was raped, she continued to live as she wanted, which is an abnormal condition for the postcolonial women. That is, Wanja can be defined as a courageous, active, and awe-inspiring woman figure.

Through the image of Wanja, Ngugi reflects the soul of Kenya, and also Kenyan women. The life of Wanja mirrors up to the lives of all Kenyan women, who are exploited and oppressed by several factors. That is, the sufferings of Wanja, and Kenyan women, do not result from only colonialism, but also patriarchy and gender discrimination play an important role in the plight of native women. As a matter of fact, the first fall of Wanja is because of her exploitation by a Kenyan man, who seduced her and left her alone after her exploitation. We see several examples of this kind of exploitation in *Petals of Blood*, and especially on the character of Wanja. Kimeria, Mzigo, and Chui are the exploiters. One day Joseph, brother of Abdulla, becomes ill, and upon this, Wanja and Karega search for help in the city. After lots of trials, a man accepts them to help. This man was Kimeria, who seduced Wanja in her teenage years and left her alone. Although several years have passed, Kimeria again wants to exploit Wanja in return for medication for Joseph. That is, Wanja cannot escape from her destiny and sleep with Kimeria to save Joseph. This extract also shows us that colonialism is not the single cause of the oppression women, in addition to colonialism, postcolonial women have been oppressed by their own citizens.

Patriarchy also makes a great impact on the lives of women in colonized nations. Wanja's experiences show the harsh face of patriarchy and discomfort of women in their own house. Wanja expresses in *Petals of Blood*: "Once I went home. My father said: I do not want a prostitute in the house" (Thiong'o, 1991). Even her father behaves her in a rough way.

In spite of all her oppressions and hard life, Ngugi depicts a strong and an active woman figure. In anyway, Wanja can be seen the glimmer of light of Kenya, and also she can be seen as a rebirth of Kenya after very harsh years. When Wanja comes to Ilmorog, the village starts to refresh. Her energy makes all villagers awake. For instance, she helps Abdulla in his shop. The business of Abdulla starts to improve with the touch of Wanja, by using her advertising skills, she makes Abdulla's profit rise.

In *A Grain of Wheat*, contrary to *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi portrays various types of women figures. We see fourteen women characters in the novel, who are depicted as freedom fighters and also sufferers.

In its general sense, we see the sufferings of postcolonial women in *A Grain of Wheat*. While drawing the picture of postcolonial women, Ngugi reflects them as sufferer; on the other hand, we see the benefactive white women figures. All these female characters are the victims of colonialism and highly suffered from it. For instance, we witness the deaths of Wambuku and Njeri, who died while fighting against the colonizers. Ngugi also emphasizes the poverty that female characters faced up with. Upon losing their lands, Kenya people put up a fight against poverty. Even many women died of hunger, such as Mukami, Gitogo's mother and Mugo's mother. On the other hand, Ngugi also mentions white women, living a luxurious life. Mrs. Dickinson, Mrs. Margery, and Dr. Lynd are the white women who benefit from the opportunities of colonialism.

Ngugi gives importance to the struggle of women in the postcolonial period. As a result, in *A Grain of Wheat*, he creates brave, honorable and strong women figures, fighting for the freedom of their country. For instance, Wambui is such a courageous woman who becomes the symbol of resistance in the novel. She has a protest attitude against the colonizers and organizes women to fight against the colonizers.

In spite of their struggle, we see the plight of women during the Mau-Mau rebellion. They experienced many bad things during the resistance movement, including rape. Several women were killed cruelly by the colonizers. By mentioning these facts, Ngugi aims to show the devilish face of the colonizers. However, besides these disgusting conditions, Ngugi highlight the innocence and self-sacrifice of Mumbi. Although she sleeps with Karanja, she does not actually betray her husband. For the sake of her husband's freedom, she throws herself to the wolves. And, she never stops loving her husband.

All in all, in this study, I tried to examine the figure of postcolonial women in the works of Ngugi, *Petals of Blood* and *A Grain of Wheat*. In these two novels, we see various types of postcolonial women, who were exploited and oppressed by several elements. No matter how they are oppressed and exploited, the postcolonial women are the victims of colonialism and their own society. And, in spite of all their sufferings, they achieve to stand against all the harsh sides of life, like a flower growing in a bloody garden.

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