

Boundaries within National Borders: A comparative study of *Petals of Blood* and *Banapangshul*

Sabrina Karim¹ & Arpana Awwal²

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Abstract

Though Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* (1977) and Selim Al Deen's *Banapangshul* (2001) are writings from two wide apart continents - Africa and Asia-both texts deal with common experience of neocolonial exploitation and both the authors Ngugi and Al Deen have consciously tried to create new forms to break away from colonial hegemonic discourses. *Petals of Blood* and *Banapangshul* portray the predicament of the economically dispossessed villagers of Illmorog and the ethnically marginalized community *Mandai* in Bangladesh in the hands of neocolonial power in the form of capitalism. Both the authors have consciously tried to find new ways of representation that was to be distinctively native and representative of the marginalized people. This paper aims at comparing the manner in which colonialism's after effects maintain exploitative hold on marginal communities even long after the nations in two dispersed continents, Kenya and Bangladesh have become independent and how these two authors have tried to 'write back to center'.

Keywords: neocolonialism, capitalism, marginalized, imperialism, subaltern

1. Introduction:

Ngugi waThing'o's *Petals of Blood* (1977), while revealing the disillusionment of *Uhuru* (freedom) after independence of Kenya, projects how imperialism in its neo-colonial form maintains its monopoly and controls the fates of the people of Illmorog, twelve years after Kenya's liberation. Though the center of power is no longer the colonizers, nevertheless, the once colonized who have replaced them are equally ruthless in their pillaging of Kenyan resources and its people. The narrative of *Petals of Blood* is polyphonic in its multiple voices and perspectives, reminiscing the history of Kenya from pre-colonial times till years after the end of colonial rule to project how the fate of Illmorog remains the same. The text takes a critical look at how the independence of Kenya had failed its people, except for a small elite group who had positioned themselves as political and industrial agents. Kenya under the neo-colonial rule of the blacks took no initiative to develop or decolonize the national consciousness. Rather it paved the way for imperialism to keep its hold

¹ Sabrina Karim is working as an Assistant Professor at Dept. of English, Eastern University, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Orcid: 0000-0002-1535-8799. Email: sabrinakarimh@gmail.com

² Arpana Awwal is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature Studies, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University. She is currently enrolled as an MPhil scholar in the Centre for Women's Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. Literary, gender and cultural studies are her areas of interest.

and control of the country's economy. wa'Thiong'o's political philosophy and concern over imperial control in Kenya is allegorically presented in the predicament of the imagined village of Illmorog.

On the other hand, intellectuals like al Deen, in post-independent Bangladesh saw with frustration how the dream of independence was flushed away with the importation of European hegemony in the name of European aids. For the economically and racially marginalized minority the motherland became a land of repression. As a witness to *Muktijuddho* (Bangladesh's independence war of 1971) Selim Al Deen foresaw intellectual revolution as imperative to overturn the existing capitalist hegemony. He was one of the pioneers who consciously sought to break away from nineteenth century's blind fidelity to European ideals. (Galib & Jamil, 2009, p.27) His *Banapangshul* (2001)ⁱ, written on the almost extinct minority community Mandai, inhabitants of the forests in Shokhipur and Tangail in Bangladesh, is an effort to unearth the various means of oppressions inflicted on them in the name of development and foreign aid. "Development" the word meant nothing but repression and pillage for the marginalized community Mandai.

Though *Petals of Blood* and *Banapangshul* are narratives written in different tongues, they share similar intellectual endeavors of the authors. *Petals of Blood* is essentially a polyphonic novel written in 'who had done it' style. Appropriation and abrogation of Kenyan language was a conscious effort by Ngugi to make the novel Kenyan English/english to decolonize the form of novel and language itself. On the other hand, *Banapangshul* is a play written in Bangla with Mandai words and songs appropriated in the main stream Bangla language infused with *panchali*ⁱⁱ form in the narrative style. Al Deen's effort to fuse eastern idea of *daitadaitobad* and adoption of *panchali* form in drama is a political stance against intellectuals' mimicking of colonial legacies. wa'Thiong'o's use of appropriation and abrogation and Deen's *daitadaitobad* has lent unique voices of resistance to the narratives from the margins.

This paper aims at comparing the manner in which colonialism's after effects maintain exploitative hold on marginal communities long after nations like Kenya and Bangladesh in two dispersed continents have become independent. It studies how intellectuals like Ngugi and Selim Al Deen have employed methods to create counter discourse against capitalist hegemony.

2. Hegemony and counter discourse

Despite being the literatures of different continents, Africa and Asia, the people depicted in *Petals of Blood* and *Banapangshul* share the common fate of experiencing neocolonial exploitation. "Imperialism is total: it has economic, political, military, cultural and psychological consequences for the people of the world today." (wa'Thiong'o, 2007, p. 2) wa' Thingo colonial subject-hood is formed through hegemonic colonial ideologies that uproot the colonial subjects from their own cultural environment. This disassociation of the cultural and social environment is what Wa'Thiong'o terms 'colonial alienation' (Wa'Thiong'o, 2007, p. 17) In *Wretched of the Earth* Fanon elaborates further how such colonial alienation manifests:

"Every effort is made to bring colonized person to admit the inferiority of his culture which has been transformed into instinctive patterns of behavior, to recognize the unreality of his "nation", and, and in the last extreme, the confused and imperfect character of his own biological structure." (1963, p. 236)

The self-loath that the native is made to go through creates the desire to identify with the master and reject everything that stands for the native. As the native begins to identify with the master,

his belief system is systematically altered into that of his master, thus, his exploitative method of his own people is merely a consequence of the procedure.

In *Petals of Blood* even after the liberation of Kenya the white monopoly is taken over by the neo bourgeoisie ruling class represented by three prominent businessmen- Mzigo, Chui, and Kimeria. “Again imperialism introduced literacy, but often confined it to clerks, soldiers, policemen, and the petty civil servants, the nascent messenger class...” (wa’Thiong’o, 2007, p. 67) Thus, educated blacks like Mzigo, Chui, and Kimeria are bent on the European ideology of individualism, as a result their goals remain self-centered, not community or nation centered. wa’Thiong’o furthers this issue when he says that there was a “calculated policy to nurture a dependent native middle class sharing the values of exploitation to take positions of influence after constitutional independence.” (wa’Thiong’o, 1984, p.36) This colonial trend is elaborated through the newly introduced tourism culture in Illmorog.

In *Banapangshul* we see how cruel blow of capitalism created self-loath in Mandai community dividing it from within. Hor’s brother Hori converts to Christianity and Pashupoti leaves his ancestral religion converting to Hinduism. Pasupoti could not accept the suffering and untimely death of Nripen. His loss of faith in his own religion is a direct result of poverty and bourgeoisie oppression. Conflict with the old faith for Pashupoti, Hori and even Shuki is just one side of the social disintegration.

Two excerpts from the text *Banapangshul* would unravel other facets of disintegration and erosion of culture in the face of capitalism:

“Lutfer Master says :“Do you know? Not long ago, just fifty years back you had your own language with its noun, pronoun, verbs. You used to speak in that language. Alas! How the afflictions of Bangali people have abolished your language too.”ⁱⁱⁱ (Al Deen, 2001, p. 205)

Shokhipur and its inhabitants have been described like this in the text “Opposite to the setting light, the lying shadow of the retrograding minorities who have not been even mentioned in the proud history of the civilized people.”(Al Deen, 2001, p. 14)

Huq and Sen have observed that these two excerpts together elucidate two things- first, that these people even when they had their language remained absent in national history and second, that those in power are the writers and heroes of the proud history of this minority group (Huq and Sen, 2008, p. 13). Shirajul Islam Chowdhury in his “Colonialism versus Cultural Conflict” says that in this world of consumerist capitalism where our values are going deflate, capitalist colony increases poverty and turns culture into a product so there is an unavoidable opposition between colonialism and culture.^{iv}(Millat, 2009, p. 156)

Intellectuals like Ngugi wa Thing’o and Selim Al Deen felt an urge to find a new way to give voice to the marginalized to write back to capitalist colony. So when wa’Thiong’o talks about the neo-colonial method of eroding Kenyan cultural roots, his narrative voice is essentially native. The text is abundant in native motifs, ritualistic references and detailing of Kenyan ways. Similar to Wole Soyinka’s *Road*, *Petals of Blood* is abundant in exuberating songs and native jokes. The narrative of *Petals of Blood* is polyphonic in its multiple voices and perspectives reminiscing the history of the black even before the colonisers were settled and after they had left. The description of Kenya’s landscape and weather never escapes the reader as African. In Illmorog every season was welcomed with its changes. Summer was met by prayers and communal rituals to invite rain. When rain dampened the soil, the wild flowers with its

“floral cloth over Illmorog was later replaced by green pods and maize cobs. ...When a good crop was expected it was known through rhythmic balanced alteration of rain and sunshine. A bad crop was preceded by sporadic rains or by continuous heavy downpour which suddenly gave way to sunshine for the rest of the season.” (wa’Thiong’o, 1977, p.32)

Such narrative technique retains the voice of the subaltern though the text is written in English.

Similarly, Selim Al Deen used to say that unless there is a cultural revolution our identities as *Bangalis* or *adeebashi*(indigenous) would be at stake. Al Deen often said that it was no use being a clinger to the Western tree he wanted to find an artistic expression that can be called our own. So he searched for all the art forms that existed over a thousand years and whose evolution was clipped short by the advent of the British when we were forced to adopt a different civilization and culture. (Amin 2007)

Selim Al Deen’s *Banapangshul* harmonically merges the old *panchali* , Bangladeshi ballad, form and his philosophy *daitadaitobad*. *Daitadaitobad* is a pre-existed Vaishnab philosophy of Sri Chaitanyadeb which was extended by Al Deen. On the other hand “...old *panchali* that combines in its form the storytelling, song, dance incorporated with “*Katha Natya* or the oral traditions ...it is all in one and also one in all”. (Amin 2007) So Al Deen’s *Daitadaitobad* is a mixture of - Sri Chaitanyadeb’s Vaishnab philosophy expressed in age old *panchali* form to talk about contemporary socio-political issues. Selim Al Deen’s theory of *daitadaitobad*, ethnic theatre and, above all, fusion theory is a distinct counter discourse against the Eurocentric models in its attempt to give expression and revive ethnic voice. (Islam, 2008, p. 65) Old *panchali* form gave Al Deen the larger narrative scope to combine the story telling technique with Bangla *raga* (music) like *bhairabi*, *bolam*, *tot bolam* songs and dance. Al Deen dexterously uses the scope to talk of myths of Mandai ancestry and their religious rituals in song and dance, always keeping the readers conscious of Bangladeshi landscape of Shokhipur. This contributes in giving *Banapangshul* an ethnic voice despite being narrated in Bangla. The multiple voices in the narrative makes the readers conscious of the ways, daily struggle and the past history, myths and rituals of the slowly eroding *Mandai* ethnic group of Shokhipur.

wa Thiong’o’s preaching of decolonization and Selim’s endeavors through *daitadaitobad* was their conscious effort to break away from the colonial hegemonic discourse to create a new form and philosophy that will be distinctively native and represent marginalized people in an effort to re-read and re-write our past. The narrative of *Petals of Blood* speaks of the natives past and present history in a unique mode of representation creating an African identity. On a parallel level Al Deen, in *Banapangshul*, invents a new narrative mode to illustrate the legendary past and present disgruntlement of *Mandai* people that becomes idiosyncratically Bangladeshi.

3. Neo-colonialism and Development Projects:

Both *Petals of Blood* and *Banapangshul* depict the hollowness of development projects. In both cases the word ‘development’ has been methodically employed by the bourgeoisie to exploit, plunder and spread neocolonial hegemony. In 1965 when V.I. Lenin proclaimed that imperialism was the highest stage of capitalism the world was already divided amongst a handful of major capitalist players. In its imperial form in colonies, capitals are funneled only as investments devoid of ‘developments’ in any colony. It is only “for the purpose of increasing profits by exporting capital abroad to backwards countries. In these backward countries profits are usually high, capital is scarce, the price of land is relatively low, wages are low, raw materials are cheap.” (Lenin, p. 73)

In *Petals of Blood* the development projects of roads, banks, factories, distilleries and housing estates transform Illmorog from a traditional African village into a neon and concrete jungle. Banks, which Lenin says are purposed to function as ‘middlemen’ in payments and transfers, play a crucial role as “one of the fundamental processes in the growth of capitalism into capitalist imperialism.” (Lenin, 1975, p.31) The functions of the banks in Illmorog do not end with controlling production and manipulating raw material, but reaches out to the remotest of the village inhabitants in the form of loan. Local people are deceived into taking loans from the banks to improve their lots only to lose their lands under its deceitful burden of huge interest. Wanja and Abdullah too have to sell their business to save Wanja’s ancestral land. As the land’s business prospective opened up, its people became transformed into mere laborers. This goes to show how the fruits of the lands and toils of the workers are funneled to enrich the uprising bourgeoisie. wa’Thiong’o affirms, “... the colonial system, through repressive racist ideologies, ensured the private appropriation of that wealth in a few hands, mostly whites. Imperialism thus introduced mass poverty and cross regional underdevelopment” (wa’Thiong’o, 2007, p. 66)

To ensure the flow of capital and power better communication system is imperative. But Illmorog, a land where once railway travelled through was left without any after its independence and “gave no evidence of its former exploiting glory.” (wa’Thiong’o, 1977, p. 11). In the beginning of the text, the politicians ignored Illmorog crises, but later became the center of attention with the construction work of Trans-Africa Road. The Trans African Road “abstracted from the vision of oneness, of collective struggle of the African peoples, the road only brought unity of the earth’s surface: every corner of the continent was now within easy reach of international capitalist robbery and exploitation.” (wa’Thiong’o, 1977, p. 262).

wa’ Thing’o portrays here how the poor become poorer and rich elite become richer along with their foreign alliances. The widening gap between the people along monetary acquisition and unfair and uneven distribution of wealth gave birth to class structure in Illmorog. Class-consciousness, a form of individuality, replaces national consciousness of the neo bourgeoisie class. The different classes of people now live in different parts of the village. The residential area in Cape Town is occupied by “the managers, country council officials, the manager’s of Barclays, and African Economic Banks, and servants of state and money power.” (wa’Thiong’o, 1977, p. 280)

Similarly in Shokhipur, the setting of Selim Al Deen’s *Banapangshul*, Mandai people are burdened under development projects. The older colonial legacy now handed down to the white-collar bourgeoisie government officials and the bourgeoisie usurers of the country. The government officers are more eager to import foreign seeds for plantation projects. Capital was being funneled and in return cheap land and labor was forcefully acquired through middlemen. Local trees were being cut for more foreign aids and for the forest dependent Mandai community deforestation was devastating. It was a blow to their culture, religion and rituals. Mandai people worshipped forest and one of their customs was to hunt wild pigs on full moon. The forest and land was at the root of their origin. But for the government people and middle class bourgeoisie most important was foreign fund.^v (Huq & Sen, 2008, p. 14)

Oyon Gongopadhya in his analysis of *Banapangshul* elucidates that trees do not have any country, so the question raised by Deen is about the border of a land, its governing policy, government and democracy and along it the majority’s dominance on minority. (Huq & Sen, 2008, p. 14)

Exploitation takes the countenance of international capitalist robbery that is evident from the pathetic story of Laltu, the monkey, who meets a tragic fate. “A forest guard shot its father. Its mother was trapped and sent to a foreign laboratory” (Al Deen, 2001, p. 46). The story

symbolically represents the exploitation of the forest and its dwellers. In another instance Forester Hasan's confession of illegal timber exportation to Lutfur Master during his stay in Bandarban forest unravels the nature of capitalist robbery. He was on the verge of losing his job in the lawsuit against illegal timber export. Later he confesses that during his stay in Sundarban forest he bribed all his superior police officers with rare antelope skins. (Al Deen, 2001, p. 36)

Bourgeoisie Bangali Bangladeshis extend the neocolonial hegemony in the form of capitalism that threatens the existence of minority groups like Mandai. After liberation, the forest being seized by the *mahajans* (Bangali usurers), the tree worshipping Mandai people were forced to work in *mahajan's* lands in exchange of minimal pay. The two Bangali *mahajans*—Raju and Nuru, in *Bonopangshul*—represent the bourgeoisie who exploit the labor of the marginalized. On the other hand Forester Hasan and Ranger are the middlemen created by the European education system. *Mahajan* wants to clear the forest area to increase cultivatable land, export its timber and animals. To this end they falsely claim to the government that the government-reserved land includes the *Mandai* territory. Gunin, the community priest, along with others accuses Forester Hasan for conspiring with the *mahajans*, and rightfully raises the question that “Isn't there a government policy saying reserved area should exclude *Mandai* land?” (Al Deen, 2001, p. 70)

The forest that contains the spirit of Mandai existence becomes a source of capitalist endeavors for the *mahajans*, Forester and Ranger. Rajumahajan shrewdly occupies Nripen's ancestral land in exchange of three thousand taka and eighty-six bottles of *dora*³ (the local liquor brewed for rituals). The treachery forces Nripen to commit suicide. His ancestral land being confiscated, his wife and daughter Maloty become destitutes. Rajendra in the fit of anger screams at Gunin and Lutfur: “You Bangalis, Hindus and Muslims have looted our lands. You have given us the money to buy *dora* in one hand and have pulled the other hand for signature. Do not talk about our rituals and religions. I don't trust you anymore.” (Al Deen, 2001, p. 28)

Rajendra shares similar fate as Nripen. He had also borrowed some money from Rajumahajan against his land. To find a way out of the debt, as a last resort, he searches for ancient *Koach* or *Mandai* King's hidden treasures in the old palace area. He ends up finding old armors buried deep in the ground. Though it belonged to Rajendra and his community, police arrest Rajendra for unlawfully taking state archeological property. Rajumahajan takes advantage of this catastrophe and with the help of Forest Ranger files a case against him at the Forestry Department.

Mahajan and his men use all sort of measures to acquire land, from bribing to killing. Mongoli's father died in land coalition with the *mahajan*; only his beheaded body was found for cremation. Her husband went missing in the same land conflict. Mongoli was forced into prostitution to save her mother and daughter.

These people became labourers in their own land. Thus, the development projects have proven to be a means of controlling and subjugating general mass in the name of progress, conversely maintaining poverty and may be giving rise to capitalist monopoly/ imperialism.

4. Spirituality:

Capitalism has transformed the simple village Illmorog into a booming lucrative tourism sites where prostitution and alcohol are major forms of entertainment. Illmorog was once the home of

³the local liquor brewed with native herbs for rituals

the spirit Mwathi. But now, wa'Thiong'o shows how the land has become sullied by the forceful penetrations of the gigantic bulldozers to construct a haven for tourists. The change in spiritual landmark into business location signals the dramatic change in the culture of the natives of Illmorog. "To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relations with others." (wa'Thiong'o, 2007, p. 16) As the people are exposed to naked ways of exploitations employed for the sake of 'development' the natives of Illmorog's self-definitive roots begin to erode. Their system of spiritual beliefs where upon rested their philosophy of life and identity eroded into the consumerist and competitive philosophy of the West which echoes in Wanja's words "eat or be eaten".

The transformation of Illmorog's spiritualism into trans-capitalism is evident in the metamorphosis of theng'eta, a drink shared by the whole community during religious and communal ceremonies. Theng'eta bonded the community through faith and its power to transcend the boundary of the living and the dead.

"Theng'eta. It is a dream. It is a wish. It gives you sight, and those favoured by God it can make them cross the river of time and talk with ancestors. It has given seers their tongues; poets and Gichandi their words; and it has made barren women mother of many children. Only you must take it with faith and purity in your hearts." (wa'Thiong'o, 1977, p. 210)

Earlier during colonial rule this unifying theng'eta was banned as an ethnic drink that made the natives lazy, not active slaves. Twelve years after independence as trans-capitalism seeps into the village with the hands of Trans-African Road, a media report on Illmorog describes the drink as "...a strange drink called theng'eta which is reported to make barren women fertile, and not so strong men, potent. Theng'eta for Power." (wa'Thiong'o, 1977, p. 258) This popularity through media made theng'ta a lucrative commodity. The change in Illmorog's economy and its effect on the people who become victims of real estate dealers is evident when Abdullah is compelled to sell his theng'eta business to save Wanja' ancestral land.

In the hands of the capitalists Abdullah's theng'eta business reaches a whole new height with the foreign investment that makes it the most popular consumerist drink. Devoid of its cultural and spiritual value, losing its purpose of being the bond between communities, theng'eta changes into Theng'eta Gin, a hybrid between local and imperial. Its purpose is no longer spiritual, rather Karega observes, "I think these drinks are made to keep people drunk to drug their minds, so that they don't ask questions or do something about their misery,..." (wa'Thiong'o, 1977, p. 284). Thus in the hands of imperial power it is transformed into a state apparatus controlling masses into passivity and consent.

Similar fate meets the people of Shokhipur. Mandai people are worshippers of nature and now that the forest is taken from them they are left without their spirit. In his last days Gunin, the staunch believer of nature's power of healing and bonding people together, moves within the forest in the hope that the trees will rescue his soul. But as the forest is being burnt, trees cut he realizes there is no hope of salvation in nature.

Al Deen demonstrates how *dora*, the spiritual liquor brewed from local herbs used in community rituals became a common drink that was consumed at the end of the day to forget the day long hardship of the Mandai. The sweet smelling *dora* reminds them of their glorious past and even if temporarily make them forget their unbearable present.

Mandai community has a rich history of wars fought to preserve their identity. Yet, today they are helpless in the hands of the law and order system of the country. Selim Al Deen draws a parallel between the past and present history of the Mandai community by using the myths.

Mandai people believe that they are the descendants of Lord Shiva. Their myths narrate that once *Porshuram* attacked their land and they were defeated in that perilous battle. Shiva could not save them from the peril. As they had lost their *maan*, meaning honour, in that war, they were named Mandai. In the past *Porshuram* and his army defeated them and in the present they are being defeated by the agents of capitalism- *mahajan* and his convoy. The only hope is that since they have survived earlier battles, they may survive the present mayhem as well.

Thus, we see how capitalism is a machinery that believes in generating money, even at the expense of spirituality.

5. Body and the Land:

In both *Petals of Blood* and *Bonopangshul* transformation of the land has been symbolically represented through exploitation of female body. Interweaved with the metamorphosis of Illmorog is the fate of its people. The new consumerist Illmorog's traits are evident in Wanja's new profession. Similar to the land that has been abused by the local elite and prostituted to foreign agents of imperial power for monetary and political benefits, Wanja's rape and helplessness brings her to a new realization.

"You eat or you are eaten. ... I have hired young girls ...I promised them security ...they let me trade their bodies...what's the difference whether you are sweating it out on a plantation, in a factory or lying on your back, anyway? (wa'Thiong'o, 1977, p. 293)

Her realization of the new law of the land and her determination to be no longer victimized makes her an example of what Illmorog has become. It has become a land of individual interests. Hence the legendary Ndemi's spirit that once looked over Illmorog no longer resides there.

Unlike the present Illmorog in wa'Thiongo's novel, twelve years the readers witness a different Wanja who had returned from the city and she joined Abdullah's bar so that Joseph, Abdulla's assistant, may have the opportunity to go to school. Later she herself becomes an epitome of exploitation. Even her whorehouse reflects the overall landscape of the new Illmorog. Wanja's wood mansion is really impressive, a contrast to Abdulla's hovel. A hedge of well-trimmed pines and creeping plants and bougainvillea and other flowers surround it. A nice aromatic smell hangs about the courtyard of beautifully neatly mowed grass with a pattern of words, "LOVE IS POISON". (wa'Thiong'o, 1977, p. 286)

The well-trimmed plants and mowed grass have replaced the natural wilderness of Africa. This trimming of plants into desired shapes and size becomes symbolic of how the people of Africa are controlled by neo-colonialism. The pines and bougainvillea are plants that represent presence, spread and permanence of alien powers in native lands even after independence. The grass mowed into LOVE IS POISON is the essence of Illmorog as here everything now can be bought and sold. It is a land of exchange values and love is a façade here. At Wanja's mansion Munira and Karega were offered drinks on a trolley: Tusker, Pilsner, Theng'eta Gin, whiskey and Kenya Cane. The drinks are either western or hybridized African symbolizing the hybrid nature of Illmorog's existence.

Al Deen draws a number of parallelisms of fate of Mandailand with female bodies. In the myth of *Porshuram*, *Poshuram* is shown to attack the Mandai ancestors to usurp their land. In the beginning of the text there is a reference of army atrocity on the Marma (another ethnic group) for political gains. Ching, a Marma woman was raped by the state army (Selim AlDeen, 2001, p. 35) in the later part of the play cries of women are heard through *Shonamukhi*. *Mahajan's* muscle

men burnt Shonamukhi's city to seize it. Despite being a warrior clan they fail to put up a resistance against the capitalist suppression.

In *Banapangshul* Shuki symbolically represents the exploited community and the land. She is synonymous of Shokhipur, the land itself, which combines and contains the very essence of Mandai existence but now it is divided in the face of Bangali atrocities. She contains the people with her performance in rituals. Shukhi a young widow at the age of six was offered to lord Shiva by her grandfather and local priest Gunin. She observes the rituals and *pujas* (prayers) for progress of the community. As she aged a conflict began between the older world order and the new one, especially because of the divide within the community. Al Deen has paralleled community's shaking faith on old religion with Shukhi's own. When the whole community was under turmoil of existence Shukhi herself was also going through an inner conflict – her love and desire for Anil and her old love and faith on religion and rituals. She as a priest can never marry but as a woman of blood and flesh she wants to marry Anil. Lutfer master appropriately criticizes how she has been oppressed in the name of religion- married off when she was only five to an old man, widowed at six and later offered as a priestess to lord Shiva. (AlDeen, 2001, p. 27) In the end Bangali *mahajan's* men rape Shukhi. Just like the forest Shukhi is exploited for political and financial gains.

6. Conclusion

Through a comparative study of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* and Selim al Deen's *Banapangshul* this paper has attempted to show means by which newer forms of exploitation in postcolonial states of different continents has emerged. Kenya and Bangladesh, having different histories and cultures, have faced similar forms of oppression in neocolonial mode of capitalism. Though European colonialism have ended, in the text we have seen how similar exploitative nature prevails in the name of foreign funds and development. Nevertheless the authors Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Selim Al Deen believe that neocolonial powers can be resisted through strengthening community and believe in humanity. *Petals of Blood* ends with men and women waiting outside Karega's cell and *Banapangshul* ends with Forester Hasan's change of heart. The ends of the novels signify that for wa' Thiong'o end of capitalism will come through uprising of collective strength while Al Deen put his belief in humanist philosophy. Both the writers in the end put hopes on the new generation. Wanja and Shuki are pregnant in the end. The embryo hints a new beginning for the communities. (Galib and Jamil, 2009, p.88). Shuki finally finds love and the child that was conceived from rape does not concern the new couple. This signifies a new way for the Mandai community where the old world view is left behind and a new and better world view is awaited. Wanja finds a partner in Abdullah, which signals the need to find strength within the community and its beliefs. For both the writers the embryo is a combination of past glories and hope for better future.

Endnotes

ⁱ*Banapangshul* the text is only available in Bangla

ⁱⁱ*Panchali* or Bangla ballad is an old form of Bangla representation used in ancient oral narratives.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Banapangshul* is available in Bangla. All translations are done by the authors.

^{iv} Mosaddek Millat edited *Gram Theatre the Quarterly Magazine: Special Issue Selim Al Deen's 60th birth Anniversary* is available in Bangla. The translations are done by the authors

^v This book is available in Bangla. All translations are done by the authors.

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