Intertextual Borrowings in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood*

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Abstract

In every writing, literary and non-literary, no text exists as a complete isolate and complete authorial innovation. It manifests and results from multiple borrowings, conscious and otherwise, from other texts. Following Kristeva (1986), Genette (1997) and William (2010), this study analysed Ngugi wa Thiong'o's novel, *Petals of Blood,* to uncover differing extents of textual borrowing in the form of reference, quotation, parody, borrowing, allusion and translation. The study used document review and textual analysis to generate the data that were then subjected to content analysis register occurrences of different forms of intertextuality. Data analysis and interpretation entailed placing these occurrences into themes, establishing frequencies, and computing percentages. The resultant data were summarised and presented in tables and figures, coupled with evidential excerpts gleaned from the text. Borrowing emerged to be the most predominant intertextual element accounting as it does for more than one-third of all intertextualities in Ngugi's novel. In second came parody and allusion in that order. The other three forms of intertextuality—quotation, reference and translation—are comparably less pronounced in the novel. Conclusively, Ngugi's intertextuality subscribes to the spirit of Africanizing the English as a literary medium in the mould of what terms decolonising the mind of an African writer.

Introduction

T he concept of intertextuality goes back to the works of Bakhtin (Bakhtin 1981, 1986) that emphasised 'dialogic' qualities of texts to refer to how multiple voices get transformed and re-used each time a new text emerges. However, it has been a much-used term to capture how texts and ways of talking refer to and build on other texts and discourses

(Kristeva 1986). Consequently, textual construction is often replete with a mosaic of quotations. Indeed, every text comprises snatches of prior texts that help to build a new text. Kristeva (1986) identified two types of intertextualities: *horizontal* and *vertical*. Horizontal intertextuality, or what Fairclough (1993) calls *manifest* intertextuality, refers to explicitly demarcated references and serves the function of manifesting ideas from others in discourse. It consists of references to clarify a particular point, or continue, build up, or develop new ideas. The relationship between the new information and old information is usually stated clearly or clued (e.g. using quotation marks) in the new text. Fairclough (1992) refers to such reformation and manipulation of original texts as 'direct discourse representation' that integrates parts of other texts into a text and is usually explicitly marked off with quotation marks and signal clauses. This direct representation of discourse adds to the power of the proposition that a producer advances because, through quotations, the writer seems to have departed from the formation of the conceptions, hence creating an impression that it is not the text producer who believes this.

Vertical intertextuality, or what Fairclough (1993) calls *constitutive* intertextuality, on the other hand, refers to merging prior texts in new texts, which may assimilate, contradict, or ironically echo them. Fairclough (1992, p. 102) argues that 'a text may incorporate another text without the latter being explicitly cued: one can respond to another text in the way one words one's text'. This intertextuality refers to 'the configuration of discourse conventions that go into the production of the text' (Fairclough 1992, p.104), for example, mixed genres. It is closely related to orders of discourse and social change that integrates many values to exceed the textual level and get the receiver to seek out hidden discourses. These hidden discourses involve the reformation of existing social, cultural, and ideological values and moulding them to serve the producer's goals. Therefore, constitutive intertextuality affects and is affected by social order and the hegemonic struggle marks off power relations in society.

In the intertextuality process, reading constitutes a process of moving between texts and the meaning that we extract from the text becomes something that exists between the text and all the other texts/textual matters to which it refers and relates, hence making the text inter-text. According to Kristeva (1980, p. 36), a text is 'A permutation of texts, intertextuality in the space of a given text,' in which 'several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralise one another.' For her, intertextuality deals with the text's existence within society and history. Since texts usually have no unity or unified meaning, they are thoroughly connected to ongoing cultural and social processes. In her view, the text's meaning is a temporary rearrangement of elements with socially pre-existent meanings. Therefore, the meaning may reside either inside or outside the text. Here 'inside' is (the reader's view) and 'outside' is (society's influence) of the text. According to Baldick (2015, p.128), a text may have other texts, whose intertextual relationships include anagram, allusion, adaptation translation, parody, pastiche, imitation and other translations. In other words, intertextuality sets out to examine a significant degree of reference between one text and another and, thus, it refers to previous texts or it constitutes the study of a text's relationship with other texts in the present or past. Therefore, constitutive intertextuality affects and is affected by social order and the hegemonic struggle marking off power relations in society. It is the relationship between texts and practices.

Empirical Literature

Several studies have been conducted in the realm of intertextuality. Ouhwaite (2020), for example, identified and analysed the network of intertextual references embedded in the first three tracks of Lamar's pop music *To Pimp A Butterfly* aimed to understand the significance of the use and manipulation of intertextuality in the song. Guided by Burns et al. (2015), the study distinguished between strategic intertextuality and stylistic intertextuality and found that Lamar accessed a broad range of

music styles and genres to historicise African-American culture and creativity. Lamar applies the original contexts of the sources of the intertexts to align with current social concerns. This new concern enabled Lamar to highlight contemporary issues while acknowledging their longstanding presence in African-American communities.

As for Ahmed (2014), he analysed the intertextual allusions evident in three groups of Qur'anic narrative periscopes: a) The story of the biblical Prophet Jonah (Q68:48-50, 37:139-48, 21:87-8, 10:98, 6:86, and 4:163); ii) The creation account on the sin of the first human couple, Adam and Eve, and of God teaching Adam the names of everything (Q 20:120-121, 7:19-22, 2:31-3 and 2:35-6); and iii) The laughter of Sarah, wife of Abraham, and the story of Abraham's intercession for Lot's People (Q 51:24-30 and11:69-76). Ahmed's (2014) established that the intertextual function is embodied in allusions to elements, incidents, entities, and characters presented as non-fictional in the text. Also, the most frequent functional category of allusion that the researcher encountered was the meta-textual function, whereby the allusion engenders commentary on the Biblical episodes. Ahmed also exemplifies the allusion to Sarah's laughter where Q 11:71 did not evoke connotations from the referent text, i.e. Gen.18:12, but instead generated implicit commentary on it.

Noring's (2016) exploratory study focused on how author Susan Hill in her *The Woman in Black*, used intertextuality as a narrative device to create a rich fabric supporting and advancing the storyline of this novel. The study revealed that the intertextual elements the author used, which include character names, allusions to titles, and the mirroring of plots are well-known works of fiction. These elements are so abundantly interspersed in the narrative that they contribute enormously to the construction of the novel and allow the author to economise on the use of other narrative devices. He cites a literary work referred to in *The Woman in Black,* Sir Walter Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian*, which Kipps attempts to read in bed while staying at Eel Marsh House overnight. The plots of both stories bear some

exciting resemblances in that they both deal with the fate of two sisters, one of whom has given birth to a child out of wedlock and lost it.

Nikitina, Lebedinskaya and Plakhova (2018) analysed the use of allusion as a feature of intertextuality in newspapers and publicists' discourses. The empirical analysis of about 150 newspaper and magazine articles from American and British sources showed that about 30 percent contain biblical, mythological, literary or historical allusions. Most often, authors resort to allusions in the headlines of cultural subjects, but this phenomenon happens less often in articles on sports. In addition, the study found pure allusion and direct quotation, to be rarely used (Nikitina, Lebedinskaya, & Plakhova 2018).

In Acim's (2015) study, intertextuality as one of the literary discourse devices in the *New York Times* addressing Muslims inside and outside of the United States attracted critical approbation. The researcher, in this regard, argues that the *New York Times* employs a whole plethora of texts to disseminate specific arguments and assumptions about such people. The periodical use of poetry, for instance, enable reporters to trigger powerful emotions in their readers and get them to take sides regarding matters related to Muslims.

Mao (2015) explored how White House spokespersons are intertextually informed by journalists' enunciations, including questions at press meetings, using a corpus of texts created by both spokespersons and journalists. The study focused on intertextual relationships such as intertextual references, hyponymy, synonymy, interpretation/description, and intertextual ellipsis. It was found that different types of intertextual relationships are used to deal with different text segments. In responses containing text segments frequently used by both spokespersons and journalists, the relationship of hyponymy and intertextual ellipsis was more commonly used while the relationship of intertextual reference, synonymy, and interpretation/description was more typical.

The studies reviewed thus far attest to the abundance of inquiry into how intertextuality has been applied across registers and languages. Ngugi's works, rich, insightful, and revolutionary in the content matter as they are, have attracted a lot of critical attention. However, the issues of intertextual borrowing have attracted scanty attention. Some of these studies have included Sewlall (2003), Mwangi(2004) and Wasamba (2013), who exploited some elements of such borrowings. To further build on this intriguing project, this article adds further dimensions in a bid to come up with a much more comprehensive understanding of such intertextual borrowings in Ngugi. Mphande (2004) and Andindilile (2017) illustrate studies that have looked into Ngugi and some textual allusions to Christianity. Indeed, titles of his masterpieces like *A Grain of Wheat, Devil on the Cross, This Time Tomorrow,* and *Petals of Blood* are themselves intertextually attributable to other sources. The current study was, in fact, intrigued by one of such masterpieces, *Petals of Blood*, to which different kinds of intertextual borrowing are analysed and exemplified.

Methodology

Petals of Blood is Ngugi wa Thiong'o's masterpiece published in 1977. The novel was purposively chosen owing to its richness in incorporating Kikuyu and Kiswahili in the narrative. Document analysis was the sole data collection tool. In studies of this nature, where a particular text is both the field and source of data, the researcher delves into reading and reading the text to gain an understanding of the content and appraise the authorial craftsmanship therein.

The study was guided by the typology of intertextuality as a textual practice by Genette (1997) and expounded by William (2010) that intertextuality is manifested in reference, quotation, parody, borrowing, allusion and translation. The researcher read and re-read *Petals of Blood* aiming to identify occurrences and linguistic stringing of the six kinds of intertextual borrowing. The occurrences were classified into themes, then frequencies

established and percentages computed. The resulting data were summarised in tables and figures, and excerpts meant for illustrations were isolated from the text and explained.

Findings

The findings are organised around seven themes guided by types of intertextual borrowing. It begins with the general distribution of borrowing strategies, followed by six specifics of intertextuality: reference, quotation, parody, borrowing, allusion, and translation.

General Distribution of types of Intertextual Borrowing

The forms or strategies of intertextual borrowing in *Petals of Blood* are variously distributed quantitatively, as presented in Figure 3.1:
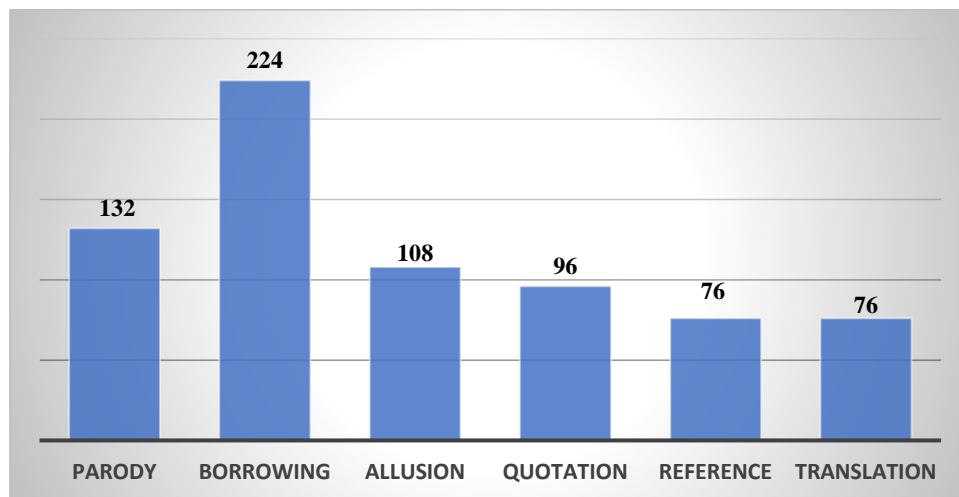

Figure 3.1: Distribution of Forms of Intertextual Borrowing in *Petals of Blood*

The results in Figure 3.1 show that borrowing is the most predominant kind of intertextual borrowing, with 224 frequencies (equal to 31.5%) of all 712 instances of intertextuality. This kind was followed by parody, which occurred 132 times (equal to 18.5%). The third in popularity is an allusion, which accounts for 108 (15.1%). The other three, which are not comparably as popular as these three, are quotation, reference and translation with 96 (13.4%), 76 (10.6%) and 76 (10.6%) frequencies of use, respectively. The study findings show that linguistic borrowing, being the kernel of intertextuality, prevails above other forms, suggesting that using language artistically is floured mainly via the imaginative richness of shared multilingualism of both the author and their target audience.

The prominence of borrowing over other strategies owes much of its justification from the tendency by Ngugi wa Thiong'o to wholly insert phrases, terms, sentences and songs from Kikuyu and Kiswahili, as will be exemplified later. Bamiro (1984) treats this orientation as Ngugi's commitment to the Africanisation of English. He observes that this is the process by which the use of the English language in post-colonial societies gradually moves from an external to an internal norm, which is variously labelled as nativisation, relexification, indigenisation, abrogation and appropriation. In this move, English-knowing bilingual scholars in non-native English cultural and linguistic settings not only use the English language for representing typically non-native social, cultural, and emotional contexts but also use various linguistic devices to contextualise the English language in their respective cultures

Reference

Reference, as a strategy of intertextuality employed by Ngugi wa Thiong'o in *Petals of Blood*, occurs 76 times in the text under review. This involved five categories of references with varying frequencies of occurrences, as Figure 3.2 illustrates:
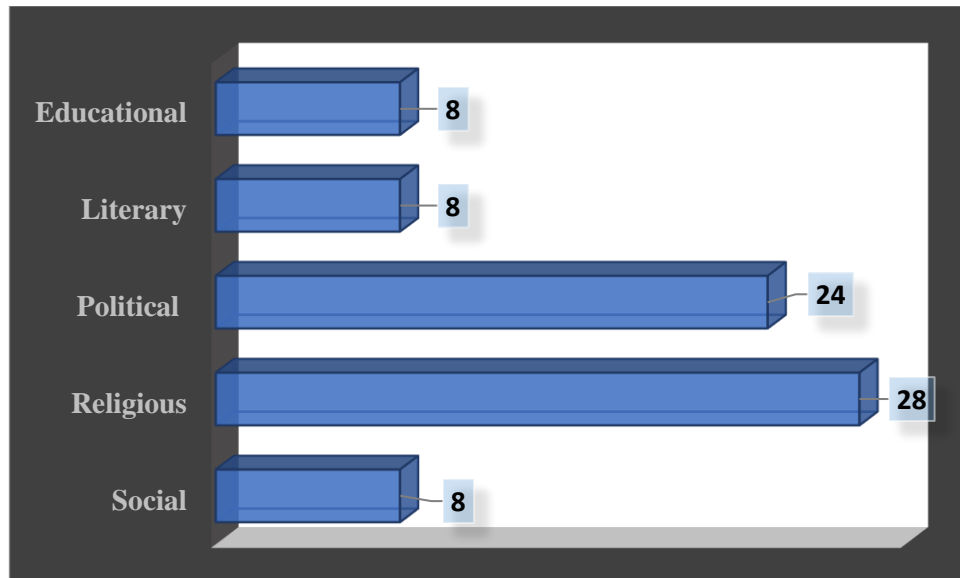
Figure 3.2: Distribution of Forms of Reference in *Petals of Blood*

The most dominant is a religious reference, which features 28 times, or 36.8 percent of all the references. Most of these are biblical references to particular figures. Ngugi used Christianity in his *Petals of Blood* to show how intertwined religion and literature are (as attested by Rani, 2021) only that he does so more creatively and imaginatively to attitudinally communicate the way religion (Christianity in this case) has weakened independent thinking by Africans. A notable character in this is Munira. The following examples suffice:

- *Munira…Carrying the Holy Book in his hand* (p. 2)
- *All the signs...are prophesied here* (p.2)
- *And Jesus told them: Go ye unto the villages and dark places of the earth and light my lamp paraffined with the holy spirit* (p.16)
- *wash me redeemer, and I shall be whiter than the snow* (p.26
- *still they waited…believing that God was the Giver and also the one who took away* (p.29)

- *he felt a kind of spiritual satisfaction; he remembered Peter and Paul... in jail hearing voices from the Lord* (p.29).

The second category is political reference, the frequency of use which account for 24 (31.5%) in terms of frequencies. Examples of political references include:

- *The new Ilmorog police station* (p.2)
- *They want to record a statement....* (p.3)
- *Ilmorog Theng'eta Breweries Union* (p.3)
- *We are making a preliminary survey for a proposed road across Africa* (p.34)
- *He was meant to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing else but the truth* (p.41)

These political references depict the presence of political economy and governance in Kikuyuland, as a microcosm of the whole of Kenya. The author communicates that in the form of 'politicotainment' because as Nitsch, Jandura, and Bienhaus (2019) observe "political information and entertainment are not mutually exclusive" (p. 18).

The author also used educational, literary and social references as a means of linking the novel with educational and social institutions. These were all equal in frequencies of references, which are 8 (10.5%) each. Examples of educational references are:

- *..a tie carrying the school motto: For God and Empire... (p.27)*
- *he believed that there was a law to it-a law of crime- a law of criminal behaviour (p.27)*

Examples of literary references are:

- *a poem: Do not cry our little ones, whoever dares beat our little ones, may he be cursed with thorns…* (.24)

- *… quoting from an English writer called William Shakespeare, ambition should be made of sterner stuff* (p.27)

Examples of social references are:

- *Dedication to mother and Nyambura* (p. i)
- *for what is the village without young blood?* (p. ii)

Referred to elsewhere as symbolism, Marijani (2014) studied literary techniques used in Severine Nduguru's selected works. He noted that the word "wreath" means an arrangement of flowers, leaves, or stems fastened to a ring and used for decoration or lying on a grave.

Quotation

Defined by McArthur et al. (2018) as the repetition of a sentence, phrase, or passage from speech or text that someone has said or written, quotations were of six types, the total of which is 96, the unequal representations as Figure 3.3 illustrates:
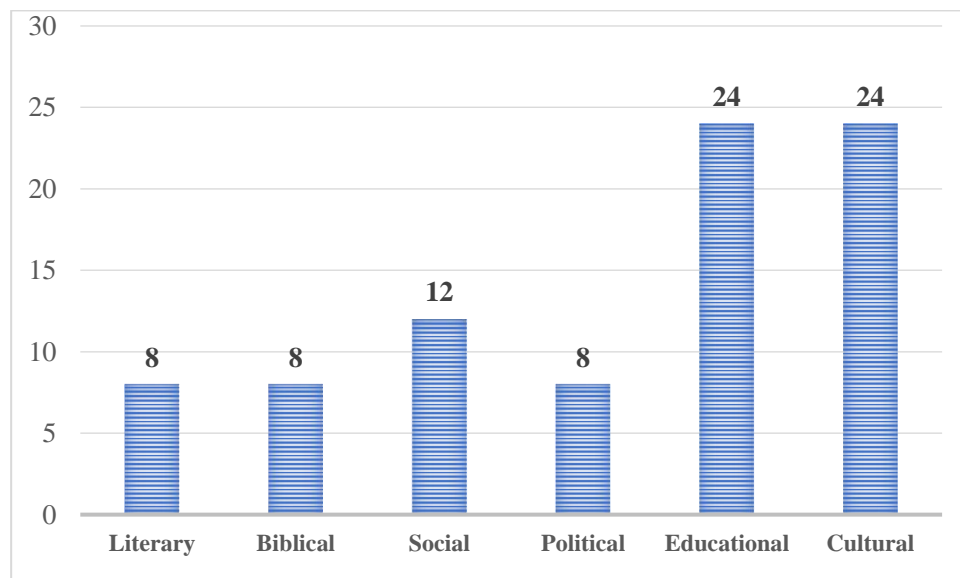
Figure 3.3: Types and Frequency of Using Quotations in *Petals of Blood*

As Figure 3.3 illustrates, cultural quotation was the most frequently used (28 times, equal 29.2%), which implies the author's literary ingenuity rests with the cultural setting of his novel to both material (clothing, food, house styles) and non-material (marriages, burials, birth rituals) of a particular language community, in this case, the Kikuyu ethnic community.

Educational quotation (20 times, equal to 20.8%) hinged on providing motivational guidelines and evaluative remarks mostly from common-folk Gikuyu sayings or historical-political quotes but attributed to the characters for literary purposes. Thirdly, there are social quotations and, fourthly, biblical quotations, the frequencies of which are 18 (18.7%) and 14 (14.5%), respectively. The biblical quotations such as the *Revelation chapter 6* (p. iii) and *Book of Revelation* (p.2), show the external influence of colonialism, Christianity in this case. However, the context of their textual appearances communicates negativity to African minds to nurture docility,

The two types of quotations that are not used widely are literary quotations and political quotations with 10 (10.4%) and 6 (6.2%) frequencies, respectively.

Examples of literary quotations are a poem by Derek Walcott and a poem by Walk Whitman. According to Salmani (2015), these quotations are also commonly used as a means of inspiration and to invoke philosophical thoughts from the reader, and can serve as language games to manipulate social order and the structure of society. Gokoi (2017) examined the use of quotations in the form of proverbs in Chinua Achebe's corpus including *Things Fall Apart,* Arrow of God, *No Longer at Ease, A Man of the People,* and *Anthills of the Savannah* unveiled that the author used Igbo proverbs translated into English to make a foreign language his own and his endeavour to make it express African sensibilities in what is also known as "venacularization." In modern terms, vernacularization is the process that permits a language choice to 'taste [...] of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life,' according to Bakhtin (1981, p. 293). In

fact, the 'densely layered historicity of discourse' is reflected in vernacularization (Blommaert 2005, p. 131).

Parody

According to *the Webster's Dictionary*, parody is "a form of satire that imitates another work of art in order to ridicule it. In the novel, parody also features in the educational, cultural, religious and political contexts, as Figure 3.4 further illustrates:
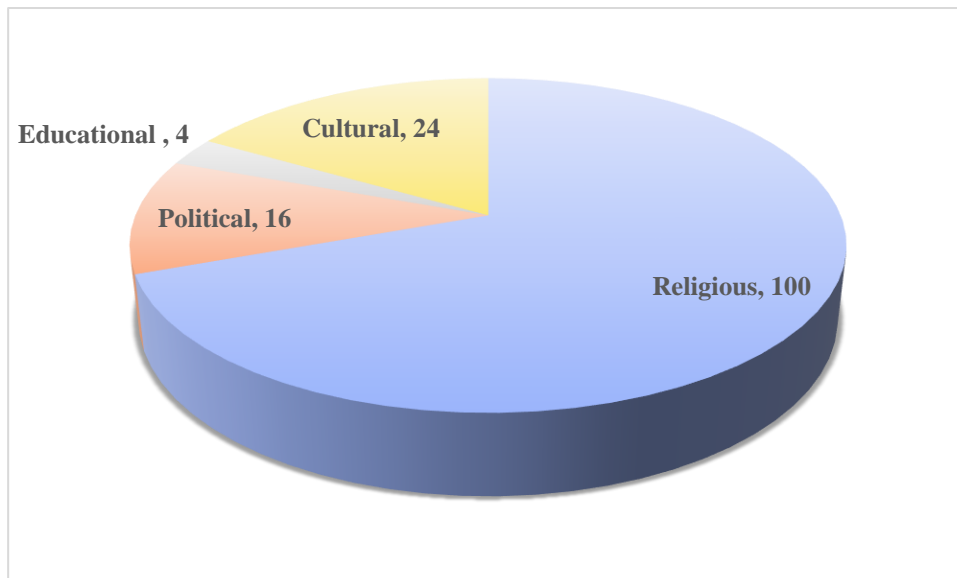

Educational , 4 Cultural, 24 Political, 16 Religious, 100

Figure 3.4: Ngugi's Use of Different Kinds of Parody

The data show that religious parody predominated with 100 out of 144 parodies, similar to 69.4 percent. The following are some of the examples:

- *..always ready to plant the seed in these last days before his second coming* (p.4)
- *..talk of end of the world and Christ's second coming* (p.2)

- *His father, Ezekiel,…a respectable elder in the hierarchy of the Presbyterian Church* (p.13)
- *they nearly had one thing in common: submission to the Lord* (p.14)
- *So be it. Aamen* (p.16)
- *Don't worry; I myself have never belonged to this world (p.16).*
- *…I could hear a Lamb's voice calling me across a deep valley, come to me all ye that are lonely, and I'll give you rest...*(p.40).

The use of such religious parodies attests to how Ngugi, like other critical-minded literary writers, serve as an eye-opener to the role of religion alienating Africans from themselves. He uses humour to show that religion may make people feel (or even be) foolish, weak, or even bad.

Ranking second, though by far less than religious parody, was the category of cultural parody, followed by political parody, with frequencies of occurrence of 24 (16.7%) and 16 (11.1%), respectively. Examples of cultural parody include:

- *…and indifference of a people opposed to light and progress* (p.10)
- *...he felt truly purified by fire* (p.14)
- *..he went to bed ……in his knowledge of being accepted by the Lord. Shalom* (p.14)
- *Didn't they know the saying that wealth was sweat in one's hands?* (p. 18)

These examples are Ngugi's imitations of the style and manner of other writers or schools of writers in which he ridicules some cultural and political practices of Ilmorog. In so doing, the author of *Petals of Blood.* Dentith (2000) proffers that parody can be a way to attack, satirise, or just playfully to refer to elements of the contemporary world by drawing on the authority of precursor texts.

The last category was educational parody which occurred only four (0.3%) times. An example is ….*Class monitors. Write down the dames of those that make noise* (p. 4).

Wandschneider (2005) analysed Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (published in 1972) about Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (published in 1740). He noted that Fielding wrote his novel as a response to *Pamela*, according to several allusions included in his novel *Joseph Andrews*. Another similar study by Uściński (2015) appraised the role of parody in the literary works of four English writers of the eighteenth century: John Gay, Alexander Pope, Henry Fielding and Laurence Sterne. He concluded that parody is a prolific constructive technique. It engineers comic genres and playful subgenres upon the debris of conventionalised, tired or obvious devices, making them culturally productive: mock-epic, romance, tragedy, or mock pastorally clear examples.

Borrowing

Borrowing is from two languages: Kiswahili and Gikuyu of lexical and direct types, plus an indirect borrowing category which is independent of the two languages. All these occurred differently, as summarised in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1 Distribution and Frequencies of Borrowings in *Petals of Blood*

Type	From Kiswahili	From Gikuyu	Total
Lexical borrowing	96	84	180
Direct Quotation	12	20	32
Indirect Quotation			12

Grand total			224

Table 3.1 shows that lexical borrowing numbered 80 (35.7%) of the 224 overall occurrences of borrowed terms. Kiswahili generally predominated Gikuyu with 96 (53.3%) whereas the latter had 84 (46.7%). However, for lexical borrowing, Gikuyu predominated with 20 (62.5%) frequencies while Kiswahili had 12 (37.5%) out of the total of 32 lexical borrowing cases. According to Poe[1] (2023), borrowing words, phrases or even full sentences foreign to the main language of the novel (the way Ngugi has done), adds authenticity and richness to the setting and characters, creating a sense of place and culture. It can also help to convey the unique voice and perspective of a particular character or community and enhance the reader's immersion in the story. Examples of lexical borrowing from Kiswahili include:

- *Abdula had added bar services to his supply of **jogoo unga**…* (p.8)
- *he (Abdula) tells me, **Baada ya kazi, jiburudishe na Tusker*** (p.25)
- *...our people in the face of the **Mzungu** invasion?* (p.7)
- *You have too much of Foreigner's **maneno maneno** in your heads* (p.8)
- *A bright coloured **kitenge** cloth tied loose on the head?* (p.22)
- *. I know that water is like **thahabu** in these parts.* (p.23)
- *didn't look up as the two said **kwa heri** and left* (p.26)
- *she often mentioned the coast, the white **kanzus** worn by men, the milky mnazi beer…* (p.26)
- *really **mwalimu!** A barmaid is employed to get more customers* (p.33)
- *…she only laughed and asked what kind of **Mswahil**i are you to believe such things?* (p.33)

Examples of lexical borrowing from Gikuyu include:

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[1] https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-purpose-of-using-dialect-or-foreign-words-in-a-novel, accessed on March 21, 2024.

- *as if driven by **Uhere** or **Mutung'u** (p.7)*
- *..the wise men, the **athamaki** of the farming community (p.8)*
- *it is the same season of course-**githemithu** season (p.8)*
- *Did you have a good **gathano** harvest in your place (p.8)*
- *...all this talk of **njahi, themithu, gathano** and **mwere**, confusing him (p9)*
- *..he would get **ahois** and hangers-on to work for them (p.9)*
- *now we look at ...the **thunguururi** birds in the sky and fear that it may not rain (p.9)*
- *some ran away ...to climb up and down the **miariki** trees in the open fields. (p.10)*

These linguistic borrowings by Ngugi testify to his commitment to the 1962 Conference of African writers as cited by Wali (1963) which vehemently argued for pro-African literature in African languages. Ayeleru (2011) observes that African writers like Ngugi deploy in their texts' linguistic strategies like African orature, proverbs, translation/transliteration, pidginization, intra/intertextuality, euphemism, metaphor, and metonym.

Related findings include Aboh (2012), who employed Castells' identity framework to examine the extent to which lexical borrowing is a resource for identity construction in selected 21st-century Nigerian novels. Four novels by Nigerian authors representing the four geographical zones of Nigeria were purposefully sampled. It was revealed that the use of lexical borrowing by Nigerian novelists to encode their Nigerian identity and as counter-hegemonic devices to English is undermined by the universality of English on the one hand and by the very incoherent concept of identity on the other. Tawfiq Hamamra, B. and Qararia, S. (2018) in another similar study. (2018) examined the linguistic and cultural phenomenon of code-switching employed in Selma Dabbagh's novel *Out of It* (2011). It was found that Dabbagh uses code-switching from English to Arabic to address the concerns of Palestinians and maintain her Palestinian belonging. Furthermore, Dabbagh employs code-switching to create predominantly

English novels infused with Arabic culture-bound expressions, which are crucial to the overall significance of the novel.

Skovde (2007) examined how Chinua Achebe uses different features drawn from Igbo and Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) in three of his novels—*No Longer at Ease*, *A Man of the People*, and *Anthills of the Savannah* that cover the urban landscape. It was established that by including many Igbo words, proverbs, folktales and the rhythm of the Igbo language, Achebe shows his readers his world from a different point of view; not the view of the English, but of the Igbo people he portrays. Similarly, Ngumo (2021), having analysed Ngugi's novel, *Murogi wa Kagogo,* using insights from sociolinguistics, reveals that Ngugi achieves this through hybridising Gikuyu with English, Kiswahili, Sheng and even Latin. The article, specifically, showed how Ngugi has hybridised Gikuyu using strategies like code-switching, borrowing and diglossia. Drawing on Murogi wa Kagogo, this article argues that literature in African languages must embrace the strategies of hybridity to make African languages relevant to new global realities.

Allusion

Turco (1999) defines allusion as the author referring to subject matter such as a place, event, or literary work by way of a passing reference while leaving it to the reader to establish a connection to the subject being mentioned. This device references any event or happening in real life or literary life. This category of intertextuality was 96 times and from historical, political, biblical and social contexts, as illustrated in Figure 3.5:
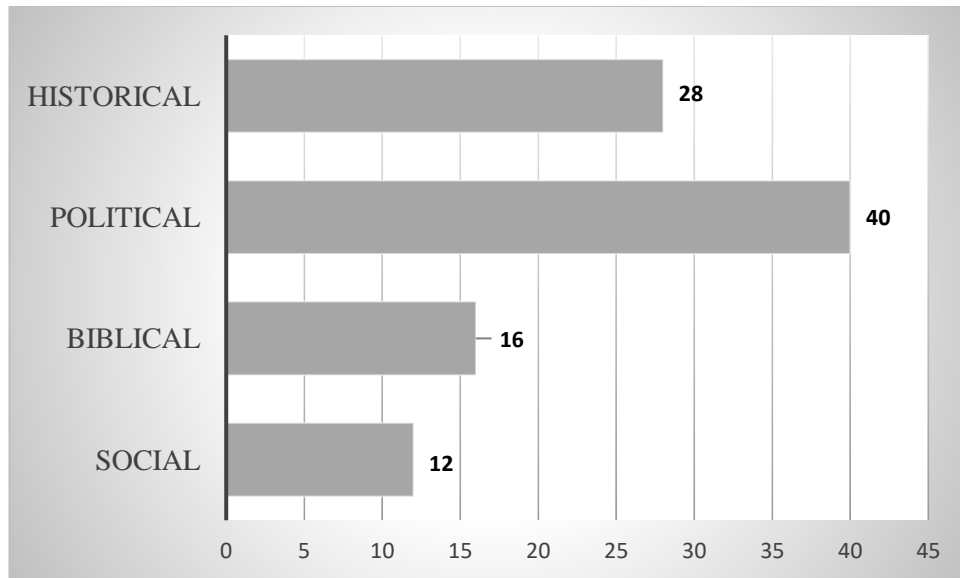
Figure 3.3: Distribution of Different Forms of Allusion in *Petals of Blood*

As Figure 3.5 illustrates, political allusions were the most used ones, with 40 occurrences, equal 41.7 percent, followed by historical allusions, which were used 28 times, equal to 29.1 percent. Ngugi has used allusions in *Petals of Blood* as a straightforward device to draw connections between the novel and his readers by harnessing them into the space where context (religious, social, historical) resides. Examples of political allusions are:

- *the tyranny of foreign companies and their local messengers* (p.11)
- *Out with foreign rule policed by colonised blacksmiths* (p.12
- *The road had once been a railway line joining Ilmorog to Ruwaini* (p.13)
- *behind the walls of the once for-Europeans-only mansions and private clubs* (p.18)
- *he had even collected two shillings … for a Harambee water project* (p.42)
- *Nderi wa riera had, after all, promised water which never came* (p.42)

Examples of historical allusions include:

- *she talked about the narrow Arab streets in Old Mombasa town bove which stood Fort Jesus* (p.4)
- *we saluted the British flag every morning and every evening* (p31)
- *during the period of the big, costly European dance of death* (p.29)
- *…in 1953 or so he heard that Mariamu's son had been caught carrying weapons for Maumau* (p.27)

As for biblical and social allusions, both of which are not so popular, occur 16 (16.7%) and 12 (12.5%) times, respectively, in the sampled pages of *Petals of Blood*. Some of the biblical allusion examples include:

- *He felt a sudden nausea; Lord deliver us from the past* (p.7)
- *Why did God allow this and that to happen?* (p 22)
- *he felt the need to confess, to be cleansed by the Lord…* (p.15)
- *….where he had sinned against the Lord.* (p.15)

Such examples show that allusions enhance the readers' understanding of the novel by uncovering hidden meanings, establishing connections with established works, and providing the readers with insights into the cultural, historical, and literary contexts.

Other scholars have also conducted similar studies. Manqoush, Yusof and Hashim (2011) analysed John Updike's *Terrorist (2006)* and Mohammad Ismail's *Desert of Death and Peace (2005*), to determine the use of allusion in the depiction of 9/11 acts and the US occupation of Iraq. They argue that when authors allude to history in their works, they either employ allusion to affirm or oppose certain notions. Updike alludes to history to affirm that Arab terrorists are the US' main enemies and oppose the actions of those terrorists who give themselves the right to kill civilians. In contrast, Ismail asserts that the Iraqi and American people are equally victims of super-power Jews. Therefore, he exposes an opposition to the US occupation of Iraq and the irrational reaction of the US to 9/11. Both novels implicitly utilise 9/11 and the US occupation of Iraq, but each one employs these incidents according to its author's viewpoint and cultural background.

Similarly, Zhu (2021) investigated how Charles Dickens employs biblical allusion in three Condition-of-England novels: *Bleak House* (1852–53), *Hard Times* (1854), and *Little Dorrit* (1855–57). The focus was on the typical patterns of biblical allusions in the opening numbers of the serialisation and those used by the narrator, perverted characters, and morally good characters. It was noted that the interpretation of biblical allusions in Dickens's novels is the implicit but intentional dialogue between the biblical and fictive worlds and the dialogic relation of both to the Victorian socio-historical context. The study demonstrates that the use of biblical allusions is in straightforward and satirical ways that not only portray characters, develop plots, and reveal themes, but also build a moral framework for the fictive world and mediate the novels' critique of wrongdoings by institutions and individuals to instruct the reader about the need for social improvement and individual moral actions.

Translation of Loan Words/Phrases

Loan "words or phrases [… are reproduced as literal translations from one language into another (Backus 2010, p. 75) and therefore word-for-word or morpheme-per-morpheme translations from one language into another" (Aikhenvald 2006, p. 24), loan translation was employed 76 times in the sampled pages of *Petals of Blood*. The following translations in the texts exemplify this case:

- *others come to visit the wives… make them round-bellied and quickly go away* (p.7)
- *...at last, we had a place from which we could get salt and pepper* (p.8)
- *...as if giving voice to their fears would keep out such calamities* (p.9)
- *Once he felt his heart quicken at his return to a seat of his past* (p.13)
- *…how Ilmorog was once haunted by one-eyed Mariamu; funny old woman shitting mountains* (p.15)
- *she-gazelle of the Ilmorog plains* (p.23)
- *your tea chased away my thirst..* (p.25)

- *they say that if you don't drink your share on earth, in heaven, you will have too much in stock* (p.25)
- *..the old onky regretted that they had not prepared a little honey beer blessed by the saliva od Mwathi wa Mugo* (p.32)
- *for he was not one to want to tear the veils around another's past* (p.32)
- *...he went to her place, determined…he would take a plunge* (p.32)

Related studies include Yeibo (2013) who examined lexico-semantic aspects of transliteration in Gabriel Okara's *The Voice* (1964), using the parameters of Robert Lado's contrastive analysis. The study explores the various sociolinguistic constraints which determine appropriate lexical choices in the text. The main aim is to enhance understanding and appreciation of the language of Okara's *The Voice* in particular and African literature in general. The study also highlights the importance of lexis and meaning, as exceptional language levels, to the construction of any literary discourse.

Similarly, Zabus (2007) studied Achebe's Africanisation of the English language in his novel *Things Fall Apart (1958)*. He produces Africanized European discourse with its distinctive use of Igbo proverbs, images, rhythms and syntactic turns from the Igbo vernacular language of the author. He uses a translation technique that Zabus calls "cushioning," putting the source language and target language words side by side, and "contextualising," providing information about the source language context (2007, p. 158). For example, "The elders, or *ndichie*, met to hear the report of Okonkwo's mission" and "He had a bad chi or personal god, and evil fortune followed him" He also translates Igbo proverbs like "When mother-cow is chewing grass its young ones watch its mouth which is the equivalent of "Like father like son."

Conclusion

This work has evidenced that Ngugi has employed intertextuality so skillfully and extensively that not only has he positioned the novel within both fictional and non-fictional texts but also within the cultural, religious, social and political milieu of the readers. The author has shown unique ingenuity in inviting the readers' imaginative and real worlds to identify with the novel via various forms of intertextual borrowing. As for linguistic borrowing (notably Gikuyu and Kiswahili) the author has also engaged in Africanizing African literature via literary language usage. A native speaker of Gikuyu reading the novel would find themselves at home reading character names, seasons, initiation rites and kinship terms written in Gikuyu verbatim while some common sayings, riddles and idioms are transmitted via loan translations. Equally, Kiswahili native and non-native speakers would enjoy a fair amount of commercial and social terms given in Kiswahili while religious adherents (notably Christians) would encounter biblical citations though some are given critically via parodying.

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