

# The Bullet and the Language were the means of Subjugation- Ngugi's Approach to Study the Phenomena of Enslavement: A Close Study of the Decolonizing the Mind

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**Abstract**— The African literature abounds with the rich contextual theories of post colonialism conglomerated by the genres of poetry, fiction, drama and pure theoretical works which breathed their life give synergy through the continent's experience of brutal colonization. The heart of darkness is not heartless. The darkness does not pervade the inner core of humanity of the Dark Continent, it is darkness of the West masters which made them to see it with their blind eyes - for a blind man everything seems dark. Ngugi Wa Thiongo hails from Kenya as a critic of post colonial literature and politics. His vivid narrative of protest against the maneuvers of suppressive nature of neo colonization where white masters are replaced by the black native masters who were just shadows of the colonizers devoid of any pride or sense of dignified identity. He triumphantly wielded 'Gikuyu' against alien linguistic domination to express the local aura of Africanism. He experienced the horrors of communal violence between Christians and non-Christians the despondency of which made him remove the surname James and prompted to become Ngugi Wa Thiongo.

'Decolonizing the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature' which urges for ideological as well as linguistic decolonization is a milestone in African literature which focuses on the prospects of using native tongue instead of colonizer's language to represent the essence of African living experience. Chinua Achebe and Ngugi stand apart from each other on the idea of language for initiating the process of decolonization. My paper would discuss the various aspects of language and ideological framework of the African colonialism which is present in 'Decolonizing the Mind', and the difference between post colonialism and the process of decolonization. I also strive to construe 'Language the suitable' for protest, for realization and for creation of self.

**Keywords**— Decolonization, Empathy, nativity, the gap in the expression, mental servitude, The Subjugation, Phenomenon.

## JEAN PAUL SARTRE - A DISCOURSE OF MARXIST PHENOMENOLOGY

"When you did remove the gag that was keeping these black mouths shut, what were you hoping for? That they would sing your praises? Did you think that when have raised themselves up again did you read adoration in the eyes these heads that our fathers had forced to bend down to the very ground?" (Sorte)

The passage thrives to state that when the black man regains his sense he would be born as a rebellion, he would raise their heads up against the tyranny of the

colonizer. The submissive tendency will be replaced by the authoritative questioning. The head would not remain bent to the ground for long. It will surely raise the optimism of change runs through the passages of Black Orpheus. The question of the medium of expression remains unanswered as it is not easily surmountable as the question of existential struggle to secure the lost selves. Phenomenology as it is envisaged by Edmund Husserl is the 'study of the structures of human consciousness in the realms the formation of human experience'. Empathy is a one of the major concepts present in the study of phenomenology which notates that

one's own body as another. Generally, it does mean that we identify and experience the subjectivity the body sense gives to us and in the relations of inter-subjectivity we identify others as the body which bears the ownership by them. The Phenomenological Empathy makes the subjectivity of the one's own body to be subdued to the thought of losing ownership on one's own self which sprouts because of ideological subjugation and hegemonic dominance leading the subjectivity to get obliterated in the created fiasco of the colonizer. 'Our sense of self does not guarantee the existence of such a self. Rather than the sense of self being grounded in an actual self which purports to be the originator of experience.....thoughts, feelings and sensations'. (Zahavi)

Aime Cesaire - a denotative voice in the Discourse of colonialism

In the gamut of creating ideas and provoking feelings the colonizer for whatever mechanism he has put to operation, the remnants of those self centered, economically exploitative methods that were imposed would hardly become delible from the post colonial mind. there has been a constant mimic and feeling it as the reflection of the self goes on uninterrupted till the component of the mindful expression-the language- is changed as the mode of truthful experience. 'The Civilization that proves incapable of solving the problems it creates is a decadent civilization' (Cesaire) begins the essay 'Discourse on Colonialism' which has become the torch bearer for the millions of the activists to seek the justice and redemption from the impact of colonization. Cesaire sincerely discusses the equation proposed by the colonists which runs as '*Christianity = Civilization, Paganism=Savagery*'. It starkly reflects the conspiracy that crafted the civilized process. He actually argues that colonial process decivilised the colonies instead of uplifting them. Civilization process involves imparting the dignity to the identity which is already there, the process shall nurture self rule and privileging the honest labor over undue supervision- the job the colonists assumed. The bullet instilled fear, the religion incarcerated the soul with uncommitted, imposed sin. To spread the religion, the element of fear comes handy as very few will be left who are fearless even for the eternal damnation as concocted by the colonial mechanism of religious chauvinism. One can overcome the fear of bullet but hardly one can overcome the fear of heaven or hell because it is un experienced and unseen, whatever is unseen un experienced it holds the key of psychological subjugation and enslavement. Therefore it is not the Eastern civilizations which are decadent as it is

purportedly shown by the west but it is the Western Civilizations which are decadent and debased as they are not able to solve the problems they created against Eastern counterparts.

How in reality the process of decolonization begins? :

The pertinent answer to the above question, as we can see, well furnished in the pages of the path breaking essay 'Decolonizing the Mind'. for body it is very easy to get rid of the malignant tendencies of the colonial impact, but the mind the inflexible, hallucinatory, and biased, never submit to the change which the times and sacrifices bring to the fore. Ngugi's very attempt to turn the mechanism of deceptive decolonization inside out begins with the sardonic use of language in the context power creation.

We can surmise the essay for feasibility of a quick look at it in the following points:

- i) The Understanding the context is important to understand the greatness of the literature of a place.
- ii) Self determination is essential to weigh the greatness of one's living experiences in the circumstances in which one lives.
- iii) The fate of Africa cannot be decided over the conference tables located in the cities of Europe/ The fate of any colonized country cannot be decided by the perfunctory attitude of the colonizer.
- iv) The Bible ( religious) wielding diplomats cannot understand the pain and anguish that is the result of colonialism.
- v) Even today the African continent is defining itself on the lines of the colonizers. The blow hazardously penetrated the soul of the continent.
- vi) Writers of the freed colonies still entrapped in the linguistic encirclement and inclined to define themselves within the purview of imperialistic parameter.
- vii) The choicelessness of the language selection pervades the core of literature in post colonial era.
- viii) Nativisation of colonial language as Indianising the English can be a better alternative as the adamant colonial language in its nascent form would fail to express native experiences/structures feelings (Williams).
- ix) The Physical violence of the battlefield is followed by the psychologically inflicted trauma in classroom.
- x) The bullet was the means of the physical subjugation and the language was the means of the spiritual subjugation.

Mere physical deliverance in manner of political transfer of power between the individuals does not qualify to be called ultimate independence. Independence shall

invoke the freedom from all the subjugation both voluntary and involuntary, the partial freedom which is generally cherished as beckoning light of hope and self determination can only lead towards the imbalance of chaos. If the language of the colonizer is not de-privileged and the literature of the colonists de-canonized, the choice of selecting the subject and language to forge ahead the themes of literature which has to be, otherwise, bolstering the true experiences of the colonized would never be found expressing in its true substance.

According to Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, the hegemonic forces would always found to be working to steer its power over the subjects not only by imposing crude physical or psychological punishments by making the subjects believe that the protecting the hegemonic powers of the ruler is actually for the own benefit of the colonizer as the rule to which they subjugated is the rule which can bestow them with security, welfare and progress. The ideological mechanism crafted by the colonists would never think for give true self rule for the colonized until the decolonizing process would achieve its zenith nullifying the multifarious tentacles of its stratagems.

Ownership of the self- a true emancipation:

T S Eliot in his poem 'Hallow Men' states the dark truth of vacuity and the moral bankruptcy of the self in the following lines..

*'Shape without form, shade without colour,  
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;'*  
(Eliot)

The self, when it lost a sense of being intact with the physical existence, it becomes regenerated into the insolvency of moral turpitude. To be called a human being, one needs his sense of self as his own and as his true condition of being the part of this vast cosmos, if the sense of self is dismantled and left in a hopeless state for no reconstruction, the individual would become a living dead- a hollow men the head filled with straw. One of the most dangerous consequences of colonial process on its subjects is leaving them to their fate- self-less, identify- less and robbing them of their very creative force that is language. The celebratory sense of self the exaltedness of identity are essential ingredients when they are burnt with the fire of language consciousness, the true sense of freedom can be gained by any one which ultimately prosper and form a national identity.

## CONCLUSION

The literature wherever it is created whenever it voices its reformatory protest, the truth finds its expression in its venerable form. Africa is the land birth for multitude of dialects, languages and cultures. It is rich not only with soil but also in terms of human expression ranging from Paleolithic paintings to modern post colonial literature. Ngugi Wa Thiongo vetoes for the use of native tongue to be used in the literature which is considered to be the finest and best expression of human mind. But if we look Kwame Anthony Appiah and Chinua Achebe's views on language they take English as it given to them to express their protest and concerns so as to make it intelligible to the oppressor. Whatever the parity or disparity among ideas exists, the revolutionary tone against the deliberate oppression by the alien forces shall be dealt with vehement protest.

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