



DECOLONIZING THE MIND: A LIMITED PERIPHERY

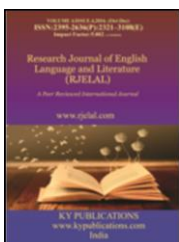
PURNIMA PANDEY¹, TANUSHREE SANWAL²

Assistant Professor Assistant Professor

¹Department of Applied Sciences, ²Department of Humanities

Krishna Engineering College, Mohan Nagar, Ghaziabad

E.mail-purnimapanday4@gmail.com; tanushreesanwal12@gmail.com



ABSTRACT

Decolonizing the mind is a collection of four essays by an African writer, poet and critic Ngugi - Wa Thiong'o. Decolonizing the mind is an attempt to free the native's mind from the colonizer's control by rejecting his language and adopting one's native language. This works as a farewell to English as medium for his writing: he has started writing in Gikuyu and Kiswahili language. He said, language was main instrument which was used by the Britishers to colonize the culture of Africa so according to him by avoiding writing in English African can decolonize ourself. He encouraged his native language but at some points he fails as Gayatri Spivak claims that Ngugi caught in "A double blind found by his desires to reach a global audience and to write to a subaltern language".

Keywords: Decolonizing, Gikuyu, Hegemonic language, Colonial Alienation, Double Blind, Orature.

©KY PUBLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

To decolonize your mind, ask yourself "Why do I believe in these norms, culture, language and no others"? This self-questioning is called Epistemology i.e. investigating the origin, method, nature and limitations of human mind. How one become colonized by colonizer?, How colonizer control or dominates?

We find the answer for some extend in famous book of NGUGI WA THIONG'O, "Decolonizing the mind" in 1986. According to Ngugi "By actively spread his language among the natives as crude and unfit for proper education, simply make the colonizers's language the Lingua Franca of imperial administration accord prestige and upward mobility to those who learn it in colonial school" (R1) This instrument (language /education system) has been also used by Arabs in the 7-8th centuries. British and the French in 19th and Russian with colonized people

see his own culture as inferior and his past as "A Nonproductive Wasteland". They slowly adopt the way of thinking, Aesthetic aspects, Political issues, Economic issues, according to colonizer's point of view, the stronger one.

It was mandatory for Africa during late 19th & 20th centuries to adopt European languages in Missionary and state supported schools.

Ngugi writes "The language of books he read was foreign, the language of his conceptualization was foreign language". (R1)

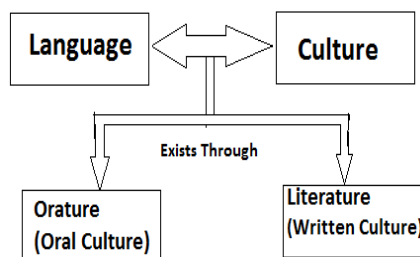
So these were not the slightest relationship between the environment of school and family / community.

It was the fight between SELF & OTHER as referred by EDWARD SAID 'S concept self /other (here self means colonizer and other means colonized) (R2)

A African school child's mentality was embodiment of COLONIAL ALIENATION, means "dissociation of sensibility of child from his natural and environment". Ngugi contrasts, his moral lesion through GIKUYU (His native language) which was magical and musical for him but the English (Hegemonic language) in school as artificial compulsion for him, native language was totally banned there.

Ngugi wrote that "If the bullet was the means of physical subjugation, language was the means of spiritual subjugation of African child".

Ngugi gave "THEORY OF LANGUAGE" In his book Decolonizing the Mind, in which "Language exists as Culture" and "Language exist as communication" in other words communication is tool of culture and culture is mean of communication.



Language introduction histories, developments, values ethics, aesthetics, technology of global level. As he put it "Language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history, culture makes possible its genesis growth banking articulation and indeed its transmission from one generation to the next".

Ngugi considers English language as "Cultural Bomb" in Africa that continuous a process of wipe out pre colonial histories and identities, annihilate the native belief, their identity, language, environment, sense of belongingness, life struggle their unity and convert all as "Wasteland of non Achievement" and leaves natives to make "Distance from that wasteland".(R1)

So linguistic operation was the great threat for natives of Africa and most favorable for colonization. Lord Macaulay's address to the British Parliament in February 1835 illustrates Ngugi's point about how the coloniser dominated the colonies by dominating cultures:

"I have travelled across the length and breadth of India and I have not seen one person who is a beggar. Such wealth I have seen in this country, such moral values, that I do not think we would ever conquer this country unless we break the very backbone of this nation, which is her spiritual and cultural heritage. Therefore I propose that we replace her old and ancient education system, her culture, for if the Indians think that all is foreign and English is good and greater than their own, they will lose their self-esteem, their native culture and they will become what we want them to be, a truly dominated nation."(R7)

To reduce the effect of colonization or decolonization of mind or in other words to safe our self our identity, our existence and linguistic attack by imperialism, should empowers the proletariat/worker/ peasantry their own language and culture. This book deals with the rediscovery of real language of mankind, struggle for existence, because struggle gives existence as Martin Carter said, "sleeping not to dream but dreaming to change the world."(R3)

But the concept of this book have some limitations also and it become matter of debate for Post Colonial writers According to Gayatri Spivak in order to nurture our self, it is requires a Internationally accepted language by which one can show ones cultural development, Technical development at global platform.(R4)

Ngugi was not simply arguing for his mother tongue but arguing for inhabiting non hegemonic language with the depth of imaginative use while retaining English as "The first language of International Communication"

According to Ngugi all English department of all universities are the agent of English language, the colonizer so it should be banned all over world. All they are still colonized by English language.(R1) So "should one write in ones native language and achieve a small yet culturally prepared audience or should one write in English (Universally accepted language) and claim an international leadership?" and make ones creative as a part of world literature Gayatri Spivak claims that Ngugi caught in "A Double Blind" – bound by his desires to reach a

global audience and to write to a 'Subaltern Language'.(4)

In 1980 a prestigious YALE JOURNAL OF CRITICISM, Ngugi did not keep his promise to never write in Britisher's Language .He did not explain "To his familiar role as a critic of IMPERIAL EUROPEAN LANGUAGE writing "(his topic of speaking)(R5)

In mid 1990s'at New York University he accepted the fellowship, it showed that "Ngugi effort to use Gikuyu as a language of both his fiction and critical discourse had been defeated by the reality of exile and American Professional Life"(R5)

So Decolonizing the Mind is an Empathetic work for those have ,English as a Second Language.

Conclusion

According to My Point of View Ngugi wa Thiong'o , himself defeated to decolonizing his own mind. Initially he nurturing his mental rigidity (to write in only in Gikuyu and Kiswahili) but finally he adopted the English as medium of his writing, because ENGLISH IS UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED for INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION.

As a literary person, he should use a flexible and appropriate medium which should be UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED worldwide. One person can easily disseminate his views, culture, philosophy, ethical values, technological advancement, Inventions, creativity etc. English Language is only rich and adoptable tool for INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION at present scenario.

Although Colonizers laid the foundation of English over much of world, INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH is a product of an emerging WORLD CULTURE. It also dominates the media internationally, which is a huge medium of communication.

So Ngugi's sentiments with his native language are basically true but not practically true in the field of literature, because literature has no role in a limited periphery, it's circle is vast which covers whole world. Therefore it's responsibility of a ambassadors of Literature to adopt a appropriate medium to spread valuable informations, ideas at International level.

References

1. Thiong'oNgugi 1986 Deom ISBN 0-435-08016-4
2. Orientalism,.Edward W. Said 1978,ISBN 978-0-394-42814-7
3. Poems by Martin carter,Edited by Stewart Brown and Ian Mc Donald (2006),ISBN:978-1-4050-6947-2
4. Gayatri Spivak (2012). "Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o: In Praise of a Friend". In Oliver Lovesey. Approaches to Teaching the Works of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. New York: The Modern Language Association of America. ISBN 978-1-60329-113-2
5. Gikandi, Simon (2000). Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 272–4. ISBN 0-521-48006-X.
6. Hulibandi Ashok(Ngugi wa Thiong'o'sDecolonizing the mind :An Overview,vol 2,issue2. IJMMS.
7. Minutes by the Hon'ble T.B. Macaulay dated the 2th feb 1835
[www.mssu.edu/Project south asia /history/primary docs/education/Macaulay001.htm](http://www.mssu.edu/Project%20south%20asia/history/primary%20docs/education/Macaulay001.htm)