Abstract

The present study aims at exploring and analyzing the idea of resistance and reconstruction as incorporated in the selected novels of Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka. The authors chosen certainly do not belong to a single country. However, they do belong to the African Continent and share common cultural values. They also share the tyrannies of history and cruelties of colonial powers.

Africa has been subjected to various forms of naked slavery, exploitation, colonialism and neo-colonialism in the last four hundred years or so. The white mind exploited various methodologies, including religion and education, to alienate the Africans from their own rich cultural heritage and designed strategies to create a rift between individual and individual and also between individual and society. Europeans succeeded in reducing the consciousness of the African people into the acceptance of their inferior position.

The African resistance in the context of the present study needs to be placed in a wider perspective and larger implication because the strategy of colonization and subjugation was not one-dimensional. It is a complex issue that simultaneously touches upon different dimensions of human existence. It also implies reshaping of African history, politics, and economics simultaneously. The issues, it can be pointed out, are deeply rooted not only in African history, culture and politics but also in the African consciousness to its core and also continues to be so even after independence. Post independence scenario is not absolutely free from the repercussion of colonial era. The study, therefore, systematically takes into account the
incorporation of the central problem of this dissertation as it is manifested in the pre and post independence Africa.

The study, however, begins with an introductory chapter which introduces the problematic. It pinpoints the origin of the very idea of resistance in its literary as well as intellectual context. It also traces out the various movements of resistance such as Mau Mau resistance, Pan-Africanism, Negritude and so on. A careful critical analysis of African politico-cultural situation is also made here as the writers chosen for exploration in this study invariably contextualize aspects of African nations. These writers, despite be deeply rooted in indigenous cultural matrix, portray an intense awareness of the postcolonial theoretical perspective. Furthermore, the chapter makes a brief analysis of the African writers writing in their own tradition but directly or indirectly dealing with the problems of resistance. The chapter in its essence, thus, creates plausible perspectives to carry out the problematic and its exploration in the novels of Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka.

Chapter two focuses on Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s protest through his novels, *A Grain of Wheat, The River Between* and *Petals of Blood*. It analyzes Ngugi’s revolutionary attitude over the years of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Ngugi as African Kenyan writer is one of some revolutionary intellectuals who have been committed to the social and political circumstances of their societies. His literary works, particularly his novels, are rightly considered as disconcerting portrayal of the African political, cultural and social resistance against colonial cultural and religious degradation and the stereotype of the Dark Continent. *The River Between* wages an unprecedented war against Christianity and Western education
which are considered as an effective instrument to colonialism in Kenya. It unveils the impact of colonialism on the Gikuyu traditional community. *A Grain of Wheat* shows the redemptive role of the long-lasting resistance movements of the Kenyans against the oppressive colonial rule in Kenya. It also subverts the authority of the colonial text which misrepresents and defames Kenya and its Mau Mau revolution calling it as purely evil and its adherents as mere terrorists and primitive savages driven by blood lust. *Petals of Blood*, unlike the novels discussed earlier, is Ngugi’s fatal stab at the heart of capitalism and imperialism in neo-colonial Africa. Nugugi’s fictional corpus is in search for a world with a prevailing sense of equality, self-dignity and absolute freedom.

Chapter three explores and interprets the idea of resistance and reconstruction as it is embedded in *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God* and *A Man of The People*. *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* are two masterpieces of cultural formation which turn the colonial fantasy on Africa upside down. They are revolutionary texts which initiate a narrative of resistance to re-fashion the collective voice that opposes the ‘fixity’ and the authority of colonial text. Their aim is to correct the whole history of misrepresentation of Igbo people and the entire country in occidental discourses. On the other hand, *A Man of the People* is a satire on corruption and power struggle in post-independence Nigeria where people are inclined to materialism and throw away spirituality. The chapter shows how Nigeria within a couple of months after independence changed to a metaphor of ‘a cesspool of corruption’. Therefore, Achebe’s novels stand as a disillusioning and disconcerting portrayals of the pre and postcolonial Nigeria, the pangs and pains, agonies and sufferings of Nigerians under the colonial regime and
also of the lust for powers and a drive for selfish ends beyond any doubt or discussion.

Chapter four aims to show Soyink’a’s denunciation of all forms of societal evils which infest the post-independence African society. Through his novels, Soyinka proves to be a revolutionary political novelist who writes about political issues prevailing across the African continent. *The Interpreters* is one of the significant works of Soyink’a’s response to the socio-political situation which aims at the total eradication of corruption. The novel portrays Soyinka’s comment on squalor, poverty, corruption in business and politics which were already endemic in Nigeria shortly after independence. Soyinka wages his biting attack against public thieves, hypocrites, apostates, snobs, cunning leaders, and the followers of imperialism. Similarly, *Season of Anomy* portrays a society violently ruled by corrupt elite who use power of the government and misuse the army to enrich themselves and to stay in their offices forever. The chapter also shows how the elites opt for politics not to serve their nations but to quench their thirst for monetary benefits by exploiting the masses. Both *The Interpreters* and *Season of Anomy* envisage a society based on egalitarian level of living and equable means of production and distribution.

Chapter five centralizes the arguments made in the earlier chapters and pinpoints certain conclusive remarks pertaining to the incorporation of the idea of resistance and reconstruction in the selected novels of the authors chosen. As it has been pointed out, Ngugi wa Thiong’o is a radical intellectual African novelist who strongly rejects, even to the extent of condemnation, the colonizers’ designs and their surreptitious moves to achieve their selfish and materialistic motives. Chinua Achebe also like
Ngugi wa Thiong’o believes in the absolute freedom of the self and society. Heart-rendering descriptions of the pains of being colonized, victimized, displaced and dejected continue to be the crux of Soyinka’s fiction also. The fictional strategies of Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka clearly indicate their resistance to the exploitative nature of colonial powers and for any form of power at large that enslaves a man to a man or a nation to a nation. Their fiction, one can say for sure, is a passionate desire for reconstruction of the socio-political order. It embodies a quest for a socio-political order with absolute freedom and right to honour, dignity and identity.