

# DECOLONIZING THE COLONIZED

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## **Abstract**

The type of colonization which the disadvantaged nations received appears to salvage their situation. But it is actually deceptive, exploitative and an enslavement. The independence of the colonized seems to have been greatly entrapped by imperialism or neo-colonialism. It appears that African independence, to a large extent, is not completely won. The oppressed move from colonialism to neo-colonialism. Hence, they have continued to be slaves of their predicament even when the oppressors are no longer there with them. The above condition exists because of the type of indoctrination and orientation given to them. The realization of a great deal of damage this has caused in the lives of the oppressed calls for decolonization which precedes the defense and development of African cultural values and identity. This paper employs critical analysis to buttress the fact that as the oppressed struggle to free themselves from the shackles of colonialism, it becomes their responsibility to react rationally and creatively to better their situation. They can be liberated from the hegemony of the oppressors by decolonizing their minds, improving relevant aspect of their culture, and maintaining their own identity. The oppressed will not gain this liberation by chance, but through the praxis of their quest for it and their recognition of the necessity to fight it. Thus, since the phenomenon of colonization is deep and powerful and has adverse effects on the colonized; it would be vain to expect that their identity remains unchanged. The colonized should heave a big sigh of relief for there is hope for a better tomorrow. Once decolonization is realized, they will have self-mastery and become self-reliant and will not be dependent again. They should expunge pessimism and be optimistic, striving with renewed vigor and creative actions for the triumph of decolonization for their growth and development.

**Keywords:** Decolonize, Colonize

## **Introduction**

We live in an era where oppression, exploitation, and disrespect for human dignity are increasingly becoming a tradition. Consequently, dehumanization of the oppressed has become a big contrast to their ontological vocation as subjects to act upon the world and transform it. My experience in society of the oppressed motivates me to conceptualize the theory of decolonization of the oppressed (colonized). This underscores the fact that experience is stronger than knowledge. Experience in society of the oppressed motivates one to conceptualize the concept of the decolonization of the colonized. This underscores the fact that experience is stronger than knowledge. Is there any link or cord that psychologically binds the oppressed and oppressor? Let us assume that there is nothing like colonization, will their not be operation and dehumanization? Will the rot be existence of the oppressors and the oppressed? Why is it that there is still connection of the African mind even when the oppressors are no longer with them? And how can they be liberated from this influence? It is against this backdrop of African situation of

limitations and underdevelopment that we have chosen to philosophically articulate a strategy of African liberation. Freedom and development. This work begins with an introduction expressing the indispensability of decolonizing the African mind subjugated either by colonialism or his inability to solve his basic problem of self-development alongside his environmental problem. It then proceeds to explain the terms: colonialism, colonialism. And decolonization followed by dialogics as an instrument of decolonization as well as other ways decolonize the African mind which brings the work to an end. It is however, credible that decolonization is a necessity and an indispensable phenomenon in society of the oppressed, because it seems not to be optional in their personal and social lives. Thus, it is, to a large extent, a requirement. Obviously, the colonizers came not to help and liberate the colonized, but to alienate, deceive, exploit, submerged in their reality, "...the oppressed cannot perceive clearly the order which serves the interest of the oppressors whose image they have internalized."<sup>1</sup> According to Paulo Freire, "...chafing the restrictions of this order, the oppressed often manifest a type of horizontal violence, striking out at their own comrades for the pettiest reason."<sup>2</sup> The colonial system imposed on the African nation has been extremely an effective process. It has, to a great extent, successfully alienated, and brainwashed the majority of Africans and assimilated them to European way of life. Consequently, Africans are tenaciously held in mentality captivity. Having "lost his identity, self-consciousness and authenticity, the ambition of the educated African was to be like the European in almost all things without exception."<sup>3</sup> The oppressor came not only as a missionary, but as a trader and an administrator to salvage the situation of the Africans. The imposition of the former's culture on the latter has caused more harm than good. With the concept of divide and rule, the oppressed fight themselves instead of fighting their common foes. Motivated by the above episode, C. Achebe observes, "...now he has won our brothers and our clan no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart."<sup>4</sup> The oppressor did not change the situation of the oppressed, but their consciousness, using "...physical force to effectively subdue him and left the African man with no alternative but this imitation of the European or allowing himself to be assimilated to the European way of life and mentality."<sup>5</sup> Conceptualizing the liberation of the African, Okolo suggests: "It the African is to win his current battle for progress and development or hopes to overcome his psychological, social, political predicament, he must, it seems to me, equip himself with genuine self-knowledge and self-understanding."<sup>6</sup>

The foregoing proposition reveals that genuine self-knowledge and self-understanding is imperative in the struggle for the African liberation. The consciousness of the depth of damage caused by colonialism should provoke the African to take a rational, radical and creative action to reform the situation. Thus, he ought to appreciate himself and his culture more and avoid the illusion of defining his existence in terms of imperial European culture. According to A memmi, "...to subdue and exploit, the colonizer pushed the colonized out of the historical and social, cultural and technical current, what is really verifiable is that the colonizer's culture, society, and technology are seriously damaged."<sup>7</sup>

Being a subjugated race, Nigeria and other African nations seem to have been placed under neo-colonialism or what Ezeani "...calls colonialism, a special disease of the mind or the head resulting from the act of colonization of the people."<sup>8</sup> They externally wear the garb of political independence and sovereignty, but the roots of their very being are anchored outside them. In this connection, Kwame Nkrumah asserts, "...the essence of neo-colonialism is that the state which is subject to it is in theory independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality, its economic system and thus its policy directed from outside."<sup>9</sup> Brian Crozier envisions and expresses the same essence in almost the same way Nkrumah did: A country does not become truly independent because an imperialist power confers sovereignty on it and even though it may surrender political power; the imperialist country is able to remain its ultimate control by other means. These may be economic, military or cultural or a combinations of all three.<sup>10</sup>

However, there is a serious need for decolonization of the colonized who are supposed to be conscious of their colonial and neo-colonial predicament and critically and systematically move towards mental liberation and self-actualization for the restoration of their cultural roots and identity.

### **Colonialism**

When slave trade was officially abolished in 1885, the Europeans converted it into colonialism and began to scramble for territories in Africa. The colonial masters: the Germans, the British, the Belgians, and the Portuguese in Berlin conference divided Africa among themselves and resolved to colonize, exploit, subjugate, oppress and control the African race. According to A. Gupta, "Colonialism is a system of acquisition and maintenance of colonies over a native territory by people of another country. It encompasses the social, political and economic life of the country."<sup>11</sup> Pondering on the selfish and exploitative nature of colonialism, Gupta states further:

Political and economic decisions are taken by the colonizers, often with the intention of serving their own interests. The relationship between the colonizers and the colonized is unequal in nature. The economy of the colony is reoriented to serve the needs of the ruling country. The profits accrued from the trade in the colonies are utilized for the development of the rulers rather than natives.<sup>12</sup>

Colonialism is replete with a political, social, economic oppression and exploitation of the less privileged nations. Though it appears to be solution to the problems of the weaker nations, it is actually meant to subjugate, exploit and dehumanize them. Colonialism, however, establishes superiority and inferiority complex between the colonizer and the colonized: here, the former assumes superior position and regards the latter as an object. Jack Woddis conceptualizes the essence of colonialism as "... the direct and overall subordination of one country to another on the basis of state power being in the hands of the dominating foreign power."<sup>13</sup> He summarizes

its essential exploitative strategy thus: "...to keep the colonial people in political subjection; and to make possible the maximum exploitation of the people and the country's resources."<sup>14</sup>

K. Nkrumah, reflecting on the exploitative philosophy of colonialism, defines it as, "... the policy by which a foreign power binds territories to herself by political ties with the primary objective of promoting her own economic advantage."<sup>15</sup> In line with Woddis' assertion, he sees the motive behind colonialism as pre-eminently economic:

I have always believed that the basis of colonialism is economic. There is abundant proof that the primary motives underlying the quest for colonies and the present administrative and economic policies of the colonial power are rooted in economic exploitation and not in humanitarianism.<sup>16</sup>

Being rapt in thought, conceptualizing a deal of damage caused by colonialism, Walter Rodney wrote a classic work, entitled, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.<sup>17</sup> Colonies and colonized peoples, consequently remain what Nkrumah refers to as:

The dumping ground and colonial peoples, the false receipts of manufactured goods of the industrialist and capitalists of Great Britain, France, Belgium and other colonial powers who turn to the dependent territories which feed their industrial plant.<sup>18</sup>

The colonies and colonial people are unfortunately reduced to objects of manipulation and exploitation by the colonial masters so as to advance their economic, social and political needs. Thus, they drained and underdeveloped the colonized to develop their own country. In doing this Europeans pretended that they were on a civilizing mission in Africa, as if Africa had no civilization of their own before they came. Instead of helping to improve African indigenous civilization, Europeans civilization was enforced on the Africans. Africans were manipulated to look down on their own values and identity in order to adopt European values, learn European languages and work for the Europeans.

Conceptualizing the above propositions, one can doubt that colonialism did some good things to Africa. However, the Europeans and African collaborators sometime argue that colonialism did some good things to Africa. According to them, the colonial masters built roads, schools, hospitals, railway lines, etc but they did all these things mainly to achieve their own selfish interest. Their purpose of building railways was to transport goods from the North to the South for onward shipment to their countries. They built a few schools to train the Africans to work for them as clerks. It is obvious that colonialism was not aimed at helping the African; it is meant to exploit them for the benefits of the Europeans. In other words, the whole enterprise of colonialism was undertaken to enrich the Europeans at the expense of

the Africans who were used to do slave labour for the Europeans in Africa. In line with this, W. Rodney states:

The negative impact of colonialism in political terms was quite dramatic. Overnight, African political states lost their power of independence, and meaning-irrespective of whether they are big empires or small politics... political power had passed into the hands of the foreign overlords.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, in line with the foregoing description of colonialism, C. Kortright states, "...the present global stratification and make-up have been dictated in totality by the colonization and conquest of European nations."<sup>20</sup> We should not only understand that the present social, political and economic dichotomy which we face today are the effects of colonialism," ...but more importantly, we must understand the psychological problems created by colonization, so we as humans can deconstruct the present leviathan we live in and create a world based on cultural diversity, liberty and mutual aid.<sup>21</sup> Conversely, the foregoing negative influence does not negate the fact that there are positive legacies the colonial masters left with Africa, such as formal education, Christianity and modern technology. Hence Africa now adapts herself and gives up her irrelevant traditions and adopts new ideas, methods of work and even principles of organizing herself economically. In fact, colonialism, to a large extent, has enabled the Africans to do away with naivety, improve upon her critical consciousness.

In sum, Kortright points out:

...although direct colonialism has largely ended, we can see that the ideology of colonialism has lingered in the identity of people with the general cultural sphere as well as the institutions of political, economic and social practices.<sup>22</sup>

### **Colonialism**

The term colonialism "originated from the word colonialism or colonization (policy: invasion, confiscation and occupation of other people's land and the imposition of the invading people's laws, customs and beliefs on the citizens of the land)."<sup>23</sup> In other words, "Colonialism means a special disease of the mind or the head resulting from the act of colonization of the people. It is a pathological distortion of the mind; a mental state in which a person unconsciously despises what is his or hers and who he or she is."<sup>24</sup> Being controlled by this mental disease, the colonized person has an inordinate love or desire to be like the colonizer or to have anything the colonizer has. In weekend Concord, 1998, it is, according to Wole Soyinka, "the slave mentality that makes sacrosanct whatever has been bequeathed to us by European authority."<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, "...it could be a critical and pathological form of inferiority complex and it is a double tragedy because of the lack of knowledge of its presence by most of the colonized. That is why it is complex."<sup>26</sup> However, "...to be ill is tragic enough and not to be aware

that one is ill a double tragedy. This is the most difficult obstacle in dealing with the process of decolonization or the treatment of colonialism.”<sup>27</sup>

### **Decolonization**

The term decolonization can be referred to as mental emancipation from “acute colonialism – involving a loss of contact with or unconscious rejection of one’s own reality in preference to the other people’s reality.”<sup>28</sup> It also means mental liberation from the two prominent symptoms of colonialism, viz: “laboring to imitate the way another people speak and deliberate mutilation of the spelling and pronunciation of one’s own names.”<sup>29</sup> Decolonization is a journey of self-discovery culminating in reawakening and reorientation.<sup>30</sup> It involves a conscious decision to first uncover, uproot and remove all vestiges of slavery imposed European or Arab values and beliefs ingested over centuries of mis-education that are detrimental to present day African family stability and African community empowerment.<sup>31</sup> Next, as the colony is being dismantled, Africans must fill “...the liberated spaces with those life-sustaining social values, beliefs and customs that enable their ancestors to establish stable, autonomous families and communities prior to the Arab or European invasion and conquest of their societies.”<sup>32</sup>

However, “...like all transforming, liberated states, decolonization is actually a protracted process demanding constant vigilance and intense dedication to task”.<sup>33</sup> It cannot be achieved in a single evening by reading a single book or by attending a single lecture or even by taking a single course.<sup>34</sup> Again, “...reading, lectures, courses (along with study groups and conferences), are critical to the success of any decolonization project”.<sup>35</sup> Hence, “because it is an effort to recover and reconnect with the best of traditional Africans in the Americans decolonization if Re-Africanization. This demands “...the dismantling of white supremacist beliefs, and the structures which uphold them in every area of African life.”<sup>36</sup> It must be stressed, however, that “decolonization does not mean ignorance of foreign traditions; it simply means denial of their authority and withdrawal of allegiance from them.”<sup>37</sup>

Before decolonization actually takes place, there ought to be mental liberation from tenacious attachment to and preference of European culture to African culture. “The power of colonization is incomprehensibly so strong that most of the colonized have no more than an atom of faith in themselves.”<sup>38</sup> They believe, for instance, that the Europeans who pronounce their names or the name of their towns wrongly are right (eg Awka instead of Oka, or Onitsha instead of Onicha).<sup>39</sup> Many are familiar with parents who pride themselves on their children’s inability to speak their own national language or mother-tongue.<sup>40</sup> Some mutilate their names and would spell and pronounce a name like Dike and Dyke and Ike and Iyke, etc. However, it does not follow to assume that the African man has lost the cultural background and identity. It is a misconception to allegedly state that they take the oppressors to be superior to them, or that Africans undermine their culture and that of the west as a

paradigm. Of course, there is mutilation of words which does not result in loss of identity or stifle the maintenance of their cultural values.

Frantz Fanon states that: “Decolonization never takes place unnoticed, for it influences individuals and modifies them fundamentally.”<sup>41</sup> The modification involved in decolonization has to do with outward manifestation and positive change of attitude to reality. It stimulates the oppressed and moves them to critically develop their potentialities. In line with this perspective, Fanon continues, “...it transforms spectators crushed with their inessentiality into privileged actors, with the grandiose glare of history’s floodlights upon them.”<sup>42</sup> It brings “...a natural rhythm into existence, introduced by new men, and with it a new language and a new humanity.”<sup>43</sup> Decolonization makes the oppressed to live not as spectators and subjugated race but as actors and liberated people. It propels them to live their real lives, that is, lives based on their own worldview. In decolonization, there is therefore, “the need of a complete calling in question of the colonial situation.”<sup>44</sup> If we wish to describe it precisely, we might find it in the well known words: “The last shall be first and the first last.”<sup>45</sup> Fanon reiterates, “...for if the last shall be first, this will only come to pass after a murderous and decisive struggle between the two protagonists.”<sup>46</sup> Actually imperialism we are suffering today originated from colonialism. To worsen the situation, some of the oppressed or the colonized have become another oppressors. The question is, can the colonized or the oppressed really decolonize from the colonial masters when the leaders make their country uninhabitable? The issue here is not merely to be at the helm of affairs or that the last shall be first and the first last as Fanon pointed out. The colonized still have a long way to go in their quest to liberate themselves from colonial influence. They should be original and creative to make their country inhabitable. “That affirmed intention to place the last at the head of things, and to make them climb at a pace too quickly, some say) the well-known steps which characterize an organized society, can only triumph if we use all means to turn the scale, including, of course, that of violence.”<sup>47</sup> “National liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people, commonwealth: whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon.”<sup>48</sup> In real decolonization, the battle field is the mind, and so, the liberation has to start from the mind. Critical thinking, originality and creativity are needed for the emancipation of the oppressed. Physical fight or violence cannot authentically liberate the oppressed.

However, in line with Freire’s idea of decolonization, Benjamin Talton articulates; “...through the process of decolonization that began, in most African territories, at the close of World War II African leaders gained greater political power under European rule.”<sup>49</sup> But did this liberate the African leaders and their subjects and make them free from colonialism and its atrocities? “In the decades that followed independence, they worked to shape the cultural, political, and economic character of the post-colonial states.”<sup>50</sup> Observing what was happening, they introduced the concept of “divide and rule”. Hence, Talton states: Some worked against the challenges of continued European cultural and political hegemony, while others

worked with European powers in order to protect their interest and maintain control over economic and political resources. Decolonization, then, was a process as well as a historical period.<sup>51</sup> “Culturally and politically, however, the legacy of European dominance remained evident in the national borders, political infrastructures, education system, national languages, economies, and trade networks of each nation.”<sup>52</sup> thus, decolonization demands that the Africans expunge the negative legacy and improve positive one. The above painted picture underscores the fact that the colonized ought to reject the colonizer’s terms, so that being liberated from the colonial influence; they would have the dynamism indispensable for decolonization.

Robin Hallet, sharing the same view with the proponents of decolonization, notably in the discourse on the miss-steps that the oppressed people made on their path to independence and liberation, has this assertion to make: “Africans entered upon their independence full of hope for the future; their optimism was shared by outside well-wishers, including the former colonial power, but instead of being mentally decolonized, they were unfortunately submerged in the system they thought they were free from.”<sup>53</sup> Hallet, therefore, views decolonization as a process that involves “...independence and emancipation from foreign influence and domination.”<sup>54</sup> It is “...a revolutionary process or a struggle through which the oppressed nations attain independence from the hegemony of more powerful countries.”<sup>55</sup> He asserts:

Decolonization, on the other hand, appeared to involve a far less revolutionary process in many countries, as members of the western educated elite move easily into the office vacated by retiring European administrators. And many of the latter political changes, though often thought about by violent means, did not process any found alterations in the structure of society.<sup>56</sup>

Wes Rehberg, rapt in thought about the issue of decolonization of the oppressed, states, “...it involves both engagements with the everyday issues in our lives so that we can make sense of the world in relation to hegemonic power, and engagement with collectivities that are premised on ideas of autonomy and self-determination.”<sup>57</sup> For the oppressed to get involved in everyday issue of their lives; thus having their own words, attitudes, beliefs and being fully human; they must decolonize their mind from the shackles of colonialism. It requires that they should endeavour to reject the colonizer’s terms, and then fight for their own emancipation from colonial subjugation. Motivated by the concept of decolonization, D. Churchill observes that “decolonization is a starting point to destroying the structures established by colonial ideologies, and creating a society based on equality, liberty, and mutual aid.”<sup>58</sup>

In consideration of the theory of decolonization, Uhuru Hotep states that, “...an uncompromising rejection attitude should be designed to achieve a total, radical decolonization of the colonized.”<sup>59</sup> He reveals that “...the method of psychological manipulation was designed by the Europeans to gain control of the African minds



through disconnecting the African from their heritage and culture because people cut off from their heritage, are easily manipulated and controlled.”<sup>60</sup> To remedy the situation, “...total and radical decolonization is a necessity to connect them to their heritage and culture.”<sup>61</sup> Hotep summarizes his strategy succinctly: In the American context, decolonizing the African mind means reversing the seasoning process and with some detail: reversing the seasoning process is a constructive way to frame a psycho educational approach for cleansing African minds of European or Arab cultural infestation.<sup>67</sup>

On the other hand, Hotep views decolonization as “a reversal which implies the demise of an operating system and its replacement by another, amounting to no less than a revolution and calls for a rhetoric of total war – even though the battle ground is the mind.”<sup>63</sup> Decolonization is a systematic process: “...first remove the occupier; next cleanse the ground, then design your own new-old structure and install it in the free space.”<sup>64</sup> Reacting to this, Deloria, Vine Jr. states, “decolonization is a rebirth of cultures dismantles during colonialism. The key to it is a conscious act of cultural revitalization,”<sup>65</sup> Decolonization is a process that assists indigenous people to “identify as members of a racial group that has been systematically oppressed by a dominant culture; it enables them to take action towards social transformation.”<sup>66</sup> Thus, facilitation and understanding of oppressive processes and affirmation of the legitimacy of a people’s ancestral culture encourages cultural renewal. However, Springhill, John reveals that decolonization and already taken place in the society of the oppressed. Thus, he articulates:

Between the early 1950s and the mid-1970s, as African leaders South of the Sahara took direct control of their economic, political institutions, and resources, they entered the brutal trap of cold war era global politics, European economic and political influence remained deeply entrenched in African throughout the period because of their strategic interest in maintaining unobstructed access to African’s natural resources and in supporting government friendly to western political interest.<sup>67</sup>

It is obvious there was an acute failure of African leadership in many of the independent African nations. And so, as western aid and a focus on anti-communism paved the way for political corruption and self-interest among African leaders, “... decolonization released Africans from their status as colonial systems but failed to rid African nations of the away of their former colonial rulers, other western powers, and a culture of political and economic exploitation and corruption.”<sup>68</sup> Based on the above propositions, it does appear that there is false decolonization in which the native elite simply replace the settler elite as the expressive rules the still exploited masses. Thus, it calls for mental decolonization and genuine independence to get rid of the alienating colonial values and assumptions.

More so, the term decolonization is a serious mental revolution to attain freedom from an oppressive colonial system. Thus, Reins borough articulates: A

decolonizing approach requires that the oppressed confront the misguided loyalties to economic values that normalize abject mental poverty, unprecedented incarceration, war policies, and a host of other economically instilled conditions of human suffering.<sup>69</sup> It is, therefore, not uncommon that the majority of the oppressed are ignorant of the oppression in which they are submerged, alienated, brainwashed and controlled. To this effect, they see their own culture as inferior to that of their oppressors. Thus, they become more attracted to the oppressors and imitate them, to the detriment of their cultural identity. This is manifest in their sense of apathy to actualize their full potentialities or capabilities. The oppressed suffer from low self esteem and a good number seems to be unaware of their full capabilities. Hence, they now share in characteristic trait of self-depreciation. Taking the advantage of this, the oppressors impose a worldview paradigm on the oppressed that dines them the power to direct their lives.

The concept of decolonization of the oppressed an exciting adventure. It brings to our consciousness that the world in which we exist is really a problem we should critically and creatively work on and solve. It exemplifies the response of a creative mind and sensitive conscience to the remarkable misery of the oppressed. It is credible that oppression may not be eliminated totally since it exists not only between the oppressed and their oppressors but also among the oppressed themselves. Thus, it follows to stress that oppression is not absent even among the developed and more powerful nations.

The foregoing propositions, therefore, underlines the purpose of this work; the motive is to make those submerged and entrapped in their oppressive realities gain useful insights. They should endeavour not to satisfy the standards set by the oppressors and their spokesmen. They ought to be determined to explore further the nature of their exploitation, investigating extensively the phenomenon of neocolonialism to formulate strategy for their emancipation and development. To be successful, the oppressed should accept their situation not a stumbling block but as a stepping stone to attain a greater height. Relatively speaking, decolonizing the colonized serves as a transformative tool to foster mental liberation from the negative influence of colonialism and to bring in critical awareness. This awareness propels the colonized to react rationally and creatively for their liberation, growth and development.

## **Instrument to Decolonizing the Mind**

### **Dialogics**

Dialogue, according to *The living Webster Dictionary*, is “a conversation between two or more persons, a formal conversation in theatrical performance, and a composition in which two or more persons are represented as conversing on some topics, a frank exchange of ideas or views on a specific issue in an effort to attain mutual understating.”<sup>70</sup> In other words, dialogue is “a formal discussion between two groups or countries, especially when they are trying to solve problems, end a dispute, etc.”<sup>71</sup> It is from above definitions that the conception of dialogics could be

understood. It is when people use their own deliberating on their existential reality that they can transform and humanize the world. To this effect, Freire is the opinion that it is through dialogic interaction that people must strive "...to achieve critical consciousness"<sup>72</sup> He maintains that it is in light of the foregoing proposition that one can claim that "communication"<sup>73</sup> has actually taken place which he distinguishes from "extension."<sup>74</sup> Human nature is dialogic, and communication has a leading role in our life. Thus, we are continuously in dialogue with others, and it is that process that we create and recreate ourselves. The goal of the dialogic action is always to reveal the truth interacting with others and the world.<sup>75</sup> In his dialogic action theory, Freire distinguishes between "dialogic actions, the ones that promote understanding, cultural creation, and liberation; and non-dialogic actions, which deny dialogue, distort communication, and reproduce power."<sup>76</sup>

Furthermore, Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin established that "...there is a need of creating meanings in a dialogic way with other people."<sup>77</sup> His concept of dialogism states a relation among language, interaction, and social transformation. Bakhtin believes that "the individual does not exist outside of dialogue. The concept of dialogue, itself, establishes the existence of the other persons. "It accommodates the other person, tolerates, and appreciates him. In fact, it is through dialogue that the other cannot be silenced or excluded. Bakhtin states that "...meanings are created in processed of reflection between people."<sup>78</sup> And these are the same meanings that we use in later conversations with others, where those meanings get amplified and even change as we acquire new meanings.<sup>79</sup> In this sense, Bakhtin states that "every time that we talk about something that we have read about, seen or felt; we are actually reflecting the dialogues we have had with others, showing the meaning that we have created in previous dialogues."<sup>80</sup> What we know and talk about had been, more or less, known and talked about before, directly or indirectly. And, therefore, "what is said cannot be separated from the perspectives of others: the individual speech and the collective one are deeply related." It is this sense that Bakhtin talks about chain of dialogues, to point that "...every dialogue results from a previous one and, at the same time, every new dialogue is going to be present in future one."<sup>81</sup>

However, dialogic interaction does not encourage self-centeredness, arbitrary decisions, or imposition of opinions or ideas. It is "based on equality and seeks understanding through speakers appreciating the provided arguments to the dialogue regardless of the position or power of the speaker."<sup>82</sup> Dialogic interaction calls for cultural synthesis and abhors cultural invasion. The former is meant for liberation while the latter is for domination and dehumanization. Dialogics serves as liberation and decolonization, "...as freedom in practices"<sup>83</sup> is facilitated through dialogics. The idea of Freire is that the oppressed understand and transform their reality. "It is necessary that dialogicity be established since man does not create himself in silence, but through words, actions and reflection."<sup>84</sup> The key element in sharing ideas and learning from each other or one another is dialogue. Decolonization proceeds dialogic in the sense that the oppressed, being liberated

from inferiority complex, refuse to be alienated from their cultural heritage or regarded as objects as they participate in dialogue. The liberation of man and the overcoming of oppression are not achieved by "...the consumption of the existing ideas that teem and circulate between people. Instead, the individual need to construct his own ideas and above all transforms them through praxis and horizontal communication"<sup>85</sup> and cooperation.

### **Cooperation**

The people alienated and subjected to domination must cooperate and begin to fight for their emancipation. In the dialogical theory of action, subjects meet in cooperation in order to transform the world.<sup>86</sup> The dialogue established between the two subjects helps to increase reciprocal kindness, something that is an act of bravery not cowardice. The dialogical theory of action "...does not involve a subject who dominates by virtue of conquest and a dominated object."<sup>87</sup> It rather, involves subjects who consciously engage in dialogue without disdain to name the world and transform it. According to Freire, "...if at a certain historical moment to the oppressed, for the reasons previously described are unable to fulfill their vocation as subjects, the posing of their very oppression as a problem (which always involves some form of action) will help them achieve this vocation."<sup>88</sup> However, in dialogical task, there is a vital role for revolutionary leadership. In other world, dialogical task involves the role of revolutionary leaders who in spite of their important, fundamental and indispensable role do not own the people and have no right to steer the people blindly towards their salvation. In his explanation to the above propositions, Freire stats: "...such a salvation would be a mere gift from the leader to the people, a breaking of the dialogical bond between them, and a reducing of the people from co-authors of liberating action into the object of this action."<sup>89</sup>

Therefore, cooperation as a feature of dialogical action exists only among subjects and can only be achieved through communication. In this context, dialogue and reflection do not end without any action; it is not chatter that is incapable of liberation. Thus Freire asserts, "...dialogue as essential communication... does not impose, does not manipulate, does not domesticate, does not sloganize."<sup>90</sup> Freire maintains that the revolutionary leaders must be committed in their struggle to achieve freedom for the people. Their choices must co-exist with that of the oppressed in their communication. Hence, he remarks; "authentic adherence is the free coincidence of choices; it cannot occur apart from communication among people, mediated by reality."<sup>91</sup> The above assertion is quite indispensable for when some people act in a negative way thinking they are superior to others whom they treat with prejudice, there will be no communication, cooperation and dialogue. Similarly, when everybody acts in his/her own way or thinks in his/her own way, not taking cognizance of the fact that others are there to be considered and appreciated, it discourages dialogue. The above background depicts that nobody ought to speak and act for others in the journey to freedom since to do so is to deny

them their humanity, dominate and alienate them from their own reality. In line with this, Freire points out:

As opposed to the mythicizing practices of the dominant elites, dialogical theory requires that the world be unveiled. No one can, however, unveil the world for another, although one subject may initiate the unveiling on behalf of others, the others must also become subjects of this act. The adherence of the people is made possible by this unveiling of the world and of themselves, in authentic praxis.<sup>92</sup>

However, in dialogical theory, at no stage can revolutionary action forgo communion with the people. “Communion in turn elicits cooperation, which brings leaders and people to fusion. In other words, when communion is taken to be dispensable by the leaders, there will be no cooperation. But fusion can exist only if revolutionary action is really human, empathetic, loving, communicative, and humble, in order to be liberating.<sup>93</sup> The leaders should have an uncompromising empathy with the situation of the oppressed and strive to establish a solidarity that will give birth to their liberation.

### **Unity for Liberation**

Paulo Freire, having observed that the dominators in anti-dialogical theory of action, are compelled by necessity to divide the colonized, the more easily to preserve the state of oppression, urges “...the leaders in the dialogical theory to dedicate themselves to an untiring effort for unity among the oppressed- and unity of the leaders with the oppressed- in order to achieve liberation. Thus, reflecting on the difficulty involved Freire states that this category of dialogical action (like the others) cannot occur apart from the praxis.”<sup>94</sup> An unflinching effort is needed for the attainment of liberation: the leaders should be undauntedly practical to achieve their common goal of liberation. “The praxis of oppression is easy for the dominant elite; but it is not easy for the revolutionary leaders to carry out a liberating praxis. The former group can rely on using the instruments of power; the latter group has this power directed against it.”<sup>94</sup> The former group can organize itself freely, and though it may undergo fortuitous and momentary divisions, it unites rapidly in the face of any threat to its fundamental interests.<sup>96</sup> The foregoing propositions reveal that the praxis of oppression and that of liberation both exist; the success of the former negates that of the latter. The fact remains that none of these praxes can be achieved without some difficulties. Reliance on the instruments of power cannot always lead to success. Even though the power is directed towards the oppressed, they can be liberated from oppression and successfully move forward when there is genuine cooperation among them. “...the latter group cannot exist without the people, and this very condition constitutes the first obstacle of its effort at organization.”<sup>97</sup>

Therefore, unity involves a lot of difficulties which when surmounted become a solid foundation for liberation and freedom. It is crucial for the revolutionary

leaders and the oppressed to be determined, get united and overcome all obstacles on their way to mental, economic and social liberation. Analogically, a bundle of brooms cannot be easily broken. But when untied, it can be broken rib by rib. This applies to the oppressed in their pursuit for liberation. They should get united, and have communication and cooperation needed to emasculate their oppressors and get rid of colonial influence. The oppressors, on the contrary, use antidialogical theory of action (an ideology of oppression) as an indispensable weapon to divide the oppressed. Thus, creating division, in other words, is a viable praxis to rob the oppressed of their indispensable unity to liberation and freedom.

The foregoing propositions expose a constant conflict between the dominant group and the dominated group, the oppressors and the oppressed. Organization and unity of the latter is detestable to the former who fight consistently to constitute obstacles to the efforts of the later at organization. According to Freire, "...it would indeed be inconsistent of the dominant elite to allow the revolutionary leader to organize. The internal unity of the dominant elite, which reinforces and organizes its power, "...requires that the people be divided; the unity of the revolutionary leaders only exists in the people among themselves and in turn with them."<sup>98</sup> The unity of the elite "...derives from its antagonism with the people; the unity of the revolutionary leadership group grows out of communion with the (united) people."<sup>99</sup> The concrete situation of oppression-which dualizes the 'I' of the oppressed, thereby making the oppress person ambiguous, emotionally unstable, and fearful of freedom-facilitates the divisive action of the dominator by hindering the unifying action indispensable to liberation.<sup>100</sup>

### **Organization**

In the theory of anti-dialogical action, "manipulation is indispensable to conquest and domination; in the dialogical theory of action the organization of the people presents the antagonistic opposite of this manipulation."<sup>101</sup> Organization is not only directly linked to unity, but is a natural development of that unity. Accordingly, "...the leaders' pursuit of unity is necessarily also an attempt to organize the people, requiring witness to the fact that the struggle for liberation is a common task."<sup>102</sup> This constant, humble, and courageous witness emerging from cooperation in a shared effort-the liberation of women and man- avoids the historical conditions of one society vary from the other, and to that effect, the form of witness may vary as well. In line with this, Freire asserts, "The form of witness may vary, depending on the historical conditions of any society; witness itself, however, is an indispensable element of revolutionary action."<sup>103</sup> It is, however, necessary that the oppressed have an appreciable critical knowledge of the current historical context in order to determine the "what" and "how" involved in the witness stated above. Hence, Freire articulates:

In order to determine the what and how of that witness, it is therefore essential to have an increasing critical knowledge of the current historical context, the view of the world held by the people,

the principal contradiction of society, and the principal aspect of that contradiction. Since these dimensions of witness are historical, dialogical, and therefore dialectical, witness cannot simply import them from other contexts without previously analyzing its own.<sup>104</sup>

Furthermore, Freire also points out that "...to do otherwise (i.e. deviating from the ideas posited above) is to absolutize and mythologize the relative; alienation then becomes unavoidable."<sup>123</sup> Witness, in the dialogical theory of action, is one of the principal expressions of the cultural and educational character of the revolution.<sup>105</sup> It could be observed that manipulation which entraps the people and paves way for domination in anti-dialogical action, is stifled by authentic organization in dialogical action. According to Freire, "in anti-dialogical action, manipulation anesthetizes the people and facilitates their domination; in dialogical action, manipulation is superseded by authentic organization."<sup>106</sup> It then follows that while manipulation serves the ends of conquest in the former, daring and loving witness serve the ends of organization in latter.

The term organization is vital to both the dominant elites and revolutionary leaders. But while the former organize only themselves in exclusion of the people, the later organize themselves and the people as well. Freire elucidates, "For the dominant elites, organization means organizing themselves; for the revolutionary leaders, organization means organizing themselves with the people."<sup>107</sup> In the first event, the dominant elite increasingly structures its power so that it can more efficiently dominate and depersonalize; in the second, organization only corresponds to its nature and objective if in itself it constitutes the practice of freedom.<sup>108</sup>

According to Dr. O. Aquirre Ortiz, "...organizing the people is the process in which the revolutionary leaders, who are also prevented from saying their own word, initiates the experience of learning how to name the world. This is "true learning experience, and therefore dialogical."<sup>109</sup> So, it is, that the leaders cannot say their word alone; they must say it with the people. They ought to act dialogically, carrying the led along and avoiding arbitrary rule. Thus, they should strive to serve the people placed under them and make their governance favourable to all. "Leaders who do not act dialogically, but insist on imposing their decisions, do not organize the people-they manipulate them. They do not liberate, nor are they liberated: they oppress."<sup>110</sup>

### **Cultural Synthesis**

This is the final characteristic of dialogical action which attempts to overcome the antagonistic activities initiated by the oppressors and goes deeper than mere induction. It addresses "the strength of one's own culture as a creature acts and vindicates the oppressed by providing a different vision of the world than the one which has been imposed without question or examination. In cultural synthesis, "the act of transformation could come into two ways: integration and adaptation."<sup>111</sup> In his quest to integrate and adapt himself to reality, man being

critically conscious of his freedom to make choices is able to transform the world. Throwing more light on the term integration, Freire writes, It is the capacity to adapt oneself to reality plus the critical capacity to make choices and to transform that reality.<sup>112</sup> The above proposition indicates that one does not depend on one's choice alone while adjusting to reality. Every human being has to consider and accommodate other persons' choices that serve as complimentary, not detrimental to his or her own choice in order to transform the world. But when he or she loses his ability to make choices and becomes subjected to the choices of others, he or she is neither integrated nor adapted.

Cultural synthesis, therefore, takes place in dialogical action which "...aims at surmounting the antagonistic contradictions of the social structure, thereby achieving the liberation of human beings."<sup>113</sup> In contrast to such contradictions, anti-dialogical cultural action aims to avoid or hinder any form of radical transformation of reality by the oppressed. The fight between the oppressed who posit dialogical cultural action for their liberation and the oppressors who posit anti-dialogical cultural action to manipulate and dominate seems to be unending. According to Freire, "while the latter would never accept a transformation of the structure sufficiently radical to overcome its antagonistic contradictions, they may accept reforms which do not affect their power of decision over the oppressed."<sup>114</sup> Hence, their *modus operandi* (mode of operation) involves the conquest of the people, their division, their manipulation, and cultural invasion. It is fundamentally an induced action. However, the oppressed should not accept defeat as they constantly fight to avoid being divided, manipulated and dominated. Instead, they should endeavour to "use dialogical cultural action which is characterized by the superseding of any induced aspect"<sup>115</sup> as a weapon against cultural invasion or the triumph of anti-dialogical cultural action.

No one should be a victim of any system that prevents him from attaining his full humanity. One ought not to be an abject being controlled and dominated by technological development. The invention of calculator for instance, should not be a halt to rigorous mathematical reasoning. Every person is expected to challenge his mind to go beyond limitations or what is already there to actualize his potentialities. In reaction to the aforementioned ideas, Ngugi Wa Thiongo elucidates:

The unity of our sweat is what makes us able to change the laws of nature, able to harness them to the need of our lives, instead of our lives remaining slaves of the laws of nature...Animals stoop low before nature, allowing themselves to be turned this way and that by her, just as sausages are turned casually in the fire by little boys. But human being wrestles with nature and strives to command her.<sup>116</sup>

In the final analysis, according to Freire, cultural synthesis is "a mode of action for confronting culture itself, as the preserver of the very structures by which it was formed. Cultural action, as historical action, is "an instrument for superseding the



dominant alienated and alienating culture. In this sense, every authentic revolution is a cultural revolution.”<sup>117</sup> In dialogical theory, there are no imposed models or division; instead there is organization and unity for liberation. Similarly, in cultural synthesis there are no invaders; there are no imposed models. The leaders and the people mutually identify themselves and together create guidelines of their action. In this synthesis, “leaders and people are some how reborn in new knowledge and new action. Knowledge of the alienated culture leads to transforming action resulting in a culture which is being freed from alienation.”<sup>118</sup> The more sophisticated knowledge of the leaders is remade in a empirical knowledge of the people, the more the latter is refined by the former.<sup>119</sup> In cultural synthesis-and only in cultural synthesis - it is possible to resolve the contradictions between the worldview of the leaders and that of the people, to the enrichment of both.<sup>120</sup> Cultural synthesis does not deny the differences between the two views; indeed, it is based on these differences. It does deny the invasion of one by the other, but affirms the undeniable support each gives to the other.<sup>121</sup> Cultural synthesis, as the final force described by Freire offers the oppressed opportunity to reclaim their cultural identity as well as their sense of self.

Having reflected on the concept of dialogics, the researcher observed that the techniques explained above if executed well will cancel out the oppressive tools of anti-dialogic actions giving way to decolonization and liberation. It is important to note that the oppressors are not far from the oppressed. They have studied the oppressed and known their weaknesses and strengths. In fact, they are inside the oppressed population. The above proposition reveals that there is a lot of deceptions and manipulations in the sense that some leaders of the people under the supervision of the oppressors often portray themselves as the defenders or the saviours of the oppressed. Chosen to represent the oppressed, they are oppressors among the oppressed. Consequently, there is no genuine cooperation. They lead the people into false form of organization; one that keeps them alienated dehumanized and prevents their long expected decolonization and liberation.

However, to achieve real liberation and development, the revolutionary leaders should detest bourgeois appetite for personal success. They should be patriotic, promote fairness and refuse to be enticed, deceived or manipulated by the oppressors. As the representatives of the people, they should constantly cooperate with the masses and strive for the welfare and success of all. Since the opposing force of manipulation is real organization they ought to work and organize themselves in order to realize their lot and transform their own destiny.

Cultural synthesis is the opposing force of cultural has freedom to participate in dialogue with others. It is in this dialogue that everyone creates and recreates, integrates and adapts himself to reality. Hence, the worldview of the leaders and that of the led is mutually resolved to the enrichment of both. In cultural synthesis outsiders come to learn from the people and the people learn from them. It encourages fraternal and healthy interdependence and interrelationship between the outsiders and the people in their various cultural values.

**Conclusion**

The effects of colonization are long-lasting and not easily removable. Thus, it affects the central aspects of the mind's structure, mode of operation, and contents. The adoption of the colonizer's culture as a paradigm ultimately expels the original mental structure of the colonized, and thus, obliterates the latter's true or authentic identity. The fact the evils of colonial system persist even when the colonizers are no longer there with the colonized introduces a movement from the colonialism to non-colonialism. In other words, it suggests the colonizers have handed over the baton of leadership to another oppressor. The leaders should endeavour to be rational and humane, and then collaborate with the oppressed to fight their common enemies. They need to be creative, and diplomatic in their revolutionary actions for their liberation, success and development.

Obviously, in order for the revolutionary action and decolonization to be successful, there ought to be discipline, order, precise objectives, clear task to be completed, and accountability to one's compatriots. There is the possibility that sooner or later the colonized will assume a significant position in world stage. According to J.P Sartre, "Man in his very nature is a free being, with the innate capacity of transcendence, that is, the capacity to transcend any situation in which he finds himself."<sup>122</sup> Taking a look at world history we would see some nations that were great in the distant past, but are now insignificant in the world stage. Examples are Egypt, Persia, Babylon, Greece, Mesopotamia, etc. on the contrary, United States of America, Russian, Germany, Japan were insignificant in the distant past, but today they are great in the world stage. Thus, world history teaches us that things have not always been what they are now. It is believable that through real decolonization, sooner or later, things will not remain as they are now in a society of the colonized. There is the possibility that the influence of colonialism and non-colonialism will become things of the past in the distant future and African nations will rise to the stage of world power. In fact, the colonized should establish solid patriotism, creativity and solidarity which pave way for an enabling environment to attain a greater height for the benefit of all.

The colonized are urged to form themselves rather than being formed. To this ends, they should rationally and creatively seize available opportunities from daily experiences they constantly encounter to do away with current ideological pitfall of resorting to artificial experiences. They should be independent through radical and genuine decolonization which will reinforce them to improve their cultural values, appreciate and maintain their own identity. Unfortunately, without this, some people acquire a kind of naïve consciousness in which they are aware of their undermined situation but don't make any effort to change it. They take a conformist stance and consider their situation something normal, even to the point of supporting it themselves. Others construct their own reality and liberate themselves from oppression, only to go to the opposite extreme and become the antithesis of what they were fighting against. What a deception! The foregoing propositions suggest that it is very difficult to have a perfect society. The impossibility of having

it is greater than the possibility. Although, many of the concepts explained in discourse are not new, he has been able to package and deliver the concepts in a way never done before and that makes the concept of decolonizing the colonized unique. The ideas will get you thinking about the very world in which you exist and make you ask the question, “am I an oppressor or an oppressed?”

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This to say that imposing communication can be viewed as extension.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that extensions is enslaving and domesticating thereby impeding human consciousness and lasting change. (cf. Freire, *Extension and Communication...*). P.96.

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