

## THEORY OF DECOLONIZATION IN FRANTZ FANON'S WRETCHED OF THE EARTH

**Vora Hirva**

Assistant Professor

Swami Sahjanand College of Commerce and Management,  
Maharaja Krishnakumar Bhavnagar University. India.

### Abstract

*Frantz Fanon was one of the thinkers and major contributors in the movement of decolonization after World War II. He was involved in the independence struggle the Algerian people waged against France. Decolonization movement has its roots in colonial period where there is the struggle of colonized people who had been treated like slaves by so called colonizers. Post colonial period arrives with the revolutionary voice raised against colonizers. The heart of decolonization lies there. Decolonization is the part of post colonialism because it is eradication of domination of non-indigenous people. It is exclusion from preconceived notion of colonizers established by their superiority complex. "The Wretched of the Earth" mainly deals with colonialism, violence, struggle between native, settler, strategic predicament of intellectuals and political leaders. Theory of decolonization revolves around binary oppositions of colonizers and colonized people which have been prevalent in this book and it too connects the struggle between natives and settlers. Decolonization changes "settings" and the things which are set already. Decolonization is first step to bring in post colonial aspect. Colonized intellectuals gain realization to word with bourgeoisie of colonialist country. The major characteristic of decolonization lies in liberation movement when colonialist bourgeoisie make contact with elite.*

**Keywords:** *Decolonization, Colonizer, Dominance, Natives, Settlers, Colonialism, Self-Realization, Bourgeoisie, Post Colonialism.*

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Fanon had much influence of Aime Cesaire being his student and there could be found some similarities between both of them because Fanon was taught how to response to injustices done by oppressors and with its emergence it leads other issue. It turns out to be a kind of diaspora in which binary oppositions and culture are mixed with superiority and inferiority complexes and they are still prevalent today somewhere in the society. Decolonization is civilization of the Algerian world. It puts stress on distances between “we” and “they”. Prime concern of decolonization theory is identity of the self and giving respect to self esteem. Like African heritage along with its people has been marginalized and African Literature has also been in marginalization. Decolonization voices on behalf of the African Literature and its people to let them be considered.

Decolonization suggests that power and knowledge work together. The relationship of knowledge and supreme power structure plays a vital role in differentiating colonized man from a colonizer. *The Wretched of the Earth* shows struggle between Natives and Settlers and people face various difficulties. One of the major aims of decolonization process is to know the vision and the process of humanism through which the writer leads readers towards new humanism. It is coming after struggle of understanding of the self and knowing each other. Eventually discerning racial prejudices in consideration of own self and others is decolonization.

Fanon was born in French colony of Martinique on July 20, 1925. His family was able to occupy a position and status within society and it made them part of black bourgeoisie. Environment in which Fanon lived was associated with France and he absorbed it as his own history. He was inspired by Martinique's other renowned critic of European colonization Aime Cesaire. Fanon bitterly encountered himself between his own black culture and preoccupation of racial identity. He left colony in 1943 when he was 18 and fought with French forces in the days of world wars. He was endowed with lived experiences of European people because he had lived

in France and studied psychiatry at university of Lyons. He faced anti-black racism and binary oppositions regarding Blacks and Whites. It helped Fanon build Marxist and Existentialist Idea. While he was working in a French hospital, he faced mental stress of soldiers. French officers carried out humiliation and violence to suppress anti-colonial resistance. Fanon was full with experiences of homogenizing effects of white imperialism and those experiences made him able to give his keen dedication and participation in Algerian independence.

*The Wretched of the Earth* is an account of basic nature of colonialism and violence. If violence is coming from settlers, natives try their best to adopt that same basic nature of violence and they answer it with the same way. There is a strategic predicament of not only settlers but also natives. While proclaiming decolonization natives discern themselves and find faults in their own beliefs. It is Fanon's force that violence ought to play a major role in process of decolonization. There come obstacles when decolonizing the nation takes wrong path and it happens when natives assign responsibilities by creating negotiations between native elite class and former colonizers. Natives believe that they can gain their eventual freedom by their negotiation instead of mobilizing masses as genuine revolutionary force. It shows other perception of decolonization. Violence shows colonialism when it is applied by colonizers and violence shows decolonization when it is suffered by colonized people and most importantly when they answer it by similar method.

Fanon's existentialist thought is to measure one's self through one's actions and behaviors. Decolonization only exists at the time when natives discern the correct meaning of what violence is and how it feels when it is inflicted upon. It is another essence of decolonization when natives deny to take position of victim. Decolonization makes person feel the same like oppressor. It gives self realization regarding person's own identity.

Fanon appreciates Jean Paul Sartre's thoughts on existentialism through which one can give proof of what he is. Fanon was also inspired by Edward Said and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak who constructed analysis of *Self and Other*. The common desire of Fanon is to decolonize the preconceived ideas by transforming its origin. It decolonizes the national consciousness. Settler's language is ideal which makes culture specific. Dialects also play vital role because they are made of speeches and their words people use in their day to day life. Natives have their own dialects and they are considered as inferior language but those dialects

liberate them. Ngugi wa Thiong'o book *Decolonizing the mind* depicts attempts to abandon's colonizers' language Gikuyu and the essay is about politics of language.

When Fanon had resigned from his post at Blida- Joinville writing in his *letter to the Resident Minister*, letter was too long but it is worth to have a partial glance on it. It was later published in (Towards the African Revolution)

For nearly three years I have placed myself wholly at the service of this country and of the men who inhabitant it. I have spared neither my efforts nor my enthusiasm.

But what can a man's enthusiasm and devotion achieve if everyday reality is a tissue of lies, of cowardice, of contempt for man?

If psychology is the medical technique that aims to enable man no longer to be a stranger to his environment, I owe it to myself to affirm that the Arab, permanently an alien in his own country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalization.

For many months my conscience has been the self of unpardonable debates. And their conclusion is the determination not to despair of man, in other words, of myself."1.

This letter indicates how Fanon's realization grew up. It seems prevailing on the minister about his dedication and his services but realities lie in injustice to black people. He is a psychiatrist and it was his duty to remove mental disaster of the person to make him realize his humanity and his place. He wanted a genuine realization on part of mentally disturbed people and named it normality. This normality is prime concern in theory of decolonization. Normality should be taken into consideration with the understanding of the self, who the person is, the place he belongs to, the community he lives in, strength and knowledge he has and at the end wisdom he yearns for. It is intrapersonal communication of a colonized with his own self and his conscience feels trouble by thinking of some debates which are unpardonable."2.

*The wretched of the Earth* shows political participation with reference to decolonization. Natives are true inhabitants of the land and settlers are perhaps like immigrants of the land. Decolonization is not only process but it is self realization of natives who are dominated people who search for equality by peeping to take position of settlers by whom they have been dominated. Dominated people want same standards like colonizers or settlers.

"The town belonging to the colonized people or at least the native town. The Negro village, the medina the reservation is a place ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute. They are born there, how; it matters little where or how; they die there; it matters not where, nor how. It is

a world without spaciousness, men live there on top of each other, and their huts are built on top of each other. The native town is a hungry town starved of bread of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town of niggers and dirty Arabs. The look that the native turns on the settler's town is a look of lust, a look of envy; it expresses his dreams of possession-all manner of possession to sit at the settler's table, to sleep in the settler's bed with his wife if possible. The colonized man is an envious man. and this the settler knows very well, when their glances meet he ascertains bitterly, always on the defensive, "they want to take our place." It is true, for there is no native who does not dream at least once a day of setting himself up in the settler's place."<sup>3</sup>(Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* )

Decolonization is a step to remove colonialism and there is no place for colonies. It only claims equality and respect. Colonized intellectuals gain realization to word with bourgeoisie of colonialist country. During liberation movement colonialist bourgeoisie makes contact with elite. Being in minority colonized people remain unaware of the facts. Their ancestral land is dominated by colonialists. Thus the strong need of equal rights and removal of injustices are necessary traits of decolonization.

"For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity."<sup>4</sup>

Natives always look for morality and equality. It explains strong equality because there should not be oppositions and classes.

"The will known principle that all men are equal will be illustrated in the colonies from the moment that the native claims that he is the equal of the settler."<sup>5</sup>

The intellectuals yearn for propaganda and appeals universally about togetherness of natives and settlers. Settlers who always dominated natives don't want union. There occurred negotiation between Algeria and French government. Natives realize that his personalities, needs and breath are as same as settlers. Decolonization shows adherence to identity by its recognition.

"For if, in fact, my life is worth as much as the settler's, his glance no longer shrivels me up nor freezes me and his voice no longer turns me into stone."<sup>6</sup>

Colonialism has always shown two different antagonistic forces and their inequality by creating dichotomy. Colonialism separates people into two parts with hegemony of superior part over other whereas decolonization amalgamates. Colonialism dominates colonizers and natives' mind by its very idea. Native intellectuals are ones who give their keen participation in



destroying ideas of identity egos and self pride. On contrary when the love for identity increases, it creates unity like Africans are accustomed to solve any trouble in public and there will be no concealment. This phenomenon breaks colonialism. In process of decolonization native intellectuals have been associated with colonialist bourgeoisie and their ideas. To be acquainted with national distress is duty. Nationalization brings violence against dominance on behalf of the poor people and it will build their conscience. By living under dominance of colonizers natives learn to mix with oppressors' values. They with their aggression do not recognize their real motif. The only way of facing colonizers is the same way of violence and natives applied falsehood the same way colonialists apply because for them good is evil. Settler is known by his exploitation because he boasts of his creation of land and making history.

Decolonization is not struggle between settler and native but there is a split within various communities of natives who embrace armaments against one another. For instance peasants and tribal commit suicide because native intellectuals' cruelty and settlers think of these actions as privileges by claiming self destruction of natives'. Apart of this settlers consider natives as ill fated people and the reason is their outdated myths and superstitions.

Decolonization insists on having own cultural identity. Colonial world also studies dance phenomena of colonized people and that is so permissive. Man and women amalgamate shaking their bodies and this moment is known as the moment of liberation to forget everything beyond universe. On contrary nature of colonialism is like abrasive sword and when it is at throat of native, his ecstasy and eccentricities regarding dance and spiritual affection will make a sudden leave.

There are accomplices within natives' own community and they turn out to be betrayers of own people by making themselves privileged under authorities of colonizers. There can be many instances like teachers, middle class workers, shopkeepers who take their profit for their own welfare and many natives are members of political parties. Native intellectuals are those creatures who embrace colonial world. When there is a sense of self realization in natives, elite national bourgeoisies will break down. Hidden agenda of some natives are to take position of settler. Violence can't exist again police force. Reformers' words of dialects are there in the newspapers and they become good sign of decolonization. Dialectical language is catalyst to arouse cognitive process of thinking in natives.

Decolonization includes two roles of violence. First is to manage it for welfare and good but another is to transform attitudes of colonizers and to make them feel the same what natives are suffering. Beyond natives' instincts and realizations, understanding of nature of violence makes difference and that is the reason the native is addressed as unusual character of contemporary situations.

Another synonym of decolonization is to be a moral compensation and some people prefer neutralism and they are threat to natives. Kenya's Mau Mau Movement is a similar example of decolonization where there was a prevalent notion that everybody would be responsible for death of victim and their only duty is to destroy settler. Integrity could be achieved through only unity and with the absence of accomplice. Decolonization is an individual task and it is responsibility of everyone to feel sense of belongingness and then individuals create a group of people turning out to be a community.

Fanon has quoted Cesaire and the words of his poetry Rebel which very whimsically shows a native as a rebel.

#### **The Rebel (harshly)**

“My name: an offence, my Christian name-humiliation; my status-a rebel; my age-the stone age.

#### **The mother**

My race-the human race. My religion..but it is not you that will show it to me with your disarmament.” 7.

All identities that colonialism has provided to native is humiliation and a sufferer who suffers exploitation only. But the race to which native belongs is human race and there only humanity is recognized.

Native intellectuals belong to political parties. Nationalist party is having intellectual elites in colonized countries. Capitalist countries and colonial countries are different. Working class gains in capitalist countries and in colonial countries working class loses. Some working people are faithful people of nationalist parties and they are endowed with privileges. They are against old rituals. Nationalist parties consist of elite intellectuals and they abominate rural people. Country dwellers live in feudal manner system. Where there are opportunities for youth, there can happen culmination but feudal system is evil system which makes young middle class less privileged. Native traders look for a large ground of freedom where they can work. This

feudal system consists of customary chiefs, medicine men and lawyers. They show rigid self esteems. Decolonization at some extent fails because some educated men also are bound by old rigidity. Where there is no need of doctors, there are medicine men. Customs and their importance are shown by customary officers on the name of religion. Peasantry in industrialized country is not well organized. Nationalists take wrong impression from western political parties and they neglect welfare of rural people.

Some old customs have significance and they are associated with cultural heritage of native so it is their belongingness but in embracing new ways old ways are not managed. Tradition is in danger due to industrialization. Traditions are identities of natives. The real motif of decolonization is to understand heritage and ancestral identity of native by discerning their belonging and raising voice against injustices. It can be done with embracement of growing ideas but decolonization is followed in absolute direction.

Hierarchy within natives is harm to decolonization. Peasants and landlords prefer to go to big places generated by colonial authorities. Adherence of Europeanization in case of townsman creates opposition with countryman who accuses townsman of forgetting heritage. The townspeople are considered traitors who are bent on achieving powers. Trade union wants to establish its business and does not show its participation in working class struggle. There is hierarchy within hierarchy. For instance native community is divided into sub communities. They are working people, trade unions, nationalist party man, political leaders, intellectual and middleclass man. There is a struggle between national middle class people and union peasants. When leaders are manipulated by colonialists and police force, the outbreak of rebellion acts changes scenario. Only doctrine of natives is to fight for nation's existence and welfare. Natives change themselves into rebels. Hence decolonization is nationhood with national unity. One representative makes other hundred representatives by moral messages to be participants in national struggle of freedom.

Mutual understanding is one of the visions and it is decided that communication should happen between natives and every representatives so it breaks so called hierarchy and important information should be reached to every person. It forms unity and strong bond between villagers and tribes. This process forms integration which is necessary in building national consciousness. People who find political activities futile discern importance of national struggle and its necessity to form national union to govern the nation. Natives are the only people who know



how it feels when an individual's existence is questioned because their identity as human is neglected. Natives' sensibilities in achieving national conscience is notable one.

“The native who didn't take up arms simply because he was dying of hunger and because he saw his own social forms disintegrating before his eyes, but also because the settler considered him to be an animal, and treated him as such, reacts very favorably to such measures. Technologies and sociologists shed their light on colonialist maneuvers and studies on the various “complexes” pour forth: the frustration complex, the belligerency complex, and the colonizability complex. The native is promoted, they try to disarm him with their psychology and of course they throw in a few shillings too. And these miserable methods this eyewash administered drop by drop, even meet with some success. The native is so starved for anything, anything at all that will turn him into a human being.” 8

One of the finest things of natives' struggle is sense of understanding among people with proper communication and they understand the necessity of delivering necessary matters to everybody. It is not like colonial system where authorities know everything and minority class is unaware of everything. That unawareness and lack of allowance to be acquainted with national affairs become reason of illiteracy. Literacy level can be achieved when people living in minority are allowed exposure to recent scenario.

One of the major objectives of natives' struggle is to let colonizer realize the current state of sovereignty of colonized people. Natives now achieve the art of managing people and their interest. Unity is prime concern. Catching conscience of people to reach discernment is motive. This struggle proves a lesson of morality and humanity to rebels. Crimes such as forced labor, inequalities of wages and lack of privileges are eradicated. Decolonization is a mental, psychological and intellectual process of knowing the self by peeping into it to encounter good and to remove worst. Theory of decolonization turns out to be as an ideological movement which is not only a political movement that teaches nature of revolt through conception of respecting own and other identities.

Traditional weakness and underdevelopment is not outcome of colonialism or it cannot be claimed as restriction and deprivation but the reason behind it is lack of intellectual enthusiasm. To manage nation, national middle class should develop economically, socially, politically and most importantly mentally. All those elites who are major reason behind progress of nation are found within national middle class. They are businessman, agricultural officers and

industrial magnates. Middle class people have no knowledge of source of their soil. Many middle class people refuse to embrace some new ideas of revolution like building factories. There is an urgent need of transformations in trading sectors. National middle class demand nationalization of economy. It is the only way for middle class people to be free from deprivation.

The conflict in process of decolonization lies in idealness of middleclass people and national bourgeoisies' embracement of European manners. Those people are some engineers, doctors, businessman and agents who are literate people but they have nothing to do with vision of nation. The same situation could be found in farmers who just ask for nationalization of agricultural production but their lack of literacy doesn't let them get acquainted with utilization of agricultural methods. Every nation's national economy is developed through farming. Native bourgeoisies are those people who are satisfied with the ways of possible advantages occupied by foreigners. Administrative classes are of two religions. One is Islam and the other is Catholicism and what decolonization theory claims is an appeal of development for having moral aspect of people by assembling them on one place to save their existence.

Negritude movement is also one of the major parts of decolonization. Negritude is theory of distinctiveness of African personality and culture. The writers have explored colonialism and utter domination in hands of colonizers. Loss of common black identity has been prevalent during the specific time. The shared black heritage is so rich and preciously endowed with their own culture and artefacts. It has been taken as the tool in fighting against French political and intellectual hegemony. Here Africa has Blacks and Whites. Africa South and Africa North have their individual norms. White Africa is traditional but those people adhere European norms. Black Africa is seen rigid, traditional and uncivilized. Thus, this split brings racism again.

"In certain regions of Africa, drivelling Paternalism with regard to the blacks and loathsome idea derived from western culture that the black man is impervious to logic and the sciences reign in all their nakedness. Sometimes it may be ascertained that the black minorities are hemmed in by a kind of semi-slavery which renders legitimate that species of wariness, or in other words mistrust, which the countries of Black Africa feel with regard to the countries of White Africa. It is all too common that a citizen of Black Africa hears himself called a "Negro" by the children when walking in the streets of a big town in white Africa, or finds that civil servants address him in pidgin English."9.

African unity is utopia. Unity is expected and it takes place in form of good leadership and defiance of the interests of bourgeoisies. New bourgeoisies understand significance of dictatorship and genuine leadership by which underdeveloped countries' affairs are minded. Negritude deals with the role of Africans as natives and inhabitants of the land. Negroes are vibrant heads and collaborators.

Ruler class has spendthrifts and they have eccentricities. Historical sense and ancestral past have always been taken into consideration. Party should be made with conscience of inhabitants to make government bow down to it because global world of nation is in hands of these people. Party is decentralization of enlightenment of regions. It is representative of masses. Minority class oblivious to the facts and this class is supposed to be acquainted with the laws of economics. The process of decolonization reaches the freedom and national consciousness in form of conscience.

“Let us decide not to imitate Europe, let us combine our muscles and our brains in a new direction. Let us try to create the whole man, whom Europe has been incapable of bringing to triumphant birth..So, comrades let us not pay tribute to Europe by creating states, institutions and societies which draw their inspiration from her. Humanity is waiting for something from us other than such an imitation, which would be almost an obscene caricature. If we want to turn Africa into a new Europe, then let us leave the destiny of our countries to Europeans. They will know how to do it better than the most gifted among us. But if we want to bring it up to a different level than that which Europe has shown it, then we must invent and we must make discoveries.”

10.

Fanon in his forth essay, “On National Culture” shows obstacles in claiming national history. Culture is a process of freedom to liberate an individual, an African to bring home the outcome of decolonization. It depicts the rediscovery of dignity, ancestral past and its values and its generations. Indigenous cultural values ought to be brought back. The essay conveys transformations in identity. Decolonization process eventually ends at enlightenment of masses. Fanon further says, “ he turns himself into an awakener of the people”, hence comes a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature and a national culture.”

Third phase enables intellectuals, “himself body and soul into the national struggle.”

It is a strident call for the rejection of the European model that has brought the world to “atomic and spiritual disintegration”. There is no need of European westernization. Fanon

appeals to Third World to solve troubles considering human relationships. 'It is a question of the Third World starting a new history of Man'. At the end Fanon appeals to "try to set afoot a new man." Decolonization's duty is to promote to remake new era of humanity. There will be emergence of Black intellectuals, developed nation, privileged inhabitants and considerate human beings endowed with humanity.

**What Reiland Rabaks says becomes notable:**

"The various reasons Fanon critically engaged blackness in the white imagination in such anguished depth and intimate detail in *Black Skin White Masks*. If Blacks were made aware of white supremacist constructions of blackness they could begin to consciously decolonize and deconstruct these false, anti-black racist constructions of blackness and reconstruct a new revolutionary blackness- that is a blackness that transgresses and transcends anti-black racism and white supremacy and, also, a blackness that promotes revolutionary humanism and solidarity with other racially colonized and struggling people, as well as authentic white antiracist allies. Transgressing and transcending anti-black racism and white supremacy revolve around revolutionary humanism because at the heart of real humanism is an emphasis on love."<sup>11</sup>. (Rabaka, *Forms of Fanonism: Frantz Fanon's critical theory and the Dialectics of Decolonization.*)

These are two different paradoxical ways. When there is a force to choose between native tradition and culture of colonizer, elite prefers culture of colonizer. In *The Wretched of the Earth* Fanon pours his critique of decolonization. Natives are attracted to colonizers the same way Blacks are bent on having whiteness in Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks*. Fanon's exploration of existential challenges faced by black human beings in social world is main concern of that book. The Black people must wear White mask to survive in the white world. Fanon is an extraordinary writer who gives a philosophical touch with sociological study of psychology of racism and celebration of the self. He gives a long series of psycho-analysis. Fanon experiences how racism builds man and women in French, Caribbean, France and Africa. It deals with language of Negro and how it is considered inferior. It speaks of sensibilities of the woman of color and man of color with each other and experiences which have been felt during the time and how recognition is gained. The way Fanon applies psychoanalytic theory to understand dependency and inadequacy of Blacks is unique. It asks question, "Mankind, do I believe in you?" The roles of self, desire and ego ideal through idea of normality and abnormality again makes book worth.

The book aims at ideal ego and it is color. Self esteem and sublimation are prioritized through the attitudes of Negro in European dominated world. Negro suffers from self-approach avoidance in which the process of loving the self and hating the self work together. Psychological study of racism indicates the need to decolonize mind.

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