

POSTCOLONIAL DISCOURSE: THE CASE OF BEN OKRI'S *FAMISHED ROAD*

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Post-day post-night
Post-history post-reason
Post human post-humanity
Show me the post of your post-coloniality
Niyi Osundare

WHAT IS POSTCOLONIAL DISCOURSE?

Until recently, Eurocentricism has turned its attention to the gathering storm surging in the identify politics, gender debates and cultural reassertions. The ensuing polemics trace identify and cultural discourse to the emergence of radical discourse, in the third word, with the decline of colonial powers in the middle decades of the twentieth century. The new discourses, in their various colourations, according to liberal scholars, seek to challenge the very basis of western dominance through especially its totalising and absolutist epistemologies and schemata. However, this paper seeks to revisit both the literary and philosophical concerns of the new discourses. The idea is to constitute a theoretical framework upon which Ben Okri's novel, *The Famished Road* is glimpsed. This is of course informed by some critics' bid to lump Okri within postcolonial discourse.¹ What then is postcolonial discourse?

Stephen Howe,² in an article titled: "Postcolonialism: Empire writes Back", asserts that "issues of race, ethnicity and gender have become the central preoccupations of debate, to a considerable degree displacing preoccupation with class and economics"². Whether this assertion is true or not is subject to serious ideological polemics. To substantiate his claims however, Howe explores the ideas of some thinkers such as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean - Francois Lyotard, Frantz Fanon and Edward Said. These scholars are widely considered by Howe as the proponents of radical ideas rooted in poststructuralist, post-marxist and postmodernist theories. Similarly, Howe also believes that identify and gender questions have contributed significantly to the contemporary upsurge in feminist and multicultural discourses. These ideas and discourses, according to him, constitute the bedrock of post-colonial reality. Therefore, to understand the concept of postcolonialism, it is necessary to look into the ideas of Derrida Lyotard, Foucault, and Said.

Jean Francois Lyotard, for instance, is especially noted for his critique of modern progress in his book: *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. According to an analyst of Lyotard's work, Pervez Manzoor, the problems posed by scientific culture in the twentieth century such as environmental and nuclear threat are brought about by what Lyotard calls "the crisis of knowledge and legitimation".⁴ Furthermore, Manzoor locates the significance of Lyotard's work specifically within the purview of scientific culture. He stressed Lyotard's emphasis on the fact that the crises he identifies in the scientific culture is responsible for the so-called "transition of high modernism to postmodernism".⁵ Lyotard employs two distinctive categories in his analysis of twentieth century crises. He divides the world cultures into narrative and scientific cultures. The former describes non-western cultures, values and knowledge prevalent especially before the advent of technological civilization. Narrative knowledge is distinguished from scientific knowledge on the basis of some features characterizing each category. Here also, Manzoor captures vividly the Lyotard's description of the narrative:

The narrative allows a society not only to define its criteria of competence but also to evaluate according to those criteria what is performed or can be performed within it. The knowledge transmitted by narration is not limited to enunciations: it determines in a single stroke what one must say in order to be heard, what one must listen in order to speak, and what role one must play to be the object of a narrative.⁶

However, science in its cognitive processes questions the validity of the narrative knowledge. Scientific procedures reject narrative knowledge on the basis of the fact that it is never subject to explanation, analysis, argument or proof. Similarly, Michel Foucault employs the term discourse to show how knowledge is manipulated by power. His studies centred on the problems of discourse as both the cognitive and articulative method within the matrix of the dominant western world view. Foucault defines discourse as "a densely woven network of ways of thinking and writing that imposes strict limits on what can be thought and said".⁷ In the process, he questions the rules and limits entrapping discourses. In what he refers to as "discourse of discourses", he sets out to examine the discourses of other disciplines like medicine, legal, religious, sex and politics. However, Alan Sheridan, the author of *Michel Foucault: The Will To Truth* quotes Foucault's words on the problems

of discourse, thus:

in any society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a number of procedures whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers, to master the unpredictable event...⁸

In other words, as is stated above, Foucault is basically examining the relationship between knowledge and power. It is in this relationship that Foucault questions the neutrality of discourse itself. Vincent Leitch, in *Deconstructive Criticism: An Advanced Introduction*, has clarified that Foucault's invalidation of the "truth" and "knowledge" discourses characteristically claim to portend:

The thinking subject collects the truth or facts that pre-exist in the world and packages them or uncovers them in discourse. Discourse itself, its materiality and free play, is nullified. When applied to discourse, the various rules and practices of exclusion, in fact, designated systematically who may speak, what may be spoken, and how it is to be said; in addition, they prescribe what is true and what is false, what is reasonable and what foolish, what is meant and what not.⁹

This is of course the process through which the dominant forms of discourse with their scientific truth claims marginalize other discourses in history, politics and society occasioned by what Lyotard considers as narrative cultures. This indeed brings to mind the question of politics of representation as theorized by Edward Said in two of his works, *Orientalism* and *Cultural Imperialism*. Although Said hates to be associated with poststructuralism, there is however no better context to locate him other than that. Said's works concentrate on how dominant western discourses, literary, philosophical and social, marginalize and inferiorize other cultures. This he achieves in doing through his adoption of some aspect of deconstructive analysis.

. Poststructuralism is widely considered to be an important pillar upon which postcolonialism rests itself. Poststructuralist movement embraces several critical vocations such as psychoanalysis, phenomenology, deconstruction and reader-response criticisms. While structuralism seeks to establish definite meaning (truth, if you like) of a text on the basis of Saussurean linguistic model of structuralist analysis, post-structuralism rejects the notion of definite

meaning in a text or the scientific leanings of structuralism. Fekete¹⁰ examines the implications of poststructuralist thought to various disciplines:

The poststructuralist position suggests a number of things in psychoanalytic terms, the revenge of desire against its satisfaction; in political terms, the vengeful anarchism and nihilism off impatience and desperation; in sociological terms, the revenge of the marginalized "other against the individual and associated selves and their capacity for quasi-autonomous, quasi-efficacious self-articulation; and psychological terms, the feeling/resentment of the defeated who have no values to affirm.¹¹

However, the most central school in the poststructuralist movement is deconstruction. Jacques Derrida is the main proponent of deconstruction theory. The thrust of his works on deconstruction is to reverse the conceptual priorities and the binary opposition in structuralist semiotics and western philosophical thought, such as is prevalent in the distinction between speech and writing, criticism and literature, rhetoric and truth, or even philosophy and literature. Derrida is not much concerned with the truth claims of philosophies but their rhetorical contents. The emergence of deconstructive philosophies according to Christopher Norris, has reconciled the binary opposition in western philosophy:

deconstruction is not simply a strategic reversal of categories which otherwise remain distinct and unaffected. It seeks to undo both a given order of priorities and the very system of conceptual opposition that makes that order possible.¹²

Similarly, Norris has observed, in the afterword of his book *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* that deconstructive thoughts have influenced profoundly the western cultural scene. Thus: deconstruction has reached doubt beyond the specialized enclave of a few elite academic institutions and become something of a buzzword among commentators on the postmodern cultural scene.¹³

Indeed, postmodernism is another arena of the postcolonial discourse. The postmodern world with its emphasis on pragmatic outlook to life is a fertile ground for serious social conflicts as is observable in the rise and development of feminism and multiculturalism. In literary polemics, postmodernism has indeed thwarted any prospect of modernism in its bid to salvage the sinking

ship of the traditional values of the west. In fact, one of the most distinguishing features of postmodernism observed by Jonathan Haynes is its tendency to ignore the differences between "high culture" and "low culture". Haynes exemplifies this thus: "culture is a vast heap of detritus on which the artist draws in the modes of quotation, pastiche, parody, collage. The Mona Lisa and Michael Jackson have equal value".¹⁴ This is what postmodernism is all about. In a way, it is about the erosion of the absolutism associated with western ideas and values. The increasing challenge to western absolutes ideas and values by the marginalized identities is solely responsible for the enhancement of multiculturalism. Similarly, within the spheres of postmodern world is also the feminist challenge. Feminism delights in challenging the male orientation of western society. In its basic thrust, feminism seeks to define the correct social role for women within the complex stratifications of western society.

Postcolonialism is thus viewed as a storehouse for radical discourses and practices that challenge enlightenment discourses upon which contemporary western civilization rests. The challenging discourses are of course poststructuralism, postmodernism, multiculturalism and feminism. The enlightenment discourses that have been challenged are considered as nothing more than "imperialist constructs", in other words, what the feminist tagged the discourses of the "dead white males". These are particularly those epistémologies that seek to enthrone the sovereignty of western man, values, worldview, "rational" and scientific culture. In this light, Gyan Praksh, an Indian historian residing in U.S. asserts that "those modernization schemes and ideologies that post-enlightenment Europe projected as the reason d'être of history"¹⁵ are CK supplanted by "anti-rationalist discourse"¹⁶ Historiography" as constituted by western historians is supplanted by the "creation of KD]d, did",¹⁷ by the new radical discourses. As a result of this counter-theorizations, Howe asserts that:

liberation comes through fabricating politically useful legends about the past, disregarding such colonialist impositions as historical truthfulness. Politically useful, that is, to the interests of whatever group one is championing at the time¹⁸.

Re interpretation of world history from the perspective of is a case in point, and even the feminist theories and practices.

POSTCOLONIAL DISCOURSE AND AFRICA:

At this juncture, it is pertinent to highlight the reception given to postcolonial discourse in Africa. In an ALA Bulletin, for instance, Firinne Ni Chreachain has summarized responses to the concept of postcolonialism by some of African literary figures such as Ama Ata Aidoo, Festus Iyayi, Aminata Sow Fall, Cyprian Ekwensi and Chinjerai Hove, in a conference in London. Of all the responses, Ama Ata Aidoo makes the most scathing repudiation of the use of the use of the concept - postcolonialism. Ni Chreachain states that:

Ghanian writer Ama Ata Aidoo attacked the use of the term "postcolonial" by western literary critics.. that colonialism could not be considered as a thing of the past as long as multi-nationals continue to plunder African resources. `Ask any African village woman how post-colonial her life is she said. "Colonialism has not been posted" at all.¹⁹

That is to say, Africa is still grappling with the forces of colonialism and imperialism. Thus, any attempt to brush the problem aside by especially Eurocentric theorizations is deceptive. Indeed, the Eurocentric point of view of postcolonialism is nothing but a play to tantalize the marginalized peoples to continue to wallow in hegemonic paradigms. The manifestation of this issue is inherent in Awan Ankpa's interpretation of postcolonialism. In his views it is observable how he tiptoes on the borderline between the Eurocentric affirmation and Afrocentric negation of the term, postcolonialism. He defines the concept as:

those contexts of anticolonial and neocolonial struggles. It is not a suggestion of a phase of total independence. Rather it represents those fields of significations in which people who had been colonized by Europe struggle to redefine themselves and their environment in the face of Eurocentrism's epistomological violence.²⁰

This sounds very much like Griffith's and Tiffin's definition of the term: "to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day",²¹ in their book, *The Empire Writes Back*. However it is Niyi Osundare who has made a scientific and critical examination of the concept. He analyses the etymology and development of the term-postcolonial in his monologue series on issues in African literature. He concludes

that postcolonialism as a concept is another form of "imperialism of theory". In addition, Osundare has also examined poststructuralist theories, such as deconstruction, reader-response theory and New historicism, and concludes that they are problematic as critical tools for the analysis of African literature. He concludes that the "project which sounds postcolonialist in intent my turn out to be neocolonialist, even 're-colonialist' in practice".²²

POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

Pico Iyer²³ has, in the characteristic manner of universalizing abstractions of a liberal mind, defined the character of postcolonial writers and writings. According to him, postcolonial writers are the product of postwar "international culture", whose "audience (are) as mixed up and eclectic and uprooted as themselves". In origin of course they are not of "Anglo-saxon ancestry, born more or less after the war, in other countries, especially former colonies, but now living in western metropolises. The common medium of communicating their literature is English. Though it is their second language, the use of English in their works is impeccable. He further view them as dislocated writers who explore the transcultural themes and tradition resulting from their bicultural consciousness. In short they are children of two worlds. The name of literary figures that come up in his analysis are those of Vikram Seth (Indian), Micheal Ondaatje (Sti Lan Kan), Ben Okri (Nigerian), Salman Rushdie (Indian) and Kazuo Ishiguro (Japanese).

Iyer claims that the literary figures are usually brought to limelight by London's Booker's award. According to him, their situation is universal enough to cross all cultural boundaries". Hence, the categorization of their literary works as postcolonial or "world fiction". In Iyer's classification, this type of postcolonial writing is patterned on the style of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children*, a narrative about the myth of modern India. Similarly, he identifies magic realism as an important character of postcolonial fiction.

These postcolonial writers, according to Iyer, graft into English language, even though they use an impeccable diction, exotic flavours of their first languages. As a result, English language is seen to have been undergoing transformation with the development of this new world of fiction:

English language is being revolutionized from within. Abiku stalks us on the page and triad gangs and "filmi" stars. Hot spices are entering

English, and tropical birds and sorcerers; readers who are increasingly familiar with Sushi and Samosas are not learning to live with malue buses and Manuka hedges.²⁴

He has not failed to highlight the thematic preoccupations of those he views as postcolonial writers. Indeed, the type of cultural mix-mash that characterize Iyer's postcolonial personalities flourish mostly in the emerging multicultural centres of the cosmopolitan west, Toronto, London, New York place where the absolutist and totalising values and ideas are increasingly being decentred. Thus, central to the thematic expressions of postcolonial writing is, according to Iyer, the concern with the question of identify and what he calls "the plight of those who are torn between motherlands and mother tongues".²⁵ It is in this light Iyer understands Achebe's view on the new writers of "world fiction". Achebe, according to Iyer, asserts that: "we were sometimes apologetic about telling our own stories. But these writers are not. They are shouting them out, if necessary".²⁶

THE FAMISHED ROAD BY BEN OKRI

This novel is Okri's attempt to experiment with one of the binary discourses on philosophy of history: is history cyclic or linear in its continuum through time? Going by the experiences in *The Famished Road*, Okri of course opts for the former. Thus, he aptly weaves Abiku phenomenon, with its recurrent ethos, into the circular notion of history. The novel is set in a growing urban centre in Nigeria which is undergoing structural transformation. Okri pagnifies the life of awnakeshift and poor family caught between the urge to live a better life and the difficulties of a system built on injustice and exploitation of man by man.

At the centre of the narrative is Azaro, an Abiku child, An Abiku child is otherwise known as a spirit child who keeps on dying and coming back to his mother, Azaro is caught in the antagonism between the spirit world, his original abode, and the world of the living. It all happens, when he decides to renege the agreement he brokers with this spirit companion to return to the spirit world at first opportunity" (p.4). However, Azaro has already highlighted the consequences awaiting any spirit child who attempts to dishonour the pact that he brokers with his fellows: "These who broke their pacts were assailed by hallucination and haunted by their companion". (P.4). Azaro's bid to renege the Abiku pact is meant to appease his agrieved mother who suffers from the agony of an unending circle of birth and death of her children. Azaro asserts that:

In not wanting to stay, we caused much pain to mothers. Their pain grew heavier with each return. Their anguish became for us an added spiritual weight which quickens the cycle of rebirth. Each new birth was agony for us too, each shock of the raw world. Our cyclical rebellion made us resented by other spirits and ancestors. Disliked in the spirit world and branded amongst the living, our unwillingness to stay affected all kinds of balances. (P.5)

Azaro's tribulations in the world of the living follow his decision to stay around in the world of the living because he is "tried of coming and going" and "to forever remain in-between", in limbo, "in the interspace between the spirit world and the living". (P.5) This is coupled with Azaro's desire to experience life, its trials and tribulations, and to make happy, as he said, the woman who is to give birth to him. Inevitably, Azaro realizes that he is not going to have a smooth sail in the world of the living due to his spirit companions' resolve to visit on him their evil machinations. The dimension taken by magic animation in the novel hinges squarely on the intrigues of Azaro's spirit peers. The supramaterial adventures of the precocious Azaro are all symbolic of his struggle with the "unearthly beings" unleashed by his ever-scheming companions.

The other thematic expression in the novel which is more or less historical in substance expresses Okri's malcontent with corrupt neo-colonialist politics. He indicts the political class who he sees as responsible for the sufferings and hardships of the downtrodden. The dehumanization of the downtrodden is clearly typified by the difficult existence of Azaro's parents, Mum and Dad. Politicians are everywhere painted black. Their concern is only to win the mandate of the people at all costs. This is what explains the use of contaminated milk to galvanize the peoples' support. Similarly, the nefarious activities of party thugs are critically represented in the novel (p.152-155).

The blemish on the political class for most of the woes in the society brings to mind the question of social change in *The Famished Road*. In fact, any attempt to decipher the message of the novel would reveal the obvious uncertainties in Okri's mind over the best possible road Africa should tread upon to attain progress and development. Olu Oguibe has indeed ascribed this to Okri's uncertain state of mind. He aptly describes Okri as "a man in search, still seeking, trying to unravel the hidden mysteries of pathways".²⁷ Okri himself has revealed to "Focus On Africa" magazine that:

Becoming certain is the most dangerous thing than can happen to a human being... certainty leads to stupidity, blindness, absence of doubt, and of dialogue. If you are certain it means you are not listening and you are not seeing... I want to be awake and alive and always ready to learn.²⁸

However, this is not to say that Okri does not address the question of school change, an issue that is very central to any form of discourse on Africa. Apparently, Dad's efforts to organize and conscientize the beggars are revolutionary. His philosophic slogans are also expressive of the need for social change in the society. In fact, he sermonizes to the beggars in emphatic terms to "lift themselves up by their thoughts... THINK DIFFERENTLY AND YOU WILL CHANGE THE WORLD... REMEMBER HOW FREE YOU ARE...AND YOU WILL TRANSFORM YOUR HUNGER INTO POWER!" (P.420)

In *The Famished Road*, the road motif assumes both denotative and connotative senses. Traditionally, the path symbolizes as communal mode of transportation. The beasts of burden are the predominant means of transporting goods and services in the predominantly subsistence mode of production. With the emergence of colonialism, the path turns into a road with all its concomitant functions in a colonial society. In fact, at an instance, Azaro, in his usual itinerancy of a spirit child, tells us that:

I emerged into another reality, a strange world, a path which had completed its transition into a road. The surface of the road was uneven with bumps. The tarmac melted under the sun and my soles turned black. The smell of melting tarmac was heady and I saw the mirage of trailer, quivering in its frightening speed, coursing down the road towards me. The mirage shot right through the road construction machines that stood at the intersection. (P.241)

Coupled with this is an array of workers and white engineers supervising road construction works. In short, the road is the harbinger of colonial mode of existence in Africa. The symbolic significance of the road plays yet another role. The road plays a spiritual role in the lives of the people. It is ingrained in the traditions of the people that the road is a form of mediator in

their bid to communicate with their gods. The road here serves as an important place where sacrifices to the gods are deposited; an abode where "witches and wizards, native doctors, sorcerers... wash off bad things from their customers and pour... diseases and bad destinies" (P.119).

Azaro, in his intermittent relapses to the spirit world realizes that roads are 'says and philosophies' (P.457) chosen by people. In other words, roads are a repository of human destiny. This of course brings us to the most crucial symbolism of the road in the novel. According to the three-headed spirit drafted by Azaro's spirit brothers to convince him to rejoin them in their spiritual abode, the road is a great sharper of human destiny. He describes the road to Azaro's spirit world as leading to different destinies: "It leads to the world of human beings and to the world of spirits. It leads to heaven and hell. It leads to worlds that we don't even know about". (P.326) Moreover, Okri has vividly represented the implications of the road trodden by Africa. The road trodden by Africa leads to "a world of wraiths. A world of feminine, famishment and draught" (P.335) This he vindicates through a vivid projection of the life of the down-trodden in the ghetto of a fast growing city.

Symbolically, the road motif signifies the implications of human choices of values, ideas and beliefs. In fact, Okri proves, creatively and imaginatively, that realities of human existence are always determined by individual choices of ideals in the society. These ideals, in turn, determine the direction society takes towards realizing its objectives in the historical processes. That is to say, all ends must necessarily have to be determined by individuals choices of means. These choices and experiences, according to Okri, are historically recurrent. *The Famished Road* is conceived along these notions.

The resort to myth to explain realities of life is a form of protest in itself. Okri's narrative begins with the myth of creation: "IN THE BEGINNING there was a river. The river became a road and the road branched out to the whole world". (P.3) This sounds very much like the christian mythology of creation: "In the beginning there was the word, and the word was GOD". The significance of this analogy is to show the incipient protest in the former myth of creation. In fact, in the novel, realities of existence are viewed from the perspective of mysteries and riddles. Human existence is mystified in such a way as to defy logical analysis. Azaro views his world as "full of riddles that only the dead can answer". (P.75) Dad also reveals to Azaro that: "There are mysterious forces anywhere. We are living in a world of riddles". (P.388) And human beings are a

great mystery (P.499). This is also how the transformation of Madame Koto into a big business woman, as a result of her collaboration with the politicians, is viewed (P.495). In short, at the threshold of the narrative one is confronted with an inundation of myths of the realities Okri is representing in his novel.

The use of contrast in the novel is quite overwhelming. The eternal world of origins where "spirits mingled with the unborn" (P.3) is projected as harmonious. Freedom, justice and affluence constitute the bedrock of the spirit world. This is confirmed in the testimony of Azaro's spirit peers. According to them, their world is made up of "fauns, the fairies and the beautiful beings. Tender sibyls, benign sprites, and serene presences of our ancestors were always with us, bathing us in the radiance of their diverse rainbows" (P.4). Azaro, the narrator and protagonist, contrasts the order of his spirit world with the disorder of the world of the living. He admits that:

There was not one amongst us who looked forward to being born. We disliked the rigours of existence, the unfulfilled longings, the enshrined injustices of the world, the labyrinths of love, the ignorance of parents, the fact of dying, and the amazing indifference of the living in the midst of the simple beauties of the universe. We feared the heartlessness of human beings, all of whom are born blind, few of whom ever learn to see (P.3).

The realities of existence espoused here sharply contrast the experiences of Azaro in the world of the living.

Okri also weaves magic realism into the historical character of the history he is projecting. Magic realism is a twentieth century latin American literary style characterizing especially the works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez.²⁹ Magic realism is a surreal phenomenon that attempts to view reality beyond the mechanistic, cause and effect affair deeply ingrained in the western philosophic tradition. In fact, Olu Oguibe views this style in *The Famished Road* as Okri's "attempt to capture an emergence reality bludgeoned and disfigured by a violent history".³⁰ However, Harry Garuba stresses the fact that Okri's novel is an exploration beyond what he refers to as "animist realism". According to Garuba:

Despite the background of myth and magic *The Famished Road* is not a fable set in a never never world of fantastic trivia, but a grim socio-economic tale of poverty and politics of a neo-colonial state.³¹

This grim socio-economic reality is best typified by the

struggles and hardships of Azaro's parents, Dad and Mum. But Azaro's dual ordeal in both the world of the living and that of the spirits makes it imperative for Okri to venture into "other dimensions of reality and being".³² The conflict between Azaro and his spirit peers, with all its magical intrigues, is what has uniquely nourished Okri's novel. Indeed, Garuba concurs with Olu Oguibe by thinking that Okri has "successfully captured a world only glimpsed but never before recollected in its wholeness and wretched glory in any of his previous work, or any previous work... hidden and revealed".³² Amidst all these concerns in *The Famished Road*, how post-colonial is Ben Okri?

CONCLUSION

There is indeed nothing postcolonial about the picture of grim realities of existence Okri has represented. His magnification of the microcosmic unit of an ordinary family struggling against the overwhelming forces of monopoly capital is typically in place with the normal preoccupations of literary practices in Africa. Indeed, African creative writers are unanimous in totalising the African experiences from the point of view of the ordinary people in the society. Here also, Okri's novel is one with writers like Achebe, Awoonor, Ngugu, and the whole battery of them in Africa. Even the highly impressive metaphysics in the novel has an antecedent in the works of Armah, Cheikh Hamidou Kane and Soyinka.

Pico Iyer's classification of a postcolonial writer and even its protean definition in *The Empire Writes Back* does not sufficiently qualify any contemporary literature in Africa as postcolonial. In fact, the country of residence of a writer does not matter much to the type of experiences he is representing in his works. The historical experiences Okri is bothered with are typically Nigerian and African. This can be understood even from Okri's preceding novels, *Flowers and Shadows* and *The Landscape Within*. Moreover, it is the earnest view of this paper that creative writers in Africa should endeavour to transcend Okri's type of uncertainty in their bid, through the might and power of pen, to steer the continent away from the edge of the precipice occasioned by the designs of global capitalism through its neo-colonial agency. This is to be achieved through a coherent articulation of a revolutionary discourse in the form and content of literary practices in Africa. We are referring to a new revolutionary

discourse that will go along way in demonstrating a thorough understanding of not only the social and economic problems, as it is often the case, but also the psychic and spiritual injuries inflicted upon Africa by the forces of imperialism via neo-colonialism. This is with the hope that, inevitably, Africa will graduate from the present condition of exploitation and oppression into a truly postcolonial entity, defined and determined by Africans.

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