

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Conflict among the Colonizers: A Study on Colonial Resistance in Le Clezio's

Onitsha

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

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Abstract

Onitsha highlights resistant campaign carried out by some colonizers against the colonial rule in African country, Nigeria. Maou, Fintan and Geoffrey are the colonial agents who stand against the colonial rule in Nigeria. Some colonial agents could not tolerate the series of colonial torture and exploitation by colonizers upon the colonized people. They find the beautiful Nigeria ravaged by the colonial rule. Then, Maou, one of the colonial agents, adamantly stands on the side of local Nigerian people protesting the colonial cruelty. She befriends the local people instead of wives of other colonial agents posted in Nigeria. She strongly advocates the rights of colonized people and gives voice to the voiceless African people. And she fearlessly faces the challenges appeared before her after she acts against the colonialism and in support of the local people. Some colonial agents like Maou, Fintan and Geoffrey adopt the local culture renouncing their colonial culture. They learn pidgin language and practice. Thus, they resist the colonialism in Nigeria both politically and culturally. Tension heightens between and among the colonizers. As a result, the colonizers not only face the tough hindrances from the local people but also from the colonizers themselves.

Content

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I. Colonialism and its Resistance in Clezio's *Onitsha*

This project focuses on J M G Le Clezio's novel *Onitsha*, a novel revolved around the relationship between European and African people in the colonized African country, Nigeria. The African people face the brutalities, torture, suppression and oppression by the colonial rulers. But this novel tries to evoke the human side emerged within some colonial agents in the colonized country whereby sprouting a wave of resistance from within the colonial agents themselves. The novel *Onitsha* opens in 1948 as a young boy named Fintan and his mother travel by ship to Nigeria to meet the father who left when Fintan was an infant to work in the United Africa Company. In the coastal town of Onitsha, the family not only struggles to understand each other after their long separation, but also struggles to stand against colonial rule in Nigeria. Both Maou and Fintan witness the brutal treatment and inhuman exploitation of Nigerian people by the colonizers as soon as they reach the Nigerian city of Onitsha. Instantly, Fintan finds himself drawn into the exotic culture of his new home. Tensions begin to raise as Fintan and his mother question the racial and economic injustices of Onitsha, a taboo topic among the ruling white upper class. Finally, Geoffrey Allen, Fintan's father, who had been serving for United African Company for long, also starts to resist the presence of colonial rule in Nigeria. So, this research explores the resistance of the colonial rule by the colonizers themselves in Nigeria.

The long history of human being shows that the strongers dominated the weaker. From sixth century BC, the Greeks had started to establish colonies in the Asia Minors. Through this colonial motif, they dominate the Asian people. When the industrialization process of the world began, European people move here and there in

search of the raw materials for the production and the market for the consumption. But their economic venture transformed into political one because they found that Asia and Africa were the better places for them to rule. So they started to laden their authorities to the African and Asian people. In course of the passage of time, Asian and African people felt that their freedom and democracy was snatched away. They felt that their rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness were seized forcefully. So, they started to revolt against the colonial rulers and the Europeans. Then the war between colonial ruler and local people started. They won the heart of those colonial agents who have close affiliation with the humanity of the people.

The same thing is happening here in the novel *Onitsha*. Onitsha tells the story of Fintan, a youth who travels to Africa in 1948 with his Italian mother to join the English father he has never met. Fintan is initially enchanted by the exotic world he discovers in Onitsha, a bustling city prominently situated on the eastern bank of the Niger River. But gradually he comes to recognize the intolerance and brutality of the colonial system. His youthful point of view provides the novel with a notably direct, horrified perspective on racism and colonialism. Throughout the book, Fintan's rejection of colonialism is symbolized by the attacks of his mother Maou, who increasingly speaks out against the way the colonizers treat the indigenous people. The attraction of Fintan and Maou is the symbolic resistance of colonialism through the colonial rulers themselves. Furthermore, the colonial agent Geoffrey is initially busy in undermining the cultural and natural heritage of colonized country. But later he also engages in the intensive study and research of African mystical culture. He conducts research in order to understand the reality of the African culture.

This novel starts from seemingly a simple motive of Maou and her son, Fintan's visit to Onitsha, a Nigerian city, to meet the father, Geoffrey. They cherish

beautiful dreams of their reunion and to see the beautiful place, Onitsha as they had previously heard the rumor of it. But contrary to their expectation, both mother and son find the miserable life of local native people in Nigeria caused by the brutality and exploitation of colonizers there. Then tensions begin to rise as Fintan and his mother question the racial and economic injustices of Onitsha, a taboo topic among the ruling white upper class. The rest of the novel is filled with the description of tensions of resistance started by colonial members themselves and some by the native people. Le Clezio gives picturesque details of description of natural and cultural beauty of Onitsha as well as the pathetic life of native people traumatized by the callous treatment of colonizers.

This research aims to underscore the sense of hatred of some colonizers against some other colonizers' inhuman treatment upon the colonized people in Nigeria whereby starts a conflict among colonizers. Colonial agents like Maou, Fintan and Geoffrey can not tolerate the inhuman treatment of colonial rule in Nigeria. They begin to give voice to the voiceless native people. Maou, one of the colonial agents, dauntlessly protests such callous behavior of colonizers. Fenton, Geoffrey and native people join her resistance campaign which is followed by the native people

Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio, writing under the pen name of J M G Le Clezio, was born on April 13, 1940, in Nice, but both parents had strong family connections with the former French colony, Mauritius (conquered by the British in 1810). At the age of eight, Le Clézio and his family moved to Nigeria, where the father had been stationed as a doctor during the Second World War. During the month-long voyage to Nigeria, he began his literary career with two books, *Un long voyage* and *Oradi noir*. So some critics define this novel to be an autobiographical

novel of Le Clezio. Friedrich Knabe takes this novel as a collection of Le Clezio's experiences in Africa as a son of colonial agents. He further says:

Memoirs or fictional accounts of childhood experiences in Africa have become popular in recent years, in particular by Africans having escaped the horrors of war. They express a need to reconnect with their roots and its lasting influence on their lives. JMG Le Clézio's fictional treatment of his own formative time in Nigeria as a child has resulted in this powerful and alluring novel. (1)

Since the publication of his first novel, *Le procès verbal (The Interrogation)*, 1963, in which the protagonist Adam Pollo finds refuge from the aggressions of modern life in an asylum, J.M. G. Le Clézio has been exploring the wounds of the human condition, caused, in his eyes, by expulsion from the liquid paradise of the womb and the fall into time. His characters are caught in various ways between the desire to lose themselves in the simultaneously comforting yet potentially fatal embrace of the maternal and the challenge of being able to mourn their loss and to acknowledge the void of the past in order to accept the risks of an imperfect future. None of Le Clézio's texts inscribes this drama as intensely or as seductively as his recent diptych: *Onitsha* and *Étoile errante (Wandering Star)*.

In this study, the researcher is going to analyze the various manifestations of the fascination with the past assumed in this novel and address the question as to whether and how Le Clézio's characters have dismantled the general assumption of the colonialism though they are from the same side. And it also tries to reveal the humanity emerging in all people either they are colonized people or the colonial agents but some are compelled to hide their ethos due the process of formation of their acts.

Le Clezio's writing always moves back toward the richness and the responsibilities of the present, highlighting the necessity of undergoing a veritable apprenticeship enabling one to experience the present fully. His fiction, whose scenes and details usually stand at only a slight remove from the facts of his own life, is thereby warmly personal in tone and thoroughly credible in effect. "Le Clezio gives an admirably full portrait of day-to-day life in Africa, from animistic religions, to food, to street festivals. And his presentation of the last queen of Meroe and her search for a promised land gives an epic frame to the continental vision he presents." (Rose 123) Rose also cited the Boston Book Review in her criticism:

Once again J. M. G. Le Clezio, a novelist fascinated by the non-Western and an anthropologist respecting the Other, takes readers to a site that destroys Westerners; that is, the site either encourages their most egregious exploitative colonialism or puts them in the thrall of difference. The latter happens when the new non-Western environment casts a spell severing the Westerners from their own kind but keeping a barrier between them and the natives. [. . .] An expertly managed piece of professional fiction-writing, but a little hard to take seriously. (124)

In this way, Rose's criticism displays Clezio's closeness with the non-Western specialties. This also shows that Le Clezio highlights the African geo-cultural beauties.

Le Clezio has taken keen interest in non-Western worlds including Africa and India, its nature, culture, religion, and language. Even being a European, he stands on the side of orient, praising, valorizing, supporting and writing for it. *Onitsha* is an outcome of his own personal experiences in Africa where he spent several years of his life. Le Clezio, who denounces colonialism in any form and shape, is sympathetic to

colonized one. He is enchanted by the African culture, values and lifestyles. In *Onitsha*, he gives the picturesque description of Nigerian scenes, rivers, streets, forest, climate, weather, tradition, religion, myth and gentle people. On the other hand, he equally imparts the description of colonial brutalities, domination and all –round exploitations. His writing on the behalf of non-Westerners is noticeable as he himself belongs to colonizers by nationality and geography. Perhaps, it is the cause of his winning Nobel Prize in Literature in 2008. He lauds literature in his speech; “If there is one virtue which the writer’s pen must always have, it is that it must never be used to praise the powerful, even with the faintest of scribbling” (2). As a model post-colonial author, his work has closely followed this prescription. He is concerned with the human lives caught in the power struggle.

Onitsha, a renowned masterpiece of J. M. G. Le Clezio, the Nobel Laureate, has drawn the attention of the numerous scholars and critics since its production and premises in 1991. There are some critics who have proposed that the novel depicts the historical ground realities of the then Nigeria. Critic Frederick Knabe claims that this novel is “written in 1991 with the hindsight of historical events. Most of the narrative is set against the harsh realities of colonial Nigeria in 1948/49 where the revolt against the British had been increasing.” (1) He sees the novel from the historical perspectives giving the vivid description about the historical location of the novel in the setting of colonized Nigeria in 1948. He not only describes the contemporary political situation of the Nigeria but also intertwines it with the natural beauty of Nigeria of that time. Furthermore, he adds:

The authors’ own experience percolates through his narrative and imagery. His detailed descriptions evoking the beauty of landscape and the creatures inhabiting it, demonstrate an intimate knowledge of these

surroundings; the magnetism of the powerful and mystical river on the people who live along its banks; the impact of the change of seasons and the play of colors and sounds from the early mornings to the setting sun in the mist after the heavy rains. The intimate connectedness between daily life and the spiritual realm is particularly well and sensitively conveyed. (2)

Knabe appreciates this novel by highlighting the natural beauties presented here in the novel. He takes the sceneries of Onitsha, the heritage or the property of the Nigerian people. Supporting the idea of Knabe, Alfred A. Knowpf contends in "*Onitsha: Mingling Cultures, Conflicted Hearts*" that "reading his story is like watching time-lapse videos of different plants, each with its own inherent growth cycle, breaking through the soil, spreading into bloom, or collapsing back the earth." (3)

The critic Karen D. Levy studies *Onitsha* from Freudian perspective of psychoanalysis. She has applied the psychoanalysis theory to explore the relationship between Fintan and his mother Moau. In this regard, she has shown the relation of Oedipal Complex between Maou and Fintan.

For the first twelve years of his life, Fintan enjoyed the exclusivity of his mother's attention, unmarred by any paternal interference. Maria Luisa, whom Fintan at age ten chose to call Maou, the name he had used when first entering the symbolic, is at once the boy's care-giver, sister, and would-be lover, whose sleeping body he gazes on with the classic Freudian blend of castration anxiety and fascination. The threat to this erotically charged intimacy which the voyage to Onitsha and the meeting with his unknown father poses is experienced simultaneously

as separation, “the wrenching away, the hole left in memory” (*O* 16) and rebirth in the belly of the *Surabaya*. (128)

On the other hand, there are some critics who try to define this novel as an autobiographical novel in which Le Clezio expresses his childhood experiences. In this connection, critic Lady Margare Hall in her writing “*Envisioning Difference in Le Clezio’ Onitsha*” asserts, “Le Clezio’s *Onitsha* was published in 1991 and is to date the most important fictional piece the author has devoted to his childhood experience of colonial black Africa (British-ruled Nigeria of the late 1940).” (127)

Another critic Kristianne Huntsberger also presents this novel as an autobiographical novel. She lauds: “His semi-autobiographical novel *Onitsha* outlines the complicated balance of European guilt and paternalistic tribal envy expressed by the colonial family.” (12) He pinpoints the attraction of the colonial agents towards the native culture. In the novel, Allen family had great attraction towards the native Nigerian culture. Huntsberger further adds:

The young and resilient boy narrator, Fintan, describes his acclimation to life in Africa, seeded with the country’s own embodied resentment of white me. Fintan’s mother, an untamable Italian, is trapped between propriety and her spirited nature. She, like the land and the native people, she dominated by the colonial rulers. Fintan’s father is a hesitant member of the ruling British business class. More shadow than presence in his family’s lives, he spends lots of his energy pursuing as obsession with a mysterious queen and the save Niger River. (13)

The Allen family is bound together by their fascination of the wild and captivating native girl. Oya, who is as silent as the country they inhabit. Le Clezio’ characters

spend less time impacting the place than being impacted by it. In Finatan's startling re-aggregation to life back in Europe he is haunted by Africa.

Marilyn Daddis Rose highlights the colonialism and racism in her criticism. She says, "Le Clezio comes to recognize the intolerance and brutality of the colonial system. His youthful point of view provides the novel with notably direct. Horrified perspective on racism and colonialism." (123). Some critics try to see the deterioration of colonial rule from *Onitsha*. "Colonizers culture itself is destabilized in *Onitsha*." (Motte 693). Motte keenly analyses the shaky position of colonialism in Nigeria not only on its military and political ground, but also on the cultural and linguistic ground.

Though many critics have seen and evaluated this novel from different angles and with different lenses. This study is different from the aforementioned critics because it focuses on the resistance against colonizers by the colonizers themselves. Some members of colonizers address the situation from the humanitarian side. They support the colonized and oppose the colonizers. They want to liberate the Nigerian people from the callous grip of colonialism which is explicitly against the colonial mission in Nigeria. In the beginning, colonizers are confident and vigorous about what they are doing in Nigeria. They dominate the colonized people in the name of civilizing them. But as some their own colonial ally and the local people dare to challenge the extreme point of the brutality, the colonizers begin to lose their confidence and vitality. While the local people are compelled to follow the unjustful acts given by colonial agents, some of the colonial agents sink deeper into despair, doubt, loneliness and homesickness. So, they want to the liberation of colonized people. Allen's family is in the sides of colonized people and revolts against the colonial rulers though they themselves are the colonial agents.

In general, resistance is opposite to ideas, plans upon existing rules and systems. Resistance, we would argue, should be defined as those behavior and cultural practices by subordinate groups that contest hegemonic social formation, that threaten to unravel the strategy of domination, 'consciousness' need not be essential to its 'constitution'.

Early African reaction to European intrusion into Africa in the late 19th century was not uniform. A few groups that had suffered from long-term warfare or slave raiding (such as in parts of East Africa) gave an uncertain welcome to European presence in their regions in hope that there would be peace. Other groups strongly resisted the coming of European political control. However, many people had no initial reaction to colonialism. This was because the early years of colonialism had little impact on the lives of many rural African people. This situation changed as the impact of colonialism became more widespread and intense in the middle decades of the twentieth century.

The colonizers gave excess punishment, suffocation to the native people which brought turmoil, disturbance, psychological pain and many other internal and external hurt in the people. Aime Cesaire claimed in his *Discourse on colonialism* that between colonizers and colonized there is "no human contact, but the relation of domination and submission which turns the colonizing man into a classroom monitor, an army sergeant, a prison guard, a slave driver and the indigenous man into an instrument of production" (81). They lose identity in their own homeland and are compelled to live like a slave. The painful and traumatized situation turned into resistance because people had no any choice but to fight against them. So the movement of "anti-Colonialism" and resistance movement through the native people was started.

Colonialism has become one problematic category for the colonized people. Stephen Selmon states that colonialism raises its own problem, the problems that have been part of recent debates. As he noted "Colonialism is an obviously enormously problematic category. It is by definition transhistorical and unspecific and it is used in relation to very different kind of historical oppression and economic control" (31).

Foucault is one of the icons of resistance movement. He takes resistance is closely related to the power relation though in modern time this does not tend to generalize the resistance. He says:

Resistance does not exist outside of the system of power relation. It is, instead, inherently part of the relation. In the modern day, normalizing the power relation, this tends very much to isolate and individualize resistance into series of 'special cases' which do not allow generalization. (1145)

Resistance is an important consequence of power. Neither domination nor resistance is autonomous; these two are so much entangled that it becomes difficult to analyze one without discussing the other. To use resistance in its more traditional sense would mean not to consider the very processes, by which power is other tasted and evaded by the action of the subordinate, and by which it reconstructs itself in response. Prevailing approaches to resistance often also impede a fuller understanding of the ways in which struggles in everyday life can grow into large scale and consciously challenges to the political or social order.

A resistance movement can be of both sorts: military or violent and non-military, mild, implicit, symbolic or non-violent. A person or a group of individuals or many groups of similar ideology can exhibit the behavior or activities of resistance either by military means or by non-military means. It means they may or may not

pursue violence in their resistance. In addition, resistance movement can include any irregular armed force that rises up against an enforced or established authority, government or administration. It means such resistance movement can be both regular and irregular or occasional. This frequently includes the groups that consider themselves to be resisting tyranny. Some resistance movement is underground organization engaged in struggle for national liberation in a country under military occupation or totalitarian domination.

Only one person can resist against the authority. In this connection, Thoreau says that civil disobedience shows the needs of one's consciousness over the dictates of laws. It criticizes American social institution and policies mostly prominently slavery. He doubts the effectiveness of reform within the government and he argues that voting and petitioning for change achieves little. He presents his own experiences as a model for how to relate to an unjust government. In protest to slavery, Thoreau refused to pay taxes and spends a night in jail. He further adds that the violation is right through the eyes of colonial people.

Moreover, the resistance movement started by the colonized people reminds the humanity within the colonial agents. So, some of the colonial agents start revolt from their side. Some writers valorize local culture than the European culture in their writings. Rudyard Kipling and George Orwell are those writers who have written about the Indian people and their suffering caused by colonizers in the colonial period. The writers like Joseph Conrad and J. M. G. Le Clezio also write about the suffering of the African people at the period of colonialism. In this regard, Le Clezio valorizes African culture, language, geography, religion and myths.

The research paper tries to explore the resistance movement started by the colonial rulers themselves by adapting the African culture. They forget their motive of

colonial mission. It shows the resistance jointly conducted by some kind colonizers and local people against the colonial agents, who settle there and seize the political, social, and economic and individual freedom of the townspeople by force. This paper shows the resistance campaigns conducted by some colonial agents against their colleagues, that is, the colonial mission in Nigeria. Such resistance finally contributes to end the colonial rule in Nigeria.

Le Clezio excels in characterizing the place, through descriptions of the sights and sounds of the forest and the river and the love of the land and the people that grows in mother and son. The sections that represent Geoffrey's thoughts are printed in a different font to indicate a shift; at first they seem irrelevant to the contemporary world, though gradually people and events from the past seem to merge with those in the present. Readers hardly experience Geoffrey except through his research into the mists of history, though his sections communicate his intense emotional involvement with that past. Gradually, though, as Fintan comes to acknowledge and respect his father's understanding of the past, we see the small family of three standing implacably against the colonial establishment in what is a powerful because of understated indictment of colonialism.

This research has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents an introductory outlines of the novel's raising issues, its problems, and a brief history of J M G Le Clezio, along with the critique on *Onitsha* by different critics. Moreover, it gives a bird's eye view of the entire works. The second chapter analyses the novel *Onitsha* by highlighting the resistance movement seeded by colonizers themselves. So, this chapter tries to prove the hypothesis of the study. In *Onitsha*, Le Clezio tries to explore the humanity emerging in the mindset of some colonizers through the suppression, oppression conducted by themselves to the colonized people. Finally, the

third chapter sums up the main point of the present research and finding of the researcher.

II. Conflict among the Colonizers: A Study on Colonial Resistance in Le Clezio's *Onitsha*

After the colonizers arrival, they impose their own culture, politics and economic model onto natives with new form of production, and the new way of power exercise and with new pattern of exploitation. This consequently results into the loss of their native tradition. Neither they completely give up the tradition of their own nor could they adapt fully from the colonizers. Colonizers tried to exclude the native people from the authoritarian role. They adapt the theory of exclusion to the natives. The natives were economically deteriorated and human rights of the native people are violated by the colonial rulers. So people realized handicapped and felt crisis of identity and freedom. So, the local people started the resistance movement against the colonial rule from their country. When the resistance movement reaches in the climax, the colonial rulers are afraid from the resistance and then they flew away from there. Due to the result of local people's resistance, after the Second World War, many Asian and African countries were got independent from the colonial rule.

Some of the colonial agents are attracted by the geo-cultural beauty of the colonial country. So, they started to follow the native culture by challenging the Europeanism. Some people challenge it by writing about the oriental beauty such as Rudyard Kipling, Gorge Orwell and Joseph Conrad. J. M. G. Le Clezio can be ranked among them who also valorizes the African culture. In the novel, most of the colonial agents have close affiliation with the native culture. They forget their motive of Christianization. Forgetting the motive is taken as a challenge for the Europeanism. Instead of spreading the so- called European scientific culture, they are adapted to the

African mystic culture. It means those colonizers, who had been influenced by African culture, started to resist to the colonial rule.

On the other hand, some colonial agents were not satisfied with the merciless colonial way of treatment to the native colonized people by the colonizers. Such colonizers began to exhibit the activities to support the local people in one way or the other. Some of them began to speak or write or act on the behalf of colonized people candidly too. This often happened when some colonizers turned to be more human rather than inhuman. They were sympathetic to the native people. They did not like the presence of callous colonial rule in the colonized land. In this context, a kind of resistance commenced from the colonizers themselves.

Actually, Onitsha is a Nigerian city from where European rule over whole Nigeria. Onitsha is the land of Ibo tribes. Since 1901, when British army destroyed the shrine of God Orisis, which is the heart of religion and cultural belief of African people, Europeans have been ruling over these Ibo and Yoruba tribes. The culture, which moves around the gods, touches the heart of colonial agents like Geoffrey Allen. Geoffrey Allen is the real follower of these cultures and languages. Along with Geoffrey Allen, all of the white characters of this novel such as Maou, Fintan, Sabine Rhodes and Gerald Simpson bring pidgin for day-to-day use.

Onitsha tells the story of Fintan, a young European boy who travels from Bordeaux to the port of Marseilles to sail along the coast of Africa to the mouth of the Niger River to Onitsha in colonial Nigeria with his Italian mother Maou in the year 1948 to meet his English father Geoffrey Allen, who works for African United Company, whom he has never met. Maou and Fintan were very happy during the journey with the great dream and expectation to see Nigeria and the father, Geoffrey Allen. But as they reached Onitsha, Nigerian town where Geoffrey lives, they both

were shocked at everything they saw over there. Neither did Fintan feel the fatherly love nor did Maou feel husbandly love. Their previous eagerness crumbled down when they found rude, cold, rough and strange Geoffrey Allen. Maou's dream of spending beautiful time with her husband in the new land is worn out when she witnesses his cold nature and his ignorance of her. Moreover, she was troubled to see the miserable condition of African slaves. She finds them being chained and assigned for certain work without proper food and water even in scorching middle sun in the house of D.O. She says, "But you must give them something to eat and drink, look these poor fellows, they are hungry and thirsty!" (60) And Geoffrey Allen is also influenced by the river culture of Onitsha. He is a white man living with black consciousness.

On the other hand, Fintan has befriended with an African boy named Bony and worships falcon and termites. He begins to question the European culture by rejecting black shoes. He begins to run with bare foot like Bony onto the gray land. Fintan tries to co-exist with African culture by worshipping termites and falcon. Instead of learning English language, he starts to learn pidgin. He challenges Europeanism by rejecting the Black shoes. Fintan remains rock-ribbed in this stand from the beginning to end. He hates the colonizers in Nigeria. He never tries to in the company of colonizers, rather he chooses local native people as friends. He is able to make local friends quickly. He establishes a cordial relationship with not only the native children, but also with the native elders. It means he turns to be a loved one of the native people. He expresses pity and sympathy upon the suffering of the native people due to the maltreatment of colonizers. He bitterly hates colonial boss. He is ready to go against his father Geoffrey if his father is unable to give up his colonial position. On the other hand, Geoffrey Allen is engaged by the mystery of black

Egyptian queen or Queen of Meroe. He returns to Africa destabilizing European myth. He says that there is no paradise at all. Being a colonial agent, he himself subverts the concept of European colonial concept. It means he himself starts the resistance movement from himself. So Le Clezio's novel *Onitsha* is a novel in which the resistance movement is not only started by the colonized people but also is started by the colonial rulers themselves.

Le Clezio clarifies that colonizers are not what one thinks. The net motto of colonizers was to rule over non-western creating a superior image of colonizers and weaker image of the non-western world. They maintained and celebrated dichotomy between "Us" and "Them." They represented the whites as the civilized of the world and apostle of light, and blacks as degenerate, barbaric and in the need of European masters to civilize and uplift them out of their filth.

Le Clezio produces anti-thesis text instead of above- mentioned characteristics of the European. From the very beginning of her arrival at Onitsha, Maou is fascinated by the local Nigerian people, their culture, geography, rituals and language. She could make local friends quickly and instantly. Her intimacy with local women and children was so close that:

She had never cared for anyone as much as she cared for these people. They were so gentle , their eyes so luminous, their gestures so pure and elegant When she walked through the different neighborhoods to reach the wharf, children came up to her, not shy , and caressed her arms; women took her by the hand, spoke to her, in the gentle language which hummed like music. (118)

Thus, Maou stands more closer to local people than colonizers themselves. She would spend most of her time with local people instead of the wives and children of other

colonial agents. She had cherished bitter contempt towards the colonial women and their hypocritical and cruel mannerism.

Colonialism is the policy of acquiring and maintaining colonies, especially for exploitation. Colonial rulers exploit the native people in the pursuit of fulfilling their interests. In the novel, *Onitsha* J M G Le Clezio shows the unequal relationship between the Nigerian people and the British colonial rulers. The colonial force always wants to dominate the local people. But the locals always want to be free. But they are chained in the prison house of white colonizers. They are cast out by the political and administrative force. Maou does not like so and revolts against the colonial rule for the sake of colonized people.

Maou is dissatisfied with the colonial rule that has destroyed the native way of life, of production, of culture. Maou, who witnesses the worst condition of Black Nigerians imprisoned in the prison house of white colonialism, becomes astonished:

Maou was on the terrace and watched with astonishment – these chained men were crossing the garden, their shovels on their shoulder, with a regular noise each time the rings around their ankles pulled on the chain – left, left. Their black skin shone through their rags like metal. Some looked towards the terrace; their faces were eroded by fatigue and suffering. (59)

The above abstract describes the condition of native people and the sympathy of the white colonizers towards them. The colonial agents, who have human pathos, do not want to treat colonized people as a slave. Maou is a member of colonial agents. Being a colonial agent, she is not allowed to move towards the native people and their culture.

In *Onitsha*, Maou found the lack of humanity in the colonial civil servants in Nigeria. They do not provide any opportunity to the colonial people in administrative and political position. Local people are compelled to follow the order of colonial agents, their unalienable rights of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness is seized by colonial rulers. On the other hand, colonial agents spend their time by eating, drinking and making merry. They live very luxurious life whereas the condition of native people is so miserable that even colonizers' "dogs who eat nothing but beef filet and sleep under Mosquito net" (71). It means even the colonizers' dogs have better lives than the native people. This condition creates boredom to Maou and starts to resist against the colonialism. She does not remain silent when she saw the condition of colonial people.

Maou had found a society of boring and sententious civil servants, dressed in ridiculous outfit and head gears, the colonizers spent their time playing bridge, drinking, and spying to each other, and their wives, cramped by their respectable principles, counting their pennies and speaking harshly to their maids, waiting for the return ticket to England (120).

Soon the brutality and the greed of the colonizers have to come to light to Maou and rift between her and other British rulers starts widening. It creates the misunderstanding between Maou and British rulers.

Maou by another kind of intuition connects with the female psyche of native queen. She shows pity on native prisoners, who are "forced to work under scorching sun without any food and water by the district officer" (60). Maou demands food for prisoner and freedom of them from the colonial chain. A critic Warren Motte says, "Maou demands food for prisoner and freedom of African girl Oya from the Sabine

Rhodes due to Allen's family has outcaste from the colonizer's society" (693). As in Motte's criticism, Maou revolts against the activities of the colonial agents. Even she does not prefer the task for her husband.

Maou is so much attracted to Oya, an African girl who is supposed to be the goddess river. She becomes pregnant but nobody knows her husband. Oya is put into the house of Sabine Rhodes as a domestic servant. She is exploited physically, mentally and sexually from the both side of the colonialism. Maou demands the liberation of Oya. She respects Oya as river god.

Maou thoughts of Oya, of the child would be born here by the river.

She no longer felt her solitude. It seemed that she had finally emerged from the confinement of colonial houses and their fences, where the whites hid away in order not to hear the world [. . .] when Geoffrey returned, they were going to leave Onitsha. They would take Oya and her baby away from Mr. Rhodes, they would go away and say goodbye to no one. (154)

The above lines prove that Maou starts to struggle with the colonizers though she herself is a colonial agent. She wants the freedom of the colonial people. She respects a native girl Oya as goddess. She goes to native people to share her ideas and feelings.

In fact, Maria Luisa (Maou) is an Italian born lady living in Onitsha with her British husband. When she gives birth to a baby she gives her name African origin, i. e. Marima. She has been living there with Italian consciousness over there but at the same time, she develops non-western feeling. She questions Europeanism or colonialism by developing relationship with native people. At a time when other Europeans are distancing themselves from native people, Maou goes next to them. She learns pidgin. She first learns the word "nyam" (118). At first, trying out pidgin

Maou said to native people, “you seen cat belong me?” (118) then they answered, “No ben seen old nyam!” (118). She first learns the word “nyam” (118), and then her identification with pidgin begins.

Allen’s family could no longer witness and tolerate the colonial brutality in Onitsha. They did not want to be the member of such tormentors. Finally, they decided to leave Onitsha forever. Their departure from Onitsha is itself a kind of resistance. When Allen’s family was about to leave Onitsha, Maou, instead of offering her goods to the wives of colonial agents, offers to her local friends. “Maou had given many things away- chest full of soap, dishes, and provisions. [. . .] The women, draped in their long robes, stood in line before Marima and Maou. Each departed with a bundle—a saucepan, plates, soap, rice, jam, tins of biscuits, coffee, a sheet, a cushion” (178).

In this way, Maou not only revolts against the colonizers by applying the cultural tools, she also applies the linguistic tools. She is quite inquisitive to learn and practise Nigerian cultural rituals and practices. In this regard, the noticeable fact is that she is more bent to the Nigerian cultures, rituals and language than the colonial ones. Such inclination is more symbolic resistance to the colonial culture and language.

In this novel *Onitsha*, Le Clezio highlights the different notion of resistance movement. In general, we see that resistance movement is started by colonial people who realize handicapped and felt crisis of identity and freedom. The colonizers give excessive punishment, suffocation which brought turmoil and disturbance, physical and psychological pain, and many other internal and external hurt in the people. So they are compelled to start resistance movement against the colonizers. But here in the novel Le Clezio tactfully provides the space for the colonizers who have the human

ethos in their mindset. Some kind colonial agents sow the seed of resistance movement in Nigeria which the colonized people follow.

Fintan, one of the vehicles of novel, is a character who directly challenges the Europeanism. When he reaches to Onitsha to meet his Father for the first time he has many expectation from his father. It is the first time in his life he is going to meet his father who left the native land when Fintan was infant. There is no limitation to Fintan's excitement and happiness as he is going to meet his father for the first time. But his previous eagerness crumbles down when he meets rude, cold, rough and strange Geoffrey Allen. When he meets him for the first time, he only says, "Are you right boy?" (43). Fintan never wants to say "My father" (51) to Geoffrey. He challenges the European vision and mission from his entrance in the African town Onitsha by befriending with an African boy, Bony.

Being a member of colonial rulers, there is prohibition to go near the black people and culture but Fintan turns a deaf ear to such prohibition and befriends with black boy named Bony, worships the termites and falcon and learns pidgin language. Geoffrey Allen and other colonial agents do not prefer the attraction of Fintan towards the native people. This sense can be smelt from the sentences said by Maou to Fintan: "I never see you anymore, you are always running off. You know your father does not want you to go around with that Bony boy" (77). But Fintan never heard the voice of his mother and he goes with Bony and starts to learn Pidgin language and follows the African mystic culture.

As discussed by Alison Anderson, "A startling account – and indictment – of colonialism, 'Onitsha' is also a work of clear, forthright prose that ably portrays both colonial Nigeria and a young boy's growing outrage" (I), this novel depicted the adverse impact of colonialism in the local people and along with it, it also presents the

growing outrage within the colonial agents. Fintan is a son of colonial agent who lived in Nigeria though he has some sorts of adverse idea than his father and others who always think how to dominates the native people.

In the beginning, Fintan was a colonial brand. So, he “wore the big, black shoes and woolen socks the Englishmen wore” (54). However, later he socializes with Nigerian geography and society by renouncing the colonial style. He no longer wants to wear the black shining shoes and woolen socks. The given sentences are the evidences for that: “Bony made him touch the soles of his feet, hard as leather sole. Fintan hid the wretched socks in his hammock; put the big black shoes in the metal wardrobe, and walked barefoot through the grass” (55). Then for Fintan, the green grass is itself shoes. He turns to be as natural as the Nigerians. Le Clezio describes this situation in this way:

Fintan had learned to run without getting tired. The soles of his feet no longer were the pale, fragile skin he had liberated from his shows. They were covered with a hard crust, the color of the earth. His toes, with their broken nails, had grown farther apart, the better to grip the ground, the stoned, and the tree trunks. (74)

In this way, the above extract proves how Fintan in the passage of time had changed him on the Nigerian pattern. He purely pursues the local way of life. At first the black boys would tease Fintan by saying “Fintan Pikni!” (74) and laughed seeing black shoes. But later Fintan became as veteran to walk as local boys “even on thorns or ant hills” (74). By doing so, he revolts against colonial standards because suits and boots were colonial brands.

Fintan understand the adverse impact of colonialism in the colonial African countries from his early childhood. His friendship with Bony helps him to understand

this. When Fintan entered into black community, black women pours their outrage by throwing stoned at him. “When Fintan arrived there, the women called out insults and threw stone at him. They laughed and they made fun of him in their language” (75). This becomes lesson for Fintan to understand the colonialism briefly. He knows that colonialism is a political system to rule over the country. It basically captures the freedom of the local people and established the authority of the powerful one.

Fintan understands his father as a colonial agent whom he disagrees and despises because his father is still in the line of colonialism. But Fintan strongly opposes his colonial stand. The following conversation between Maou and Fintan gives the same hints:

‘Don’t go too far, it’s dangerous – you know your father already has a great many worries’

‘Him? He knows nothing about it.’

‘Don’t say that- he loves you, you know.’

‘He’s a nasty man, I hate him.’

He pointed below his shoulder to a black and blue mark in his arm.

‘Look, he did that, with his stick.’

‘You must obey him. He does not like you to be out at night.’

Fintan persisted in his spite.

‘But I broke his stick; he’ll have to go cut another.’

‘And if a snake bites you?’

‘I am not afraid of snakes; Bony knows how to speak to them. He says he knows their chi, he knows the secret’

‘What are they, these secret?’

‘I cannot tell you.’ (126-27)

In this way, the above conversation proves that Fintan believes in African mystic culture more than the European one. He symbolically challenges the standpoint of his father by breaking his stick. He also believes that the *mantra* is sufficient to avoid the snake bite. He is not scared with the snake bite.

After the colonizers' severe punishment, exploitation of the natural and human resources, the colonized people also started resistance movement. They want to chase the European people from their country and want their own rule. They want democracy and freedom but their desire of freedom and democracy is caged by the colonizers. So they seek the option of resistance. However, in this novel, the resistance movement is embarked by the colonial people themselves.

When Fintan's attraction is growing with the native people and their culture, he starts to hate the colonial agents who kill the native people without any cause, and chain them as domestic animals. This incident is described in the novel as the following way:

Fintan tried to speak, he was sobbing. 'They were shooting, they killed them, the shot the man in chains, and they fell down.' He clenched his teeth to keep from crying. He hated Gerald Simpson, the resident and his wife, the lieutenant, the soldiers, and he hated Shaxxon most of all.

'I want to leave this place; I don't want to stay anymore.' (169)

The above abstract shows the anger of Fintan towards the colonial agent though he himself is a son of colonial agents. He wants to leave to Europe from there. This refers that the resistance movement is triggered from the colonial agents themselves. The oppressed and suppressed colonial peoples' voice is spoken by the colonial agents.

At the final hours of their departure, when Bony does not come to bid bye to Fintan, he guesses that that may be because Lieutenant Fry had shot local people which Bony and Fintan had witnessed. Bony might have thought Fintan to be colonial agent. But Fintan feels ashamed of it. Fintan “hated them as much as Bony did” (180). He further thinks “If I killed Simpson, could I see Bony again?”(180) This is Fintan’s extreme point of scorn and resentment towards colonialism in Onitsha. Moreover, when Shakxon proposes Geoffrey to give his house to him, Fintan again protests the idea telling “when we leave, I’ll burn it!” (178). This shows the extreme hatred of Fintan towards the colonial agents.

When Fintan returns to France he goes on using Pidgin Language. He challenges Europeanism living in Europe. Fintan exercises pidgin in his nursery school at France. His language touches French boys and they are also trying to learn the pidgin language. He said in pidgin. “He don go naw naw, he tok say”; “Di bok bilong mi” (191). His use of pidgin language even in Europe challenges the European mission to give universalism to their own language.

Even after Fintan reaches to France, his feeling of resistance has not faded away. The strong sense of resistance exists in the root of his heart. He wants the freedom of the African people from the brutality of colonial rule. He becomes happy when he heard the news of the death of Sobine Rhodes “during the bombing in Onitsha, at the end of the summer of 1968” (206). He is in the side of colonial people in his life time. His happiness after listen the death of colonial agents in Nigeria shows the longing desire of freedom of the colonial people in Fintan.

Colonialism is a process of forming a community in a new land necessarily means un-forming and re-forming the communities that existed already, and involve a wide range of practices including trade, plunders, negotiation, warfare genocide.

Therefore, colonialism is the conquest and control of the other people's land and goods. Modern colonialism did more than extract tribute, goods and wealth from the countries that is conquered- it reconstructed the economies of the latter, drawing them into complex relationship with their own. There is flow of human resources between colonized and colonial countries. The flow of worked in directions- slaves and indentured laborers as well as raw materials. The colonies provide market for the European goods. At the time of colonization, colonizer not only brought natural resources of the Rest but skilled or non-skilled labor. In the postcolonial situation, the people from the Rest use this chance to exercise their culture, rituals on the ground of colonizer.

Like that when colonizers came in non-western territory, they not only influenced the Rest's culture but they are influenced by the native culture. Then they begin to follow some cultural patterns of the Rest. At that moment, the hangover of cultural supremacy could not function. And it has been also challenged by the rest culture. The same thing happens here in the novel *Onitsha*. The European agents are influenced by the African mystic culture. The people from the Africa use this chance to exercise their culture, rituals on the ground of colonizer. In this way, the colonial agents forget their motive of Christianization and spread the cultural universalism in the whole world. Rather, they follow the African culture and language. It means they challenge the Europeanism by themselves. There is no need of starts the resistance movement from the colonized people; it is started by the colonial agents by themselves.

Geoffrey Allen, another protagonist of this novel, who is working as a distributor for the United African Company, is fascinated by the river culture of Africa. He is a man of white skin living with black consciousness. At first, Geoffrey

tries to dismantle the African mystic culture. For that purpose, he kills the Falcon which is taken as a god in Africa. He is a colonial agent living in Nigeria. So, his duty is to collect the raw materials and supply them to the different European countries. He is busy all the day in meeting. So, “Geoffrey Allen was absent and he came late home” (64). His activities in colonial country are described as follows:

He met other representative of the trading companies – the commercial company of the West Africa, Jackel and Co. Ollivant, Chanrai and Co. John Holt and Co. African Oil Nuts. These names were strange to Fintan [. . .]; name of strange people, who bought and sold, who sent purchase notes, telegraphs, orders. There was one name above all, United Africa; Fintan had seen it on the parcel Geoffrey sent to France-Jam from South Africa, boxes of tea, of brown sugar. (64)

The above mentioned sentences show that the colonizers come there with the commercial motive. So they are to collect raw materials for production and search the market for consumption. Geoffrey Allen is busy for his own works being colonial agent living in colonial country. Even he has no time for his wife and son who have woven the beautiful dream to spend beautiful life with him. Their desire to enjoy with Geoffrey crumbles down.

Geoffrey Allen is in Civilizing Mission in Africa. Officially, he is there to teach the African people about how to be civilized. West has created binary opposition like civilized/barbarous to rule over the rest. But he knows African people are already civilized, there is no need of whites to teach them. Their lives are whirling with god and myths “when he reaches to Onitsha he begins to search the secret of myths. Geoffrey Allen cannot tear his eyes away, not even for a moment, he cannot dream another dream. It is the face sculpted with the marks of the itsi, the marked face

of the Umundri” (71). He challenges the Europeanism by engaging with African culture. As Helen Tiffin says in his article, “In challenging the notion of literary universality (or the European appropriation of post-colonial practice and theory as post-modern), post-colonial writers and critics engage in counter-discourse” (qtd. Post-colonial Study Reader 95), Le Clezio produced the similar counter-discourse to challenge the canonical representation of Africa. Geoffrey Allen is a representative character of Clezio’s purpose. Geoffrey’s affection to African culture neglecting his colonial mission and the command of his senior officers is a symbolic resistance. In the beginning, he seems to be rock-ribbed in his mission. But later, he softens himself and nears to African distancing himself from European identity. Finally, his intimacy increases with African and decreases with colonialism which compels him to leave Onitsha. His departure has weakened the colonial mission in Nigeria.

Geoffrey is engrossed in his project of the history of the African people and their migratory culture and the settlement. He dreams of the gods and the people and their voyage, partly from the folklore and partly from the earlier work of his predecessor. While the British colonizers continue their act of atrocities and the abuse of power, Geoffrey Allen continues his fascination towards their culture, which does not go well with his superiors. As Sabine Rhodes tells Maou.

My dear signorita, you must realize we see people like your husband pass through here every day. People who think they are going to change everything, I am not implying that he is wrong, any more than you are, but one must be realistic, one must see things as they are and not at one would like them to be. We are colonizers, not the benefactor of mankind. (141)

The above abstract displays that the colonial rulers are afraid with the activities by Geoffrey Allen. Allen does not follow the colonial orders rather he engages more with the research of African mystic culture. The colonial rulers feel that his acts threaten the colonial rule in Nigeria. It is a noticeable fact that Geoffrey Allen, who is a colonial staff for the United African Company, runs after the river culture and mythic life in Nigeria. He wants to free the African people. He forgets his mission to come there in Africa. This background of the novel is self-evident that resistance has started through the colonizers themselves. By realizing so, Sabine Rhodes tells aforementioned sentences to Maou. Geoffrey does not obey his senior officers regarding his activities. Consequently, soon Geoffrey was given the order of deportation, and was replaced by another British named Shaxon, not before the seeds of rebellion sprouted. Sabine Rhodes, another British national, already a miscalculation in the colony, recognizes the inevitability. So, in this backdrop, he vows not to fly away from there by defeating: “the empire was finished, signoria, it’s crumbling on every side, turning to dust; the great ship of empire is sinking, but I shan’t leave. I shall stay here to see it all, that’s my mission, my vocation, to watch the ship go under” (143).

When colonizers have forced colonized to feel inferior in comparisons to them, and then they begin to imitate powerful culture. They think when they encountered with civilizing nation; they could improve their jungle status. It is due to hegemonic power, colonized people take their culture as jungle culture. It is all because of ruling mentality of West: rest has been presented as barbarous, emotional, and illiterate in their text. But in Onitsha their hypothesis could not function. Instead of native people the western man is affected by native culture and religion. Allen British man who is going on his study about African River culture, which is the pivot of African culture around which their life moves. Geoffrey further knows the people

of Adamawa call the sun Anyare, the son of Ra. The Ibos of the south say Anyanu, the eye of Anu, which Bible calls 'On'. Therefore, Geoffrey accepts myth in his life. He takes rain, harvest as the god, and begins to worship them. His modality of living standards looks like native people. Therefore, it highlights colonized culture, which has not jungle status. They have their own system. Geoffrey Allen highlights the rest culture.

Allen de-historicizes European official document about Africa and themselves. He for the first time breaks the cultural supremacy of Europe by following the native culture. He brings the non-western culture on the equal status of western. He goes on study of cultural ground of African people. He knows Nuba were last inhabitants of Meroe from Ethiopian mountains, following the underground flow of the river, at night; they found all the water they needed, by capillary action and for themselves and their cattle. He is influenced by the African Mystic culture and indulges himself within it. The sympathy towards the colonial people is flourished in Geoffrey's mind and starts to revolt against colonialism.

His semi-autobiographical novel *Onitsha* outlines the complicated position of European guilt expressed by the colonial family. The young and resilient boy narrator, Fintan, describes his acclimation to life in Africa, seeded with the country's own embodied resentment of white men. Fintan's mother, like the land and the native people, is dominated by the colonial rulers just because she resists against the colonial brutality in Nigeria. Fintan's father is a hesitant member of the ruling British business class. More shadow than presence in his family's lives, he spends most of his energy pursuing an obsession with a mysterious queen and the savage Niger River. The three are bound together by their fascination for the wild and captivating native girl, Oya, who is as silent as the country they inhabit. By the attraction of Allen's family

towards the native people, the Allen family is treated as a colonized people. So, they are compelled to leave Nigeria at the end of the novel. Le Clézio's characters spend less time impacting the place than being impacted by it. In Fintan's startling re-aggregation to life back in Europe, he is haunted by Africa and affected by how remote the country is to his own sister, who has lived her entire life in the South of France. He wonders,

Is Africa, for you, no more than a name, a land like any other, a continent one talks about in newspaper and books, a place that is mentioned only because there is a war going on? In Nice, in your room at the university with its angel's name, you are cut off; there is nothing to keep the thread intact. (198)

These lines prove that Fintan, even long after his arrival in Europe, is haunted by the memory of Africa. He wants the freedom of African people. He shares his feelings about Africa with his sister who has never seen Africa in her lifetime. His haunted memory always reveals out by different way.

On the other hand, colonizers' life is far different from native people. They are cold and callous. They forcefully capture the native people to make the slaves, make them work for colonial officers. Colonial officers compel the Nigerian people to work in adverse condition without food, water and pay.

The heat was sweltering. The black workers were prisoner that Simpson had obtained through Rally, the Resident, because he couldn't find anyone else, or because he did not want to pay them. The workers arrived at the same time as the guests, bound by a long chain that was linked by rings to heir left ankle; in order not to fall they had to walk in step, as if on parade. (59)

The above abstract shows the brutality of the colonial rulers. They do not want to pay for the labour of colonial people rather compelled them to work under the sweltering sun. Colonial people are presented as a prisoner who must follow the order of colonial agents as real prisoner in the jail.

They rape the native women forgetting their European identity. A local girl named Oya who works in the house of Colonial officer, Sabine Rhodes, is impregnated by unknown colonizer. They exploit local resources. But Allen's family does not like the activities of colonial agents in Nigeria. They have the sympathy towards the African people. So, they establish closer relationship with local people distancing themselves from the colonial agents. It is an explicit resistance against the colonialism by the colonizers themselves.

Even the mild level of resistance has endangered the colonial agents to the large extent. They struggle to suppress anti-colonial rumor spread in the street. Colonial agents have lost their patience in Onitsha. They have lost their sleep. Their heart has displaced. This can be evidenced by the following lines in the novel:

Destroy Aro Chuku, reduce to nothing the rebel city with its temples, its fetishes, its sacrificial alters. Nothings must remain of this cursed place. They must kill all the men, including the old men and the male children over ten years old. Nothings must remain of this rabble! Is he deliberating his war orders against the Aro people, against the oracle which preaches the destruction of the English? (145)

Lieutenant colonel Montanaro, commanding officer of British forces in Aro, fiercely orders his soldiers to finish off the local people of Aro Chuku just because of a rumor of an oracle which, as it is rumored, predicts that British will be finished off in Aro Chuku.

Apart from Allen's family who resists colonialism in Nigeria, there are some other minor characters that are also against the colonialism in Nigeria. Dr. Charon is a colonial physician appointed in Nigeria who is sympathetic to Maou. He visits to Allen's residence when Geoffrey gets sick. He suggests Maou not to be the part of the colonial mission in Nigeria though he himself is unable to revolt against colonialism. But he has the latent idea against colonialism in Nigeria. He suggested Maou "take your husband to Europe, make him eat. He'll never get better if he stays here." Dr. Charon thinks that European mission has made Geoffrey ill. He wants to make Geoffrey get rid of the colonial business in Nigeria. Though under obligation, he serves colonial staffs in Nigeria, he is reluctant to be a member of colonial officers in Nigeria. Thus, a kind of latent resistance can be traced upon Dr. Charon too.

Sabine Rhodes, one of the colonial agents working at Nigeria has been impressed by other Yoruba or Ibo Ethnicity. Rhodes is an English man but he speaks all the languages of river. On the boat he said, "Ozoo Je Kanyyi!"(80). This implies to head the boat on the way towards Jersey Island. Therefore, the so-called superpower accepts marginal culture or ethnicity in this time. Rhodes sees sense of belongingness with the Nile River. He said, "It was the biggest river in the world, because its flow it carried the entire history of mankind since the beginning" (85). He develops new idea about human history, which is different from White man's definition. Moreover, he is ready to give his all property to Oya and Okawho. He has collected big amount of books to study their history and myth. He says to Fintan, "No one ever comes in here except your father from time to time, to see his Egyptian goods: And Okawho" (79). The opportunity to visit the library of colonizer is provided to the colonized man Okawho refers that whites begin to accept the presence of African. Okawho, a black boy, is a servant working on the house of colonizer. Rhodes has decided to hand over

his all properties to Okawho. He said, “Everything here is his” (79). This act is a result of loss of colonial confidence and acceptance of African existence. Rhodes’ unwillingness to rule over Africa is manifested in his speech. Though he is a strong pillar of colonialism in Onitsha, yet he implicitly displays some sort of symbolic resistance. This too weakens the colonial rule in Africa.

Later, the spirit of resistance somewhat seeded by the colonial agents themselves is transmitted to the native people. They began to cherish a sense of resistance and revolt. Their confidence is boosted up by some colonial agents like Maou and Geoffrey. The long-bred suffocation is choked by the constant torture imposed by the colonial officers. The following lines show how the fire of resistance was blazing into the native people:

The uprising began to Gerald Simpson’s house, the convicts who were digging the hole for the swimming pool. The D.O. thought that everything would go back to normal and parceled out a few wacks with his stick. The convicts seized one of the guards and drowned him in the hole full of muddy water; then, no one knows exactly how, some of them got free of their chain and, instead of running away, entrenched themselves at the top of the, against the wire fence, and they were shouting and threatening the D.O. and the English guests at the Club.

(167)

While African resistance to European colonialism is often thought of in terms of a white and black; civilized and barbaric people; European and African power struggle, this presumption underestimates the complex and strategic thinking that Africans commonly employed to address the challenges of European colonial rule. It also

neglects the colonial -era power dynamic of which African societies and institutions were essential components.

The revolution of the colonial people is also presented as a forceful factor for overthrowing the colonial power from their country. When the colonial power sinks in, local people become fierce and start the violent struggle against the colonial rulers. “The BBC says little. Bombs, village razed, children dying of hunger on the battlefields –a few lines no more. In Umahia, Okigwi, Ikot Ekpene –photos of children blasted by hunger, their faces swollen their eyes larger than life” (199). At last colonized people won the battle. They killed the colonial agent Sabine Rhodes in the war. And get freedom from the colonialism. In reality, after end of the colonialism, the neo- colonialism has been started in this novel too as in the human history but present researcher does not effort to show the neo-colonial aspect rather tries to reveal the resistance of colonialism by the colonizers themselves.

So, this novel *Onitsha* offers a compelling contrast between the white mistreatment of Africans and the occasionally dangerous natural beauty surrounding the village of Onitsha on the banks of the Niger River. Le Clezio upturns the natural image of African people and their culture created by European. He writes Africans are not the alternative utopian of Europe. Most of the Europeans feel discomfort at the misbehavior of other colonial agents towards the African people and culture. They have sympathy towards the colonized people, culture and language. They forget their mission of Christianization and make the world into a global village. The colonial officers not only face the hindrances from the colonized people but also from their own colonizers colleagues. We can assert that they themselves turned to be their problems. This is the core idea which the present researcher wants to show. So, present researcher claims that this novel *Onitsha* shows the weakening power of the

colonialism in the colonial countries not by the movement of colonial people but by themselves.

Finally, the writer Le Clezio has successfully depicted the declining state of colonialism due to its negative impact both on colonizers and colonized people in Africa at the time of colonialism. He also sprinkles the anti-colonial ethos using as significant protagonist and other characters always entangle in unsuccessful condition due to their close affiliation with the colonized people and culture. So this novel *Onitsha* creates the anti-discourse to valorize the non-western language, culture and geography. Finally, colonizers do not become successful in their mission, rather colonized become successful by chasing colonizers from their country. Colonized people turned to be winners and colonizers losers.

III. Masters against Masters

A resistance movement is dedicated against the established authority either by peaceful activities or by embracing violence in an occupied territory. Such resistance activities can be both regular and irregular or occasional. This frequently includes all the groups that consider themselves to be resisting against tyranny, oppression and exploitation. J M G Le Clezio's *Onitsha* is a well-woven story about Nigeria in its colonial period. It is a story of a young European boy and his mother who move to Nigeria to be with his English father. This family's various engagements with the country, its people and its cultural heritage conflict with European mannerism upon the natives. Hence, a section of colonizers is completely dissatisfied with the exploitation and cruelty. Finally, they can no longer live there and leave the Nigeria.

In the novel *Onitsha*, Le Clezio dismantles the conventional parameter of both colonizers and colonized. He creates a situation where colonizers themselves are fed-up with their colonial mannerism and the way of exploitation. They turned to be more sympathetic and humanitarian towards the colonized people negating their own European mission and philosophy. Clezio shows the society where both masters and slaves come together for the liberation for slaves. Masters stand against masters. Both colonizers and colonized construct a panel which raises voice against the tyranny of colonizers. Colonizers, instead of hating the life style, language and culture of colonized, love it and pursue it. They become friendlier with local people than with the colonizer friends. In one sense, finally colonizers become the enemy of colonizers but friends of colonized.

The resistance embarks against colonial rule in Nigeria which is first voiced by the colonizers themselves. Maou strongly raises voice against the colonial tyranny and wholeheartedly stands on the behalf of local people. As soon as she

reaches to Onitsha, being a wife of a colonizer, she hesitates to extend friendship with colonizers' wives, rather builds a cordial friendship with local black women. Moau first raises the voice for the liberation of chained native workers who are forcefully made to dig up the swimming pool of a colonizer. Her first voice raised in the support of colonized people divides her position with her other colonial friends in Nigeria. The present researcher wants to highlight the given colonizers' resistance against their own colleagues.

On the other hand, Le Clezio shows a cultural resistance. Maou, Fintan and Geoffrey gradually reject the colonial culture and lifestyle and pursue the local culture and lifestyle. Geoffrey is so attached with the native local river and mythic culture that he spends several hours a day in researching the local culture. Fintan quickly abandons his European way of life and socializes with the local lifestyle. He in the very beginning throws away his suits and boots and runs barefooted in the grassy land. A cultural resistance starts from within the colonizers which jeopardizes the European mission of civilizing Nigeria. The present researcher also wants to show the cultural resistance in *Onitsha*.

Fintan can not forget his memory of Negiria even long after he reaches to Europe. "I never stopped thinking about it" (3). The text recounts the voyage aboard the *Surabaya* which the twelve-year-old Fintan, Le Clézio's superego, and his Italian-born mother, Maria Luisa (Maou), take to join the English father, Geoffrey Allen, whom Fintan has never known, in the Nigerian river town of Onitsha. It depicts the conflicts that occur when these three individuals come into contact with one another and with the British colonial administration. It traces the indelible marks which their sojourn in Africa engraves on their psyches and reveals the consequences of this experience when they are forced to return to Europe.

Le Clezio brings into light to the Nigerian natural beauty in the novel. Such description of natural beauty has taken the large portion of coverage in the novel dedicating many pages in the portrayal of the forests, rivers, climate and weather. It tries to unfold the nexus between the life of the native people and the forests, rivers and climate. The people are gentle and sincere whose life is closely linked with the rivers, with the forests. They worship them as Mother God. They live the soil-based and river-based life. This kind of lifestyle of the native people attracts the colonial rulers.

Therefore, the novel *Onitsha* shows the vulnerability of colonial mission. Despite showing the native African vulnerability to colonial culture and language, this novel tends to show the influence of African culture into the life of European agents. It creates the anti-discourse by valorizing the native African mysterious culture and language and standing on their support. Finally, it is a justice to see this novel from the perspective of resistance movement started by the colonizers themselves. In reality, forgetting their mission to civilize the colonized people, the colonial agents are indulging into the native culture and language concluding on a resistance against their own mission. So, it is taken as a resistance act started within themselves. So, the novel *Onitsha* creates anti-colonial discourse praising the colonized people and land, illustrating the colonial resistance by the joint efforts of some colonial agents and the colonized native people.

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