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Anti-Imperial Discourse in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*

**A Thesis Submitted to the central Department of English
In a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in English**

By

Biswar Singh Rai

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

May 2010

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Humanities and Social Science

Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Biswar Singh Rai has completed this thesis entitled “Anti-imperial discourse in Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko*” under my supervision. He carried out his research effective from 9th December, 2009. He consulted me time and again to give the completion of this task. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for Viva Voce.

Raj Kumar Baral

Thesis Supervisor

Date-

Acknowledgement

My sincere gratitude and indebtedness should go to the lecturer Mr. Raj Kumar Baral of Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, who made the other impossible tasks an easy one by providing me valuable suggestion and materials and thus built stairs of hope and confidence by which I was able to complete this task. I can't help extending my sincere gratitude and reverence to Dr. Beerendra Pandey who energized me by providing his innovative guidelines and valuable materials to tackle every intellectual respite.

Special thanks goes to Prof. Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma , Head of the Central Department of English for his useful suggestion and encouragement. I would like to express my gratefulness to Ramesh Thapa, Lecturer in Central Department of English for his useful suggestions and support.

Much more thanks for the cooperation and scholarly support to my beloved friend Prakash Poudel. Likewise Puskar Wasti, Sita Ram Chaulagain, Sagar Dahal Ramesh Dahal and dear brother Krishna Prasad Wagle deserve my innermost thanks for their support and encouragement. My dearest friend Mr. Himel Dahal should deserve especial gratitude for his tireless help in typing this thesis.

At last, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my parents Kaji Bahadur Rai and Soma Laxmi Rai for their economical and intellectual support on my academic pursuit. And how can I stop saying nothing about my wife Padam Laxmi Rai's inspiring good wish on every step I take.

Biswar Singh Rai

May 2010

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Abstract

Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* exposes the tormented state of the central character Oroonoko and author's implicit alignment to the deplorable slaves. Oroonoko, though he is first a prince of a small African country, undergoes the turbulence of slavery when he is caught by trick in a slave trading ship and brought and sold in Surinam, a English based colony. The racial consciousness in Oroonoko emerges with his re-union with sold fiancée Imoinda, whose conception leads him to be rebellious for ultimate liberty. Oroonoko kills his wife to save her and unborn child from the evil of slavery and his ultimate attempt to commit suicide, aftermath of his towering racial consciousness, itself turns to be the resistance against the imperialism founded on racial discrimination.

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I. Aphra Behn and Anti-Slavery Consciousness

The present research work focuses on Aphra Behn's most widely discussed novel *Oroonoko* in order to study the domination of natives and slaves through their own experiences in time of imperial heyday focusing on the experience of slavery and resistance of it by the protagonist Oroonoko.

The study examines how the writer tends to align with savage though she belongs to so-called civilized society in her time. The women were as vulnerable as slaves in the sense that one was dominated and suppressed by the patriarchy and latter was pitious due to the practices of slavery. The novel moves from relatively happy and brave life to tragic and racial break-down.

The central intent of *Oroonoko* is the examination of racial catastrophe in the life of Oroonoko in slavery. The version tells of a nobler African prince, betrayed into a worse captivity-slavery in the British colony of Surinam-destroyed by the attempts to gain liberty. Here is the story of a young native prince born into a royal family and enslaved by British colonizers whose struggle to gain liberty ultimately becomes horrible when he kills his own wife Imoinda to save her from the evil of slavery.

Oroonoko and Imoinda are supposed to come from the kingdom of Coramantien, town on Gold Cost of Africa, where the British had built their major trading station. European visitors often treated the rulers of the natives with respect and somewhat king's sons were educated in Europe. Instead, the native rulers sell the criminals and the persons defeated in the wars to European as slaves. So does Oroonoko in Coramantien. His fiancée Imoinda newly queen to his grandfather, king of Coramantien- is sold to slave traders due to his sexual evolvment with her before the king does. Here, slavery within the natives seems to parallel with that of imperial reign. As a result, Oroonoko being frustrated and fragmented visits slave trader's

campaigning ship where he is, by treachery, captivated by colonial agents. This is not more than the common facet of colonizers controlling even over the ruling class people.

The racial consciousness in Oroonoko emerges along the reunion with Imoinda in slavery plantation. Their marriage and conception in Imoinda rather generate the racial surveillance regarding to anti- imperial awareness. Meanwhile, the narrator, a colonial agent, enters into the metamorphosis of racial consciousness of protagonist with some hopes of liberation. The female narrator- perhaps Behn herself narrates- tends to align with Oroonoko for many reasons and evident to pacify his angst and suffering of slavery. This must be because the writer is female and similar destiny to slaves.

The anti- slavery awareness comes to the highest consideration when the protagonist gathers the fellow slaves to rebel against the tyranny over them. The rebel ultimately turns into the escape narrative with their flee from the plantation in leadership of Oroonoko. The imperial power can be observed not in direct action but also in treachery and deception which eventually multiplies the racial resistance in captives. Oroonoko and fellow slaves are recaptured and whipped severely as if they are senseless. To save his wife and unborn child from the evil of slavery, he kills Imoinda that is the climax of anti- slavery proposition. Moreover, he himself cuts his throat and belly to show the severe rebellion against tyranny. When they treat him at first and burn him alive as a punishment for rebellion at last, it clears the way to anti- imperial discourse in the novel.

Present thesis draws on the criticism of slavery and racism on the basis of post- colonial theory, since it shows the nexus between the culture and colonizer's exploitation of natives. Particularly useful will be Edward Said's *Culture and*

Imperialism and various criticism of racism. Imperial discourse will be fruitful to the research due to its hegemonic tendency over the natives of parts the world.

Oroonoko, a seventeen century novel, was published in 1688. Aphna Behn was the actual name of the author who was born in England in 1640. She was one of the most remarkable writers of late seventeen century. She was the first British women to earn her living as a creative writer. Her unprecedented role in literary field made her a rather fragile and marginal figure and she certainly encountered some prejudice against women writers who dared to write about sex. She began her literary career among a number of male writers enjoying friendship with them and having significantly her more new plays staged than any of male playwright. From early 1680s she diversified prodigally in to poetry, translation and most fruitfully prose fiction.

As she began her writing as playwright, *Abdelazer* (1767) came being dominated by explicit contempt for black African. She is in the mood to clarify that the human's ruling qualities are not those of race but of his sex. *Abdelazer* is such a character who appears attempting to rape a white woman, Spanish princess Leonora, for his racial contempt. But Behn handles the episode with some nuanced complexity to prove that each and every accident arises from a specific combination of circumstance and motives. The central theme of the play is derived from the notion that human activity is individual rather than a racial type.

Women's attitude and behavior towards the marriage in seventeen century Europe have been reflected in Behn's second play *The Rover* (1677). She portrays the typical pattern of options available to woman. The seventeen century women had few options in terms of marriage and courtship. Moreover, the practice of dowry system had made the female fragile to maintain their social status. Due to the compelling

destiny, they might have prepared for falling into the prostitution profession. Behn seems to be revolutionary in the matter of women regarding to their destiny in the play. The distinction between women seeking men for marriage and women who sell themselves for money lies at the heart of Behn's *The Rover*. Also apparent in the play is distinction that was made between 'ladies of qualities' and 'whore'. More than above, the play explicitly thematizes the marketing of women in marriage and prostitution.

Behn's came into the literary field with her first novel *Love Letters between a Noble-Man and His Sister* in 1684. The epistolary novel gives the historical account of France which is criticized as a misleading historical background. Love affair between a married young man and his unmarried sister-in-law gives the then concept of marriage and extra marital relationship. The most interesting aspects are probably the moral reflections of the young lovers who risk stepping out of all conventions and restrictions. Neither law, religion nor family ties ultimately prevent them from following their burning desires. The novel bears the notion of human nature towards the repressed desires is unpredictable and inevitable as its central theme.

Oroonoko, probably her last work is known as the first novel through the first person female narrator triggering at the exploration of plan and angst due to the tyrannical practice of colonization. The novel succeeds to drawing the core relationship between masters and slaves for preparation of escape narrative. Culture is contradictory and it can be felt when the primitive paradise of Native Americans and conceptual sophistication of Europeans both coexist with horrifying violence. The novel explicitly proves the tendency of colonizing people blooms first from the cultural contradiction. Furthermore, Aphra Behn's intention of writing *Oroonoko* becomes more transparent when she writes “This is a true story of a man gallant

enough to merit your protection and he always been so fortunate, he had not made so inglorious end” (1217) in her tribute letter to Lord Maitland. Behn, confidently proclaims her supportive attitudes to the hero who rebel against the system she belongs to. It makes clear intention for writing such a novel which deserves the quality to dig the surveillance upto inter and intra racial discrimination.

During and after seventeenth century, *Oroonoko* as well as Aphra Behn received a huge pile of criticism. Many of them covered the space of criticism regarding to the saga of racial prejudice and some of them went through the feminist perspective. Taking the cultural and feminist issues in the consideration, Stephanie Athey and Daniel Cooper Alacorn declare in their essay “ *Oroonoko's gendered economic of honor/horror Reframing colonial discourse*”

Set in the seventeenth-century British colony of Surinam *Oroonoko* examines the intersection of three cultures (South America, Africa and English) involved in building of empire and practice of slavery. Behn's novel not only intervenes in the colonizing discourse of her day but also raises a pointed challenge to contemporary feminist and colonial discourse studies in America. (410)

They further add: "This essay then brings *Oroonoko* in to the context of American literature and colonial discourse study in order to examine the relationship between colonial codes of honor/horror and black body"(417).

They clarify that the notion of imperialism is deep rooted in the binary of culture and feminist dimension that can challenge the colonial discourse. The colonial discourse begins intersecting the different culture that ultimately builds the foundation of imperialism. The practice of slavery is no matter inter or intra racial, similar to the destiny women in the sense of patriarchal domination. Behn's novel makes parallel

examination between the colonial dimension of hegemony and racial relation to the female destiny.

Factuality of fiction is greatly debated by some of the prominent critics. Behn's own experience in Surinam prevails in the whole narration which attracts attention of critics who proclaim the novel as an autobiographical account. Historical event in Surinam during the British colonial period is said to be depicted artfully. Wylie Sypher claims "The passages are not fiction but plain history" (405). For many years readers and critics observed the novel through realistic point of view. History of Surinam and the then practice of slavery are fictionalized realistically, since Behn herself stayed in Surinam from 1663 to 1664 as a government spy. Taking it into consideration Katherine M Rogers, in her essay "Fact and Fiction in Behn's *Oroonoko*" argues:

In its major outlines, Behn's representation of West African cultures is accurate. She could have got her information both from published account and from talking with slaves and owners in Surinam or traders in England. (3)

She further explains "It seems clear then, Behn made a serious effort to fortify her romance with realistic detail" (9). Rogers's main concern is to reveal the fictionalization of reality in the novel. Geographical description of Surinam, physical explanation of natives, actual account of the then slave trading system is some of the facets that make the novel realistic.

Just after the novel came out, it was taken as an anti-slavery novel by most of the critics as well as readers due to its pathetic subject matter of slavery. Slave revolts were common in the late seventeenth-century in colony of Surinam where much of the action of *Oroonoko* takes place. And there was a tendency to take it as an anti-slavery

movement. But some of the critics disagree with this kind of notion. They find ambivalence in Oroonoko himself because of his double role as slave holder first and slave himself last. Warren Chernaik, in his essay “Captain and Slave” argues:

Critics, emphasizing Oroonoko's royal status and his ambivalent relationship with the slave trade, have argued that Behn's novel is 'Pro-Slavery' or at the very least displays a disturbing 'oscillation' toward slavery as an institution. (99)

His core criticism on *Oroonoko* is that the institution of slavery is promoted by the ambivalent role of Oroonoko. Similarly Juth E. Martin points:

Scholars have long disagreed about classifying Behn's *Oroonoko*, or the Royal slave as an anti-slavery narrative. Many critics have pointed out that Behn's Oroonoko, a prince of Coramantien in West Africa, himself holds slaves at home. (319)

The above citation clears the person who holds slave can't be anti-slavery even after being himself a captive.

From the very beginning, feminist critics have been taking an interest to examine the novel through the feminist point of view. It is because the writer is female and her inclination towards the pitiable condition of natives and slaves. It is in this light *Oroonoko* becomes the interest to the feminist reader. As a first female novel, Behn had to receive patriarchal domination against her female pen. Firdos Arzin writes “her [Behn's] writing has generally been either maligned or neglected by male literacy establishment” (43). He adds; "It [*Oroonoko*] is read not only as the first novel to be written by a woman but also as the first 'emancipation' novel dealing in detail with the misery and flight of Black slaves"(43).

His argument is that Behn was supportive towards the black slaves since the similar plight between female and slave of the time. Another prominent feminist critic Margaret W. Ferguson claims:

The analogy between white woman and Oroonoko and particularly the alliance between the narrator and hero is, however, extremely volatile, partly because it poses an obvious double-pronged threat to the colonial social hierarchy in which white men occupied the top place.
(165)

Ferguson says the alliance between the white woman writer and her black male character poses no meaning at all since the patriarchal society makes it fragile in meaning. Although *Oroonoko* written by a female writer, the then society couldn't digest the feminist element of the novel. But Behn's effort to be supportive towards the black slave was really a revolutionary.

So far, most of the criticisms under feminism, realism etc are discussed broadly regarding the thematic area of the novel *Oroonoko*. Little has been given attention to anti-imperialistic perspective that has especially emerged from the post-war scenario. When the decolonization took place around the world, the importance of post-colonialism in theoretical field gets a vast opportunity to redraw the boundaries. *Oroonoko* is not exception that can be analyzed and examined through the anti-imperial perspective. Surinam is ruled by British that is no more than the extension of British Empire. The protagonist Oroonoko though he is slave holder, bears the tyrannical tortures for his rebel against the British colonizer. When he kills his wife to save her from the evil of slavery, it makes the way clear to anti-imperial discourse.

The thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents a brief introductory outline of the work. In addition, it gives a bird's eye view of the entire

work and tendency of author. The second chapter tries to explain and verify the theoretical modality that is applied in this research work. It discusses racism, post colonialism and concept of imperialism. On the basis of theoretical framework established in the second chapter, the third chapter analyzes the text at a considerable length. It analyzes the activities of major event and chapter especially, *Oroonoko*. It sorts out some of the extracts from the text as evidence to prove the hypothesis of study- Benh's alignment with savage for generating her criticism of natives and slaves tends to foreground anti- imperial discourse. The fourth chapter is the conclusion of this research work.

II. Racism/Imperialism and Resistance

Racism

Racism is the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics that determines their respective culture and tradition. It usually involves the idea that one's own race is superior to other. It is also believed that racism works through the hierarchy made between the races with the objective of ruling one race by other. Obviously, the idea of racism is closely tied to the concept of race and by now one should delve into the notion of race before discussing about racism.

Race is as biologists claim, based on physical differences that can be easily seen the color of the skin and hair, body size and proportions, shape of the different parts of body. This means some people of certain race are distinguished from others on the basis of their physical features. Jullian Wolferes, Rattn Robbins and Keneth Womack opine "to speak of different races such as 'black' or 'Jewish' is to speak in biological misnomers and more generally, metaphors"(69). They mean to say that race refers to the family of people which is based on biological misnomers and metaphors.

In the contrary, sociologists are of the different opinion. According to them, race is a socially constructed concept for human beings. It refers to the group of people that is constructed by a particular society. And this group of people is first apart division into the whole human society. After this division, each group shares its own distinctive norms and values. For instance, one particular group speaks its own language, practices its own culture and rituals. Again, Wolfreys, Robbins and Womank Write:

Race has become a troupe of ultimate irreducible difference between cultures, linguistic group, or adherents of specific belief systems. Thus as a discursive, political and ideological term, race functions frequently

as means of definition based on binary oppositions between self and other, civilized and savage and so on. (69)

Here, they state that race, as a sociological formation, functions through the dichotomy between social aspects such as culture, language and tradition. It is race that creates the binary oppositions between people through which ruling system is created.

Throughout seventeen and eighteen century, race simply denoted the class of people. But it was described as a biological tenet since late eighteen century and sociological interpretation was given to the race only in late nineteen century. When race was taken as sociological concept that functions through the binary opposition, the concept of racism is more than sociological concept but a political phenomenon.

Though the root of racism is the concept of race, the term was coined only in 1930s, primarily as a response to the Nazi project of making Germany 'Judenrein' or clean of Jews. The Nazis were, in no doubt that Jews were a distinct race and posed a threat to Aryan race to which authentic Germans supposedly belonged.

Racism is the bad treatment between the people of different races as Nazis treated the Jews. It is a form of prejudice. People tend to consider their own appearance and behavior as normal, therefore, desirable. They mistrust or fear people who look or act differently. When the difference becomes obvious, the distrust becomes greater. And such attitudes lead to the belief that people who look or act differently are inferior. This type of attitude is supposedly called racism and it prevails in the society like Elizabeth Martinez Smith's saying "Racism is an epidemic, like AIDS. It is a living death and it permeates every aspect of our society." (35)

As racism functions through the binary opposition a racist often regards the other race as biologically, intellectually and morally inferior. So, racism is based on

the assumptions of superiority and inferiority. This type of assumptions automatically turns into the political conflict caused by the inherent racial dichotomy. All Rattansi writes, "Inevitably, therefore, the term 'racism' has also becomes subject to social forces and political conflict (8)" Similar view is expressed by Martain Bulmer and John Solomos. They say:

Social and political movements that articulate racial ideas and values have had an important impact on the history of a wide range of societies, often with deadly consequences when such ideas have been interlinked with state power. Racist movements are no means uniform, and it is clear from the experience of the twentieth century, that they can takes a wide range of ideological forms.(177)

The extracts makes it clear that racial ideas and values if articulated by social and political movement promote racial inequality and if it is interlinked with state, it takes an ideological form. Binary opposition makes racism political and political movement makes racism ideological concept. Robert Miles supports their ideas and opines "All the writers were agreed on using a concept of racism or racialism to refer to a very specific ideology (347)."

Thus, racism develops from political conflict to ideological concept. When it is ideological concept, it divides the people into groups on the basis binary opposition. So racism is always a violent treatment of people of one race towards the others. It is always a hindrance to bring equality and rights among all people. It is a powerful and complex social force affecting every institution in society and human lives. It cripples the growth and development of million people regardless of age and sex.

Racism is a matter of socialization. Elizabeth Marinter opines, "Raciest attitudes are learned by children at an early age. Families, schools, churches, libraries,

government and media socialize the population by communicating what is 'good' and what is 'bad' behavior" (37). She means to say that government is responsible for socialization of racism. It is because, most of the institutions which teach racist attitudes are under the control of government. Now the concept of institutional racism arises here which is analytical and political subject matter to practice. Robert Miles states:

They (Carmichael and Hamilton) distinguished between overt and individual racism on the one hand and covert and institutional racism on the other. The former was defined as explicit actions individuals and latter as those actions and inactions which maintain 'black' people in a disadvantaged situation, which rely on 'the active and pervasive operation of anti-black attitudes and practice'. (352)

According to him on individual racism is explicit and open to observe where as an institutional racism is hidden and implicit which is general for certain purpose by any form of government. Practice of institutional racism is fueled by relict once to change what pervades organization. The organizational rules and procedure have already pre-structured the choices against people of racial inferior. An individual only has to confirm to the operating norms and values of the organization and it will do the discriminating for him or her.

Likewise, individual racism refers chiefly to the prejudicial beliefs and discriminatory behavior of whites against black and other ethnic groups. It is based on racial assumptions of superiority and inferiority. Institutional racism refers to policies of communities, schools, libraries and organizations that restrict the opportunities of Hocks and ethnic group.

A new concept of racism came into existence in mid-nineteen century that is scientific racism. It arose in America with the work of Samuel Georgy Morton's comparative study in cardiology. Kathleen Kerr writes

Scientific racism ranked races according to skull measurements and concluded that the Caucasian race, especially Germans, English and Anglo-Americans were intellectually superior, while Ethiopians were endowed with lowest intellectual abilities. (372)

Scientific racism also tries to camouflage the notion of binary oppositions. From which colonialism and imperialism got chance to legitimize their mission all over the world.

The underlying basic of racism is the power struggle between dominant group who want to maintain their privileged positions in society and racial and other group who are determined to change the status quo. This power struggle creates great fear. This fear of loss of their privileged position has driven the superior group to preserve their power. Thus, racism existed in different power seeking institutional forms such as slavery, imperialism and colonialism. In this sense, talking about the end of slavery, Bulmar and Solomons write, "The legal ending of the institution of slavery by no means meant the end of racism (59)." They further clarify:

Racism in the colonial empires of the European powers from the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries was less clear cut, but it was ever present, and its historical legacy is a king to understanding more recent relations between white, brown and ethnic groups in the contemporary world. Moreover, it took different institutional forms under different conditions, so that the relations between colonizer and colonized were

established differently in countries such as South Africa, Nigeria or British India. (59)

The extract tells that racism is obviously related to colonialism from the time it was born and it has been working through the different institutional form.

While talking about the history of racism, United States of America holds forefront position than European countries comes latter. Thomas Jackson declares, "There is surely no nation in the world that holds 'racism' in greater horror than does the United States (1)." He further writes, "The press and public have becomes so used to tales of murder, rape, robbery and arson that any but the most spectacular crimes are shrugged off as a part of inevitable texture of American life. Racism is never struggle off" (1).

It is clear that racism is, indeed the national obsession for America and the history of America is the history of racism. America is always practicing racism in its history. Racism in the United States has been primarily directed by white against racial and ethnic group. So it is mainly a racist country. George Fredrickson says:

Unlike Brazil and other Latin American countries, the United States have been genuinely society. On the whole it has treated blacks as if they were inherently inferior and for at least a century of its history this pattern of rigid racial strengthen cal by a widely accepted racist ideology. (71)

Further he claims:

Although few would deny that explicit or ideological racism the formal doctrine of inherent inferiority become popular at a relatively late in American history, recent historians have tended to see implicit or societal racism as having sprung up very early, partly because of

certain pre existing European attitudes towards black which gave a special character to the natural antipathy of English settlers towards any people who were obviously strange and different. (71)

In this extract, Fedrickson talks about the ideological racism which is, now, being practical in America. He clarifies that implicit societal racism is the core foundation of ideological racism. The societal racism in America sprung up very early by the influence of preexisting European attitude to words black and other's why, people of color become the victim of institutionalized and comprehensive prejudice. If we look at history of America, it provides us with a long record of white people holding and using power and privilege over people of color to subordinate them. Discriminatory and prejudicial actions in America are not limited to certain time or period within individual or organizations. This process of discrimination has extended across generations, across organization and across social structures.

The formulation of racism discrimination was established when the black Africans were brought to America as laborers to work in farming plantations and industries. So the exploitation over them began with their arrival to America as slaves to support American society were clearly based on exploitation over other races- African blacks. Previously, rich white people and latter on the whites in general excessively exploited Afro- Americans and marginalized them with the tag of 'other'. Afro- American had to live in a state of humiliation. Their dignity as an individual being was not admitted they were deprived of respect from the white and even non white people of the world.

Thus, racism is, in general, practiced in America for its purpose of economic boom. They exploited Afro- American on the basis of racial discrimination and prejudice. We can't see America using the racism explicitly for other purpose such as

imperialism and colonialism. Slavery is the gist objective. But it is not similar in the context of European countries. When they began to practice racial discrimination, they were in the situation of expanding more and more colonies throughout the world. They wanted to rule over the world and they took 'racism' as a sharp weapon to gain such a purpose.

Imperialism

In general, imperialism is a state policy or advocacy of extending pattern and domination especially by direct territorial acquisition or by gaining political and economic control of other areas. It is because; imperialism always involves the use of power, often in the form of military force. It is widely considered merely objection and it has been used by states to denounce and decreate the foreign policy of opponent.

Imperialism in ancient time is clear in unending succession of empires in China, Western Asia and Mediterranean. Between 15th century and middle 18th century, England, France, Netherland, Portugal and Spain built empires in America, India and East Indies. Russia Italy, Germany, United States and Japan became imperial power in the period from middle of nineteen century to Second World War. European was the foremost of all in the extension of empires throughout the world.

Edward W. said writes:

Consider that in 1800 Western powers claimed 55 percent but actually held approximately 35 percent of the earth's surface and that by 1878 proportion was 67 percent a rate of increase of 83000 square miles per year. By 1914 the annual rate had risen to an astonishing 240000 square miles and Europe had a grand total of roughly 85 percent of the

earth as colonies, protectorates, dependencies, dominions and common wealth. (8)

Further he takes the reference of Ruskin, "England is to rule the world become it is the best, power is to be used, its imperial competitors are unworthy, its colonies are to increase, prosper, reaction tied to it" (104).

As Said's point, England was prominent imperial power among the European empires which controlled most of the parts of world under its empire. Formation of colonies and direct invasion on distant territory were the method of imperialism. Racial discrimination and political hegemony played the vital strategy for making empires. There were scholars, administrators, travelers, parliamentarians, merchants, novelists, theorists, speculators and varieties of outcast and misfit working as agents of imperialist.

This kind of imperialism existed before World War. As time passed and changed, the face of imperialism also got changed. Edward W Said writes regarding the present status of imperialism, "In our time direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism, as we shall see, lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic and social practices (9)."

In a sense, imperialism, for today's is known as neo-imperialism. Neo-imperialism suggests a new or current kind of cultural domination but the term shouldn't be understood merely in temporal frames of reference. Former imperialism was centered around European power that they merely use colonialism with either direct military power or optical and economic hegemony. In the contrary, neo-imperialism uses cultural domination for its first hand weapon that is centre in United States after World Wars. The imperial power for instance, United States, produce

such a media panel as films, radio, TV, books, newspapers, internet programs that make a crucial effect on other countries like South Asia. They take and imitate the cultural production as their role model, that's why, they are reluctantly colonized.

Helen Gilbert and Toanne Tomkins clarify the shifting imperialism:

In many respect, the emergence of modern neo-imperialism is directly related to European invasions of much of the world. The rise of United States as a superpower was predicated on the colonization of the north American continent, the decimation of its indigenous peoples the migration or transportation of a substitute population culture. (257)

The extract clarifies that the imperial power has shifted from Europe to United States but in different forms. They further write the following extract about that different form, “It could be argued, then, that neo- imperialism is even more insidious than overt domination because its hegemony often masquerades as a form of aid, advice or non-partisan support” (258).

Neo-imperialism involves the distinct types of domination which function like a slow poison or in the other word it colonizes the countries disguising the face of its hegemonic power instead of direct military power as in the past. Neo-imperialism uses the mass media as its pervasive tool which advertises its hegemonic power in the form of aid, advice, assurance etc. United States mostly control the world media system and develop a tendency to produce discourse and images that reinforce hierarchies based on race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual performance and the class. In particular, race-based discourses are common to almost all forms of imperialism, neo-imperialism, regional imperialism, global imperialism and continue to instigate or justify specific social and political orders.

Since there is close relationship between colonialism and imperialism, western powers have a tendency to alter the form of colonialism too. Colonization for, today's, is insidious; it invades for more than political chambers and extends well beyond independence celebrations. Its effects shape language, education, religion, artistic sensibilities and increasingly popular culture. Regarding to this fact Gilbert and Tomkins write;

British Empire was the largest modern empire and its vestiges still exist today in a reconfigured organization of former common wealth status which oversees political alliances and trade discussions among form or colonies. Many of those former colonies now possess a linguistic heritage that is based on the English language. (4)

We should bear it in mind that resistance against either imperialism or colonialism in any form began and existed from antiquity. Every era of imperialism had to face distinct type of resistance in a word it was not allowed to pervade in free space without protest. In the course of time, many thoughts, theories and movement came against imperialism, some of which worked well and vice versa. Among them, post-colonialism possesses the foremost position against the imperial discourse. In Alan Lawson's words, "post-colonialism is a politically motivated historical analytical movement which engages with, resists, and seeks to dismantle the effect of colonialism in the material historical, cultural, political pedagogical, discursive and textual domains" (156). He means to say that post-colonialism opposes the notion of imperialism in terms of historical, cultural, political, and pedagogical and so on. An important text *Orientalism* by Edward W. Said helped the theory develop and flourish.

Moreover many things and movement arose against the racism and imperialism in western and non-western political as well as aesthetic arena. Civil War of 1860^s and Civil Right Movement of 1960^s in America developed a kind of racial conscience that provoked the anti-racial consciousness in black people. Civil War declared the freedom of American slaves and slavery prevailed in many more areas especially south. But still nascent form of slavery existed even after civil War. After a hundred year, Civil Rights Movement proclaimed the end of slavery and racial segregation in America. But racial thought was deeply rooted in the mind of American whites which couldn't be avoided easily and soon. As a result, America is suffering from the racial problem even in the twenty first century.

Harlem Renaissance of 1920s and Black Arts Movement of 1960s were purely aesthetic and literary resistance against the racial discrimination. Harlem Renaissance was such a significant movement of black writers and artists through United States through which blacks started to express their bitter experience and sorrows. The movement was fruitful to develop the racial consciousness of black people in America with leading figures such as Langston Hughes, Claude Mckey, Countee Cullen and others. Black Arts Movement in 1960s established more racial consciousness of blacks in United States. It was associated with Black Power movement in politics which opposed the proponent of integration and assimilation and instead advocated black separatism, black power and black solidarity. Similar opinion is expressed by Kathelen Kerr:

The Black Arts movement of 1960s was the aesthetic arm of Black power and the handmaid of the Civil Rights Movement. These movements stimulated different groups in a common political aesthetic agenda; the emancipation of the American Negroes and the

development of a uniquely black aesthetic. Martin Luther King's advocacy of passive resistance and civil disobedience (influenced by Gandhi in India) soon inspired students' sit-ins. (376)

Kerr's remark on passive resistance gathers a considerable amount of support over a century long anti-racism movement. In fact, King's position disagrees with the hard linear movement like Black Power in terms of liberating from slavery.

Besides, King Kerr brings the reference of Du Bois and Booker T. Washington in terms of resistance of racial discrimination and prejudice. He writes;

Du Bois's interest was in building an educated class that could lead the Negro people and participate in political decision making. Washington was more interested in the development of a base of skilled workers and a business class that could participate in the capitalist monopolies. (375)

Here, it is clear that rift between Du Bois and Washington was ideological and mainly based on their agenda for the class future of Negro race in the United States. Du Bois advocates educating people could lead to emancipation due to the ability of evolving in decision making process. Education is only the way to emancipation. On the contrary, Washington suggests to develop the skill power of workers that could lead them to economic emancipation. But we can agree with them in the sense that education and economic boom only can resist the racial discrimination as well as imperialism.

Apparently, postcolonial studies came into the existence as a response to the colonial and imperial discourse with some of prominent critics like Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Hommi K Bhabha and others. Said is, undoubtedly, in the center of post colonialism for his publication of ground breaking study *Orientalism* (1978) or which

in institutional terms marked the beginning of post colonial studies. In fact, orientalism is a systematic discipline or discourse about the Orient/the east which functions as corporate institution for understanding and controlling other people. In Said's words, orientalism is "a western style for dominating restructuring and having over the orient" (3). According to Said, orientalism is a corporate institution for dealing with orient. It deals with orient and oriental society by describing, teaching and ruling over. The westerners construct a dichotomy between oriental and occidental and it is made truth through what Foucault says discourse. But Elleke Bohmer elaborates the notion of orientalism more than Said did E. He says;

Orientalist discourse thus depended on an absolute distinction being made between the dominant colonizing West and other people or 'underground slaves' not only 'orientals' as such but also Africans, Caribbean's, Latin Americans. In fact everyone who did not conform to value- laden image of dominant European itself.(321)

Boehmer sees the orientalist discourse not only in Oriental but every where the westerner's domination prevails in. Orientalist discourses are generated through the different corporate institution such as media, technology, pedagogy, ethics, politics and so on. The orientalists are working in disguise as Said says, "anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist- either in its specific or its general aspects, is an orientalist(2)." Moreover, orientalism works through the formation of hierarchy- occident is superior, civilized, powerful and orient is inferior, uncivilized, natives poor. Said again makes clear, "the basic distribution between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories" (2). In sum orientalism is a purely western discourse to subjugate the non western in terms of politics, geopolitics, and culture and so on. It has on assumption that the colonized lacks strategies and language with

which to resist oppression, to decry their objectification, to answerback. It has raised the awareness in oriental about the orientalist discourse so as to define the orientalism. Similar view is opined by Hans Bertens, "Orientalism offered a challenging theoretical framework and a new perspective on the interpretation of western writing about East(and other non-western cultures) and of writing produced under colonial rule"(205).

Said's *Culture and Imperialism* drew on one critical boundaries of post colonialism in which he discusses some of the key cultural productions of the West opera as well as literature of colonial dominance. Said's interest goes to the cultural emancipation. For him, post colonial independence involves not only the recovery of geographical territory but also the reclamation of culture. He says "Imperialism's culture was not invisible, nor did it conceal its worldly affiliations and interest" (XXI). He claims that reconstruction of native culture can be the force of resistance. Elloke Boehmer further elaborates, "For him [Said] the construction of the resistant, anti-colonial self is to be accomplished first and foremost by adapting especially Western configurations of identity. (352)"The extract is meant to say that the western domination can be resisted using the method developed by westerners themselves. They attack on native's culture and native should be bold enough to preserve the cultural heritage by adopting and assimilating the western configuration of identity.

Said has three great topics of cultural resistance. One is, in his words, "resistance on the right to see the community's history whole integrally"(215). Observation of history needs the the use of the national language and without the practice of national culture, the language will, for Said, be inert. He argues that national culture organizes and sustains the communal memories which reinhabits and restore the way of life and it also formulates the expression and emotion of pride as

well defiance. Said presents more arguments that slave narratives, spiritual autobiographies, prison memories which are written in national language can form a counterpoint to western power's monumental histories, official discourse and panoptic quasi-scientific viewpoint. In a word, restoration of national language is a seer resistance to colonial power.

Said's second idea about the resistance is an alternative way of conceiving human history. He means to say that alternative preconception is based on, in his words, "breaking down the barriers between the cultures" (216). He stands on side of disrupting the binary opposition made between the cultures. For that one should not oppose it as traditionally rather one should enter in to the discourse of west and mix with it, transform it. Then the western discourse is automatically disrupted and it forms as a resistance.

Lastly, Said opines that norms of separatist nationalism are mimicry an imitation of western political behavior that brings only little good. This type of nationalism revived several anarchic attitudes. He states, "The history of all cultures is the history of cultural borrowings. Cultures are not impermeable just as western science borrowed from Anabas"(217). That's why; assimilation and appropriations can be the best exercise of resistance to western.

Edward Said has done much more for the theoretical basic of postcolonialism. Apart from Said's notion, postcolonial studies analyses the relationship between colonizers and colonized from the earliest days of exploration and colonization. It draws on Foucault's notion of 'discourses', on Gramsci's 'hegemony' on deconstruction and to some extent on Marxism. It also examines how the western texts construct the colonizer's superiority and colonized inferiority and in doing so have legitimated colonization. In Hens Berterns' word, "It is especially

attentive to post colonial attitude-attitudes of resistance-on the part of colonized and seeks to understand the nature of the encounter between colonizer and colonized” (215).

Post colonial theory and criticism radically questions the aggressively expansionist imperialism and the system of values that supported imperialism and all the post colonial theorists and critics agree in their focus on colonial oppression, on resistance to colonization, on respective identities of colonizer and colonized and on others. In the course of time, many theories and assumptions have been developed as a resistance against colonial and imperial discourse. Among them, language of resistance is being discussed and applied in many literary and non-literary fields.

Language is a means through which imperial norms and values are communicated and transformed to the colonized people. According to Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins, “Part of imperialism's projects has been to impose the English language on colonized subjects in an endeavor to control them more completely” (164). They further write, “Forbidding people to speak their own tongues is the first step in the destruction of a culture” (164). Gilbert and Joanne claim that eradication of native's language and imposing of English is the first attack of imperialism. They suggest, that's why resistance to imperial project can be best done through the language itself as well.

They propose the three dimensional ideas for using the language as resistance. Firstly mimicry of colonizer's tongue is a hitting back to them in absence that mimicry can mock at the colonizer's sense and sensibility of language. But the mimicry should be confined to subvert the real spirit of the language the colonizers use. Secondly realization of the language, which arises from blending of one imperial language with an indigenous language, is an effective means of abrogating the imperial standard of

language. Gilbert and Tompkins opine, "It [Creole] is deliberately designed to destabilize the authority of English and to de-center the dominant linguistic group" (188). The mixture of two languages creates the difficulty in the understanding of colonizers. That's the great linguistic threat.

The last and important language of resistance is the reconstruction of indigenous language that is, according to Gilbert and Tompkins, a process of back to root. The project of imperial discourse is always centered at dismantling the natives root. Reconstruction of indigenous language preserves the root as well as heritage which is transmitted through the oral tradition. Likewise, the use of rhetorical devices of indigenous language into English dismisses the power invested in the colonizer's language.

A key site of resistance against the imposed values and practice has also been generated by the towering interest of post- colonial critics towards the ritual enactment. Rooted in folk culture these enactments are not only mnemonic devices that assist in the preservation of history but are also effective strategies for maintaining cultural difference through specific systems of communication-aural, visual and kinetic and specific values related to local customs. Ritual enactment is cultural heritage which embodies what Gilbert and Tompkins say an ostensible pure, pre-contact reality. The reality is expressed through the use of costumes, and masks. Besides, rhythm of music, drums, chants and other form of communication become the principle force guiding the resistance to the imposed western culture. Gilbert and Tompkins associate the use of mask as "an overturning the western influence" (28). Masks are mostly used to create archetypes and to help establish the ancestral links. Like the uniform of Christian Clergy, the non-western ritual clothing carries with it

various unspoken authorities and can be read, therefore, as a powerful tool for non-western is deeply embodied in ritual customs.

To sum, post-colonial criticism is a form of cultural criticism and cultural critique which disidentified whole societies from the sovereign codes of cultural organization. Colonization invades far more than political chambers; rather its effects, shape, language, education, religion, artistic sensibilities and popular cultures. For its project, colonization extended through the gate of binary opposition-colonizer and colonized, civilized and uncivilized, western and non-western. Colonialism and imperialism often come in to consideration as alternative way of western domination due to its application of binary opposition.

Racism is one of the binary oppositions imperialism has been using for centuries. It is because imperialist or colonizer always needs a kind of verification to give validity for its project. They often use racism as a grand tool that, they think, provides the validation to rule over others. That's why; racism is a megaproject of imperialism which can't work alone. Racism and imperialism function as two side of same coin to some extent. But imperialism has other tools besides racism which are irrelevant to note for this research work.

III. Anti- Imperial Discourse in *Oroonoko*

Aphra Behn's ground breaking work, *Oroonoko* represents a perfect synthesis of binary between the civilized and savage, colonizer and colonized and more than it white and black. This splendid synthesis indicates Behn tending to align with the secondary pole of the binary opposition. That's why; it is significant to spread limelight on the application of racism and slavery in *Oroonoko*. In many ways *Oroonoko* exploits the first person narration in order to signify the resistance generated by the protagonist and to some extent the racial prejudice promulgated by white. Although, he was slave holder at first, the protagonist Oroonoko is captivated by himself and faces with physical torture, family distortion, racial discrimination and death penalty for his rebellion.

Oroonoko, a black prince of Coramantien, was a gallant soldier who sells the captives of war to Europeans. His fiancée Imoinda, a supposed wife to king, is sold as a slave for she has immoral relationship with him and as he is wandering being fragmented, he is also captivated by the slave traders. He is bought to Surinam, an English colony on northern cost of South America and sold to Trefry. Then it begins the real torture of slavery.

The novel begins by insisting on its reality and veracity:

I do not pretend, in giving you the history of this royal slave, to entertain my reader with adventures of a feigned hero....And it shall come simply into this world recommended by its own proper merits and natural intrigues, there being enough of reality to support it and to render it diverting, without the addition of invention. (123)

Familiar novelistic devices are here. There is an insistence on veracity and a sense of readership is expressed as the author/narrator addresses an audience/ the

readers. The reality to be presented is set at two levels: part of the narrative relates directly to the experiences of the author/narrator and the part is heard by and therefore is related to the narrator. The narrator is inscribed directly into the story while at other points remaining outside it. *Oroonoko* is, moreover, not divided into the preface and chapters, but is presented as a continuous narrative.

The text is set in two continents: first in Africa where Oroonoko is seen in his natural habitat- this is the part of the hero's life of which the author has no first-hand experience- and second in Surinam, which appears as a recounting of the author's real experiences. In this way, the life of the main protagonist is seen to have originated in a distant land where European (English) forms of government is dominant, "Coramantien a country of Blacks so called, was one of those places in which he found the most advantageous trading for these slaves" (127). It is in the second part of the story that the narrator enters as actor and has direct contact with Oroonoko whose "Adventures lies in a colony in America called Surinam in the West-Indies"(123). Both of the settings are, thus, under the dominant power of English, which is to overuse them as much as it likes.

The novel can be divided into three parts: (1) Early life of Oroonoko in his own country; (2) The capture and early residence in Surinam and (3) The rebellion or the gradual dehumanization. Oroonoko remains the object of examination in all three sections and it is his integration into the field of European commercial and political discourse that is under the discussion of post colonial theory.

The story opens in Surinam, with a description of its flora and fauna, its inhabitants and its commercial potential, "trading with them for their fish, venison, buffalo skins, and little rarity"(124). The racial heterogeneity in Surinam is vividly brought to the light first the slaves are not natives of this land. Unlike the slaves, the

dichotomy between the inhabitants is clearly drowned as the preparation of legitimatizing of racism. Moreover the European settlers barter with them for fish skins,foirs, feather,beads and trinkets. The exchange-value of goods is enhanced by the racial exchange "I had a set of these presented to me and I give'en to the king's theatre" (124).

Surinam is at the service of its white colonizers. The value of the colony is fueled by commercial consideration and the beauty of flora and fauna of the land is described with this in view. The nature of colonizer is described as the role of explorer, traders, travelers, scientists, adventurers and so on. The land has not yet been fully explored," Tis a continent whose vast extent has never to known" (127). This unknown nature of most fictitious colonies signals danger and represents the uncharted and unmapped regions, outside the discursive purview of colonization and civilization. The known familiar colonized parts of Surinam are described in terms of a tropical paradise "groves of oranges, lemons, citron, gigs, nutmegs and noble aromatics continually bearing their fragrances"(127). The binary between explored and unexplored region of same colony wants, indirectly to propose the validation of white's attitude towards blacks.

In this context, Oroonoko is introduced. The seventeen years old and grandson of the king, he is described in great detail for physical structure. He is different from other people of his race and the narrator can't wait to say how beautiful he was to has sight:

I was as greatly surprised when I saw him as if I had heard nothing of him.... He was pretty tall but of a shape the most exact that can be fancied...his eyes were the most awful... His nose was rising and Roman, instead of African and flat. His mouth the finest shape. (130)

The description of the natives of Coramantien differs from Oroonoko's:

They have plurality of wives, which, when they grow old, they serve those that succeed'em who are young but with a servitude easie and respected and unless they take slaves in war, they have no other attendants. (126)

The distinction between the two descriptions of same group clarifies the colonial intention of division in ruling. The more they divided the people the more they can rule over them. The physical feature of Oroonoko seems more to be European and others are more like savage and hence therefore the politics of division assures colonizer for their project.

Language plays vital role in colonial discourse. The colonizer's intention to erase the language of natives is seen in *Oroonoko* with the protagonist learns English and French. The culture of imperialism works under the different branches and among them is language. The linguistic hegemony helps them legitimize the imperial discourse. Oroonoko is taught to speak with English and Spaniards:

Took a great pleasure to teach him morals language and science and was for it extremely belov'd and belid by him: Another reason was, to see all the English gentleman that traded thither and didn't only learn their language but that of the Spaniard also.... (129)

The sexual harassment or lust is one of the examples of racial discrimination in slavery whether it is in polite language or in harsh tongue; the female are addressed in core intention of lust. The black woman enters in to the person of Imoinda- "female to the noble male: the beautiful Black Venus to our young Mars" (130). Instead of dwelling on the details of her beauty, the text introduces her irresistible charm with one sentence, "I have seen white men sighing at her feet" (130). She is presented as

the object of white male lust. The racial segregation turns, ultimately into the resistance against the system violently. More seriously, Negro women are presented as a mere means of reproduction, not as a desirable woman. Negro males can have "many wives and many concubines" for their sexual pleasure (133).

The love between Oroonoko and Imoinda is Jeopardized when she falls prey to the old grandfather's (The king) lust. The royal veil-a symbol of invitation to the royal bed-is sent to her. Imoinda, on pain of death (for Oroonoko) declares her virginity and waits unresisting for her fate. Now, her virginity becomes the matter of honor and horror for the old king and Oroonoko. The old king symbolizes the imperial power that is going to ravish a virgin land. Imoinda's virginal body plays the role in securing each man's (king or Oroonoko's) political position. In this scenario, the hymen is a form of currency and a token of honor, whoever possesses the hymen- Imoinda, Oroonoko, or the king- possesses the honor but leaves other two dishonored. Finally, Oroonoko succeeds the tussle, when he manages to enter Imoinda's chambers one night and "ravish(ed) in a moment what his old father had been endeavoring for so many months" (143). Oroonoko's victory symbolizes the virgin land. Imoinda, wife to king, ravished by the grandson, can't now be possessed by either and is therefore banished and sold into slavery. Imoinda's auction, in a way, represents the situation of colonized women.

Distinction between western passion and Eastern passion is politicized as a part of process of feminization. Oroonoko, in the meantime, believes Imoinda to be dead and is prostrate with grief, with the result that the hitherto noble and courageous army is confused and awry in his absence. The excess of grief is in keeping with the nature of his love and is associated with Eastern passion love is pure and innocent "amorous slumber" enjoyed by a "love-sick slave" (148).

Colonial invasion on distant land was conducted either by direct military force or by indirect treachery in early days of colonialism. These common facts are practiced in time when Oroonoko awakens to a sense of responsibility and to the dangers that face his nature. He resumes his trading career, selling slaves to white merchants. The fortunes and status of the colonized subject are determined within the boundaries of commercial colonization. As trader, he is on the colonizer's side but his position as such is precarious and can't be sustained. When an English ship appears in the port, the captain and Oroonoko become friend, the friendship proves to be treacherous: Oroonoko, along with "about a hundred of the noblest of the youths of the court" is captured in a state of semi- drunkenness and the ship sails off with "this innocent and glorious prize" (150). A commercial partnership is, thus transformed and the European acquires full of power over the fate and lives of his native friends. It is a celebration of natives or 'black' values over European and civilized ones. The deception doesn't end here-the whole voyage is punctuated by the promises of freedom at the other, hereby quenching any potential rebellions and other protest. The first rebellion against the captor is passive resistance. It is like seductions of an unwilling maid: the form of protest that Oroonoko and his friends' resort to are to stop eating. It gives the glimpse of Gandhi's non-violence, non-obedience movement which succeeded to return the white colonizer to Europe.

The captivity of Oroonoko paves the way to real destiny of slavery on himself which is based on racial discrimination proposed by white masters. As a first sign of slavery, Oroonoko is sold to Trefry, a colonizer's agent. Trefry is described as a white man should be, "a man of great wit and fine learning . . . a very good mathematician and a linguist could speak French and Spanish" (154). The description shows clear

dichotomy between so-called civilized European and savage, it also helps the racism to be legitimized.

The most devastating process in slavery occurs when the slaves are given new name by the master. Naming and addressing is an act of possession- to be performed by the dominant subject. It can also be seen as an act of classification and ordering. The masters can't get control the slaves until the slaves are renamed. It is because the slaves face the identity crisis which makes easier to be colonized. Oroonoko is still a royal prince and Trefry his master, is trying to rule over him but in vein. Oroonoko is still honored and praised by fellow slaves as royal member, "They all cast themselves at his feet, crying out, in their language, live, king! Long Live O King" (157). It makes Trefry more trouble to get control over Oroonoko as well as other slaves. That's why he use the weapon naming, "their native ones being likely very barbarous and hard to pronounce. So that, Mr. Trefry gave Oroonoko that of Caesar" (156). And Imoinda is transformed into what "we know Clemene was Imoinda" (160). The act of naming is of prime significance and related to a notion of possession. It also shows an awareness of the importance of names to imperialisms efficacy. Imperialists also used to change the name of colony they invaded. It works in individual to legitimize racial discrimination and to pave the way to identity crisis. Oroonoko loses his identity in his new name and thus falls into slavery reluctantly. It is moreover, an interesting matter that the new names 'Caesar' and 'Clemene' are itself a form of passive resistance. Caesar comes from the emperor Julius Caesar and Clemene is derived from the Greek name Clymene which means famous and infamous. The Great imperial king and queen are associated to the seer name of slaves to signify the ironic resistance of colonizer.

Initially, the text tries to erase the hierarchy divisions between master and slave by insisting on the 'individual' superiority of Oroonoko. The 'she-slave' is introduced and the woman is made to play the role of exchange and mediation. Imoinda, now Clemene, the 'fair' slave has won every one's heart, including Mr. Trefry, who claims, "that all the white beauties he had seen, never charmed him as absolutely as this fine creature had done..."(159). When Clemene's identity is revealed, Mr. Trefry steps aside and Imoinda and Oroonoko are reconciled in the new world. The reunion of the couples is the first point that brings Oroonoko with racial consciousness when he "swore he disdain'd the Empire of the world, while he could behold his Imoinda...." (160). Likewise, anti-slavery consciousness blooms in Oroonoko more powerfully with a child. This new accident made him:

More impatient of liberty and he was every treating with Trefry for his and Clemene's liberty and offered either gold or a vast quantity of slaves, which should be paid before they let him go, provided he could have any security that he should go when his ransom was paid. (161)

For a colonizer, gold or any treasure is not valuable than the opportunity to rule over others. That's why, Oroonoko's plea for liberty on the condition of offering gold or vast number of slaves goes vain. They feed Oroonoko "Day to day with promises and delay'd him, till Lord Governor should come" (161). The anti- imperial discourse in narrator bursts when she sees Clemene pregnant and her coming destiny with her delivery of child in slavery. The seventeenth century destinies of women were no better than that of slaves. The narrator (some extent Behn herself) is, that's why, attracted to plight of Oroonoko and his family. Her nascent form of resistance against the system of slavery begins when she tells him the story of "the lives of the Romans and great men which charmed him..."(161). She expects Oroonoko to be

bold enough like Roman Warrior to fight against the slavery. The narrator becomes more and more critical against the system. She criticizes:

Trefry stands as representative and symbol of new order in Europe .However, the economic prosperity of that order is based on commercial and colonial expansion .It is ironical that eighteenth century doctrine of the rights of man should be established with a system which legitimized trade in human bodies. (162)

The narrator / author presents herself in terms of this concept of rights , integrity suddenly to tell the readers that she had already constituted herself as advocate for Caesar's liberty . She says "I was interested in Oroonoko only on humanitarian grounds "(164).The narrator, thus, encourages Oroonoko's power against the slavery. But it is very conscious that it should not be bloody and rebellious. Meanwhile, Oroonoko gets the opportunity to be a tourist guide going, hunting, fishing, and trekking over the island. During the course of time, he shows many Herculean tasks to perform his mighty power on the one hand and to reveal his symbolic resistance on the other hand. To Oroonoko's status as a tourist guide is added that of intermediary between the natives Indians and White Colonisers.

Natives are efficient in hunting. They have only the traditional weapons such as arrow, sword, axe and others. These weapons have cultural significance which saves them from enemies on the one hand and on the other hand they are the symbol of racial resistance. Oroonoko uses his traditional weapons to perform the difference Herculean tasks which are symbolically passive rebellion against the slavery .At first, he encounters a tigress while he is trying to grab a cub from it. The tiger is "Beast of might size and vast a limb, who came with open Jaw upon him " (166) and it is killed by Oroonoko with a sword which belongs to Mrs. Martin, a white agent.For the

second time, Oroonoko gets another opportunity to show his bravery murdering the tiger which people call it 'beast 'because it has been shot "with several bullets quite through the body Through the very heart, and it was still alive and people believed she was devil rather than a mortal thing" (166). He kills it with his sharp arrow at once which goes directly through its brain.

Another, he captures a fish 'Numb Eel' which a kind of quality to be numbs the fisher after it touches the bait. He is almost dead; fainting fell into the river due to the electrical effect of fish. But he succeeds the mission gambling his life .These all events show a common activity done by native. Besides it, the events have more significance in symbolic meaning. The beast or demon like creatures represents the colonizer or imperial agents who always want to suck the blood and sweat of native through racial and colonial practices. Oroonoko is seen successful defeating the opponents. Despite the repeated attacks from British colonists, the "courageous animal" ultimately dies from Oroonoko's arrow. Upon infection, the tiger's "wound" reveal that the English hunters whose bullets appeared to be ineffectual, indeed pierced the animal's heart.

The cultural practice and the use of native language play the vital role in resisting the imperial discourse. Culture determines the thought and it is circulated through language .Every language has cultural significance without which language can't be understandable .Every imperial attack was and is on the language first and on land and others. In this context, language plays important role to resist and assist the imperialism. The narrator faces difficulties which she visits Indians for her and their exploration of new world to spread empire .Most of the members of the team are afraid because "fears of some of the company failed and they would not venture it "(109). Indian cultural practices and the traditions, which are totally strange for them,

make the whites afraid of approaching them. The native cultural heritage plays the vital role of preventing colonizer into their world. But the narrator, her brother and maids gathered the courage to approach Indians simply because of the mediatory role of Oroonoko who is not much different from Indian natives and the local fisherman.

Language becomes only one way for them to venture into the communication with Indians which becomes possible only through Fisherman's translation. Without it, they are to be avoided by Indians. The distinction between Indians who are almost naked and English who are dressed well is a clear demarcation line between Oriental and Occidental. But narrator's attempt to assimilate with them, "we offered our hands which they took and looked on us" (170), shows the latent form of her support for Indians. When narrator's brother kisses the young wife of Indian peemie, he instantly goes to kiss the narrator in return. His wife is ravished by a white man and he is also ready to ravish a white woman. It shows one to one resistance against the invasion of colonizer.

Anti-colonial discourse is generated by the ritual and body language too. The Indian natives serve lunch to the narrator's team which is seasoned with pepper. Their table is made of leaves, plates of leaves, chair of log and these dining set make them different to have the meal offered by the natives. Moreover, the warriors of the native are of different body structure and shape which are chiefly post-colonial significant. The narrator accepts it "so frightful vision, it was to see 'em no fancy can create, no such dreams can represent so dreadful a spectacle" (172). The body structure of native warrior is purely post-colonial:

cut through each cheek, long slashes; through which their teeth appeared, they had several other formidable wounds and scars or rather dismembering, they had comitias or little aprons before 'em and

griddles of cotton with their knives naked, stuck in it, a bow at their backs and quiver of arrows on thighs and most had feathers on head of drivers color. (172)

The Indian natives represent oriental conception made by western power. But more than it, they verify the anti -imperial discourse constructed in post -colonial theory.

All of the adventures that Ornooko performed are motivated by the hope of liberation which is more multiplied by Imoindia and her grown up pregnancy. To them, it is " hard to gain the liberty of two and it would be more difficult to get that for three" (174). Thus, the antislavery consciousness blooms in Oroonoko arithmetically day by day with his child in the womb. He feels that all of his expectation of liberation has gone vain and prepares himself for decisive conclusion which is his highest anti- slavery consciousness .Unified whole is the strength and Oroonoko applies this norms for his first revolt. His revolt against the slavery is justifiable and historical in a sense that there is no option after the failure of long – term negotiation. Oroonoko gathers his fellow Negroes in time when whites are overtaken in drunk for their day of debouches. He gives a long speech clarifying their miseries, agonies, suffering, loads, burdens, misfortunes and so on about their poor condition. He also makes clear about their destiny which is no better than ass, dog, donkey or horse .He concludes that the present condition is due to the tyranny of white and he persuade:

My dear friends and fellow-sufferers, should we be slaves to an unknown people? Have they vanquished us nobly in fight? Have they won us in honorable battle? And are we by chance of war, become their slaves? We are brought and sold like apes and monkeysFor

rapines, murder, thefts.....and shall we render obedience to such a degenerate race that has no human virtue left? (176)

The speech is more persuasable like a speech given by Martin Luther King .This type of speech is deeply rooted in racial consciousness which, later, multiplies into anti- racial discourse either under the non- violence movement or over the bloody revolution . Oroonoko leads his fellow-slaves to non-violence movement escaping from the plantation. Escape narrative has a long history as an anti- slavery discourse through much of racial consciousness has been generated. Their first rebel begins with their march to the kingdom of freedom in which all of the children, women, old and young participate.

Oroonoko's final rebellion remains incomprehensible to the narrator and this friendly admiring European narrator is bewildered at his rebellion .That's why, the revolt is reported in terms of which make it clear that rebellion are doomed to failure, "It was not hard to find these fugitives for as they fled , they were forced to fire and cut woods before them.."(178). Master slave relationship is always undermined by the treachery and here too, begins the treachery to catch Oroonoko and his fellow-slaves. The governor-general proceeds with an armed band of men and Trefry , once Caesar's friend , is part of this band ,though he goes along "rather to be a mediator than a conqueror in such a battle"(178). Finally they are caught and persuaded "to surrender yourself, all imaginable respect shall be paid you and yourself your wife and your child shall depart free out of your land "(179). Every persuasion has latent of conspiracy and Oroonoko understands it well.

Imoindia, a passive character upto now, becomes aggressive, violent women more than her husband. Black woman has to bear double violence by male and white. Double violence makes her strong enough to resist against the tyranny .She wounds

several and shot the governor into the shoulder with the poisonous arrows. He is likely to die but an Indian woman, his mistress, sucks the wound and cleans the wound from venom. Apart from it, they keep on persuading and Trefry plays the role of mediator. He speaks "very cordially himself generously put himself with tears to live, by surrendering himself and to name his condition "(180). Oroonoko, overcoming by Trefry's wit and reasons and in consideration of Imoindia, surrenders to the government who takes them to the plantations

Physical punishment has been using to break the spirit and make the person a common object like a stone. In racial discrimination, either in colonialism or racism, the ruler uses the physical punishment as a ultimate tool for controlling the fugitives. They no sooner arrived at the place than they have got whipping " in most deplorable and inhuman manner, rendering the very flesh from their bones "(180). The cruelty of punishment is seen when:

they unty'd him , almost fainting ,with loss of blood from thousand wounds all over his body from which they had rent his cloths and led him bleeding and naked as he was and loaded him all over with irons and then rubbed his wounds to complete their cruelty with Indian pepper. (180)

The torture turns into resistance .It can be both latent and open to be observed. The doctrine with family is another mental torture making the person's spirit more senseless. They separated Imoindia from Oroonoko and "did not let her see this barbarity committed towards hers lord .And shut her up, which was not in Kindness to her "(181). It makes Imoindia more rebellious and confident towards the unseen plight.

The narrator's alignment towards the protagonist is revealed when she goes to the plantation to meet Oroonoko and imagines, "I suppose I had authority and interest enough there, had I suspected any such thing, to have prevented it" (181). She makes as much pardons as she can for the bad treatment committed to him for the offenders, till we said so much, that he believed we had no hand in will ill treatment" (181). In fact, the narrator is taken as a victim of same cruelty and she is under the control of same tyrannical system. She can feel any unjust but can't revolt it. She can observe any cruelty but can't reform it. It is only because of male dominated society of white which treats the woman and slave through the same token of perspective. She is under the control of her male dominated society against which she can't revolt openly supporting the slaves. That's why she only supports the pain and angst of victim in her own decision of observation which doesn't appear apparently.

Moreover, narrator's ambivalent position can be pointed out that makes the reader puzzled. Her omission of a "thousand events" that Oroonoko tells the other slaves because they are "not fit here to be recited" directly contradicts her promise in the opening of the novel to make her narrative speak from Oroonoko's mouth (176). At the same time, throughout the novel she is "oblig'd ...to discourse with Caesar" and she often redirects her narrative abilities to distract Oroonoko from the idea of himself (174). The narrator's conversations with Oroonoko reflect her inability to accommodate her story to his perspective, "I perceiv'd he resented that word, which I strove to soften again in vain" (141). The narrative subject 'I' transform into "we" at the critical time when Oroonoko escapes from the plantation. 'We' refers to the whole community especially women who are terrified of Oroonoko's rebel that make "all the females of us fly down the river, to be secured" (181). Narrator's 'we' is the whole community of white women who are not in favor of Oroonoko at all. But the

ambivalence is due to the patriarchal society dominating the whole women including narrator herself. The narrator is also the integral part of society. So that, her support to Oroonoko is under the ambivalent meaning, this is her obligation to be like that.

Despite the goodwill of his friends and narrator, Oroonoko's situation continues to be hopeless, so that he contemplates suicide. This is to be preceded by killing of Imoinda and their unborn child and his enemies. This is the highest point of resistance which apparently turns into anti-slavery rebellion. Freedom from the slavery is ultimate goal of Oroonoko and revenge is his only one way to get it. It is considerable that killing his own wife paves the way to get freedom from slavery. It is because slavery is more cruel and brutal than death. Death takes one's life for once but one has to scarify his/her life for many times in slavery. In a sense, that's why, Oroonoko takes death as an ultimate weapon to defeat the slavery. If Imoinda isn't killed, he thinks, "she may be first ravished by, every brute, exposed first to their nasty lusts, and then a shameful death" (184). To save her from the brute slavery, she must be killed no other than by himself. Moreover, his unborn child should be freed before coming to this slavery world. Only death can save him too. Imoinda is bold enough to accept the proposal. She can be found "pleading for death than de was to propose it" (184) and she is pleased to find her husband's fixed resolution not to leave her pry to his enemies.

Imoinda's acceptance of death can be analyzed as a masculine form of resistance by a female character. At least, she gets victory over slavery, though she plans nothing against it. On the fixed day Oroonoko kills his wife and unborn child imagining he is getting "victory over brute" (185). Imoinda is smiling while her throat is chopped away. Now she cant's be "sucked with lust and anger by those of hungry

monster” (185) and she passes away to land of freedom where she will be waiting Oroonoko for their next “reunion of freedom” (185).

Feminine action of masculine Oroonoko begins after her wife’s slaughter. He can’t keep his promise to take revenge of his enemies due to the grief caused by the death of his sweet heart. He has spent two days mourning on her and has been delayed to take action against his enemies. His plight doesn’t end here. He concludes to suicide rather than to be caught again in slavery. The search party finds that Imoinda has been killed by Oroonoko, “Oh, monster that hast murdered thy wife” (186). The white party feels humiliated because Oroonoko has killed his wife before they do. The defeated mentality comes out with “Let us take him alive by all means” (186) for they have to take revenge killing him. But Oroonoko cut his throat and stabs his belly before they take him under control.

He is taken back to the plantation for treatment. The master-slave relationship becomes more complex when Oroonoko isn’t allowed to die too and is cured to be tortured again. The colonialists use the slavery to sweep away all the anti-imperial activities from top to button. Oroonoko is not alone member of anti- slavery movement, rather there are more fellow-slaves in latent form. Oroonoko only leads the group of that racial consciousness. And the colonizers want to brush out as such consciousness by executing Oroonoko publicly.

Only the mental resistance has remained in Oroonoko and he is ready to accept the death as Imoinda did few days back. He is told, “You should die like a dog” (188) and he thinks this is the only sentence that “ever he heard speak truth” (188). All of the slaves’ conditions are no better than a dog has and he, who revolts against the white, should die like a dog on the street. Oroonoko has already internalized the core truth before his execution. That’s why; he desires to take a

tobacco pipe. It indicates the cultural root to resist the imperial evasion on a foreign land. Taking tobacco has been a cultural practice for any African black people. They feel and are given pride who smokes local tobacco.

The last scene of his execution is the most barbaric and brute:

He had learn'd to take tobacco; and when he was assur'd he should dye, he desir'd they would give him a pipe in his mouth, ready lighted, which they did; and the executioner came, and first cut off his members, and threw them into the fire; after that, with an ill-favored knife, they cut his ears, and his nose, and burn'd them; he still smoak'd on, as if nothing had touch'd him; then they hack'd off one of his arms, and still he bore up, and held his pipe; but at the cutting off the other arm, his head sunk, and his pipe; drop'd and he gave up the ghost, without a groan or a reproach. (188)

Thus, Oroonoko's life ends. He seems to be untouched by such brute torture. He is smoking while parts of his body are being chopped away. This is the great indifference towards torture that's definitely hitting back to the colonial master. If the victim of torture is not affected then the executioner is itself affected.

IV. Conclusion

Aphra Behn's masterpiece *Oroonoko* reveals the seventeenth-century system of slavery in a British colony of Surinam with details of many discriminating events preceded by the perfect synthesis of binary between white and black, civilized and savage and colonizer and colonized. Although, Behn belongs to her time of imperial heyday, she tends to align with latter in the system of binary opposition formulated by the then time that is secondary pole. It is possible through Behn's semi-autobiographic writing with the exploitation of first person narration that has ambivalent relationship with the black protagonist, Oroonoko.

Behn's first person narrator claims that she went to Surinam as the daughter of the Lieutenant-General-elect of the colony along with her mother, sister, and brother. Her father died on the voyage, so the family arrived in Surinam with high social status but no political position, and remained there until the next boat to England. In the colony she meets a remarkable slave, Oroonoko, a prince who had own country, she witnessed his reunion with his beloved Imoinda, his growing realization that the whites had no intention of freeing and returning them to their native land, his consequent organization of a slave rebellion, and his gruesome execution.

The protagonist Oroonoko though he is slave holder at first, encounters the racial prejudice when he is captivated in Surinam colonized by whites. The racial consciousness of Oroonoko blooms with his own experience of slavery which ultimately multiplies into metamorphosis of resistance in terms of language, custom, culture and religion. The resistance against the colonizer come to the highest consideration when he kills his own wife 'Imoinda' to save her and unborn child from the violence of slavery. Eventually Oroonoko's slaughter by the colonizer itself turns

to be a counter-discourse. It is because he is taking tobacco during the execution as if untouched by dismembering parts of his body.

Imperial tenets in the novel are more apparent through the setting of colonized Surinam and characters of colonial agents. British Empire extended worldwide during eighteen and nineteen century. Surinam, part of British colony, fall its prey in late seventeen century. Imperial power is generated through its agents such as ship captain Trefry, Byam, Governor- in- General and so on. Oroonoko is first captivated by ship captain and sold to Mr Trefry where he encounters the violence of slavery.

The imperial agents are of different characters- cruel, kind, mediatory, and dogmatic- that add more torture to the slaves rather than soothing them and as a result anti-racial consciousness grow implicitly not only in Oroonoko but in all of the slaves. Moreover the conception in Imoinda generates the consciousness of liberty in Oroonoko that ultimately bursts in the form of rebellion- flee from plantation- resulting his leadership gets failed. Imperialism always tends to suppress others culturally, socially, psychologically or physically by using either force or treachery. It is necessary for Oroonoko to get victory over slavery instantly, that's why he kills his wife and tries to commit suicide because death is more desirable than the violence of slavery.

In this way, Oroonoko encounters cruelty of racial discrimination in the British colony of Surinam. Although slaughter seems to be a snap of racial violence but it is definitely anti-racial resistance by a single person. It is considerable that imperial power always need some kind of political tool to legitimize its norms and principle and that is racism and slavery in the context of Oroonoko. The nexus between Imperialism and Racism lies on the politics of legitimizing the imperial

discourse. The present research comes to the conclusion that anti-racial ethos of Oroonoko turns automatically into anti-imperial discourse.

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