

RESPONSES TO THE PROCESS OF COLONIZATION: NATIVISM IN INDIAN LITERATURE AND NEGRITUDISM IN AFRICAN LITERATURE

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SUMMARY

The present minor research project gives a comparative analysis of the two movements-Nativism in Indian Literature and Negritude in African Literature.

Some common aspects between these movements are as following:

- 1) Both movements are the forms of nationalism and through it they protested against colonialism. Negritude took place to fight against colonialism and nativism fought against neocolonialism which is an invisible form of colonialism.
- 2) Both movements emphasized on the assertion of self-identity. By asserting self-identity they attempted to regain self-confidence and self-dignity.
- 3) Both movements are the expressions of self-pride by reviving the native history, culture and traditions.
- 4) They tried to do away with the colonizers' ideals and advocated their own indigenous ideals.
- 5) They rejected the idea that the colonizers were inherently superior to native people. Basically they fought against inferiority complex of native people created due to colonization.

Besides, these two movements are different from each other in some of their features. The difference can be explained in the terms of their place and exponents, aim, span and scope, the time period, nature and area of these movements.

The nativistic literary theory grew since 1960 in order to break the assumption that works of literature can only be appreciated by those with a particular sort of culturally breeding, brahminical in particular when students from 'bahujansamaj' entering higher education. It is Bhalchandra Nemade who introduced first the concept of nativism in his essay in Marathi "Sahityatil Deshiyata" in 1983. It was translated into English as "Nativism in Literature". Nemade and G.N.Devy started this movement with the cause of freeing Indian

literary criticism from the shackles of Euro-American dominance. At the same time, it was against Sanskrit hegemony.

Negritude was a literary and ideological movement developed by French-speaking black intellectuals, writers and politicians in France in 1930s. The founders were Senegalese President Leopold Sedar Senghor, Martinican poet AimeCesaire and Guinan poet Leon Damas. They were from three French colonies in Africa and the Caribbean who met while living in Paris in the early 1930s. Taking inspiration from Harlem Renaissance movement, they started a magazine *L'Etudiant noir* in 1935 and launched the movement. The term was coined by AimeCesaire in his poem "Notebook on a Return to My Native Land" in 1939. Though the magazine was short lived, the three writers continued about Negritude through their poetry.

Nativism challenges Eurocentric modernism and internationalism. The two critics deeply rooted in Bhasha tradition, emphasize the language and creativity of the masses and reject the domination of Anglicised or Sanskritised models. Thus nativism has the target of decolonization of Indian psyche which still was under the Western influence even after getting political independence. Also it was a struggle against neocolonialism.

Negritude fought against colonial and racial policy of Europeans. They rejected the superiority of European culture and civilization over African culture. Getting political independence was their objective, but also they aimed at redefining the term 'negre', which had been used pejoratively and establishing a new identity of blacks to the whole world.

Nativism writers advocate 'bhasha' tradition in India. They emphasize the multilingual and multicultural society of India which needs their own critical models, tools and standards. For that, they recommend a nativistic awareness of Indian history and tradition. They reject domination of both Anglicised and Sanskritised elites in language and creativity which they call as 'videshi' and 'marg' respectively. They favour language and creativity of the majority of ordinary people who make up the plurality of Indian civilization.

Negritude writers wrote about the 'black' people and the unique experience of blacks. They wished to celebrate 'blackness' having pride in their black identity. There are many poems describing beauty of black people. They wanted to unite the people of negro race all over the world on the basis of common heritage. Negritude encompasses the whole of African cultural, economic, social and political values.

Nativism can be called as an intellectual discussion which mainly concerns Indian literary criticism. It mainly speaks about critical tools needed in Indian critical discourse. Literary criticism and culture are their main fields of concern. Whereas negritude is an

emotional condemnation of the oppression of black people by the European colonizers. As black people were double suppressed –as colonized and as negro, negritude makes an emotional appeal on the basis of humanism against racism. Senghor calls it “humanism of twentieth century”. One of the main themes of negritude poetry is reflection of slavery and physical torture through which black people had undergone.

Lastly, as their immediate objective achieved i.e. political independence gained by most of the African countries in 1960s, the movement faded away after it. the racism is almost no more. Today we see equality in the world and we find many black people leading in politics, culture, sports, business etc. Nativism movement started by mahatma Gandhi, getting momentum due to the contribution by Nemade and Devy and others after 1980s. We can say that today nativism is still needed in the wake of globalization.