



LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN POSTCOLONIAL AFRICAN LITERATURES: A MARXIST PERSPECTIVE

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“Get up, stand up! Stand up for your right!” Bob Marley, *Burning*, 1973.

ABSTRACT

The political decolonization of Africa in the period of independence has soon bumped on a crucial obstacle on the way: the question of the language in postcolonial African literatures. In this regard, several well-known writers and essayists such as Ngũgĩ, Fanon, and Kunene have offered their approach to this question and expressed their full support for the production of texts in African languages as the way to mind liberation. The promotion of mother tongues is proposed by Ngũgĩ in his book *Decolonizing the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986) to analyze and sustain the paradigm change. However, the question remains delicate given to the fact that the multilingual meaning of literatures expressed in a foreign language in Africa constitutes a diversity and a strength assumed by other writers. The question of the language in postcolonial African literatures is answered here with a Marxist perspective to reveal and preserve the quality, the influence and the international reputation of the African authentic creation.

Keywords: African language, African literature, postcolonial, education, nationalism, Marxism.

RESUME

La décolonisation politique de l'Afrique à l'époque des indépendances s'est rapidement heurtée à un obstacle crucial : la question de la langue dans la littérature ou dans la pensée africaine postcoloniale. À cet égard, plusieurs écrivains et essayistes de renom tels que Ngũgĩ, Fanon et Kunene ont proposé leur approche à la question et ont exprimé leur plein soutien à la production de textes en langues africaines comme voie de libération de l'esprit. La promotion des langues maternelles est proposée par Ngũgĩ dans son livre *Décoloniser l'esprit: la politique de la langue en littérature africaine* (1986) pour analyser et soutenir le changement de paradigme. Cependant, la question reste délicate étant donné le multilingue des littératures en langue étrangère en Afrique qui constitue une diversité et une force assumée par d'autres écrivains. La question de la langue dans les littératures africaines postcoloniales est ici répondue dans une perspective marxiste pour révéler et préserver la qualité, le rayonnement et la réputation internationale de la création africaine authentique.

Mot clés : Langues africaines, Littératures africaines, postcolonial, éducation, nationalisme, Marxisme.

INTRODUCTION

The story of mass struggle for self-determination is worked out by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' *The Communist Manifesto* (1848). Since the time Karl Marx has published the book, scholars and intellectuals of different horizons including

literature have fallen in love with the ideology. Marx's ideology and its activities have come to be known as Marxism. It declared that the capitalist elites or the bourgeoisie successfully confined the working class or the proletariat represented here by the Africans to marginal position. That is the reason why it was difficult for the bourgeoisie to encourage the inferior classes to voice their needs. The ideology has been influential in many literary postures since its publication. The Whites' linguistic hegemony was positively set against the proletariat's interest during the colonial period to see the Blacks converse in foreign languages to detect first hand their intentions.

The question of African languages was not a serious concern since many colonizers thought that Blacks were inferior beings, so there is no need promoting their language. Seyferth explains this as follows (1991, 179): "They all imagined European immigrants as representatives of superior 'races' destined to whiten a mestiço and black population". In the colonial period, church missionary societies were opened all over Africa as it has been described in Ferdinand Oyono's *Houseboy* (1956) and Ngũgĩ's *Weep Not, Child* (1964). Africans were thought to hate their own culture and identity and embrace the colonizer's cultures.

This was a machine of cultural and linguistic alienation. However, after African elites' encounter with Marxist theory, they have become more mindful of the necessity to claim their full independence in politics as well as in literature. The argument is that the lower class should revolt and take control of all spheres of their countries including language policy and promotion, knowing that literature is a product of the base realities. Marxist perspective relates literary texts to the society, to the history and cultural and political system in which it is created. It follows, therefore, that African languages fit their being used in African writings as claimed by Ngũgĩ (1981).

The present article aims to evaluate the necessity for African languages to take over the linguistic hegemony of foreign languages which targets to dominate the colonised body. So, deploying Marxism theory helps address all this by giving ways out to exploited masses with a quantitative methodology. The Marxist theory is preferred here as it encourages an innovative spirit, an appeal to the people to rise and take back what belongs to them as the only reasonable mean to change history.

1. What is Marxism?

Marxism puts in foundation on people, history and class struggle. Marxism centres on societal events and nothing is explained without referring to this. In other words, Marxism is a hypothetical framework of socioeconomic study that examines class relations and societal conflict using materialistic interpretation of historical development of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. This method of analysis is called dialectic under which opposing elements clash to produce a positive or negative

result. It is named after Karl Marx and examines the effects of capitalism on labour, productivity and economic development and encourages workers' revolt to overturn their exploiters. In the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Karl Marx defines the "superstructure", one of the notion of Marxist criticism, this way:

In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The totality of the relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society - the real foundation, on which legal and political superstructures arise and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. The mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life (Cited in Jay, 1993, 257).

Marxists believe that literature belongs to base realities and that the best system of governance, after the struggle, is socialism since the class struggle originates out of the exploitation of one class by another. According to Griffith (2002), Marxist criticism then appeared early in the 20th century, expressly in the 1930s during the Great Depression. This depicted the difficulties of the poor and downtrodden, especially when they struggled against oppressive capitalist bosses. Marxism condemns the miserable conditions in which African people and the Third World live in their own countries after they have encountered the colonisers. In the end of colonisation, Africans have been left with a terrible legacy of destruction as the colonisers used the materials and ground resources to serve their own economic and social development.

For example, apartheid was used to send the native off their own land and redistribute them to the white settlers for free, because the settlers thought that they were ordained by God to own, exploit and extend the land more than the proletariat that they considered to be their subalterns. The settlers reinforced racism and subalternity through violence against the natives. This has also occurred in Zimbabwe, Uganda and Kenya where fertile lands categorically have belonged to the settlers and the natives have become mere workers. What could be the Marxist approach pertaining to literature and language?

2. Marxist Approach of Literature and Language

Language is crucial to culture, and culture is a means of communication of a social group's identity. Communication carries culture, and culture carries literature. Language is an important means to ideology of any country in the world. Language is then inseparable from human society with specific form and character. A country conveys its ideology in language and literature. This is the reason why it is vital to have a national language in which to put all this. Writers and theorists need language to frame ideology and imagination. Following this, Freeman (2001, 965-966) defines language as "a system of beliefs characteristic of a class or group; a system of illusionary beliefs, false ideas, false consciousness as opposed to true or scientific knowledge; the general process of the production of meanings and ideas". As a result,

when a nation's ideology is not expressed in its own language, there is a serious gap to fill. The linguistic freedom is related to the right for Africans to use their languages whether major or minor in schools, administrations and creative thinking without referring to the white settlers'. For Seegers (1997), "there is a search for cultural authenticity, the return to origins, the need to preserve minor languages, pride in particularism". Imperialists imposed their languages on the erroneous ground that when they came, there was no written form of language and no other items symbolizing civilization in Africa. This helped imperialists establish their form of education designed to control the African mindset and "to assist in the consolidation of foreign rule" as stated by G. P. Kelly and Philip G. Altbach (1984, 1). The colonial system of education resisted to integrate African teaching methods in the system. This occurs because the colonizing nations applied their own systems of education in their colonies for years without considering the existing one. A good dosage of self-hatred was poured in the new educated Africans to abandon their ancestors' cultural ways and episteme. The search for authenticity was erased during the colonial period, when African defeated leaders and colonial administrators paid fidelity to European ideology. This created rifts and fragmentation between traditional and modern Africans. All this strengthened the imperialists and weakened African nationalists to present-day. This attitude has impacted the life of Africans in their own countries and many African writers still write in borrowed languages.

For instance, African pupils were punished when they were caught speaking their mother tongues in schools. They were caned on bare buttocks and were made to carry a wooden or metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as "I AM STUPID" to represent their defiance against the conventional rule. Some African teachers were rebuked by their school heads for having explained some models in local language to their pupils instead of the foreign language. The physical violence was followed by the psychological one in the classroom, for the new learners could not cope quickly with the foreign language intonation and sentence building. In fact, when borders marking stopped distilling bloody violence in Africa at the end of the Berlin conference of 1884-1885 as some European countries gave themselves the right to share the African continent, psychological violence started in classrooms via chalks, blackboards and kaki uniform.

To escape from this humiliation, some teen-agers would corrupt the class prefects by giving them pieces of chalk, money or promising them loaves of their meal at the lunchtime. The lucrative part of this wicked game turned the pupils to witch-hunters and premature spies. Others who did not have resources to share had to fight back, report others to pay off their fault or stop attending the school. For the latter, schools are places of terror where they had better fear to save their lives. To prosper, very earlier, the system turned Africans against their fellow Africans in colonial schools.

This corroborates Gauri Viswanathan's opinion which indicates that "cultural assimilation [...] the most effective form of political action" (1988, 85).

Through violence, the colonizers conveyed a sense of inferiority in the colonised, and it was only through the same means that the colonised would regain his sense of self, a sense of culture, and the physical reality of statehood according to Fanon in *The Wretch of the Earth* (1963, 7). Moreover, the child had to take time to internalise the dissimilarity between the language he was forced to speak, read and write in class and the one he spoke at home, the language in which his mother taught him epic battles of great and brave hunters of his village. This was a big dilemma to take on for a young and innocent spirit. The separation is more stressed when it came to teach him mathematic, geography, history, music, and poetry. None of these was complicated in his own language. Mother, father, and siblings lonely or together taught him all this at home. It was not that problematical. Under full moonlights, the new learner had listened to saga of brave hunters, mermaids coming out of the waters to save orphans from drowning, but never the foreign names his ears were filled with every day in class as poets. Revival songs never cited the names of the local singers, the adored of the village. In fact, as simple as it can appear, all this is done because "the colonial schools [...] sought to extend foreign domination and economic exploitation of the colony", Kelly and Altbach (1984, 2) highlighted. Colonial schools' syllabi were strategies used to establish colonial authority and African mentality. This is the reason why Kallaway (1984) defended that, "Education was a primary tool used in cultural domination tactics".

The coloniser's language was, therefore, established with violence and the traumatic events are still vivid in the collective memory of all Africans and passed from generation to generation. The theorist of postcoloniality, Achille Mbembe illustrates that "to those who are still in denial, it might be worth reiterating that Cecil Rhodes belonged to the race of men who were convinced that to be black is a liability. During his time and life in Southern Africa, he used his considerable power - political and financial - to make black people all over Southern Africa pay a bloody price for his beliefs". In fact, Rhodes strongly believed that human beings were racially categorised by God and that the Englishman ruling over the natives in South Africa was a God given duty. He fantasised of a British territory which overextended from Cape to Cairo and English as an imperialistic language of expansion. Mbembe's writing places violence at the core center to western colonial conquests in Africa as well as Fanon links its expiry with violence, since Black life has suffered social realities rooted in history.

If the right to conquer another people's territory comes from the right to bring illumination and civilization, then the dominated has also the right to strike back to lessen the imposition. Fanon in *A Dying Colonialism* (1965, 3) submitted that "The masses resist and fight in a thousand ways, not only with arms in hand. These means

include violence because in a world where oppression is maintained by violence from above, it is only possible to liquidate it with violence from below". Therefore, the breakthrough goes hand in hand with the demise of European political and linguistic hegemony. This is what Fanon refers to as disalienation of the colonised as a reappropriation of language as whole, as a medium of truth and experience.

Thus, as discussed above, the imposition of a language to undermine the native is a violent act on the speaker of the new language. It breaks the harmony existing between the new learner, the place of the apprenticeship and his house. The new learner of English and French in Uganda, Senegal, Benin, Kenya, Mali, Tanzania or Ghana considered schools as places of violence and humiliation. If he continued to learn and speak this language, it is because of the reward it procures, the forced privilege of a new self. These first Christianised Africans who emerged from the colonial schools felt more considered than the leftovers, although the white missionaries kept them away from running the missions and the schools. This type of Africans felt more loyal to British crown and other colonial systems as they could speak and discuss with the colonisers. They often behaved harshly against their fellow Africans who did not receive colonial education. They strongly believed in the education system introduced by the colonizer and year in year out perpetuate the tradition. English or French speaking became a vanguard of liberation, a passport to freedom; these new African intellectuals leaving their language to their fellow Africans that they called 'uncivilised'. This line of a language, in power relation context, assured the hegemony of European languages since their acquisition gave access to jobs like junior-level civil obedient servants, maids and cooks. This was designed to alienate Africans. Since it was quite hard for the majority of Africans to think in their own languages, it was also difficult for them to consider themselves as beings as equal in rights as their former colonizers.

Walter Rodney explained that these lower level jobs were meant to limit the African subjects' education and doomed them to low paid jobs. The focus was to train local people to cheap labours and dutiful domestics. They were not allowed to go further. Those who were permitted to go further were indicated by the white instructors. Rodney illustrates that "[...] The African native was to be gradually civilised". The priority was to produce semi-educated elites to make them dependent on the metropolis. Subsequently, if these semi-elites grabbed the power or were helped to via political recommendations, democratic elections or coup d'Etat, they would still be in need of counselling, political and economic guidance. The colonial education systems focused on theoretical more than practical subjects (Coleson, 1955). Also, to give them secondary and sophisticated education was like asking "a young child to chew meat when he should be eating porridge [...]" (Rodney, 1989, 268).

The colonial period was structured in a way that African languages were not equally accepted in public administrations. The colonial education system was structured to

make the colonised fully dependent on the coloniser's language in every field and position himself as an inferior being as some western giant intellectuals and political leader like Hume, Hegel and Jefferson scornfully stated. Thomas Jefferson declared that "the Blacks [...] are inferior to the Whites on the endowment of both body and mind" and Hume to say that "the negro is naturally inferior to the whites". As for Hegel in *The Philosophy of History* (1956), he erroneously thought that "Egypt is not part of Africa [...]. The African is not part of humanity [...]. Only slavery to Europe can raise him. Slavery is good for the African". The result is that over time, the new African intellectuals did not find the place that they deserved in the colonial apparatus. The more they tried to become civilised, the more they were rejected. This joins Ngũgĩ's clue about the negative attitude that Africans display towards their own languages. He highlights that "the effects of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their language, in their environment, in their heritage, in their unity" (1986, 3).

This is why Ngũgĩ beseeches his fellow Africans in his book *Moving the Centre* (1993) not to substitute their own languages to English or any foreign language. One can understand from his point of view that the coloniser uses his language to enact his culture and impose English and the others language as if spoken by God in Heaven. Many other societies like Arabs have trailed the European coloniser's path in this ideology of linguistic power. This provides many privileges to their language in African literatures. This has also been condemned in the South African novelist Sol Tshekisho Plaatje's *Muhdi: Muhdi: An Epic of South African Native Life a Hundred Years Ago* (1930). He illustrates the paternalist attitude of Europeans particularly the Boers who considered themselves as God's chosen people by using the Bible as means to coerce the black people and confess Christianity, undermining the Black spirituality. Plaatje raises people's attention to provoke a change of mentality and attitude towards the use of foreign languages in all spheres. As Eagleton (1984) observes, "the narrative Marxism has to deliver is the story of the struggles of men and women to free themselves from certain forms of exploitation and oppression". Consequently, Africans should be conscious of the large possibility their languages have to be internationally recognised if they work for it.

Downtrodden Africans should wake up and claim for their right whether violently or not as suggested in Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks*. When Afrikaans was forced as medium of education in South African schools in 1976, the only way to have the normal order back was to revolt in Soweto townships. The Boers settlers failed to fortify the link between Namibia where Afrikaans has already been imposed as the lingua franca and South Africa. Every South African has that bloody day image in their mind and Afrikaans is still regarded as the language of oppression. From this experience, the role of Marxist writers is to depict the plight of the mass and highlight the emergency to address the issue on the one hand. On the other hand, the

Marxist writers liberate the African thinking in their own languages to show its authenticity. Among these writers, Ngũgĩ places himself as one of the pioneers with his earliest novels such as *Weep not, Child* (1964), *The River Between* (1965) and *The Grain of Wheat* (1967) in which he portrays the hardship of Kenyans in the hands of British colonizers. He made the decision to cease writing in English to stimulate Gikũyũ, his country's language for its international promotion. His time in prison inspired the play *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (1976) that he wrote completely in Gikũyũ when he embraced Fanonian Marxism. His regular landing in prison did not come from his political activism, but his writing in local language, instead of English. Later published in English as *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1980), *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) and most recently *The Perfect Nine* (2018) were novels entirely written in Gikũyũ during the country's longest serving President Daniel Arap Moi.

However, the attempt laid bare of the rich value that is inherent in African culture and languages, and the role they play in national identity. The choice of language in African postcolonial literatures is absolutely politics and real African writers do not need any permission to promote their authenticity and diversity. The role of language use in literature is then central to people's full self-realisation. In *Transition*, Gabriel Okara (1963) corroborated that:

As a writer who believes in the utilization of African ideas, African philosophy, and African folklore and imagery to the fullest extent, I am of the opinion the only way to use them effectively is to translate them almost literally from the African language native to the writer into the whatever European language he is using as medium of expression. I have endeavoured in my words to keep as close as possible to the vernacular expressions. For, from a word, a group of words, a sentence and even a name in any African language, one can glean the social norms, the attitudes and values of a people.

From the above excerpt, what makes sense according to Ngũgĩ is to write in African languages and then as it becomes public, people translate it into any foreign language. This way, African languages would have the same international credit as the imported ones, or at least, would come out of their marginal position and compete with other languages. In doing this, Ngũgĩ follows the footsteps of Thomas Mofolo and Daniel O. Fagunwa respectively from Lesotho and Nigeria. Since the period when these forerunners had ventured to lay bare the African thinking in Sesotho and Yoruba, no other African writer trailed the line. All these years after, the African postcolonial literature has experienced no other form of change. The African literature borrowed from the coloniser's language to express itself worldwide. Where many African writers who have attempted to tackle taboos or magnified African cultures and civilization, they were rigorously rebuked and criticised for failing in terms of plot and characterization according to Sithole (2012). Mofolo's *Moeti oa bochabela* (1907) translated in *The Traveler to the East* by Victor Ellenberger, could not find a publisher. Even Mofolo's third novel *Chaka* (1931) has been one of the reprimanded example which was retained for many years by the Sesotho Book Depot for having praised

paganism, and cannibalism like human sacrifices as king Chaka's method of sentencing his enemies and conspirators.

In the period, the African literature's commitment was totally fractured and dichotomised. On the one side, those who succeeded in coping with the diktat, and, on the other, those who wanted to bring an end to the whiteness in the African literature, but have no political and financial means to. It has been challenging for African writers to commit their works to the proletariat, the writer being seen as a social enlightener and literature as social criticism and investigation. But, as writings were censured by the capitalistic leading power, Eagleton (1984, 41) argued that, it was hard to "tolerate a mechanical egalitarianism, a domination of the minority by the majority". Promoting revolt against capitalism was a risky deal. When it comes to support the few who condemn the white literary hegemony in the African literature. This group of people claim on the ground of the definition of language by Noam Chomsky that language is "the part of mind or brain that allows to speak".

In this way, all languages can be used in literature since "the life of a people is embedded in their literature (Ukpai and Orji, 2002). Life here symbolises the cultural values of the people in question. Literature then helps understand, politics, science, religions, social conflicts and class struggle in a given society. It better expresses its objective and mission when it is written in the language of the writer to reveal the ideological interests underneath. In *Literature and Revolution*, Leon Trotsky cited by Eagleton (1984, 24), "maintains that the relationship between form and content is determined by the fact that the new form is discovered, proclaimed and evolved under the pressure of an inner need, of a collective psychological demand which, like everything else [...] has its social roots".

Although the essential task of literature, for the African writers, is to act as a vehicle of liberation, it is still difficult to see raised fingers in support to these initiatives. Not making it possible maintains African languages in a linguistic alienation and to marginal stance. This is particularly the mission that Ngũgĩ took on and also assigned to African writers. He declared that "I believe that my writing in Gikũyũ language, a Kenyan language, an African language, is part and parcel of the anti-imperialistic struggles of Kenyans and African peoples" (Ngũgĩ, 1994, 17). Thus, African literatures, as some detractors assert, seeming to depend intrinsically on western languages to express its quintessence is totally mistaken. On the other side, its defenders think and maintain that African writing can walk by its own since it embodies the value of its society. They think of the possibility to demythologise the whiteness in African literatures by giving the chance to grow in its local languages and to be loved by Africans themselves. African countries have to develop literacy in their own language from primary to secondary schools to realise one of Ngugi's wishes: "Education is a means of knowledge about ourselves" (Mbembe, 2016, 35). But only the major

languages have to be developed because in Nigeria, for example, “there are 505 indigenous languages” according to Udoh (2003, 18).

So, it has better focus on the development of only the major such as Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo. Literature in the minor languages of very few speakers is quite impossible and difficult to prosper. The African countries’ educational system should reward publicly pupils and students who have excelled in the local language during the semester or the year. It could also encourage national and regional language promotion in creative writing. Funds has be raised to help publish the best literary works in African language to motivate the unconvinced writers to join the movement to conjure the fear of the Martiniquan writer Raphael Confiant who has declared during an interview in 2009 to Jo-Anne Ferreira on Trinidadian French Creole that “an unwritten language is condemned to disappear” sooner or later. This is the reason why many unwritten languages like the Gaulish in Europe, although spoken by many people, have died out after Julius Caesar’s conquest during the history of Rome’s expansion.

Finally, decolonizing the mind as fully desired by Ngũgĩ (1986) is to consent that the African philosophy has its word to place in African literatures to “reveal its true nature as a constructed product” according Eagleton (1984, 56). Thus, what is possible in Japan, China, Germany and France should as well be possible in Tunisia, Kenya, Angola, Togo, and South Africa. The missing gap to fill out is the language policy and the regionalization of the main African languages. Language policy is of vital importance for the political stability and legitimacy of the state. Most contemporary African states are experiencing acute economic, social and political problems nowadays. In education there are many symptoms of crisis. The capacity of African governments to meet all their citizens’ expectations is increasingly in question. The authority of the state is in doubt from Morocco to Egypt, from Liberia to South Sudan and from Libya to South Africa. But, there is no reason why African languages are not able to communicate African thoughts, ideas, and ideologies to affect others’. Unity in the struggle would ensure unity in our multi-lingual diversity as argued by Ngũgĩ (1994, 453).

This way, African writers communicating to their people in their languages would feel participating democratically in the sharing of African resources. They would then stop being seen as dangerous and too much nationalists. Linguistic imperialism would stop being an African issue, if African languages are considered in African literatures and more extensively in African episteme. If it was possible for the colonizers to translate the Bible and the Koran in the smallest language in Africa, it is also possible to decipher the African creative thinking in African languages decades after the independence. What Goethe did for German, Milton and Shakespeare for English, Moliere for French, and Pushkin for Russian is also possible in Africa.

CONCLUSION

For decades, what the African continent has produced in terms of literatures in its hybrid state seem not to be considered as authentically African. It has been melted with the failed expectations of those who died for Africa's freedom. This liberation visibly has not yet occurred as the African philosophy is still in the former coloniser's languages. This hybridity has fashioned talented writers such as Achebe, Soyinka, Senghor, Armah, Gurnah, Soce, Sadjji, Amouro, Kane and many others whose international credit is due to their forsaking their respectively national language. People like the Senegalese poet and state man, Leopold S. Senghor, went further, while answering a question in 1954, after the introduction of his poems, to glorify the French as "[...] a language of kindness and honesty"¹, insinuating that African languages do not appear to be nice in terms of grammar and aesthetic. But he did not nothing sustainable to mend the grammar of his local Serere. When Senghor militated for the spread of French as a universal language, Fanon called for its end as a colonial instrument. To prove this, Fanon sponsored a radio channel called "the Voice of Fighting Algeria" in which only Berber and other national languages of Algeria were media of communication to inspire the fighters and the peasants in 1956. He documented all this in *L'An V de la Révolution algérienne* [1959] translated in English under the title *A Dying Colonialism* in 1965.

Finally, the disalienation of African literatures comes through the decision of the former colonised to reappropriate his right to think, write and speak. The linguistic restoration of African episteme needs an organised language policy to demystify gradually the whiteness in postcolonial creative thinking in schools. If African literatures represent the proletariat in the hand of the foreign bourgeoisie, then they have to wrest their liberty from its stranglehold and stop the foreign language privileges. This is far from obliterating the history out of African collective memory. The time will come, so that no African writer will feel indebted to use the colonizer's language. The new paradigm shift will be set via education in the major African languages such as Bambara or Jula, Yoruba, Swahili, Berber, Hausa, Ewe, and Lingala. This is the only way for Africans to get their mind fully decolonised. It is what Andrei Sinyavsky defined in *On Socialist Realism* (1934) as "[...] the truthful, historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development".

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¹ Introduction to poems, Ethiopiques, 24th September, 1954, Senghor said: « Le français est une langue à vocation universelle, que notre message s'adresse aussi aux Français de France et aux autres hommes, parce que le français est une langue de gentillesse et d'honnêteté ».

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