

Postcolonial Strain in the Writings of Chinua Achebe and J.M. Coetzee

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Abstract

Comparative study shows a broader way of looking at unseen myth and search for the hidden myth without any border. The violent effect of past has enduring consequences on people's identities and their wellbeing. Exploring the similar matrix of memory and trauma has become the concern of writers like Chinua Achebe and J.M. Coetzee. The life and laughter of the colonized people is unheard because of the memory and trauma occupied in the mind of victims. Writers like Chinua Achebe and J.M. Coetzee have not only endeavored to express the memories but also have attracted international acclaim and attention through their sincere manuscripts. The paper brings out the application of memory and trauma to demonstrate the aftereffect of colonialism at one side and providing strong foundation for futuristic visions with complete evacuation of the past problems in the writings of Chinua Achebe and J.M. Coetzee.

Keywords: colonialism, after-effect, memory, trauma, past, visions.

Introduction

Comparative Literature is an outcome of intellectual changes and the impact of variant cultural studies. The main aspect of comparative literature is, it should discuss two texts from two different linguistic groups, either two historical periods or genres and text from different media; for instance literature and performing art (film, music or play). Comparative literature stresses the proficiency of different types of art beyond boundaries. The comparison of two authors exhibits their acquaintance with sociology, history, anthropology, critical studies, critical theory, cultural theory and religious study. In a nutshell, Comparative study shows a broader way of looking at unseen myth and search for the hidden myth without any border.

Effect of Memory

Colonialism is the traumatic relationship in human history. To understand a colonised country and its contemporary situation, it is essential to comprehend the dynamics and conflicts that took place during colonialism. Past events and its memory are interlinked together. It plays an important role in the creation of a nation's identity. The physical clutch of colonisation is little found in a

colonised nation, but the traumatic effect of colonialism is still seen in the memory of people. Under such case there is an urge for spiritual liberation, and free from emotional rupture. Memories weigh on diplomatic contacts between colonized countries and the colonizers. The violent effect of past has enduring consequences on people's identities and their wellbeing. Exploring the similar matrix of memory and trauma has become the concern of many African writers like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Amos Tutuola, J.M. Coetzee, NgugiWaThiongo and so on.

This paper deals with the themes of colonialism, liberation, rootlessness, memory and traumatic effect of it. First of all it is essential to bring out the knowledge of what constitutes the African literature. West Africa, East Africa, South Africa and its suburb regions together form its literary mother African Literature. These literatures are naturally different from each other. African literature arrives different things to different people. On the one hand, a few scholars consider it as a New World literature, on the other hand it is a literature with new messages. Others consider it as a political document characterised by contemporary politics and the past politics. On the whole with the clear nuances and instructions, it is said that African literature is compiled of documentary literature addressing the chaos with an omniscient point of view.

In an outline, the present paper sketches the application of memory and trauma to demonstrate the aftereffect of colonialism at one side and did not stop there, rather providing strong foundation for futuristic visions with complete evacuation of the past problems. The choice of dissect taken for the comparative study is the writings of Chinua Achebe and J.M. Coetzee. Postcolonial writings expresses the problems of decolonization. Literature act as a medium to reclaim their freedom and the new identities after struggling for independence.

On this basis, both the writers address their country's societal change with the aid of the past memories and the traumatic effect of it. Achebe and Coetzee undertook the job of scrutinizing and presenting the realities of the world. It is the duty of the postcolonial writers to re-educate the readers. Therefore both the writers express themselves freely and commented on the prevailing situations. The theme which immediately comes after reading the works of Achebe and Coetzee is the inter-relationship between colonizers and natives. This is unavoidable for any writer who wants to truly write about the historical perspectives of his homeland.

Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart

Chinua Achebe became the most recognised African novelist in English. The works of Chinua Achebe is amongst those well-known inside as well as outside Africa. His language communicate cultural, social and racial ideas and the nuances of traditions, with the blending of old and new. Chinua Achebe's novel Things Fall Apart demonstrates how Igbo value and identity has come to signify a way of apprehending the Nigerian character and the reality of African nation. In this paper a simple attempt is made to show how Achebe wrote his novels under postcolonial epoch. One must keep in mind that colonial intervention and the aftermath of it is mu severer in African countries than any other part of the world, mainly because of its geographical natural resources, traditions and cultures.

In any case, with Things Fall Apart, this Igbo story in sum speaks about the narrative of colonial conflict and anticolonial struggle and resistance at the onset of the colonial intervention. Colonialism and its consequences on the native culture captures the attention of Achebe. He exposes the political, social, cultural and human dimension of the postcolonial society. The protagonist of the story is Okonkwo, but symbolically he represents the entire community. His mental frustration is the picturization of the entire Igbo community. Expansions of the European colony in the African continent is a result of serious implicit exploitations. Achebe reconstructs the definition of African identity. Achebe seriously scrutinizes the western representations of the African's past. The past

memory is used as a vision to change Igbo's life, their dignity, their pride. Achebe also attempts to recreate the past of Africa in terms of its myths, rituals, beliefs and customs. The light is shed on how Chinua Achebe highlights the pain and sufferings underwent by the native people.

J.M. Coetzee's Waiting for the Barbarians

J.M. Coetzee's writings challenges the readers' mind in raising the consciousness about history and colonisation. He himself has stated that, "History remains a deeply contentious subject in South Africa. The struggle for the right to make up the story of the country is by no means over" (Coetzee 352). As a successful novelist, Coetzee is sensitive to the colonial history of his homeland. This sensitive feel paved path for Coetzee to talk about the universal struggle of the people. Under Postcolonial studies, he narrates the position of the natives' life under the colonizers.

Coetzee published the novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* in the year 1980. The novel does not give an explicit account of the history of South Africans, instead he represents allegorically. The setting of the novel is unspecified because Coetzee's aim is to make the sensation a universal one. The issue between the colonizer and the colonized are used recurrently in the novel. In this work of art every moment is present, the past fades and the future is hidden; source and consequence remains to be emphasizing in every aspect. The presence of colonization is sustained by a series of concepts implicitly constructed in the minds of the colonized. Although the barbarians are invisible in that particular area, the soldiers of the Empire humiliate, abuse the inhabitants even the fishing folks, believing in illusion that they are barbarians.

The colonial empire try to prove the colonized people to be barbarians and capture twelve prisoners for false reasons. In this respect, victims are revealed to torture and suppression; so that they are under a situation to confess anything and everything when pain becomes beyond tolerance. The ability to limit is crossed far beyond and the victims (colonized) are not able to speak anymore and become passive and inactive. There ends the claiming of their own rights. Throughout the novel, the colonized remains to be passive, an invisible other and struggling in the traumatic events of colonisation.

Conclusion

The powerful pen draws and records the breath taking and awe-struck narratives and adds visions to conquer the human minds. The striking beauty of undiscovered enchantment is the outcome of mighty pen. Spread across such remarkable level of quality in his writings, Achebe and Coetzee have sharpened their aesthetic erudition consistently in reminding the people about the height of greatness yet to reach. Achebe and Coetzee records the history and identity and stands as an outstanding example as a true literary man. Both the writers consciously mirrored the chaotic life and made it possible for the entire universe through their writings and similar perceptions of re-educating the people with their past and memory.

Note: This paper has adhered to VIII Edition of MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers

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