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Submitted: 9. October 2018
Published: 19. October 2018
Volume: 5
Issue: 8
Affiliation: Bahaudin Zakariya University Multan, Pakistan
Languages: English
Keywords: post colonial, Fragmented identity crisis, euro centrism
DOI: 10.17160/josha.5.8.479

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This article unleashes the torturous post-war effects in Kamila Shamsie’s *A God in Every Stone* (2014) and Michael Ondaatje’s *The English Patient* (1996), that had altered the ideologies of colonized. This is a qualitative research and theory applied in this article is post-colonial criticism. The study is an effort to expand the ways through which the war and colonialism paid their contribution to the alter the ideologies of colonizers and colonized. I will be analyzing the fragmented loyalties of characters in war incidents mentioned in the text of the novels. The novel attacks the colonial power, identity crisis, and the euro-centric approach of the British.

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Altering Identities- from Europe to Asia: Demented Impression of war and colonization in “*A God in Every Stone*” and “*The English Patient*”

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Abstract

This article unleashes the torturous post war effects in Kamila Shamsie's *A God in Every Stone* (2014) and Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1996), that had altered the ideologies of colonized. This is a qualitative research and theory applied in this article is post-colonial criticism. The study is an effort to expound the ways through which the war and colonialism paid their contribution to the alter the ideologies of colonizers and colonized. I will be analyzing the fragmented loyalties of characters in war incidents mentioned in the text of the novels. The novel attacks the colonial power, identity crisis, and the euro-centric approach of the British.

Key Words: post-colonial, fragmented identity crisis and euro-centrism.

Introduction

A God In Every Stone(2014) starts in 1914 with an archeological delve in Turkey with the sentimental Vivian Spencer, overpowered by history and Scylax, the man who flew out from Persia to Peshawar and was remunerated with a silver circlet by his Emperor Darius. War isolates Vivian from archeology and from Tahsin Bey, who she adores in spite of the distinction in their ages, and sends her nursing the injured from combat zones like Ypres, smashed men and lives. Her life runs parallel to that of Qayyum Khan from Peshawar, who has lost his eye at Ypres and is liberated from the combat zones to return home, loaded with contempt for the British who will never see individuals from the subcontinent as their equivalents.

Vivian goes to Peshawar in Syclax's strides searching for the silver circlet which he lost some place on his voyage, planning to back track the bliss she lost in Turkey when the War started and tormented by blame since she was incidentally in charge of Tahsin Bey's passing.

Research Question

1. In what ways, Kamila Shamsie's *A God in Every Stone* (2014) and Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1996) are post-colonial novels?
2. What are the effects of war and colonialism in fragmenting the identities of the characters present in the novels?

Analysis

Sometimes writers describe the post-colonial effects by inflicting miseries upon the characters of the novel. This is a way of giving a physical representation to those hurt feelings and emotion. In the novel *A God in Every Stone* (2014), Kamila Shamsie did the same with Qayyum Gul's character. He was the Pashtun man, who was fighting for the British armed forces during the First World War. In the course of the war time, he got wounded in one eye, which caused his complete blindness in one eye, and this is the symbolic representation of Qayyum's lack of judgment. Later in the novel, it was revealed that the nation he was fighting for, aims to destroy Qayyum's homeland. There is an incident of Peshawar massacre at the end of the novel in which all the Pashtuns were collectively burned to death. Therefore, the blind eye of Qayyum shows his inability to sense the betrayal of the British army. It was very soul damaging and earth shattering experience for Gull because he never anticipated the infidelity of the Britishers. Moreover, TehsinBey also articulated his emotions about the loyalties of nations. He was the descendent of an Armenian family. Like other Turks, he had not deep rooted nationalism towards the Ottoman Empire. Though he was living there, and Turkey government was funding his excavation. But he was never fond of the turkey government.

“Though even then I understood that the world well enough to hold the loyalties in my heart, not on my tongue”

(Shamsie, 2014, p.30)

These lines were said by Tehsin to Vivian. He wanted to tell her what was stopping him to marry her. He told him about his family and his attitudes towards the enforced nationality. He never felt real love for his country, because he was not allowed to be himself, not only for a while. To his viewpoint, it was dangerous to discuss his feelings as he says that he knows how to run the world. Playing a diplomatic role, one for the country and the second one for personal interest, was important for him in order to sustain his individuality among the society. Like Voltaire once said;

“It is dangerous to be right in matters on which the established authorities are wrong.”

(Voltaire)

Another example is reflected in Michael Ondaatje's renowned novel *The English patient* (1996), there is a vivid description post-colonial aspects. Kirpal Singh, called as Kipp, is the parallel to Qayyum's character. Both were fighting for British but in return, British were torturing their homeland. What happened to Qayyum also happened with Kipp. When he was busy in fighting the enemies of English, British army was attempting bomb attacks on the Sikh community residing in India. He, for the first time in the novel, questioned his loyalty towards the British. His identity was shattered and he felt treachery by the British government. He said in the novel about the bombing incident.

“When you start bombing the brown races of the world, you're an Englishman”
(Ondaatje, 1996, P.286)

The burnt body of the protagonist Almásy is a remarkable work piece. Almásy pretended that his body was set to flames during the war. He faked his identity and called himself an English national. But in reality, he was a Hungarian desert explorer. He helped both the American and German agents in crossing the desert as he had spent most of his life in mapping the desert. When the war broke out between the two countries, he was asked to determine his allies and he chose Germany over America. Later in the novel, when he was fried in the aero plane crash, his body was unidentifiable. Some native desert people were taking care of him, then he was collected by the English troops. After reaching the English military camp, he was afraid of the disaster the truth would cause if he revealed his identity. Because he was on the German's side, therefore, he pretended to be an English man. Here, the dexterity of the writer lies in the type of injuries he had conflicted upon the characters in this novel.

The scorched body of the protagonist shows the major representative of identity crisis. Previously, he labeled himself to German's but in the camp of the English troops, he himself originally was Hungarian citizen, resulting in the shattering of his identity. He could not associate himself with any nation. His shapeless physical form was the reminder of his mental state. He was amorphous similar to the formless desert. This is why; he was intrigued in mapping the desert. As he said in the novel,

“Erase the family name! Erase nations!”

(Ondaatje, 1996, P.139)

Caravaggio is the third character that has shown the disastrous effects of the war as he had lost his thumbs of the both hands. He was a thief in those days; unfortunately, someone caught him convicting the crime. He was wrongly assumed to be an American spy by the German army. Therefore, they held him captive and tortured him inhumanely for the exchange of those confidential government secrets he would have known. The German army cut his thumbs, and made him a handicap for the rest of his life, dependent on other people's support and sympathies.

National imperialism and racial superiority are evident throughout these novels. As described in *A God in Every Stone* (2014), on various occasions Vivian (the female protagonist) is reminded that she is an Englishwoman and she should not be doing anything like this. These English characters were acting like they belonged to the superior race on the basis of their color. According to them, white color is pure and moral. Even it is the color of God. Therefore, they categorized themselves as the supreme nation in the world.

“Pity all those who didn't have the good fortune of the Englishness as their birthright.”

(Shamsie, 2014, p.34)

These lines were said by Vivian Rose Spencer. She felt pity for people who were not English. She associated good fortune with Englishness which implies that the only fortunate people on this planet were native English speakers. Euro-centrism is palpable in these lines. English people were living a life full of illusions. They saw, what they wanted to see and their reality was always subjective

“His expression that of an Englishman having an emotion he didn't want to deny but couldn't fully find a way to express.”

(Shamsie, 2014, p.40)

Almasy, the protagonist of *The English Patient* (1996), had the same viewpoint similar to the Vivian Rose. He had issues with his nationality and identity. All he wanted a land with no rules, no religion and no racial discrimination. He was the admirer of peace. Like he said the only place where one can find God was desert because God gives the message of love and peace. And it could only be possible in the desert, because that's the place where all were free from those foul discriminations of race, gender, language and religion.

“There is God only in the desert; he wanted to acknowledge that now. Outside of this there was just trade and power, money and war.”

(Ondaatje, 1996, P: 157)

“All I ever wanted was a world without maps.”

(Ondaatje, 1996, P: 149)

This is effectively expressed by Tagore, as quoted by Mishra, warning that the concept of European civilization is **“a torch”, “not meant for showing light, but to set fire” (210)**. These lines portray the true faces of the Europeans as they are not peace offering, they do not listen to show us the path. The Europeans are here to misguide us from our path. They would risk anything to see us suffer. Because it makes them feel powerful i.e. they are capable of doing anything, like playing God with alienated and marginalized colonized people.

“Why hate those who were born in his realm? Pity them, yes; pity all those who didn’t have the good fortune of the Englishness as their birthright- though some could approach Englishness via their education, yes, they certainly could- but why hate them?”

(Shamsie, 2014, p.34)

From this quotation, it is revealed that Vivian was holding somewhat neutral feelings for the people other than English. She felt pity for those people who were not English speakers, but they were forced to learn English. This was the aftermath of the colonization process, which lead the colonized to imitate their oppressors just because they were in charge of everything happening in the world.

Conclusion

Both novels, *The English patient* and *A God in Every Stone*, are the product of colonialist activity of the British Empire. These two novels share the mutual themes and concept of subjugation on the basis of racial discrimination. These texts attack the policies of imperial power and advocate the suffering of colonized people in terms of identity crisis, euro-centrism, marginalization and betrayal.

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