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Neo-Colonialist critique of Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist and Kincaid's A Small Place: A Comparative Postcolonial Study

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Abstract *With a specific focus on two different novels from different continents, the study analyzes the current American neo-colonialist hegemonic behavior, which is causing developing countries to remain in a doldrum. The data is based upon the comparative analysis of selected textual paragraphs taken from Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist and Kincaid's A Small Place. Both Mohsin Hamid and Jamaica Kincaid assert that due to the American neo-colonialist regime, indigenous cultures of so many countries of the African and Asian continent have suffered a lot. Theoretical insights for this research have been drawn from Kwame Nkrumah's concept of neo-colonialism. Nkrumah defined neo-colonialism as the exploitation of former colonial subjects by European conquerors for political, economic, cultural, ideological, and military gain. The research concludes that although with the inception of the United Nations Organization the colonialism has formally come to an end still the American neo-colonial supremacy is disturbing the people of once colonized countries through various economic, political, and ideological maneuverings.*

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Introduction

Colonialism, although it has formally come to an end still neo-colonialism is ruling the weaker nations. Neo-colonialism, a new system of colonization is started after the formal end of colonialism. Different writers like Edward Said (1978) and Kwame Nkrumah (1966) talk about neo-colonialism and declare that although neo-colonialism was supposed to be beneficial for the developing countries, it is not only degrading them rather, it is making them financially weaker. Institutions like IMF were although created to help the poor countries, now the interest rate on loan makes the weaker states weaker, and there becomes a disparity among the developing and developed countries. Neo-colonialism and Neo-Imperialism are now being used alterably, and both are making the lives of underdeveloped countries more bitter.

Mohsin Hamid, via his bestselling fiction The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007), attempts to construct an individual identity that makes the protagonist a part of a neo-colonial state. The newly earned identity of the protagonist goes into crisis soon after the incident of 9/11. The protagonist, who had adopted almost each and every way, which may call him an American, soon learns that his neo-colonial identity goes into crisis and indigenous identity comes forward. Changez, the protagonist of the novel, was fully satisfied by the way of living that was being provided to him by the neo-colonial country soon after the attacks were treated like all other Muslims. Due to American immoral behavior his self-satisfaction disappeared, and he started cursing the United States of America. (Hamid, 2007, p.38)

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Kincaid, in her novel A Small Place (1988), also seems to resist firstly against the colonizers and secondly against the neo-colonialists. In the whole of the novel, her main aim is to challenge the west and to create a place for the people of Antigua in their own homeland. She actually presents her narrative to the world in order to make Antiguan identity clear to the rest of the world. She says that even the ex-colonizers have left Antigua, but still Antigua does not have its own identity. Antiguan people have deconstructed neocolonialist identity. She says that she would ask herself a question that the Antigua in which she used to stay during colonial rule is different from which she is currently visiting, as now it is being ruled by the neo-colonial power (Kincaid, 1988, p.41). After asking herself the question regarding Antiguan identity, she herself answers that it is the result of a corrupt government that the Antiguan have no identity of their own. Due to the corruption of the rulers, the Antiguan have lost their identity in the world, and now anyone can come to Antigua to buy the whole of the country.

Literature Review

Adeeba Fatima (2021), in her article "Neo-Colonial Trends and Power Dynamics between East and the West: A Case Study of Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist: talks about the neo-colonialism and asserts that due to continuous western influence on the eastern people, the people of Eastern continent are again colonized through neo-colonialism. She says that The Reluctant Fundamentalist beautifully covers all the economic and political agendas of neo-colonialism that the United States of America is doing to the modern world. She further asserts that Changez, the protagonist of the novel although cherishes the identity given by the neo-colonialist country, but after the 9/11 attacks, he himself rejects that neo-colonial identity and highlights that how America is projecting itself in the whole of the world.

Dr Fariha Chaudhry and Dr Zia (2021), in their article "Neo-colonial Perspectives on Identity: Comparative Analysis of Male Characters in Mohsin Hamid's Novels Moth Smoke and The Reluctant Fundamentalist: assert that the youngsters of Pakistan have a greater desire to either live in the United States of America or to imitate American lifestyle in their own native land. They further suggest that due to different cultures and geostrategic values, they remain unable to achieve true identity. For the purpose of earning money, people move to the USA, which is now acting as a neo-colonial state. In the USA, they find themselves as a culturally and morally inferior race due to their native identity, and thus ultimately, they recognize the effects of neo-colonialism.

Leon E. Stennis (2012), in his thesis "Jamaica Kincaid: A Multi-Dimensional Resistance to Colonialism", states that due to global capitalism, neo-colonialism still has a greater impact on Antigua and the Caribbean. He says that Kincaid in A Small Place is presenting the voice of the Antiguans who are losing their identity in the hands of Americans due to their dependence on west-based economic substances.

Cahit Bakir (2017), in "Deconstructing the Tourist's (Colonizer's) Gaze in A Small Place", explores that Kincaid, through his memoir, has tried to reverse the position of the once colonized people by deconstructing colonial gaze and making western supremacists ready to face the situation. He says that Kincaid reverses the binary of colonizers and colonized and makes colonizers answerable to once colonized people. However, by reversing their position, Kincaid does not make Antiguan superior rather, she only shows that though her country is now an independent country, still the colonial legacy has affected it through corruption, illiteracy and poverty.

Theoretical Framework

Neo-colonialism is broadly considered the worst form of imperialism. Although colonization has formally come to an end, neo-colonial powers like the United States of America have now taken charge of maintaining the colonial legacy. Ex. Colonial powers have been replaced by the neo-colonial powers who, although they are not directly controlling the resources of once colonized countries but indirectly, not even a single decolonized country can survive without their existence. Kwame Nkrumah, who is also the former President of Ghana, successfully describes the neo-colonial agenda of the United States of America. Nkrumah (1966) is of the view that through neo-colonization west is exploiting the basic rights of the decolonized countries. He further asserts that during the colonial rule, people were able to complain against the colonial masters, but in the case of neo-colonial

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hegemony, people can not complain to colonial power as the people who are controlling them are their own people, and nothing can be done against them. Nkrumah asserts that "Neo-colonialism is broadly considered as the worst form of imperialism. For those who practice it, it means power without responsibility, and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress." (Nkrumah, 1965, p.8)

Kwame Nkrumah (1966) talks about the role of corruption and incapability of the government officials of the newly independent countries and says that they depend all of their doings on the ex-colonial masters. While giving a solution to this incapability, he says that this can only be removed if the African pan movement is created, which can lead to a unified form of government. In ex-colonized countries, corruption prevails in each and every institution, which is also due to the ex-colonizers, as the people who participate in the independence movements are largely the rich people, and after the independence, these rich people rule the country and make their own assets instead of working for their native country. Kwame Nkrumah (1966) states, "Neo-colonialism is based upon the principle of breaking up former large united colonial territories into a number of small non-viable States which are incapable of independent development and rely on former imperial power for defense and even internal security." (Nkrumah, 1965, p.xiii)

Kwame Nkrumah (1966) also talks about the American hegemony in the whole of the world and says that the United States of America has not left even a single decolonized county to whom she has not exploited. From Vietnam to Cuba, she has played a distinctive role in exploiting the basic rights of the people of those countries. Nkrumah (1966) also discusses the American investment into Africa and regards it as a great danger for the sovereignty of African people (Nkrumah, 1965 p.36). Furthermore, Nkrumah (1966) also suggests that the independence that the people of Africa should have been enjoying is also being violated by the United States of America, which has now taken charge of the Neo-Colonial Empire. According to him, it is not only Africa rather the whole of the world which is being exploited due to American vested interests.

Foremost among the neo-colonialists is the United States, which has long exercised its power in Latin America. Fumblingly at first, she turned towards Europe, and then with more certainty after world war two when most countries of that continent were indebted to her. (Nkrumah, 1965, p.202)

Analysis and Discussion

Neo-Colonialism has done greater damage than colonialism, as the countries having a history of colonialism are still the victim of neo-colonial imperialism, which is a process through which the stronger nation has always dominated rather than violated the weaker nations. Although at the beginning of the world, there were different imperialist powers that influenced and controlled the weaker nations. Muslims, though at current are not imperial power they also have remained imperial power during the reigns of Khilafat. They had conquered Spain, and in Sub-Continent, they ruled for more than a thousand. Britishers, in the same manner, emerged to be a greater imperialistic power. As it was said about the Britishers that the Sun never sets on Britishers. It was due to their imperialistic agenda they were spread all over the world, and in every part of the world, they had their own colonies. As Thomas Macaulay in Minute on Indian Education asserts that the Britishers need to develop of variety of populations that would be adequate to speak English, and their role will be to have a communication with us. (Macaulay 1835 p.8). Edward Said says that now the world major colonial powers, including the British Empire, have been replaced by the United States of America, and now it is the USA who is now holding the imperialist and neo-colonialist agenda of the west. Edward Said says that "France and Britain no longer occupy centre stage in world politics; the American imperium has displaced them (Said, 1978, p.285). Kwame Nkrumah (1966) also asserts that although the major colonizers of the world in the past were British and France but now the USA has replaced them. He says,

Where neo-colonialism exists, the power exercising control is often the state which formerly ruled the territory in question, but this is not necessarily so. For example, in the case of South Vietnam, the former imperial power was France, but neo-colonial control of the state has now gone to the United States. (Nkrumah, 1965, p.10)

British remained imperialistic power not only in India but also in Africa and America, where they defeated all other imperial powers

and remained comparable to none of the other. Jamaica Kincaid, in her novel A Small place (1988), discusses British imperialism in her country. She says that due to British imperialism Antigua has suffered a lot. She describes the story of a British queen who was fallen in love with an Antiguan and used to spend her holidays with him in Antigua. She also tells about how the school colleges and even the libraries were being ruled by the Britishers. Throughout her novel, she challenges the imperialistic perspective of England. In her novel, she, while talking about British imperialism, asserts, "So wherever they went they turned it into English, and everybody they met they turned English. But no place could really be England, and nobody who did not look exactly like them would ever be English. (Kincaid, 1988, p.24). She says that Britishers have left no place that they had not made their own, but nowadays they have nothing, and they even don't have the place to hide.

In comparison to A Small Place (1988), Mohsin Hamid in The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007) also pinpoints the American role that is also based upon imperialism and neo-colonialism. Hamid Resents the manner in which America is posing herself in the world. He says that America has not taken over the charge of imperialism from the Britishers and is manipulating the other countries just like Britishers had manipulated the world before the second world war. Hamid pinpoints the American role in the wars that are happening all over the world. America, after the second world war fought a cold war with Russia in which different wars were fought like the Vietnam war, the Korean war etc. Hamid also highlights the American role in the war on terror and Afghanistan war against Russia, in which America supported the Taliban. Hamid, through his character Changez, asserts that it makes him wonder when he thinks about the "I wondered how it was that America was able to wreak such mayhem created by the USA in all over the world. Furthermore, America makes other nations believe the legality of her attack even if that attack is universally recognized as a wrong or willful invasion (Hamid, 2007, p.78). Changez tells the second person, who is supposed to be an American that America has now replaced their forefathers, who actually came from England and ruled all over the world with no fear of human rights violation.

International law prevails among states, and after the 2nd world war, all the colonies in the world have either been demolished or forgotten as the human rights commission restricts the countries to make any colony. Termination of colonialism has brought a new term, neo-colonialism, that is not like postcolonialism; rather, it is used for the new version of colonialism. Before the second world war making a colony was no crime, but now it is a crime, and no country can make any other country her legal colony so, Neo-colonialism now helps the countries to make the symbolic colony, and it is usually done through the control of resources and capital hegemony. Neo-colonialism has not remained stagnant to only one continent; rather, it is being done in almost all the continents. Former colonizers are now controlling the capital and the institutions like IMF and decide the fate of weaker countries. Kwame Nkrumah (1966), in his book Neo-colonialism the last stage of imperialism, states that "The Result of Neo-Colonialism is that foreign capital is used for the exploitation rather than for the development of the less developed parts of the world". (Nkrumah,1965)

Mohsin Hamid, in his novel The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007), also talks about the imperialistic as well as the neo-colonialist perspective that is present in Pakistan. He, through his protagonist character, tells the world that although the poor countries get loans from the richer ones, still they are losing their worth and are financially weak. He says that inflation prevails everywhere in the developing countries as the ruler of the countries are corrupt, and the money that they get in the form of aid or loan is directly going into the bank accounts of the corrupt rulers of these countries. While describing Pakistan, Changez says that "Salaries have not risen in line with inflation, the rupee has declined steadily against dollar." (Hamid, 2007, p.6).

Jamaica Kincaid, on the other hand, in her novel A Small place (1988), also depicts the ex-colonizers role in controlling the financial matters of underdeveloped countries like Antigua. She says that now America is acting like a neo-colonialist country as she (USA) plays a hegemonic role in IMF due to becoming the founding member of it. She also talks about GDP and associates it with the former colonizers. She says, "You will forget your party in the whole setup, that bureaucracy is one of your inventions,

that Gross National Product is one of your inventions" (Kincaid, 1988, p.36) She while talking to unknown tourist, says that every bad thing is associated to the former colonizers. All the laws that were made by the colonizers were supposed to be carried on, and the ex-colonized countries are doing so in order to oblige their former masters and do not change their colonial mentality.

Kwame Nkrumah (1966) also asserts there always remains outside pressure on developing countries, and their sovereignty is endangered by the power of external forces. He says that although the once colonized countries have now got independence still their major national and international issues are dictated by the neo-orientalist powers like America. These powers not only control the country's financial dealings but also decide which political party has to come forward and win the so-called elections. The key notion in neo-colonialism is a state whose main ingredient is sovereignty, but in the modern era, this sovereignty is violated by the other states who approve and disapprove the money aid for any country of the world and thus has monopolized the world. He says that "In reality, its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside." (Nkrumah, 1965, p.ix)

Countries like Pakistan, India, South Africa, and all the former colonized countries of Africa are directed from the external masters about the policies and major governmental decisions; otherwise, they are supposed to face sanctions by the monopoly of those external powers. Mohsin Hamid, in his novel, describes the same situation where his country gets dictation from the neo-colonialist America and fights a war against Russia by taking the side of America, and at the time of need, America does not support Pakistan, which has remained his supporting country for a long time. After the Mumbai attacks in India, the skirmishes between Pakistan and India were started, but America stayed neutral in all the circumstances. Hamid, though his protagonist Changez says that his country has no value as she gets aid from America and can do anything for the sake of that aid. He also says that although America had established its military bases in Pakistan but during the Indo- Pak rivalry, it adopted a neutral position and did not say that the attack on Pakistan would be considered as an attack on America. "All America would have to do would be to inform India that an attack on Pakistan would be treated as an attack on American ally and would be responded to by the overwhelming force of American military" (Hamid, 2007, p.86)

In A Small place (1988), on the other hand, Jamaica Kincaid also highlights the incapability of indigenous people to rule on their own homeland. She says that the people of Antigua have surrendered, and now they do not want freedom or any kind of emancipation; rather, they are used to slavery. Although they have got independence, still they are being ruled by the foreigners as every big contract is given to the foreigners and the ministers of Antigua have green cards, which makes them the permanent nationals of the USA, and it is the result of their services to the USA that they have been given the green cards. She further says that although Antigua has its own army, this army is just like a decoration piece and cannot fight against the external powers. She also talks about rulers of Antigua who fly on diplomatic cards of Antigua and expresses their corruption with the following lines. "The fact is that they are governed by the corrupt men, or these corrupt men have given their country away to corrupt foreigners." (Kincaid, 1988, p.56). She further says that since the inception of Antigua, it has seen just one type of government that is current except the five years in which gentle people came into power but were thrown to the background and now the cabinet ministers of that government are running taxis which is the result of not bowing to the external powers.

Kwame Nkrumah (1966) also pinpoints the role of corruption and inadequacy of the legislative authorities of the recent autonomous nations and says that they depend on the majority of their doings on the ex-colonial bosses. While providing for an answer for this inability, he says this must be expelled if African pan motion is made, which can be a harbinger of a central type of government. In ex-colonized nations, corruption wins in every single institution, which is additionally because of the ex-colonizers as the general population who take an interest in the freedom developments are to a great extent the rich individuals and after the autonomy, these rich individuals rule the nation and make their own benefits as opposed to working for their pure nation. "Neo-colonialism is not a sign of imperialism's strength but rather of its last hideous gasp. It testifies to its inability to rule any longer by old methods" (Nkrumah, 1965, p.214)

South Asian countries have always tried their best to list themselves as independent countries, but due to the incapability of decision-making power and fear of sanctions, these countries are never independent countries where the rule of law can prevail. Mohsin Hamid, through his novel The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007), has highlighted the corruption and inflation prevailing in his country. He also talks about the dictatorship in his country, which has led it towards a miserable state. Father of Erica, while talking to Changez, says corruption, dictatorship, the rich living like a prince while everyone else suffers. (Hamid, 2007, p.33) He also goes on to say that if he is not wrong, the upper class of your country has raped the lower class well and good. These above-mentioned lines show the Pakistani image in the world that need a change. Nkrumah (1966) talks about this change and says that these neo-colonial states should get out of these assumptions and make laws to curb all this. Making laws is not only the solution rather, but the implementation of those existing laws is also the main thing that these ex-colonized countries should do.

A Small place (1988) by Jamaica Kincaid also presents the condition of the country that is similar to the condition of the country presented in The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007). She, while talking to a tourist, also pinpoints that people of Antigua are currently facing a corrupt government, and this government is unable to run their own matters as they are giving building contracts to the foreigners, and after the completion of those contracts, the government hires those building and pay double interests. This is just because the corrupt people in high government ups that they take money from the contractors and sign their files that are not beneficial for their own country. People of Antigua are now aware of their corruption but still are not willing to overthrow the government due to the impacts of slavery. She says, "For the answer on every Antiguan's lips to the question "What is going on here now?" is "The government is corrupt. They are thieves; they are big thieves." (Kincaid, 1988, p.41)

Conclusion

Research is done to limelight the neo-colonialist hegemony of the United States of America in Jamaica's A Small Place (1988) and Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007). Both of these novels are comparatively analyzed through postcolonial theory. Kwame Nkrumah's (1966) concept of neo-colonialism is applied to the selected passages of two different texts. The findings of the analysis are that although there is a different neo-colonial hegemony that is present in both of the novels, the way through which the writers try to seek the indigenous identity by surpassing the neo-colonial identity is the same. In both novels, the second person narrates the story and tells the reader how he or she has lost his or her identity due to the American hegemonic behavior and hybridization of culture. It is clear from the textual references that in both of the novels, neo-colonialism plays a vivacious role in violating the lives of different people of once colonized countries. Analysis of the selected passages of the text shows how the resistance against the colonizers and the neo-colonizers is made in once colonized countries and how this resistance leads a nation towards building a national culture. Comparative analysis of these novels exposes the misconception that the colonizers can transform the colonized. Furthermore, through analysis, the colonial gaze is challenged so that the readers of these native countries may get the benefit from it and avoid complying with these stereotypes. Mohsin Hamid projects the story of a protagonist who becomes the victim of American neo-colonialist hegemony as after the incident of 9/11; he was treated in the same manner in which all the Muslims were being treated in the USA. In comparison with Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007), Jamaica Kincaid, in her novel A Small Place (1988), also deconstructs the Antiguan cultural identity and asserts that although ex-colonizers have now left the Antigua still the neo-colonial power like America is damaging her country through different economic, political and ideological agendas. To cut the discussion short, the analysis suggests that although the UNO charter restricts further colonization the people of the decolonized nations are suffering a lot due to the neo-colonial supremacy of the United States of America.

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