

A GOD IN EVERY STONE: REPRESENTATION OF BRITISH EMPIRE

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to explore the representation of the British Empire in Kamila Shamsie's novel, A God in Every Stone. Additionally, it seeks to understand why the novelist emphasizes social change over political change. The analysis draws on the theories of Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism proposed by Edward Said, using them to interpret the text and contextualize the novel. The source of primary data for this qualitative research is the novel itself, while secondary data includes relevant journals and articles. The findings of the study reveal the portrayal of the British Empire as superior compared to the Ottoman Empire, reflecting a favoring of colonial discourse. The character Vivian Rose Spencer, a skilled artist, exemplifies discriminatory practices of the British Empire towards Indians. Furthermore, the findings of this study demonstrate that the novel portrays a preference for social change over political change. The novelist gives preference to social change and belittles movement of liberation since according to her, freedom through such movements ensures freedom to half of the population which means male community. The novelist devalues both Haji sab of Taurangzai and Ghaffar Khan; the former for announcing Jihad against the colonizers and the latter for non-violence.

Keywords: Representation, Empire, Imperialism, Orientalism, Colonial discourses.

INTRODUCTION

The politics of representation refers to the ways in which people, societies, and cultures are depicted, portrayed, or described in various forms of media, such as literature, film, art, or news. Representation involves the selection, framing, and interpretation of information and is influenced by social, cultural, and political factors. The politics of representation focuses on how power dynamics and social hierarchies impact the representation of marginalized or underrepresented groups, such as women, minorities, or people from non-Western cultures. It explores questions such as who has the power to represent and how they represent, what is included or excluded in representations, and how representations shape our understanding of the world. Edward Said and Homi k Bhabha are regarded as founding figures of postcolonial studies. Said is frequently credited with creating the postcolonial theories of *Orientalism* (1979) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1994). According to Edward Said "People live in a world not just of goods but also of representations, and representations-their production, circulation, history, and interpretation constitute the fundamental essence of culture" (Said, 1979, p. 89).

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Naz et al., (2022) in their article entitled *Manacled Identity of Pashtuns: An Analytical View of Kamila Shamsie's A God in Every Stone* focus on the subject of Pashtun representation in oriental writing that attempts to give voice to Pashtuns who are mute. The study demonstrates how and why Pashtuns were given voices in oriental writers. How much the natives deprive them, how they are treated as inferior, and why they are hidden. For such purpose writers took help from the Gayatri Spivak's (1988) subaltern theory, "Can the Subaltern Speak," The first theory is used to highlight the problems with marginalization, specifically how marginalized people are voiceless, whereas the second theory's focus is on how marginalized people can speak up. Those who are subalterns are mute and are subjected to many forms of oppression. But Spivak gives the voices of the subalterns. After carefully reading the text and applying attentive textual analysis, the researcher discover that Pashtuns were depicted in the novel as being oppressed and exploited. They are devoted to the British administration, but when the British government suddenly changed its stance regarding Pashtuns, they made a quick change of heart. Pashtuns so protested the British with loud voices. Ghaffar Khan, who is leading the movement known as Khudai Khidmatgar, has already begun. Although it was founded on non-violence, the British troops not only started shooting at Pashtuns but also put obstacles in everyone's path. In the book, Shamsie provides Pashtuns a voice by highlighting their struggles in a variety of areas that lead to their independence from British domination as well as from a source of independent state that receives little more respect than a footnote in a history book. The qualitative research methodology is used to conduct the current study.

Inam Ullah et al., (2022) in their article named *Cultural Resistance And The Indian National Liberation; A Study Of The Indian Freedom Movement From A Cultural Perspective In A God In Every Stone* highlight the concept that by examining the Pashtun characters in the book, the study demonstrates how they began adhering to local cultural norms, upholding their traditions, and adhering to their rituals as a kind of resistance against the British on the Indian subcontinent. They reject British cultural practices and symbols, yet neither racial hatred nor armed opposition are displayed by them. The study also reveals that Pashtuns, who are typically linked with negative traits like bellicosity, pugnacity, warmongering, and aggressive disposition, retain a peaceful stance and support the cause of freedom. To analyze present task Amilcar Cabral's "National Liberation and Culture" is used as its theoretical foundation. Whatever the physical characteristics and methods of foreign dominance, according to Cabral (2015), they can only be sustained by systematic repression of the populations' cultural practices, as foreign dominance cannot establish itself on the ground in the face of a vibrant indigenous cultural tradition. The significance of culture as a tool of resistance against foreign hegemony rests in the fact that it is the robust representation of society's physical and historical reality. Similar to how a bloom in a plant can reproduce, culture ensures that civilization will continue to advance and evolve while maintaining its historical continuity. Thus, cultural repression of the dominant people is required for foreign dominance, either completely or in part. Hence, the textual analysis of this novel is then conducted using a qualitative research approach. They arrived at the following conclusions after a thorough investigation of the text employing the theories of the aforementioned thinkers. Kamila Shamsie's 2014 book *A God in Every Stone* includes cultural resistance via nonviolent methods as a mode of resistance experienced by the British Empire in the Indian subcontinent. By utilizing cultural resources, Shamsie illustrates the Pashtun's involvement in the Indian freedom movement and their struggle against the British. The study asserts that Pashtun culture and nonviolent resistance, which were advanced by the Pashtun population, played a significant role in the liberation of the Indian subcontinent. It also claims that the use of peaceful methods and nonviolence is more in keeping with Pashtun culture, which is typically associated with conflict and aggression.

Imran et al., (2021) in their Article "The Resistance of unarmed characters in Shamsie's *A God in Every stone: A Critical Analysis*" discusses that War and colonialism gave rise to several tragedies including identity crises, racism and many other issues. The main problem of current research is to examine the colonial reasons that motivate Shamsie's characters to rebel against their government. Above mentioned study further explain the circumstances under which the characters lost their innocence and turned bold and independent in front of the authorities. Moreover, the purpose of this article is to indicate the harsh realities of colonialism that threaten the colonized nations. Shamsie's story illustrates the damages caused by war,

state and the families on weak individuals. In addition researchers took help from New criticism's Text itself theory examined in the analysis part, mostly relating to text that constitute "Art for sake of Art". New Criticism uses characterization and plot as components of Close Reading. The result shows that it is inconceivable to think that an oppressed person would lead the fight against their oppressors. In truth, Qayyum was having a good time with Kalam Khan while providing his services to the British. He sacrificed his eye while fighting for British forces at Ypres, but he did not renounce his allegiance to the British; instead, he was discharged from the British service. Qayyum found the British to be unkind to Pashtuns, cruel against Indians, and responsible for the assassination of his best buddy Kalam. At this point, he is experiencing mental difficulty "If a man is die to defending a field, let the field be his field, the land his land, the people his people (p. 56)". As a result, he joined the "Jihad" Ghaffar Khan Platoon to fight for their freedom. Qayyum intently observed the British during the anti-British protests as they brutally beat and killed the protesters, behaving like the devil against human nature at a time when complications were at their height. Because of the brutality of the British, Najeeb Gul and Vivian Rose Spencer lost hope in people. As a methodology, this article seeks to use a qualitative approach to the problem and throughout the analysis, they contextualize the perspectives of new Criticism, which encourages a close reading of selected text.

A study by Khan et al., (2018) 'A critique of Resistance shown by Pashtun leaders to British Raj in Kamila Shamsie's *A God in Every Stone*'. The study highlights the resistance of colonized people (Pashtuns) to the rulers of Britain in India. The researchers has used the theory of *Orientalism* (1978), the reason behind choosing such theory is frequent reading of novel. The two prominent Pashtun leaders Haji Sahib Taurangzai and Ghaffar Khan resisted the British rulers together but later they parted their ways. Both are the prominent names in the movement of freedom. However, the author also downplays the political activism because she believes that the social change is more important than the political activism. The act of colonization provokes resistance among colonized people. In addition Haji sahib was in favor of social reform. He wanted to reform the madrassah and use it to eliminate social evils. In particular, he was to compete with Christian preachers who wanted to instill Christian values in Indian minds. He favored educating the people rather than armed resistance against the Raj. Ghaffar Khan is another Pashtun who challenges British colonial rule. He made use of western education as a weapon against Britain. Results notes that the political independence movement was masculine-oriented, and that despite Indian women's suffering in the bloody war, there was no glimmer of hope for true freedom. She believes that the fight for freedom is only for men. Even after independence, women had to be ruled by their husbands. Resistance breaks out in every colonized country. Colonist oppression is met with intellectual and physical resistance. Haji Taurangzai fought the Britain rulers with religious fervor. The novel States that his efforts to reform the madrassah on scientific grounds were a threat to a representative Englishman. So he was trapped in a mountain, and in order to make his voice inaudible. No mention is made of the circumstances created by the British rulers to force him to tribal land ruler. His anti-British campaign was disqualified in the words of Ghaffar Khan. Ghaffar Khan started his political campaign under the name of "Khudai Khidmatgar" (servant of God). His non-violent struggle was ridiculed as he fought unarmed against armed British forces. The paper reveals that the settler's plans were compromised by the settlers in a number of ways. Shamsie satirized both movements. One of Jihad and another of the unarmed resistance that led the brutal Peshawar incident. Shamsie prioritizes the social change. She makes fun of Pashtuns for being chauvinist. There is no option for resisting the Raj and reforming society without drawing inspiration from Colonial discourse.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The author of the selected novel depicts the British Empire as an oppressive entity, juxtaposing it with the Ottoman Empire. Through the portrayal of these contrasting empires, the author highlights the oppressive nature of the British Empire in comparison to the Ottoman Empire. Shamsie has portrayed the negative image of Ottoman Empire such as, "All empires end such as French and Roman Empire. The Ottomans have been on their deathbed long enough" (Shamsie, 2014, p. 24). This implies that the Ottoman Empire is in decline and near its end, while the British Empire is portrayed as superior and presumably still thriving. This suggests a comparison between the two empires, with the British Empire seen as more successful and

enduring. The use of the phrase "deathbed" suggests that the Ottoman Empire is in a state of terminal decline, while the British Empire is implied to be still at the height of its power. This contrast highlights the differences in the trajectories and outcomes of these two empires. The quote reflects the imperialist attitudes of the dominant powers in the novel towards the Ottoman Empire, which was seen as a backwards and declining empire in need of modernization and reform. As Edward Said is of the same view regarding Ottoman Empire in *Orientalism* such as, there were instances where British and French interests regarding the Ottoman Empire aligned or had common goals (See page 26). Despite their historical rivalry, both empires found areas of convergence when it came to dealing with the Ottoman Empire.

As Kamila Shamsie favours colonial discourses and she favours British Empire through the character of Vivian Spencer. "When Spencer asks about T. E. Lawrence and Leonard Woolley's women, both men laughed at this, and her father said, I told you she wasn't like other men's daughters" (Shamsie, 2014, p. 31). This highlights Shamsie's idea that Vivian Spencer is different from other women in some way, perhaps because of her upbringing or education. As the mention of her father's comment suggests that she has had a non-traditional or unconventional upbringing that set her apart from other women of her time. As Said (1979) is of the view that "Oriental one for engaging companionship (or so it seems) and the Western one for authoritative, useful knowledge" (p.160), suggests that there is a perceived difference between the role of women in the East and the West. This idea is reflected in the quotation from the novel where Spencer asks about T.E. Lawrence and Leonard Woolley's women and both men laugh, with Viv's father commenting, I told you she wasn't like other men's daughters. This quotation highlights the contrast between Viv's non-traditional upbringing, influenced by her time in America, and the more conventional expectations for women in the East. The laughter of the men in response to Spencer's question reinforces the idea that the role of women in the East is often seen as one of engaging companionship, while the West values women for their authoritative, useful knowledge. Thus, the quotation can be seen as supporting the idea that there are cultural differences in the perception of women's roles and capabilities between the East and the West. The quotation also suggests that Viv's non-traditional upbringing, influenced by her time in America, has allowed her to challenge conventional expectations for women in the East, as exemplified by her interest in sketching and her desire for knowledge and intellectual engagement.

Moreover Shamsie talks about Ottoman Empire that "Fairness, morality – these aren't just lofty abstractions. In times of war they work to everyone's advantage, binding ruler to ruled, Natives to Englishmen. The Ottoman Empire, by contrast, is crippled by its own savagery" (Shamsie, 2014, p. 33). This quote suggests that fairness and morality are not just abstract concepts but have practical benefits, especially during times of war. It argues that these values help to unite rulers and their subjects, as well as people of different backgrounds. The statement also implies that the Ottoman Empire lacked these values and was instead hindered by its own savagery. This suggests that the Ottoman Empire was characterized by violent and cruel behavior, which may have undermined its ability to govern effectively and maintain the support of its people. Said's quote about the representation of Orientals in *Orientalism* elucidates how the "West has historically constructed and depicted the Orient as irrational, depraved, and childlike, while presenting the West as rational, virtuous, and mature" (1979, p. 40). This quote resonates with a similar portrayal in Kamila Shamsie's novel, where she represents the British Empire in contrast to the Ottoman Empire as a declining force crippled by its own savagery. For instance, the mentioned quote from the novel reinforces the idea that the British Empire portrays itself as morally superior while denigrating the Ottoman Empire as savage. This further supports Said's argument regarding the constructed representations of the Orient by the West.

Qayyum, a soldier who has returned from war and is currently staying at a palace in Brighton, England. He is reading a letter from a fellow soldier, Kalam Khan, who is still fighting in the trenches at Auber's Ridge. Qayyum is struck by the contrast between his current peaceful surroundings and the war-torn world described in Khan's letter. Despite having lost an eye in the war, Qayyum feels grateful for his "ticket home" and does not desire to return to either Peshawar or Auber's Ridge. He finds solace in the Pavilion's green dome and the facility's efforts to provide comfort to soldiers of all backgrounds, including separate kitchens for different religious groups. "The King-Emperor himself had sent strict instructions that no one should treat a black – and this word included Pashtuns – soldier as a lesser man" (Shamsie, 2014, p.

54). This highlights the fact that the King-Emperor himself had issued strict instructions regarding the treatment of black soldiers, including Pashtuns, indicates a recognition of the importance of social equality. This emphasis on social equality is significant because it indicates that change must occur at the societal level, rather than simply at the political level. Furthermore, the passage suggests that social change is more enduring than political change. While political changes may be enacted through laws and regulations, they are often temporary and subject to reversal. In contrast, social change that is ingrained in the attitudes and behaviors of individuals is more likely to be lasting. As Said is of the same view regarding the Orient that "Orient was always in the position both of outsider and of incorporated weak partner for the West" (Said, 1979, p. 208). Selected quotation from Said's theory and the excerpt from Shamsie's novel highlight similar themes related to the perception of the Orient by the West. Said's statement suggests that the Orient is always seen as both an outsider and a weak partner by the West. This implies a power dynamic where the West dominates and incorporates the Orient, but still views it as inferior. Shamsie makes it apparent in the paragraph that the political movements for independence were male focused, therefore even if Indian women suffered in the brutal conflict, there was little possibility for them to achieve true freedom. She thinks that even after independence, women had to be subject to their husbands because the fight for freedom was solely for men. The burqa, a garment worn by Pashtun women to cover their entire body, was worn by English nurse Vivian Rose Spencer to conceal her identity. She experienced suffocation while wearing the burqa and felt bad for the Peshawar ladies who had to carry the load of the "vile cloth" on their heads. Thus, the author expresses her support for societal reform. She disapproves of masculine chauvinism in Pashtun culture. People experienced serious problems, which damaged society. Therefore, social transformation was more important to the society than political change.

The finding shows that the representation of the British Empire in contrast to the Ottoman Empire portrays the former as superior, while the latter is depicted as inferior: In contrast to the negative depiction of the Ottoman Empire, Shamsie portrays the British Empire as superior. She likely presents the British Empire as a thriving entity, implying that it is still powerful and dominant. This portrayal suggests that Shamsie views the British Empire as being in a more favorable position compared to the declining Ottoman Empire. Shamsie's portrayal of Vivian Rose Spencer as a skilled artist, whose sketchbooks are highly valued for potential use in the Maps Division, supports the representation of the British Empire by highlighting the talents and contributions of British individuals within the context of imperial endeavors. By showcasing Spencer's artistic abilities and the recognition her work receives, the author presents a positive image of British expertise and cultural influence, implying the superiority and significance of the British Empire in various fields, including art and cartography. Moreover, The finding implies that the Ottoman Empire did not possess the values of fairness and morality. It characterizes the empire as being hindered by its own savagery, suggesting a lack of moral conduct and violent behavior. This portrayal indicates that the Ottoman Empire may have faced challenges in governing effectively and maintaining the support of its people due to its perceived cruelty. Ottoman Sultan, the ruler of the Ottoman Empire, did not enjoy the love, admiration, or loyalty of his people, indicating a lack of popular support for the empire. Findings highlights that Pathan being inherently linked to their cultural identity and traditions suggests that this identity is fixed and unchangeable. By perpetuating this view, the author reinforces stereotypes and promotes a narrow perspective on non-Western cultures, including Pathans. This contributes to the marginalization and dehumanization of Pathans and other non-Western cultures, while also upholding the historically dominant Western-centric perspective in global culture and politics.

The analysis shows that King-Emperor issuing instructions regarding the treatment of black soldiers, including Pashtuns, reflects a recognition of the significance of social equality within the British Empire. The indication that social change is deemed important over political change implies that transforming social norms, values, and practices is seen as crucial for achieving true equality and justice. The movement of Khudai Khidmatgar for liberation created troubles for women since the men could not protect their women because supporters of the movement were armless. It shows that the author belittles the political movement. The author's expressions of support for societal reform and disapproval of masculine chauvinism in Pashtun culture indicate a broader endorsement of social change. This suggests that the author recognizes the need for transformative shifts in societal attitudes and structures to address

gender disparities and promote equality. It aligns with the belief that political independence alone is insufficient without corresponding social transformations.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicates that the writer presents a portrayal of the British Empire as superior to the Ottoman Empire. This portrayal suggests the British Empire's continued power and dominance. It also highlights the historical context of the declining Ottoman Empire and sheds light on the power dynamics and colonial relationships between the two empires. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that the Ottoman Empire lacked fairness and morality, while portraying the British Empire as culturally understanding and inclusive. Moreover the findings also reveals that Kamila Shamsie's portrayal of Vivian Rose Spencer as a skilled artist in the novel connects to colonial discourse. Spencer's exceptional artistic abilities, particularly valued by the Maps Division, highlight the influence and expectations of colonial powers. The depiction of her foreign education, particularly her American education, underscores the emphasis on developing analytical and creative skills in foreign educational systems. This suggests a connection between education, skill development, and success in the modern world, as viewed through a colonial lens. Overall, these findings indicate that Shamsie presents Spencer's artistic skills as both contributing to and benefiting from the colonial power structures, supporting the notion of colonial discourse in the novel.

Furthermore the findings highlight the control exerted by the British Empire over various aspects of the colonized society in selected novel. The control over the healthcare system, as evidenced by Qayyum's inability to visit his friend in another hospital, reflects the oppressive nature of colonial violence and the denial of essential healthcare services. The hospital itself becomes a symbol of imprisonment and restriction, underscoring the pervasive control imposed by the British authorities. Furthermore, the discriminatory practices, such as the exclusion of Indians from the museum, demonstrate the power dynamics and marginalization perpetuated by the British Empire. The selective acceptance of individuals who align with the colonial power structure further emphasizes the exclusivity and discriminatory nature of the empire. These findings collectively reveal the far-reaching impact of the British Empire's control over the lives and experiences of the colonized people in the novel. Present study also reveals that the perpetuation of fixed cultural identities in selected novel reinforces stereotypes and contributes to the marginalization of non-Western cultures.

It is evident from findings that the presence of institutionalized racism and discrimination within the British Army, where Indian soldiers faced barriers to advancement based on their ethnicity. It also highlights the control and exclusion exerted by the British Empire in colonized spaces, symbolizing the marginalization of the local population. Furthermore, the unequal power dynamic between the colonized people and the British Empire is emphasized, portraying a sense of subjugation and limited agency. These findings underscore the pervasive impact of colonialism and the need for a critical examination of power dynamics and social injustices in postcolonial narratives. Lastly the findings reveals a strong emphasis on the importance of social change over political change. The portrayal of the British Empire as superior and the discriminatory practices against colonized individuals highlight the power dynamics and systemic barriers within colonial societies. The novel also underscores the significance of education, individual agency, and nonviolent resistance as catalysts for social transformation. Moreover, the recognition of gender inequality and the need for broader societal reform after independence demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the complexities of social change. Overall, the findings suggest that Kamila Shamsie's work advocates for a comprehensive and inclusive approach to addressing social injustices, challenging traditional norms, and promoting equality in the face of colonialism and its aftermath.

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