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Reflection of Anti-imperialism in “The Village in the Jungle” by Leonard Wolf.

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to identify the depiction of anti-imperialism of Leonard Woolf's novel *Village in the Jungle* and to see the techniques that the author has used to point out the said concept in the Sri Lankan contexts. This research has been done based on library research. Even though ‘The Village in the Jungle’ is a famous novel in Sri Lanka, it has not done its way through the British society since it was ignored by the main stream of the British society. This study has found out that the writer has used characterization in the text to highlight the notion of anti-imperialism in the text. Mainly, it has identified that the character of Silindu, Babun and Babehami have been used to depict the said concept. In addition to the characterization, the employment of language also can be seen as a fact to talk about the anti-imperialism. The study has found out that the language and the wording of the text do much on the concept of anti-imperialism in the novel ‘The Village in the Jungle’.

Key words: Anti-Imperialism, Characterization, Language

1. Introduction

Sri Lanka was colonized under many invaders in the history. Among them, British invaders are in the culmination and they ruled the country from 1815 to 1948 by adding minor and major changes in many sections which led for long lasting effects in the different systems in the country. While the country was governed by many agents of the queen, some government agents were well aware about the location of the country, rituals, inhabitants and the indigenous ruling system that the Sri Lankans practised from the beginning.

Among those memorable governors, Leonard Wolf who visited Sri Lanka for the first time in 1904 as a cadet officer in Jaffna, was the one who ruled the region with the support of the residents. Until his departure from the land of Ceylon, he served in Hambanthota as an Assistant Government Agent from 1908 to 1911.

During the period of colonization Sri Lankans were subjected to different harassments, especially the ignorant poor villagers in the remote areas. Even the people were well aware about what is going to happen in the surrounding, they had no courage to go or raise the voice against the system that was in the practised since the Sinhala authoritative people indirectly support the British government. According to the found chronical, it has revealed that even the responsible people in the villages such as village headman, the person who needs to protect the dweller from the outside forces, himself has supported the queen's government neglecting the pleadings and the necessities of the people depending on the verbal appreciations of the queen's agents.

The influence of these factors in more or less made many to oppose the British system. As a true record, this opposition were breaking out not because of the British government, but depending on the way that the minor position holders treated for the Sri Lankans, as the people who came out from their own category. Many of the Sri Lankans who were serving under the British system as supportive crew, they used the system indirectly revenge on the people with whom they had personal conflicts.

Therefore, many chapters of the novel have been allocated to depict the anti-imperialism which was built up inside the soul of the Sri Lankans through different characters. In simple term imperialism refers to the political and monetary dominance by the authorities who are ruling a colonized county by themselves or others. For Sri Lankan also, during the period of British colonization, people were made to face with many difficulties depending on the unfathomable laws and enigmatic practices of the leading characters who served under the crown.

However, in “The Village in the Jungle” by Leonard Wolf, the author creates some typical Sri Lankan villagers as characters who are timid to express their anger and timorous in behaviour to be against in front of the

injustice which is going to fall down on the heads, in the view of a foreigner. The attribution of anti-imperialistic attitudes for the characters who are well played in the story is magnificent. When this reveals by an author with a foreign view, it develops much better depiction about the anti-imperial characters and the characteristics of the said characters. So, in this study, it is going to present a survey about the reflection of anti-imperialism in the novel "The Village in the Jungle"

2. Background of the study

Reading a literary text is mainly based on the relaxing. People are interested to read the books which are very familiar to their subject matters and the society. Sri Lankans are eager to read the books which are based on the Sri Lankan context since it is very usual to them. Because of that people like to read *The Village in the Jungle*. And also, this makes the people aware about the British system that make the Sri Lankans to suffer for years for no reasons. This notion and the attitudes of the people about anti-imperialism can be found in different views in the said text very explicitly. This study is trying to highlight the reflection on anti-imperialism with evidence and to see its' applicability for the respective idea.

3. Research questions

1. How the anti-imperialism has been depicted?
2. What are tools that the author has used to present anti-imperialism?

4. Objectives

1. To identify the depiction of anti-imperialism.
2. To identify the techniques that the author has used to depict anti-imperialism in the text.

5. Aim of the study

This study aims at identifying and revealing the depiction of anti-imperialism in the text and to present it through the techniques that the author has used.

6. Discussion and data analysis

The concept 'anti-imperialism' has been inscribed to the novel in various situations but only a little number of readers have identified the concept. The author uses characterization as one technique to depict ill feelings that the Sri Lankans had on the invaders. It is an evident fact that the characters of Babun and Silindu have been added to the story for the reflection of anti-imperialistic views of the people. These characters are placed in the story by the author intentionally for representing of Sri Lankan community.

The character 'Babehami' is the representative of the British government for the village called Beddegama and he is the immediate head of the villagers whom need to deal with. It is a well-known fact that those days, when the rulers are having personal conflicts with ordinary people, they had used the power that the authorities have given to them to control the people. The actual fact was not about controlling but harassing the ignorant. If there is nothing to much revenge on Silindu and his family, Babehami kept on bad eye towards the Silindu's family and when the opportunity comes to Headman, he uses the power remarkably.

'The headman's dislike became more distinct after the birth of Punchi Menika and Hinnihami. Silindu had resented his interference between him and his wife, and when Dingihami died bitter words had passed between them. Though Silindu soon forgot them, Babehami did not. For years Silindu did not realise what was taking place, but he vaguely felt that life was becoming harder for him' (The Village in the Jungle, p 22)

In many of the situations, the headman gives more troubles by using the power that the government has given to him to rule the area. The revenge is going on under behind the scene and the surface is very calm. No one can identify what is going on in the mind of Babehami. When the ladder goes up, all the official governors who have been appointed by the government are oppressing ignorant. This idea is supported by the act which is happening between headman and the Korala Mahattaya. Even though the headman is leading the village, he is responsible under the authority of Korala. In the same way that headman puts the people into trouble, the Korala also does not care about the headman and he considers Headman as a fool. This attitude is very evident with the following discussion going on between Headman and Korala.

'On the poya day two months back there was not a kuruni of grain in all the village. I went to the Korala Mahattaya; I said to him: "Can men live on air?" He is a hard man. He said (his stomach swollen with rice), "For ten years now I have told you to leave your village. There are fields and land elsewhere; they pay for work on the roads. If you make your paddy fields on rock, do you expect the rice to grow?" I said to him, "The Government must give food or the people will die." Then he said, "Go away and die quickly," and he abused me, calling me a tom-tom-beater, and drove me away. (The Village in the Jungle, p 100)

As a whole, that is the responsibility of the Government to look after the people of the country. The way that they are treating people should be equal for all and there should not have any differences depending on the place that they are residing and the language that they are talking. The Korala as the representative of the Government cannot ill-treat the poor and ignorant people. The people who are in villages, they live by cultivating. The quality and the amount of the harvest decides by the rainfall. When they don't get enough rain, the farmers

cannot have enough harvest to use until the next season. Many of the farmers in rural areas in Sri Lanka face with this issue. In this point, when we look at the setting and the surrounding of Beddegama, always people are suffering since this is situated in Hambanthota district. They don't have enough water and then the cultivation would not be successful. They have to ask for help from the government and the government authorities are telling the people to go away from their native land. Here the depiction of the attachment that the people are having to their native place has been highlighted by the author even though he is a foreigner to Sri Lanka. People are starving and the fever is beating them severely. However, they don't like to leave their native place and be the strangers to an alien land. What they need is that they need to die among their people. When the discussion is going on with the Korala, Headman is telling "The government must give food or the people will die". According to the text, from the beginning, the headman is not in a good mood with Silindu, but he is talking with Korala for all the inhabitants of the village Beddegama. The notion of anti-imperialism is highlighted here with the intension of the author. The headman remembers to Korala that it is the responsibility of the government to look after its' people.

When the story develops, Babehami and Mudalali try to put Silindu and Babun into trouble since Mudalali needs Punchi Manika, the woman of babun and the daughter of Silindu. Headman tries to make them victims for a robbery in the house of headman and brings Korala to the village to solve out the case. The headman thinks that he can do whatever he needs since he is having the power to rule the village and Korala asks the questions from Babun and Silindu. By forcing two men to talk about the robbery, Korala puts his power on these innocents. The timid nature of the Babun goes away and he answers the questions raised by Korala. The direct answers of the Babun says that he is no readier to accept the cruelties that people are placing on him intentionally to keep him in troubles. Babun knows well that all these difficulties are there for him and his family since the authoritative power of the government.

"The news of the burglary had not reached Babun and Silindu. They were bewildered by what was passing. They saw the Korala go into the house with Babehami. They were sometime in the house, while the men in the compound talked together in whispers. A little group of men and women had gathered outside the fence, and Fernando stood in the door of his house watching what was happening. At last the two headmen came out of the house. The Korala was carrying a bundle. He walked up to Babun and showed him the bundle: it consisted of two clothes, a pair of gold ear-rings, and some other pieces of gold jewellery."

'Where did you get these from, yakko? he asked.

'I know nothing about them: they are not mine.' (*The Village in the Jounle*, p 108)

In addition to the characterization, the author has used the language well to talk about anti-imperialism in the text. Even though the language is universal and the text is written by a foreign well-known author, many of the readers are failed to identify the novel as an anti-imperial text. The reason many be the simple language that the author has used here in the text. By using a simple language, the author tries much to give hidden meanings on the deep messages. In many situations, the writer uses a direct language for the conversations for Babun and Silindu to show the anti-imperialistic ideas. As well as, it is possible to identify that the language and the wording that the author has employed to headman for the conversation had with Korala gives a clear picture about the anti-imperialism. The headman says that the government must give food to people. Here the headman emphasised that it is the responsibility of the government to look after the people by giving them what they need. When the Korala oppressed headman, his ill feelings towards the imperialism becomes obvious in the novel. In this way, the author has used both characterization and language with wording to denote the notion of anti-imperialism in the text '*The Village in the Jungle*'.

Conclusion

The novel '*The Village in the jounle*' by Leonard Woolf has reached to a big crowd by acquiring a grate fame due to the theme and the language that the author is handling throughout the text. While depicting the oppression that the ordinary ignorant village people are receiving from the rulers, the writer makes his way to talk about anti-imperialistic opinions of the people in different ways. In the text, mainly the author has used Silindu, Babun and Headman as the characters to show the anti-imperialism and the direct representative language to point out the said facts. Further, the usage of the language is very specific and it has been employed where it is much necessary for the development of the said concept.

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