

Geographical Marginalisation in Context with Identity Crisis Projected by David Rubadiri and Derek Walcott in Their Poems

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to view the “Geographical Marginalisation” with the reference to the two poems, David Rubadiri’s “A Negro Labourer in Liverpool” and Derek Walcott’s “A Far Cry from Africa”. In Rubadiri’s poem, the poet spot lights the suffering of a Negro who is working in the land of free (the place of White) and how he longs for a hope. The title of the poem itself is a juxtapose and the toil of a Negro to get an identity is shown. In Walcott’s poem, “A Far Cry from Africa” the suffering of the native African is discussed and the condition of the native “Kikuyu” is mentioned. The poet uses the personification to show the pitiable condition of Arica during the battle by comparing the position of the White and of the Black. Both the poems depict out the voice of the voiceless.

Keywords: David Rubadiri, “A Negro Labourer in Liverpool”, Derek Walcott, “A Far Cry from Africa”, Battlefield, Impact, Migration, Quest for an Identity, Longing for a hope.

This is an attempt to focus on the poems which has the same theme ‘Geographical Marginalisation’ of two different poets like James David Rubadiri’s ‘A Negro Labourer in Liverpool’ and the poem ‘A Far Cry from Africa’ by Derek Walcott tell about the pitiable situation of the African people.

Literature is a word derived from Latin word ‘Littera’ means Letter in English. Literature is one of the arts which teaches us and makes us to enjoy through aesthetic sense. It is in the form of manuscript. Literature takes a vital role in any nation’s pride. The literary men may die but never their works which show the history, movement and the political status of them why they lived, Writers have the capacity to win the heart of the readers through their writing skill with many literary techniques.

“Geographical Marginalisation” can be done only through Migration, which is nothing but the movement from one place to the other geographical zone to seek the prosperity individually or in a group. Migration may be temporary or for the purpose of settlement whether it is because of voluntary or involuntary.

Among 53 Commonwealth nations, Africa is one which was invaded by the British by admiring the wealth but later they treated the people of Africa as slaves. The most pathetic

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 19:9 September 2019

Prof. Dr. S. Chelliah, Editor: Select Papers of the International Conference on *Paradigms of Marginality in Literature - Exploring the Nuances*

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condition is how women were treated. The White consider the Black women as a machine just to produce the children, they quench their sexual desire by abusing them. When Black and White are compared, the White men are in the peak and at the same time the Black women are in the lowest position. The African children were died due to malnutrition. At one point of time, the people of Africa begun to raise their voice against the cruel behaviour of the Britishers. Every nook and corner of African people struggle a lot for their freedom; for instance, Kikuyu', a group of tribal people formed themselves and names as 'Mau Mau' strive hard for eight years form 1952-1960. The African suppressed themselves by underestimating them as a Black and they long for the Blue Eyes like the White people. Toni Morrison spotlights the longing of the blue eye in the work 'Bluest Eye'. Though they were dominated they have the spirit of overcoming obstacles with a new hope is shown through the poem of Maya Angelou's 'Still I Rise'. The African Literature is otherwise known as 'Black Literature'.

In the beginning, African literature blooms in the form of Oral and in the later period it gradually developed into several genres like poetry, prose, drama, short story etc. Poetry is one of the greatest genres of literature through which the poet can expresses his inner feelings under different circumstance whether it may be subjective or objectinve with the end of happy or melancholy note. By using the numerous styles like figure of speech including personification, metaphor, zoomorphism, alliteration and by the various meter, the poet can attract the mind and heart of the readers. The good poetry can create the tension while reading. In poetry, there are various kinds like the epic, sonnet, ode, etc.

James David Rubadiri was a Malawian poet, playwright, diplomat and novelist. Rubadiri is a father of East African Poetry. After the independence of Malawi, in 1964 he became the first ambassador to the United States and the United Nations, He was taught to the University of Ibadan in Nigeria by the invitation of Wole Soyinka.

Sir Derek Alton Walcott is a St. Lucian poet, essayist, playwright and a traveller who is a descent of Africa. St. Lucia is an island under the colonization of British in West Indies. Walcott is a child of both the English Dutch and the Black African. Walcott as the blood of Africa worries a lot about the poor condition of the African people by the Britishers. In 1992, Walcott received the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Rubadiri's poem, 'A Negro Labourer in Liverpool' is a juxtapose with the Black man in Liverpool (the place of the White). In the title of the poem, article 'A' represents the lack of an identity of the Black man who works in Liverpool. In the poem's title, the word 'Labourer' shows how hardly the man is working.

In Walcott's poem, 'A Far Cry from Africa; the phrase 'A Far Cry' gives the meaning how far the cry comes from and reaches the poet in St. Lucia. The cry comes from the far

distance by crossing the number of oceans. This poem depicts the reason for the cry of the African people.

Rubadiri views the life of Black labourer in Liverpool through the poem.

“I passed him
Slouching in dark backhouse pavement
head bowed
taunt
haggard” (lines 1-5)

The poet passes the man who is working hard in the backhouse pavement; his head was bowed so he could not find who is working. The labourer toiled himself a lot as he is in the state off hag. The bowed head represents the submissive position of the labourer and though he is not stable, he could not take rest.

“Our eyes met
but on his dark negro face
no sunny smile
no hope” (lines 10-13)

The poet and working man looked each other, but he could not find any smile or hope on the dark Negro face. The dark says not only the colour the Negro but also his life in blank without any colourful moments. The labourer watches a crowd of people and he searches for a hope and he longs for it. The only hope of him is shovel which is in his hand.

“the negro labourer in Liverpool
That from his motherland
With new hope
Sought for an identity” (lines 21-24)

When the labourer comes to Liverpool, he has a hope and dream about his life. The Negro dreams that he posses an identity in the foreign land, but now the circumstance is too bad and here he searches his identity. The Negro toils a lot by working in the coal mine for the sake of Britishers and for the development of their nation. The hard working man is nothing in the image ‘in the land of free’ shows the independent life of Britishers. Though the Black people in the free land, they cannot be independent and enjoy freedom as much as White people can. The Black especially in the poem, ‘A Negro Labourer in Liverpool’ is a refugee whose life is in dark without any hope and he waits for his dawn to be colourful fills with joy and happiness.

The poem, 'A Far Cry from Africa' of Walcott spotlights the battlefield of Africa and the consequences of this "Corpses are scattered through a paradise" describes the cruel condition. The African land was full of dead bodies, wherever they turn, they could hear the lamentation and mournful cry.

"The salient of colonial policy
What is that to the White child hacked in bed?" (line 8 & 9)

The poet talks about the power of the colonization and he raises the question if the white child is killed, will they leave us. But without any compassion the white murdered a group of innocent African people. This is the allusion of Jews.

"In a white dust of ibises whose cries
Have wheeled since civilization's dawn
From the parched river or beast-teeming plain
The violence of beast on beast is read" (lines 12-15)

The poet says the people of White came here to civilize but they dominated the native and they made them as slaves. The White entered through the river, but they now rule the natives. If the native does not follow the rules and regulations made by the White, the Black sentenced to death.

"The gorilla wrestles with the superman,
I who am poisoned with the blood of both,
Where shall I turn, divided to the vein?
I who have curse." (lines 25-28)

As Walcott is a blood combination of both the English Dutch and the Black Africa, he considers himself as a curse. He can't divide his vein to any one of the nations. Walcott says that White people tamed the Black as the superman tames the gorilla. Zoomorphism is used by the poet.

"Betray them both or give back what they give?
How can I face such slaughter and be cool?
How can I turn from Africa and live?" (lines 31-33)

The poet's rootlessness and the placelessness is shown in the last part of the poem. The poet is in the dilemma to know who he is and his identity. In the poem, Walcott talks about the war of 'Kikuyu' a group of East Africa formed themselves as 'Mao Mao' whose freedom struggle takes a vital role. Though the native people live in their motherland, but they are forced to obey the order of the White. Whether it may be a group or of an

individual. In some case, the negro may have migrated himself to get the prosperity, but it was judged by the other in whose land, the man lives.

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