

EROSION OF TRADITIONAL CULTURE IN RUPA BAJWA'S *THE SARI SHOP*

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Abstract

Colonialism changed the traditional culture in India. Colonialism is a form of domination, exploitation and cultural imposition through power over weak nations. It refers to describe European settlements in Africa, America, and Asia as the British did in India. After the colonial rule of the British, Indians have Indian domestic and social lives underwent tremendous changes. Indians are influenced much by the impact of the English language and scientific techniques. In 1835, Lord Macaulay opens the flood-gates of European thought and literature for intellectuals. Alcoholism is one of the most important impacts of westernization in India.

Rupa Bajwa's *The Sari Shop* (2004) presents a multilingual, multicultural reality, rife with humor and irony. Ramchand is the protagonist, who works as a shop assistant in Sevak Sari House. He is so eager to learn the English language because of the western impact. Chander is one of the colleagues of Ramchand. Kamla, who is the wife of Chander dies because of alcoholism. This paper aims at the erosion of traditional culture in this novel.

Keywords: Colonialism, domination, social lives, English language, .etc

The word, 'colonialism' comes from the Roman term "Colonia" which means "farm" or "settlement" to refer to the Romans who settled in lands. It considers as the expansion of a nation over foreign territories through forcible occupation.

Colonialism is a form of domination, exploitation, and cultural imposition through power over weak nations. It has long existed. It has taken different forms and diverse effects. It used to describe the European settlement in Africa and Asia. The British did in India, which is one of the well-known examples of colonialism. Ania Loomba argued,

This postcolonial theory is used to explore how the postcolonial writers depict the deconstruction of the perceptions and attitudes of power and oppression adopted during colonization, how there are power struggles between the two cultures, and how there are forms of resistance to the impact of colonialism and the psyche of the colonized.

The British involvement in the Indian subcontinent began in the early seventeenth century through British East India Company. The British were interested in India for reasons. India is a source of raw materials, area of investment and a market for British goods.

India is the center for trade and raw materials. The European countries and the British came to India for its wealth. The British rule in India began with trade around 200 years control over the subcontinent. It has an impact on several fields especially the economic and cultural side which mostly affected all parts of education, women, social class and religion.

Westernization is a kind of globalization 1835, Lord Macaulay introduced the English language into Indian school.

She wrote two novels such as *The Sari Shop* (2004) and *Tell me a Story* (2012). She also writes some articles like The Telegraph, The Tribune, Time out and India Today. She got many awards such as the Grinzane Cavour Prize, the Commonwealth Award and India's Sahitya Akademi Award. Now she writes her third novel. She writes her controversial piece called Dark Things Happen in Gurdwaras Too.

Rupa Bajwa's *The Sari Shop* (2004) explores her hometown and the class dynamics of India. It presents a multilingual, multicultural reality, rife with humor and irony. Ramchand is the protagonist, who works as a shop assistant in Sevak Sari House in Amritsar, Punjab. In his early age, Ramchand's father wants to send him to English medium school. His father thinks that one who is studying in the English medium school, he will consider as the best man in the world. This is one of the most important impacts of Europeanization.

Unfortunately, his parents died in the bus accident while going to Haridwar on a pilgrimage. So he did not go to school and he goes to a job in a sari shop. But his interest in the English language is increasing. He is so eager to learn English. Ramchand is influenced by Rina, who is the student of the Department of English.

Rina Kapoor is the daughter of a local businessman named Kapoor in Amritsar. Mrs. Sachdeva, who is the professor of Rina, is the regular customer of Sevak Sari House. Ramchand believes Mrs. Sachdeva helps in the matter of Kamla. But she refuses. After the influence of Rina, he wants to know about the English language.

Ramchand buys and reads many books like *Radiant Essays for School children of all Ages*, *Complete Letter Writer*, *Oxford English Dictionary*, *Medical Dictionary*, *The Mayor of Caster Bridge* and *Quotations for all occasions*. He practices speaking English in front of the mirror for twenty minutes daily. "And he would practice English speaking in front of the mirror every day. At least for twenty minutes. You never know, he might even get a better job someday..... (36)". Ramchand is a typical example for the person possessing the colonized mind.

He reads the words and their meanings alphabetically in the Oxford dictionary. Rina is interested in writing English fictions. Ramchand thinks that he will learn English regularly; he will get a good job in his future. The English language has an impact on India.

Kamla is the wife of Chander, who is the colleague of Ramchand. She is very innocent in her early married life. Chander works in Ravinder Kapoor and Gupta's factory. Chander drinks alcohol and beats her regularly because he loses his job in Jandiala. At last, he is working in Sevak Sari House at Amritsar. Chander did not come to his work properly. Anybody did not take her. So she takes alcohol daily. She becomes very rude and arrogant. Kamla makes many problems after drinking.

Kamla goes to Gupta's house and shouts them. Police arrest her and Chander releases her. Gokul is one of the servants of Sevak Sari House. He tells about the past and present state of Kamla and the pathetic situation of Chander to Ramchand. He wants to help Kamla. But After some days, Kamla goes to Kapoor's house with the drunken state and breaks his head.

At the sight of him, Kamla picked up a stone and hurled it at him. It catapulted through the air in a defiant semi-circle and struck his forehead. The sharp edge of the stone made a deep gash. Blood seeped through the gash and then dripped down to Ravinder Kapoor's white silk kurta (216).

Kapoor is ashamed of this incident. So he sends four men to break her house. They sprinkled the small house with kerosene, where she is alone and set it on fire. Kamla died.

The production and distribution of alcohol acquired a prominent place in the public discourse and political rhetoric in colonial India. Alcoholism is the western impact. Before British rule, alcoholism is much popular. But nowadays women drink alcohol. Thus the impacts of westernization changed the culture in India. The novel discusses the erosion of traditional culture in India.

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