

Postcolonial Study on Guest by Camus in the lens of Homi Ke Bhabha

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Abstract:

The aim of this study is to discuss use of Postcolonial Study on Guest by Camus in the lens of Homi Ke Bhabha. The result of this study shows that The Arab was "imposing on him a kind of brotherhood he understood well but refused to accept in the particular circumstances," Daru believes (80). Due to the control Daru wields over the Arab as his 'transport' to the police and the political context of the region, the two have significant contrasts that make for a difficult friendship to form. The human connection, on the other hand, is undeniable, since the two sharing a place led to the formation of "an odd alliance," as Daru describes it

Keywords:

postcolonial; guest; lens of Homi Ke Bhabha

I. Introduction

Postcolonialism is the study of how the colonial nation affects, conquers and controls the culture, language and society of the colony. Colonialism is maintaining of colonies in one territory by the people from another territory. Postcolonialism is a period of time after colonialism. And postcolonial literature refers to any literature that expresses an opposition to colonialism, even if it were produced during a colonial period. Postcolonial literature often record slavery, apartheid. Many postcolonial writers believe that their countries are still very much colonial countries, both in terms of their values and behaviors. European control over the colonized countries distorted European literature's portrayals of 'other' cultures. Albert Camus is a pied-noir whose parents were of French and Spanish origin is one of the most divisive literary characters of the twentieth century. Algeria is a one-of-a-kind example of colonial dominance and the challenges that the colonial system causes. After an eight-year conflict (1954-1962) that claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, Algeria gained its independence. As a result of the postcolonial society's rejection of the French language, in order to foster Algerian nationalism and the development of an Arab-Algerian identity, In the 1990s, Algeria experienced yet another brutal civil war. Albert Camus discusses these events and address how his writings provide us with a unique representation of Algeria's evolution as a contentious postcolonial and literary space. (Connie 69-70) The present researcher tries to work on Bhabha's view concept diaspora, mimicry, cultural identity and imperialism.

II. Review of Literature

Diaspora is a basic concept in postcolonial study which Bhabha works on it. Diaspora includes movement and transition. Diasporic communities construct identities in new spaces, without demanding the necessity of tying identity to the roots of land and blood. The *Guests* by Camus is the story of three characters: a schoolmaster named Daru, Alducci, and an Arabic prisoner who together encapsulate the social and political strife in north Africa during the French colonial period. Incidentally, this short story was published during the height of the independence Algeria. In this story, Camus employs literary tropes like as location and symbolism to convey his apolitical attitude about the colonial discourse. The character Daru who functions as an alter ego to Camus and a personified reflection of the author's moral problem at the moment. Indeed, the equivocal emotion of home is implied by the pondering.

III. Results and Discussion

This is the way the region was, harsh to live in, even without men who didn't help matters either. Daru was born here. He felt exiled everywhere else. In fact, we can see the schoolmaster's desire to live in the little town' among the locals in an attempt to integrate as one of them, but the law dictated by colonial rule places him on the plateau itself. Emphasizing his status as an outsider in such a society simply due to his origins, which plunges him in alienation echoed by the silence 'around him.

"It was this silence that had seemed painful to him during the first days here, after the war. He had requested a post in the little town at the base of the foothills separating the upper plateaus from the desert. Here, rocky walls, green and black to the north, pink and lavender to the south, marked the frontier of eternal summer. He had been named to a post farther north, on the plateau itself. (*Guest* 33)

Camus' concern for Algeria's future is most visibly expressed in *The Guest*, a novella in which Daru, an Arabic-speaking schoolteacher who educates Arab children, is tasked with transporting an Arab criminal to the police station. Daru represents "the colonizer who refuses"¹⁰⁶ in that he will not be the one to decide the fate of the colonists. He is given the option of fleeing or turning himself in as a prisoner. Daru, on the other hand, pays a price for his impartiality. Daru discovers a note chalked on his chalkboard after the Arab surrenders:

"'You handed over our brother. You will pay for this.' Daru looked at the sky, the plateau, and, beyond, the invisible lands stretching all the way to the sea. In this vast landscape he had loved so much, he was alone. (*Guest* 107)

In Camus's story, the conflict between Arab culture and French authority as a result of colonialism is palpable. The novel is set in Algeria during the Algerian War, which started in 1954. Algerians were subject to French dominance at the time, and Algeria was home to a large number of French citizens. Algerian natives' democratic rights. Under the influence of colonialism, repressing one's own free choice can result in the loss of one's freedom, as not being able to express one's actual conviction renders one's morality and self-determination meaningless, as Albert Camus' novella "*The Guest*" illustrates. Carroll's interpretation of this narrative situates it inside Camus' public position on the Algerian conflict:

The just man, the "good colonizer," is misunderstood by both sides and has no place in the Algeria of armed conflict. He is condemned to solitude and treated as a traitor by the French and an enemy of the Arabs. His refusal to act on behalf of either side serves only to fuel the flames of conflict rather than extinguish them. Daru's solitude ... is presented as both a punishment and a reward, the sign that his position is irrelevant to the outcome of the conflict and at the same time that it must be right and just because it is misunderstood by both sides. (537)

As a result of his inability to affect substantial change in the Algerian conflict, Camus became immobilized. At best, he could keep writing and hoping for a just resolution to a struggle that had polarized not just the *pieds-noirs* and Arabs, but also the French Left and Right. Camus was a stranger once more. As we read the first few words, which depict a barren plateau blanketed in snow, Camus transports us back to the harsh Algerian climate. We learn that the area is hit by a blizzard after months of drought. Snow had suddenly fallen in the middle of October, and the twenty pupils, more or less, who lived in the villages spread across the plateau had ceased arriving, as soon as Balducci came into Daru's vision. The depiction of snow as a scary and unexpected invader upsetting the natives is allegory for colonial law. We learn that the weather was clearing and the light was increasing over the snowy plateau as soon as Balducci leaves the scene, and therefore Daru's home. The sun would then take control and burn the stone fields once more once all the snow had melted. (68)

Postcolonialism portrays the colonized society's identity; it addresses the enormous difficulty of forging a national identity after a traumatic past, as well as how writers speak about and celebrate that identity, often reclaiming it from, and retaining close ties with the colonizer. For Bhabha, mimicry is a technique of colonized Other to facilitate colonial domination. When colonial discourse encourages the colonized subject to 'mimic' the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. The result is a 'blurred copy' of the colonizer that can be quite threatening (Bhabha 85). Bhabha (1994) explains mimicry in this way:

Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference (86).

The story's three characters are a *pied-noir* teacher named Daru, who is forced to host an unnamed Arab who has been charged with murder by a *pied-noir* police officer of Corsican ancestry named Balducci. Daru must host the Arab at his little one-bedroom lodging adjacent to his classroom before giving him to the French Algerian authorities the next day, while the story unfolds in the third person. Camus establishes the concept of the *pied-noir* by focusing on Daru, an "instituter" who lives in squalor. We saw a number of examples of colonialism right away. Camus portrays education as a type of colonialism for the first time, and it is possibly the most important aspect of colonialism for the *pied-noir* culture. This image also shows the physical divide between France and Algeria, as well as between French Algerians and their Arab counterparts at the time, through temperature and location. Camus highlights Daru's poverty, but he also compares Daru's plight to that of other *pieds-noirs* or Arabs who are hungry. Daru's position as a teacher merely entitles him to a little bigger share of the wheat, which he divides with his fellow *pieds-noirs*, or Arabs, as the case may be. Daru lives a very simple existence, but he nevertheless wields tremendous authority over the Arabs

and feels like a Lord. Daru and the Arab are at odds since they both belong there and have accepted their exile.

Daru teaches his pupils, and he teaches his guest. He teaches through hailing, and he teaches through hospitality. And in "The Guest", he teaches obedience through his refusal to obey, turning the prisoner's stay at the school into what Harold Bloom calls – in a very different context – a "Scene of Instruction". [...] In that sense, the writing on the chalkboard is precisely true: "You handed over our brother", the message declares. [...] And in fact, Daru has. And he has done so precisely by setting him free. (232)

By presenting the dispute between Balducci and Daru, Camus further demonstrates the issue of roots and identity as it relates to the pieds-noirs myth. Because the colonial institution is two-fold, Camus introduces two pieds-noirs to depict it. On the one hand, Balducci feels the Arab should be imprisoned, and on the other, Daru believes the Arab should be welcomed and released. The dichotomy of liberty vs. incarceration. Daru is unconcerned with his personal feeling of liberty. He feels at ease in his remote Algerian environment. He is content with his decision. Nonetheless, Daru's fight of revolt and obedience introduces the myth of the pied-noir in Camus. Daru's problem stems from his lack of ability to ignore or disobey Balducci. Simultaneously, he is wary of the power he wields over the Arabs' destiny. Camus disputes Daru's and the Arab's validity in this colonial schoolhouse. Daru, against Balducci's counsel, wishes to give the Arab the option of being free or being imprisoned. Daru also hopes that he will not be forced to make the decision on his own. He hopes the Arab had bolted. Daru is yet another pied-noir paradox. Daru isolates himself from the world by living alone. He is sympathetic to the Arab and feeds him. Daru exhibits compassion for Arab characters, but He treats them with contempt by interrogating them. Daru interrogates the Arab prisoner or by his ability to speak Arabic. Daru can speak Arabic while the Arab cannot speak French. This interrogation is a method of comprehending the Other, but Camus' narration indicates a level of judgement that threatens to undermine Daru's humanity and open-mindedness. (Carroll 102)

Homi Bhabha, (1997) himself also says: "In order to understand the productivity of colonial power it is crucial to construct its regime of 'truth', not to subject its representations to a normalizing judgement" (19). As Bhabha talks about the "difference" and "diversity" of cultures in his book entitled *Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences*, he emphasizes the importance of exploring the boundaries between cultures where they meet (206). Cultural differences, whether they be based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic position, or political affiliation, are frequently the source of conflict, and these conflicts are well-documented. Less talked about are the times when people come together despite their cultural differences, or, even more fundamentally, when they broaden their own viewpoint by learning about someone else's culture. From the setting in French-colonized Algeria to the connection between the two major characters, Daru, a schoolteacher, and the Arab, a prisoner, Albert Camus' short story "*The Guest*" is rooted in cultural disparities. Despite the fact that it was published in 1957 and is set in a colony that no longer exists, the story retains its relevance by examining the various ways humans can contemplate, empathies, and connect across cultural divides, a process that is becoming increasingly important in the face of increased globalization. Daru's contacts with the Arab are the most important method he communicates across divides in "The Guest." Daru feels "a sudden wrath against the man, against all men with their rotten malice, their endless dislikes, their blood hunger" after discovering that the Arab allegedly sliced his cousin's throat (2577). Despite his irritation, Daru treats the Arab with humanity. Daru's civility toward the Arab is expressed in modest

gestures, but they nonetheless reflect a wish to connect with—or at the very least not alienate—the Arab. Daru, for example, observes that the Arab "may possibly be untied" before serving him tea, but does not re-tie the rope around the Arab's wrists, despite Balducci's advice (77). Daru just asks, "Why?" when Balducci orders him to keep a rifle near his bed while the Arab is with him. "I have nothing to be afraid of" (77). Daru also equalizes the relationship with the Arab by conversing with him in Arabic rather than French (78). Despite his illegal status, the Arab is allowed to sleep in the same room as Daru, a further attempt to coexist despite cultural differences. It's never clear whether the Arab is guilty or innocent of the crime for which Balducci accuses him; the fact that Daru chooses to treat him well despite this perceived 'moral' difference between them demonstrates an instinct to value humanity and simple acts of goodness over mindlessly following orders simply because they are cultural expectations. The Arab was "imposing on him a kind of brotherhood he understood well but refused to accept in the particular circumstances," Daru believes (80). Due to the control Daru wields over the Arab as his 'transport' to the police and the political context of the region, the two have significant contrasts that make for a difficult friendship to form. The human connection, on the other hand, is undeniable, since the two sharing a place led to the formation of "an odd alliance," as Daru describes it (80)

IV. Conclusion

Albert Camus' "The Guest" is a study of cultural differences. The novel recognizes the difficulties of multicultural contacts, as well as the life-altering hazards that they can bring, but it also urges awareness and compassion. While Daru and the Arab's fate is doomed, the little period in which they acquire each other's trust is admirable and, regrettably, rare. Perhaps, one day, the forces that divide them will vanish, but only if people first make an attempt to see past their differences. They are victims of French colonialism. The story is also about individuals, loneliness, freedom, responsibility, and most importantly, the difficulty of making moral choices. migration and national identity are presented in the story. As a parable, "The Guest" involves and conjures opposing concepts of justice in the setting of a guest-host relationship, and implies parallels to our current reality. This demonstrates that the schoolmaster would prefer avoid his obligations than face the problem. Daru believes it would be simpler if the Arab simply fled; that way, he could return to his usual life, free of moral dilemmas.

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