NAMES THAT SYMBOLICALLY RELATE TO POST-COLONIAL AFRICAN SOCIETIES IN NOVIOLET BULAWAYO'S NOVEL WE NEED NEW NAMES

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Abstract: This study sought to analyze the names that were symbolically related to African societies in Noviolet Bulawayo's debut novel, we need new names. Various names were analyzed and their symbolic aspects were discussed. It concentrated on the names uses on this novel and how Noviolet has represented Zimbabwe in post-colonial time and the African societies at large. It showed that a writer in modern African societies is a mirror of her own society as they inform the world about things happening in their societies. Scholars have not fully paid attention to the symbolism of names in relation with the periods in the history of the society. This study used post-colonial theory as its theoretical framework. This theory was preferred as the study dealt with a post-colonial novel. The research used qualitative research design with a descriptive approach. The target population was Noviolet Bulawayo's story hitting Budapest, her novel we need new names (2013) and Yvonne Vera's novel butterfly burning (1998). Purposive sampling was used and the novel we need new names was chosen as it fit the needs of this study. The study was fully library based. Documentary analysis technique was used to gather information from the novel of research. The text was read extensively and contextual analysis method was used to analyze the data. The researcher concluded that there were names that symbolically related to African societies in the selected novel. These names have been strategically used to remind us about the African post- colonial struggle. It was found out that names are not just aesthetics to works of art.

Keywords: post-colonial period, symbolism

Introduction

Theoretical framework

This study was guided by post-colonial theory. Post-colonial theory is concerned with the aftermaths of colonization on ways of life and societies in general. It shows the results of colonization to the colonizers and the colonized. Frantz fanon was the major proponent of post colonialism theory. He started the post-colonial study in 1950 and aimed at showing how the societies were after colonization. He analyzed and described the innate characteristics of colonialism as damaging. Its societal effect on the infliction of imposing colonial selfhood is injurious to who were subjugated into colonies mental health. ('The wretched of the earth'(1961) Post-colonial theory analyses the history, culture and dissertation of the European powers to Africans societies after independence. It also examines the lives of the colonizers and the colonized after colonialism.Frantz looked and the minor and major consequences of colonialism. He noted that both the colonized and the colonizer suffered and both need to be delivered from colonization.

This theory has enabled the researcher to analyze the names and place them back to the post-colonial African societies. This theory was also helpful because this book was written with the setting being post-colonial period in Zimbabwe and Detroit Michigan. It shed light to the post-colonial experience of the Zimbabwean people.

Methodology

This study used the qualitative research approach. It was exploratory and used descriptive design to relate the names in the selected novel to post-colonial African societies. Contextual analysis method was adopted for analysis of the names chosen.

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Findings and discussions

The study found out various names that were symbolically related to post-colonial African societies. Noviolet Bulawayo creates a great picture of how African societies are now and show various post-colonial struggles that they are going through

Paradise

Paradise is a fictional city that darling's family and the other families who were affected by the demolishing of their houses homes to .this is a post-colonial Zimbabwean city and even though it is represented with a beautiful name, it is made of tins and an adult cannot stand straight inside. It is a shanty town. Full of poverty and people barely make a meal a day. The name of the city is very beautiful and one would think it's a very safe place full of love and peace. But darling says that people did not come to paradise. They had no choice. They had to leave their ruined homes. Even though the people had no choice to come here, the name is symbolic. The place provided a kind of healing to them. They were able to start again even if it was in a shanty village. The place could offer them peace and love again. It was a new place but they observed that the sun was still shining and that was a sign that things were going to get better. When the children are playing country-country game, all of them want to be the big developed countries in the world. They want to be U.S.A., Britain, Canada, Australia, France, Italy, and Sweden among other countries that famous. They want to be countries that have all the things that they are not getting in paradise.

Paradise is a symbol of some African cities suffering post- colonial issues up to now. They are suffering due to dictatorial governments. They have been neglected and have no one to turn to. They live with disillusionment as they are not reaping the fruits of independence. Noviolet is trying to remind the world that there are people who are still suffering in different parts of Africa and something needs to be done to save them.

Budapest

Budapest is the city of the rich people in the country. The children went there to steal guavas after they have exhausted the trees in paradise. It is a white dominated city thus very different from paradise. Noviolet uses the name Budapest and one would think she is talking about Budapest in Hungary as the two cities are not different .both are modern cities with beautiful homes.

This city is symbol of all the oppression the people in paradise are doing through. It is a representation of all the things they don't have. The children sees is a source of food and are trying to equalize the situation between paradise and this city by stealing guavas from the beautiful homes.

Budapest is also a symbol of othering of the poor societies in post-colonial African societies. The people in paradise do not have anything. They cannot access the basic needs while those in Budapest are lavishing in all these things and more.

New names

Noviolet Bulawayo's original name was Elizabeth Zandile Tshele. She was born in post-colonial Zimbabwe. She was the first child born in her family after independence. She changed her name and picked up the pen name 'noviolet Bulawayo to connect herself with her roots. Bulawayo to represent the post-colonial town she grew up in and used Noviolet which according to her was a tribute to her mother who died when she was young .Noviolet picked a new names that symbolized her home country, Zimbabwe. She wanted the whole world to know that she is from Bulawayo and learns about what was happening as she grew up in this post-colonial town.

In the novel three characters pick new names. Darling, Shbo and Forgiveness pick new names when they are helping their friend Chipo abort her pregnancy. Shbo picks the names that he heard in a television show that talked about the ER in America. The kids needs new doctor's name so that they can help their friend. Shbo picks the name doctor Roz, gives Forgiveness the name doctor cutter and Darling the name doctor Bullet. The symbolism of these new names was to idealize the American supremacy. With new names, they are doctors, they can perform a surgery, and they can save their friends life. Their names are a symbol of Africans trying to do

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everything necessary to ensure that they survive.

The children's only way to save their friends was through unsafe abortion. Abortion is illegal in most African countries but it is still being done using risky methods like the one the children are using. It's an eye opener to Africans as there is need to protect the vulnerable children. If this operation had succeeded, the patient would have surely died and over the years so many young girls have died from illegal abortions in Africa.

Conclusion

This study concludes that names used by Noviolet Bulawayo in we need new names are a symbol of post-colonial African societies. Names are not used for aesthetics in works of art. They have meaning. In this study, they are used purposely to remind us of the Africans post-colonial struggle. This study also concludes that post-colonial African society's still needs help from the clutches of secondary colonialism from ruthless governments.

Recommendations

This study recommends that the author's should focus on the names they plan to use in their works of art and ensure that they fit to the overall essence of their work. This is because the names will be interpreted by the readers and they may get the wrong message. Writers should read more about our African societies and the world at large before writing any work so that they can get some essential information about the names that will fit their books

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