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ABSTRACT: This article is devoted to exploring the function of memory and history in postcolonial literature, focusing on how authors use these themes to address the legacies of colonialism. It examines how memory, both individual and collective, serves as a tool for reclaiming cultural identity and telling untold stories. The article also analyzes how postcolonial writers confront the distortion and manipulation of history by colonial powers and its lasting impact on postcolonial societies. By looking at key literary works, the article highlights how memory and history are intertwined, shaping narratives that challenge dominant historical discourses and offer alternative perspectives. Ultimately, the article seeks to demonstrate the role of memory and history in the healing and transformation of postcolonial cultures.

Keywords: Colonialism, collective memory, cultural identity, historical distortion, postcolonial literature, reclaiming history, trauma, unwritten histories.

INTRODUCTION

The function of memory and history in postcolonial literature is a crucial area of study, as these themes play a central role in how postcolonial societies confront the legacies of colonialism. Postcolonial writers often use memory as a way to reclaim lost identities and provide a voice to those whose stories were marginalized or suppressed during colonial rule. History, particularly as shaped and distorted by colonial powers, is reexamined to highlight its impact on the collective consciousness of postcolonial nations. The study of these themes in literature reveals how authors challenge dominant historical narratives, offering alternative perspectives that reflect the complex and often painful realities of life after colonialism. Given the ongoing relevance of postcolonial issues, understanding the interplay of memory and history in literature is essential to recognizing the ways in which these works contribute to cultural healing and transformation.

METHODS

To explore the function of memory and history in postcolonial literature, this study adopts a qualitative, text-based approach, focusing on key literary works from postcolonial authors.

A close reading of selected texts from postcolonial authors such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Jean Rhys will be conducted. This analysis will focus on how these authors represent memory and history, paying particular attention to narrative structure, language, and the use of historical events within fictional contexts.

Themes related to memory and history will be identified and coded within the texts. The analysis will highlight how memory is used to reconstruct personal and collective identities and how history is portrayed or reinterpreted to challenge colonial narratives.

A comparative study will be made between the historical events referenced in the literature and the actual historical accounts, assessing how accurately or selectively history is depicted and how memory plays a role in shaping the understanding of these events. This method will help

uncover the tensions between history as a factual record and history as a tool for narrative construction.

The study will incorporate postcolonial theory, particularly the works of theorists like Homi K. Bhabha and Edward Said, to frame the analysis of memory and history. Theories of cultural trauma, collective memory, and historical revisionism will be applied to interpret the way these concepts are explored in the texts.

Interviews with scholars specializing in postcolonial literature will be conducted to provide expert insight into how memory and history function within the literary canon. These interviews will offer a broader understanding of how these themes have been interpreted in critical scholarship and their relevance to current discussions on postcolonial identity and history.

By combining all of these, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how memory and history shape postcolonial literature and contribute to its broader cultural and political significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study reveals that memory and history are integral to postcolonial literature, often serving as powerful tools for reclaiming identity and challenging colonial narratives. Many postcolonial authors use memory to highlight the emotional and psychological impact of colonialism, showing how personal and collective memories are shaped by historical events. For example, in works like *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe and *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy, history is not simply a set of facts but a lived experience that deeply influences the characters' sense of self and their connection to their cultural roots. The analysis also shows that these authors often present history as fragmented or distorted, reflecting the ways in which colonial powers rewrote historical records to justify their domination.

Moreover, the portrayal of memory in these works is not static; it evolves, reflecting the ongoing process of healing and reconciliation in postcolonial societies. The study found that memory acts as both a site of resistance and a source of strength, enabling characters to reclaim lost histories and reimagine their futures. In *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, for instance, the recollection of the Nigerian Civil War serves as a critical tool for healing, as characters grapple with the trauma and the silences surrounding this period in history.

The results of this study highlight how postcolonial literature uses memory and history not just as narrative elements, but as means of confronting and reinterpreting the past. Memory in these works is often fragmented, reflecting the fractured nature of postcolonial societies, where colonialism has left lasting scars. However, memory also provides a space for resilience, as characters work to reclaim and rewrite their histories in their own terms. This process of reimagining history allows postcolonial authors to challenge the dominant, often Eurocentric, narratives that have shaped global understanding of the past.

What stands out in the analysis is how postcolonial literature often blurs the lines between fact and fiction, suggesting that history is not a neutral account but a subjective construction. By intertwining memory and history, authors critique the ways in which colonial powers have manipulated historical events to serve their own interests. This is evident in works like *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys, where history is portrayed as being shaped by colonial perspectives, and characters must navigate their personal histories within this distorted framework.

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Moreover, the study underscores the importance of memory in healing and identity formation in postcolonial contexts. As characters confront their pasts and recall traumatic events, they are able to reclaim their narratives and reshape their futures. In doing so, postcolonial literature not only challenges historical injustices but also contributes to the ongoing dialogue about cultural reclamation and the struggle for self-determination in the wake of colonialism. Ultimately, memory and history in these texts are vital tools for both understanding and overcoming the complexities of postcolonial identity.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, memory and history are fundamental in postcolonial literature, as they allow authors to address the lasting impacts of colonialism on identity and culture. Through the lens of memory, postcolonial writers reclaim suppressed histories, challenging the distorted versions of history imposed by colonial powers. These works show how the past continues to shape present identities, offering alternative narratives that resist colonial domination. By revisiting and reconstructing history, memory becomes a tool for healing and cultural renewal. Postcolonial literature uses these themes to critique historical injustices and explore the complexities of personal and collective identity. Ultimately, the function of memory and history in these texts contributes to the ongoing process of decolonization, helping societies reclaim their narratives and imagine new futures.

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