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English 200

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Cultural Impact of Colonization

The novel *Annie John* by Jamaica Kincaid is a narration about a girl who goes through a very painful growth into her womanhood. She has a blissful childhood, becoming the center of interest for her mother, and later into her adolescence characterized by harsh maternal conflict. She later leaves for England for studies and make her future as a separate being. The events of the story unfold various themes of the cultural impact of colonization. On the other hand, Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*, there is magic use by Prospero to cause a storm to trouble shipwreck survivors, and the King of Naples. There arise issues of love, gender, freedom, and a reunion of family ties, happening in colonial and political times of unrest, among others. With reference to the novel and the play, this essay explores the argument of whether or not colonization impacted culture in both scenarios.

The Tempest was brought forth in the era of the foundation of the British Empire, and at a time when most colonies of the French and Britain were acquiring their independence. This was in the middle of the twentieth century. From the play, Caliban is presented as a native character of the island in a sympathetic manner. The white European colonizer involuntarily subjugated him by the name, Prospero. This shows that the text contains aspects of colonialism, affecting people's lives, especially of the colonized.

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Commented [MZ2]: This is not accurate. *The Tempest* was written in 1610.

Commented [MZ3]: Is he always presented this way? This needs nuance and textual evidence.

On the other hand, *Annie John* portrays the colonization of Antigua by Britain (Willis & Deborah, p. 281). The school that Annie attends has been taken up for discussion on colonialism where the running of the activities is done in a British way and the materials that the students are taught cover the English culture, history, and literature. The dressing style for the girls is British, and for them, local dancing in the playground is discouraged. The students are taught not questioning social order and history that is passed onto them, as this is seen on the failure of the institution to address the perverse slavery history and the delight depicted by Annie in Columbus's imprisonment. Annie has shown excellent performance in school, indicating that she is now well acquainted with skills that prove the social worth and intellectualism of the colonial world. Nevertheless, she still portrays her spunky habit with the absence of her teachers, meaning that her gutsy Antiguan spirit still blossoms within (Strickland et al., p. 10).

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Still, *The Tempest* portrays a social aspect in which Prospero forcefully gets himself into the ruling of Sycorax's island, through the imposition of his own culture of the inhabitants of the island. He places himself at the control of every affair, pushing the native aside. He treats Caliban's mother with no sense of humanity after displacing her. Moreover, he takes Caliban as his servant, referring to him as a thing of darkness. Through this, Caliban is also undergoing dehumanization and treatment of him as a subhuman. In this case, he becomes more of a slave in serving Prospero. This depicts the attitude of colonizers looking down upon the colonized group. The people of color were being looked down upon by the White people, embracing the idea that some people are born to dominate, while others to be dominated. As such, Caliban is viewed as inferior and wicked. Words like wisdom, knowledge, and light were used by the colonizers to refer to themselves, while ignorance, elemental, and darkness were used in the description of the

Commented [MZ5]: This is a lot of summary. Provide textual evidence in the form of quotes. Analyze these quotes.

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colonized. These scenarios led us to deduce that the two literary works have exhibited racial segregation, racial differences, or what may also be called othering (Strickland et al., p. 12).

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Moreover, parent-child relationships are evident in *Annie John*. The particular aspect of the parent-child relationship in this novel is the mother-daughter relationship. This has appeared to be the central theme of the novel, depicted by the association between Annie and her mother. Their relationship is characterized by tensions and difficulties, all of which emanate from Annie's incapability of accepting herself as a separate being or self. She desires passionately to remain with her mom due to the emotions common in many girls of her age (Willis & Deborah, p. 281). The classmates with Annie show sympathy with her essay reflecting on her fear of disunity, disconnection, or separation. In addition, these girls create friendships with each other in a bid to redeem the maternal love that seems dissipating. In the process of her aging, Annie is caught in between hating and loving her mother, translating her to be both a disobedient child and a good student. Overly, the justification of her nature of rebellion during her adolescence looks like an extended description of general psychological trend, instead of a mere phenomenon of fiction. Later on, Annie has to go to school to study nursing in Britain and has to part with her parents. Here, she has to accept the fact that she cannot live beside her mother the whole of her life and takes on to face reality. These dynamics in their relationship take up the position of the prime theme in the novel.

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Commented [MZ10]: Is this in your own words? Much of this paragraph and parts of the other paragraphs seems to be lifted from other texts. If you are getting it from somewhere else (Willis & Deborah?) and not putting it in quotation marks, it is plagiarism. But putting it in quotation marks doesn't fully solve the problem either because I want to see your ideas, not the ideas of a secondary source

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Likely, *The Tempest* exhibits a parent-child relationship.. The relationship between Prospero and his daughter Miranda is great and pure, more so when the basis is laid on their past. Miranda believes in her father and asks him to do all that is in his power to bring the salvation of the souls on the sinking ship. The survival of these two, Prospero and Miranda, is dependent on the supplies, the books left by Gonzalo as the origin of their magical prowess. They have lived

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and cherished their father and daughter relationship and love for up to twelve years. Prospero elevates the tempest in a bid to make things straight not just for once, but for all. It is with that regard that he tries to interrupt the growing love between her daughter Miranda and Ferdinand, with a goal of making it not to grow too fast. As such, it is a storyline showing the care the father accords to his daughter, but the feeling of happiness towards marriage is also present. In addition, Alonso, the father to Ferdinand, cries over the fate of his son Ferdinand, regretting of journeying to Tunis, something that becomes a nightmare for Ferdinand. This depicts Alonso's heart as the sore brought by the loss of Ferdinand (Murdoch, p. 340).

It is not a hard thing to note that Prospero's magic has been used as a metaphor to represent the art of Shakespeare as a playwright. There is the summoning of creatures of illusion and spirits in both scenarios. Both scenarios create performances that involve actors, in order to tighten up the parallelism. The magic powers of Prospero have been described as "art," which is stronger than the Setebos's powers, a god worshipped by Sycorax, Caliban's mother. On the other hand, *Annie John* novel alludes to the use of magic from the play of *The Tempest*. Another stylistic device used is foreshadowing (Willis & Deborah, p. 281). The essay written by Annie in class showing the separation of her and her mother by water comes to be when she later goes to England for studies, the waters of the Atlantic Ocean separating her from her mother.

In conclusion, this essay has looked into the cultural impact of colonization, paying attention to issues of racial prejudice, parent-child relationship, and aspects of slavery in the play, *The Tempest*, and the novel, *Annie John*. In different forms, Shakespeare and Jamaica Kincaid have presented such cultural impacts of colonization, each remaining relevant to the messages they are passing across. The novel, *Annie John*, has borrowed the issue of magic from *The Tempest*, to create a scenario of power over some obstacles in life, and maintenance of one's

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life in the status they wish. It is arguable whether or not colonization from the two literary works had an impact on cultural ways. Still, from the issues discussed, the effect is evident and proves significant thereof.

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Murdoch, H. Adlai. "Severing the (M) other Connection: The Representation of Cultural Identity in Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John*." *Callaloo* 13.2 (1990): 325-340.

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