

Multiculturalism and Transculturalism in Buchi Emecheta's

The Rape of Shavi

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Multiculturalism means the preservation of different cultures or cultural identities within the unified society, as a state or nation. In *The Rape of Shavi* two cultures mingle with each, other the culture of the West and the culture of the East, or the civilized and the uncivilized, or the innocent and the wicked. The "albino aliens" come to Shavi as their "bird of fire" crashes there. The people of Shavi have not seen the fire of bird till that time. So they look at the albino people as "Only that I have my doubts as to whether those figures are human or not" (14). In *The Rape of Shavi*, Buchi Emecheta has given an account of the mingling of two cultures;

Oh, Father, I've watched them closely whilst standing behind that egbo tree, and I'm convinced that they've had a very bad accident. It even looks as if one or two of them dead already. They feel pain, they talk, and they walk on two feet. What other evidence do you want them to produce to show them that they're human?" (14).

The natives take them to their palace and give a grand welcome in their traditional way. People of Shavi like that of 'Live and let live'. (45) Flip the easy moving man mingled with them easily. He accompanied the Shavians while going to market. He observed everything and he shared the practices of his country.

Ronje one of the member of albino wishes to say goodbye to Shavi. So the day before they leave commented Shavi as Godforsaken place. But Flip objected to it by

saying that the Shavians did not invite us. By crash of plane we are here. So don't blame the Shavians.

First time after fourteen days Asogba came to Flip and had an introductory note. Kisskiss answered her father as "yeah, yeah". But Asogba misunderstood that it was her name. That much ignorant were the people of Shavi. The albino for the time being accepted the things which happened to them in Shavi. Their thoughts were fully occupied by the return to their homeland.

Flip felt that he could trust the humanity of the people of Shavi. They had not acquired the art of superficial kindness. Their kindness was humane and genuine. The people of Shavi were quite satisfied with their lives. So Flip tied his head cloth more securely, held his desert walking stick firmly, and followed Asogba and his men. They went to the cow fields. After his return there was a celebration they gave them new dresses and wine. In the party, Andria began to giggle like the Shavi girls. Flips observation on Shavians is:

I am remembering our civilization. To think these people have been living here, surrounded by their desert, going about their own business and completely unaware of the west so that they don't even know the name we give the deserts surrounding them (73)

After the party the next day morning Flip awakened Andria. She wore the Shavians dress. But Flip pointed out to the small children of Shavi could tie the cloth properly. And he advised her to adopt herself to the practices." You don't have to be born to it. You adept to it. We've been here for over two weeks; you should be able to do things like that by now." (84)

Ronje married a South African White called Shona who loved the black race. She had left him for the loud mouthed black American from Chicago. That was humiliating him. Whenever he was drunk, he used to say, "Shona prefers to go back to nature". (90) After Shona's desertion, Ronje couldn't stand a black person that behaved the way of these Shavi people. They had so much cool and dignity. Shavi people gave of their best to their visitors. They treated well from the day onwards. But Ronje saw the future queen of Shavi Ayoko took bath in the river. He went near to her. For the first time she searched for somebody to help her. But she couldn't find anybody there. Then a thought sparkled in her mind. Her father told that these people were another breed of Uthang, and these animals could harm women. Ayoko had not seen a live Uthang before, but his eyes look like the dead one brought by the hunting guards once to the palace. Now her smile had gone. She was fifteen. Within ten minutes he destroyed the life of the future queen of Shavi. Ayoko went back to home and cried to her mother, Siegbo. Siegbo said as:

"My daughter, I think your father was right. Those leper-looking creatures are not human. You can only be violated by humans. Animals cannot violate human beings, because there are no such laws in the animal kingdom. So say nothing to anybody. Go in and wash yourself properly and go about your work. Leave the rest to me. You have not been violated. The creature, Ronje, is an animal, for what human would destroy a beautiful person like you? And we can't let an animal destroy you, daughter of the great priest of Ogene, the would-be Queen Mother....Dry your tears, daughter, and go about your work with a young bright face. Leave the war to us, the mothers." (98)

But in contrast Flip lived with Andria and she given birth children too. But they did not marry. Their cultural identity was different. In the case of Ayoko, she was engaged to Asogba by the time of her birth itself. Ronje not only spoilt the life of the future queen of Shavi and the country Shavi. Once Ronje enquired about Ayoko, Flip warned him not to go near her. Flip added that, if he would rape her that was raping the country Shavi He did not want them to introduce the corrupt ways of theirs to Shavi people. When the albino people decided to go back to their native, they lost a person from their team. But they did not care about his whereabouts.

In the traditional practice of Shavi polygamy was permitted. The man could marry many times. But the one who give birth boy would be considered the senior. Priority would be given to her. Here queen mother was Shoshavi. She was the one who was performing the test of virginity to the future wife of prince Asogba, Ayoko.

Transculturalism in Buchi Emecheta's *The Rape of Shavi* the son of King Patayon, Asogba nearly twenty- three years old induced to follow the Western culture. When the prince of Shavi Asogba wishes to go with them to learn new things to make their land as:

"...I want to go with the albino people to learn their tricks. Then when I return teach our young men to build and fly birds of fire. Now it takes three trekking days to get to Ongar and sell our cattle. Then it will take us only half a day, and with our bird of fire, I am going to settle the Kokuma score. We will be the most respected and feared people of the desert. No longer will we be a timid people hiding in a secluded oasis behind the Ogene hills." (134)

He went with the albinos while they returned to their homeland. He was not treated well by the West .But at the same time his interest towards learning the westernized things laid the destructing path of Shavi.

When they reached England, the immigration officials arrested him and took him to Pentaoville prison. Flip decided to teach him the modern farming techniques and he too should learn so many things from them. Asogba learnt everything eagerly. In between Flip tried to know much about the value of the stone which they

brought from Shavi. The changed Asogba came to Shavi. There was draught. He conveyed the albinos deal of exchanging food for the valuable stones in their country. But King Patayon reminded of the individuality and freedom of Shavi. But Asogba did not give time for the elderly council. He started explaining about the loyalty of albino people. But what King Patayon feared about that happened. Flip did not feel guilty for making the quiet contented life of Shavi disturbed.

. Asogba became the transcultural man in this novel. He followed the West and forgot everything about his traditional practices and the elderly people suggestions were ignored.

"People in the desert call us the shy ones ruled by the Slow One. All this is going to change, because Ogene wills it, we're no longer going to be called the shy ones. Why should we be shy? We are a strong tribe, good hard – working people. And why should our ruler be called "the Slow One"? Are these flattering titles?" (161)

Asogba took young men from Shavi to market. The Shavians were known for their cattle. But they came to market without cattles. The Ongar was known for camels. The people in the market wondered about their arrival without anything to sell. Before evening, Asogba and his men acquired almost fifty camels by frightening the Ongar people. Like that they started taking other villages. Asogba had Land Rover and his men riding camels with pride. After raiding so many places, they decided to return to Shavi.

Finally, their raid to Koo a small village their hope was shattered. They allowed them in and started at them and also set fire everywhere. The car got fire and exploded, and camels choked and died. Asogba and his men were caught in the fire. It was a humiliating experience after the successes of the previous months. Asogba, badly burned and shaken, survived his brother Vijayan, and six others.

They went to their country Shavi. They saw a child, it screamed as if he had seen the ghost. A women, more like skeleton than a human being peeped out of the door. Vijayan asked Asogba as "Look, our prince, is that not Ayi's daughter, the last of the king's queens? What is she doing outside the palace? The king of our father has not died...?" (175).

Asogba, who could bear the skull-like stare of women, no longer, summoned all the energy of his body and cried, "Where's the council of the Elders? I know that there is a drought, but they should be in council, and you should have enough to eat. The albinos sent food..." (175)

There are few men in the country. Some of them killed in drought. Some of the elders were killed by Ongar people, for the Shavians raid to that village. Some of them died of shame of their act exposed by the Ongar people.

The drought killed many, and the people of Ongar killed the rest by taunting them and telling them of your 'desert conquests'. This killed all of the thinking men. You know that with them shame kills very fast. The talking men are still around, living and hiding behind the Shavi hills. You took all the men of actions with you so we have very few men left". (176)

Asogba enquired about the bird of fire and the albinos. There was no reply to it. Asogba could neither cry nor speak. But now everybody was looking at him. His responsibility was to correct everything. He enquired about the bird of fire and their promise to come over there every six days. He received the information that the albinos came and informed that they no longer in the need of the stones. So they stopped sending food also. The drought went for another two months many of them died. Asogba became the king of Shavi and he married Ayoko. But the disease spread to him also. After he married twice but he did not have any issues. After him, Shavi was ruled by Vijayan. He followed the ways of King Patayan. Asogba asked about the civilization to Vijayan. He said as, "I don't know what it is, but we have it, the best of it, and maybe the albino people have theirs too. It is difficult to say"

Thus, *The Rape of Shavi* depicted the two cultures mingled by accident of the fire bird and the life style of two different stayed together for some time and the return of the west kindle the wish to enjoy the unfamiliar and powerful mechanisms of the youth and future king of Shavi, Asogba. The research paper analyses the effects of multiculturalism and transculturalism in the novel *The Rape of Shavi*, it became new country with the abolition of the transcultural trend followed by Asogba. Queen Mother said to Asogba, "Shavi is the mother of us all. She has been raped once, and we must never allow her to be raped again". The transcultural idea of Asogba led to the destruction of the elders and their home country Shavi too.

Works Cited

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