

modern age. Thus, their suffering is what makes them similar:

A dead father and a mother as good – or as bad – as dead. We are orphans, she and I. A dead brother and an absent brother – I touch the underside of the wooden table quickly, secretly: my brother is absent but alive. A broken marriage – we share that too. ... 'You're divorced?'

'No. But we've been separated for a long time.' But I have sons and she hasn't. (81)

Thus, both suffer from a broken relationship, that of marriage; Isabel is divorced while Amal is separated from her husband and, in a way, from her children, which eventually leads them to suffer from isolation and alienation. Still, each clings to something that links them to future; Isabel is still young and, in a way, "at her beginning" and may have a child in future, while Amal, though "close to [her] end" (81), she has children who connect her to future. Besides, there is Anna who creates a link between both women, whether with regard to the past or to the present; they end up by discussing the progress in Anna's life story after she comes to Egypt and settles in Cairo (83). Soueif made Parallelism between the story of Anna and Sharif in the past and that Omar and Isabel in the present. The combination between the two stories reaches its climax in which the consummation of both love stories occurs. Besides, the parallelism between the two stories is deepened when Isabel gives birth to Omar's son, Sharif, as Anna, the great-grandmother of Isabel did in the past and gave birth to Nur al-Hayah, Sharif's daughter. The novel ends on a more serious parallelism, which is between that of Sharif Basha who was assassinated because of his political opinions in the past and that of Omar, whose sister Amal is seized by terror for his safety and for fear that he might be killed because of his political views regarding recent issues of the world. In this way, a close study of Ahdaf Soueif's novel, *The Map of Love*, shows that she has succeeded, to a great extent, in presenting her vision through multiple perspectives. Amal, we find is searching the letters and documents of Anna but at the same time could feel her, as if Amal is having the same feeling along with Anna: "I took the journals and papers into my bedroom and read and reread Anna's words. I almost know them by heart. I hear her voice and see her in the miniature in the locket: the portrait of the mother she so much resembled." (11) "I am obsessed with Anna Winterbourn's brown journal. She has become as real to me as Dorothea Brook." (26) For Amal it is a feeling as if Anna "is leaving her life here, on the page in front of me." We find Amal thinking of Jasmine in chapter 4 when she gets the news from Isabel that Jasmine is dying. She thinks of Jasmine's pain of the loss of her son. Amal is identifying herself with Anna to some extent here as she can't meet her son as well.. here we find the resemblance with Isabel as well, because she is also childless. Amal was imaginative and we see her power of imagination "I sit here, holding my great-uncle's letter in my hand. I imagine him sitting at his desk to write it. He has been standing at the window of his studying in his house at Himalaya-the house that had stood next to ours." (254) Amal is so much involved in their life story and the feelings of Anna that she has started to feel the love Anna had for Sharif: "I

am half in love with him, I believe-with my own great-uncle.”(254) And when Isabel and Omar's child Sharif-al-Gharwami is born, we find Amal so loving and caring towards him as if he is with her beloved. She is showing her motherly love at the same time.

Throughout the novel one observes that the main characters end up by discovering themselves though they start their search with one aim which is discovering the other. Anna in the past and Isabel in the present come to Egypt with the aim of discovering the other, Egypt and Egyptians, but they end up by discovering themselves. Amal, she starts her quest with the aim of discovering the other, Anna, but she ends up by discovering herself as well as the other in addition to reviving the past. What is done in the novel is actually an enactment of the principle that states that memory is life and forgetting is death. This act of narration, which is an enactment of the revival of the past, takes the narrator and the other main characters as well, into a journey of discovery, by the end of the novel where they come to discover themselves as well as the other. In addition, they feel each other with the senses and feelings of their heart and familiarity of life experience. And most importantly these women could read each other so intensely that they discovered themselves.

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Voices of Cultural Oppression Across Borders: A Reading of Jamaica Kincaid and Tamsula Ao

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Abstract: The proposed study examines the challenges of a neglected identity and cultural crisis in minority groups posed by the tenets of colonialism, economic inequality and political differences. In this paper, I focus on the Caribbean author Jamaica Kincaid's long essay *A Small Place* (1988) and the Indian Naga writer Tamsula Ao's short stories from *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone* (2006) to locate personal loss in the larger context of culture conditioned by the aftermath of a colonized historical past within two different territories. The question of Antigua's identity as a nation in Kincaid's memoir and the quest of Naga people for an independent state in Ao's stories raise significant issues: the clash between a community's past and present, between tradition and modernity, between indigenous and foreign, between individualism and community, between socialism and capitalism, between development and self reliance, and, between minority groups and humanity at large. The influence of homeland on identity, culture, and the desire for independence becomes the dominant part of the discussion. This intra-cultural and cross-border comparative study analyzes how the traumatic experience of history of a nation or a tribe becomes a voice of assertion- personal as well as political in the works of these writers. The texts discussed here also explore the way a suppressed self embodies the agony of a whole community hitherto marginalized.

Keywords: Identity, Culture, Colonization, Minority groups.

"Where is Here?", the fundamental question posed by the Canadian critic Northrop Frye seems to address powerfully the postcolonial issues of identity crisis, as, the minorities, more or less, are the victim of an oppressive colonial environment, and their bewildering experiences leave nothing untouched (1971, 220). Like most fiction from post-colonial, indigenous cultures, *A Small Place* (1988) by the Caribbean writer Jamaica Kincaid, and *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone* (2006) by Ao-Naga Indian author Tamsula Ao, originates from a land still in turmoil. In both Kincaid and Tamsula, the actual struggle of the communities remains a backdrop; the thrust of the narratives is to probe how the events of that era have re-structured gradually. Both have a preoccupation with history, cultural dominance, individual and communal identity; a concern with naming the landscape and validating the local; a focus on childhood experience; a prevalence of notions of alienation, exile, and nostalgia; a preference for the autobiographical mode and the realist tradition. My paper focuses on some of these issues shared by Ao and Kincaid in their narratives. The question of Antigua's identity as a nation discussed by Kincaid and the struggle of the Naga people for an independent Nagaland that provide the background for the stories of Tamsula Ao bring alive how ordinary people cope with violence, how they negotiate power and force, how they seek and find safe spaces

and enjoyment in the midst of terror. Through the use of a metafictional discourse, Kincaid's narrator deconstructs colonial, postcolonial and neocolonial myths, thereby interrogating the tourists' perspective and unraveling the continuing colonizing construction of a place legitimized only by its visitors. The short stories by Temsula speak of Nagaland, a remote state in India's northeastern region- home to a group of hill tribes called the Nagas. Closer in race, culture and customs to the tribes of Myanmar and northern Thailand, the Nagas have waged a separatist battle for autonomy since the end of the British Raj in 1947. Trapped between the tribal freedom fighter and the Indian military forces are a people whose lives and destinies have been inescapably affected by the conflict. Frantz Fanon first talked about the violence of colonization. Violence in multiple forms is deep-rooted in the history of a colony that has wrestled to find its identity. In Temsula Ao's poignant tale titled 'The Last Song', one of the stories from this collection, Apenyo, a little Naga girl is portrayed as extremely passionate about singing since childhood. Even as a small child of one or two, when she could walk and talk a little, she used to start singing her own version of a song, mostly consisting of loud shrieks and screams. On the occasion of the dedication of the new church building, a big event in the history of this village, Apenyo, now a young woman of eighteen was all set as the lead singer of the choir performing for this function. But an attack by the Indian army soldiers ruined and disrupted all the festivities suddenly. Both Apenyo and her mother are raped and killed inside the old church building by the captain and soldiers of the army. But none of the captain, the soldiers and the villagers is able to forget the humming sound of the girl, who continued her last song even as she was being raped. Eventually, her story becomes an eerie folktale among the storytellers of her tribe.

Violence takes a different stride in Kincaid's *A Small Place*. The narrative expresses her anger and anguish at witnessing the destructive legacy of Antigua's colonial past on her visit to the island after about twenty years of voluntary exile. The writer's voice is unmediated and the autobiographical note is explicit. But, here Kincaid is not so much concerned about herself as in her other works but about the cultural situation of her native land and the response of her people to centuries of oppression. In her direct attack on the imperialist tourists, the merciless colonizers, the corrupt government, and the passive natives, Kincaid proceeds by associations of thought, inserting asides and rhetorical questions. *A Small Place* is a counter-hegemonic work by a decolonized writer denouncing the horrors of historical corruption and its aftermath. Although there are differences of boundaries, communities, cultural issues and concerns, Temsula Ao and Jamaica Kincaid being women writers of the same era, share a concern for questions of personal identity and personal relationships, stressing the mother-daughter bond because of their colonized past. Infact, the most substantial and recurring theme in the fiction of Kincaid is the troubled relationship that she shares with her mother. For instance, in the novel *Annie John* (1986), the destructive relationship between the protagonist and her mother account for the precarious sense of self on part of the female lead. In *A Small Place* too,