

Winston Warrick: The Symbol of Colonial Legacy in ‘The Schoolmaster’ By Earl Lovelace

Dr. Balasaheb G. Gaikwad

Associate professor,
Department of English,
Br. Balasaheb Khardekar College
Vengurla Dist: Sindhudurg

Abstract:

The *Schoolmaster* was the second novel of Earl Lovelace published in 1968. As an educationist, Earl Lovelace believes that education is a means of bringing change in human life, helping people become literate and transforming their lives from darkness to light. Earl Lovelace himself received his education at foreign universities; hence, he believes in preserving native culture, old customs, and the moral values of ancestors. Through the character of Winston Warrick, novelist Earl Lovelace criticises and exposes the effects of colonisation, or how the legacy of the colonisers is being carried out in postcolonial nations like Trinidad and Tobago. Earl Lovelace is a well-known novelist and short-story writer from Trinidad. He expects that Trinidad shall be developed as the countries of Europe have made drastic development in technology and industry. He portrays Winston Warrick as a symbol of colonial legacy; he completes his education in England but forgets his own traditional learnings and moral values transferred to him by his ancestors, which ultimately causes him to break the chain of happiness, peace and unity of the society.

Keywords: Earl Lovelace, ‘The Schoolmaster’, Colonisation, and Winston Warrick.

1. Introduction:

The present research paper examines the character of Winston Warrick in the context of the effects of colonisation on Caribbean people. Winston Warrick is a title character who leaves a remarkable impact in this novel. Being an educated person and loyal to his own traditions and customs, Earl Lovelace expects the same from other people of Trinidad. So the novel *The Schoolmaster* presents a gap between expectations and reality. The gap is found between people, as some of them still like to preserve legacies of the colonisers, and develop the nation with modern ideas, science, and technology and other

Earl Lovelace was a well-known novelist, short story writer and popular columnist. He devoted his entire life to the welfare of Trinidad and Tobago.

Unlike other Caribbean writers, he chose not to live in England or America after completing his education there; instead, he preferred to live the rest of his life in Trinidad. The literary contribution he has made to Caribbean literature is entirely based on his experiences in Trinidad and Tobago. In his novels, short stories and articles, he gives space to postcolonial political, economic, cultural and ethical issues of Caribbean society. The greatness and simplicity of the Caribbean and its culture are often described by

Earl Lovelace in his six novels, including ‘While Gods Are Falling’, ‘The Schoolmaster’, ‘The Wine of Astonishment’, ‘Is Just a Movie’, ‘Dragon Can't Dance’, and ‘Salt’. These six novels are a great source for understanding Earl Lovelace's deep connection and affinity for traditional customs, ethics and rituals. In *The Schoolmaster*, he portrays the characters Pauline Dandrade and Winston Warrick, who belong to Trinidad and were brought up in the same soil. Both are well educated, and therefore they know how important education is for human beings. They are also aware of the changes that are taking place outside the Caribbean country due to the arrival of new technology and a new education system. But they are opposite in nature and purpose in life. Pauline Dandrade sacrifice his life for the goodness of society, to preserve inherent ethics and social values; he often attempts to glorify the simplicity of Caribbean customs. On the contrary, Winston Warrick is self-centred and deeply influenced by colonisers' materialistic culture. Hence, Earl Lovelace finds that Winston is externally Caribbean, but inwardly a coloniser.

The existing literature on this novel reveals that many research scholars have examined it in terms of ‘individual versus community, effects of colonisation, loss of identity, education and transformation, and conflict between modernity and tradition’; the present topic chosen for the study remains untraveled.

‘The Schoolmaster’ is the second novel by Earl Lovelace; as usual, the problems of postcolonisation are explored and expressed in detail. Particularly through Winston Warrick, the character of the schoolmaster is portrayed as a colonised man. The novel is set in Kumaca, a rural place in Trinidad. The village of Kumaca is situated on the riverside. The village has huge plants, beautiful trees and greenery. The village inhabitants are simple, kind, and illiterate. They love their old customs and traditions. They do not want to be polluted by the arrival of new technologies and industry; however, the villagers like Constantine Patron, Dardain the shopkeeper and Pauline Dandrade think differently. They feel the village of Kumaca should be developed like the city of Port of Spain; they also expect their children to go for higher education in Trinidad and other big cities. Especially Pauline Dandrade, the protagonist of the novel, has aspirations of opening a new school in Kumaca. He conveys his village mates' importance of education. Education is a mode of transformation; therefore, in Kumaca, the school should be started. In comparison to Zanilla and Port of Spain, Kumaca is far behind in development. Even the basic amenities are not available for the future generation of Kumaca: “Today, all about in this country people are learning to read and write, but in Kumaca we do not have a school. Our children do not learn to read and write. We remain backwards in this place. The world is moving forward....Go to Zanilla!....have big buildings going up, and it is something to hear the people talk about what is written in the newspapers....Yes, we hunt in the forest. We catch fish in the rivers, and have our fetes and cockfights” (*The Schoolmaster*: 27).

Ultimately, he succeeds in imposing the idea of education and benefits for students on the villagers. If the school is opened, the Kumaca will make progress like other cities of Trinidad. Pauline also promises his villagers that he will complete the required conditions for a new school. Even the school permission has to be taken from the father priest who belongs to White Irish Community and is a representative of Colonial authority. After getting permission from the Father Priest, Pauline Dandrade, along with his village mates, inaugurates the school in Kaumaca.

After giving legal permission to start the school, the Catholic Church, a representative of Colonial authority, appoints Winston Warrick as schoolmaster. Winston Warrick, who had his education in England, though he is from Trinidad during the colonial period; educational facilities were not available for the local people, so interested people had to go either to England or to British schools. In this respect, Winston acquired his education from a British school. Due to the open culture and freedom of materialistic

life, Winston was easily captivated by the English culture and way of life. During a discussion about the newly appointed schoolmaster, Benn says to Priest:

“He is black, yes. But not my own people. Priest, he is closer to your people. I think he is your people. He learned in your schools, and he wears the clothes the way you wear them, and he talks the way you talk, and his thinking is that of your people. He is yours, priest. He is not mine” (The Schoolmaster: 66).

Winston Warrick’s overall behaviour and entry into the village remind the villagers, especially the children of Pauline Dandrade, of the arrival of the governor in Kaumaca. He projects himself as a respectful person in the village school. His first meeting with Pauline's daughter shows his lustful approach, and he forgets the dignity and respect of his status as schoolmaster. After appointing her as a school assistant, he dares to rape her and disguises himself before the priest Vincent, as if he has not done anything. Winston Warrick behaves in Kaumaca by wearing a mask of Colonial authority. He projects himself as a “Master” and not a schoolmaster who is from the black community. Earl Lovelace exposes the corrupt mind of Winston Warrick, who forgets inherited values and ethics. He learns the exploitation skills of British colonisers rather than moral education. His overall behaviour and interactions with people of Kumaca create a cultural rift. The novelist portrays him as a replica of a coloniser. Every action of Winston Warrick creates contradiction in the village of Kumaca. At the end of the novel, his rape of Christina causes her to commit suicide. The novel also presents that well-educated people of Trinidad and Tobago are easily tempted by the colonisers' way of life compared to illiterate members of the society.

2. Conclusion:

By presenting characters of Pauline Dandrade and Winston Warrick, Earl Lovelace describes how the legacy of colonisers is deeply carried out by Winston Warrick in comparison to Pauline Dandrade. Pauline, though, is impressed by education and other advanced development of Port of Spain and Zanilla; he does not forget his roots, inherited values and ethics. On the contrary, Winston is transformed completely. He projects himself as a representative of English authority rather than a Schoolmaster. His attire, communication and way of life reflect the characteristics of English colonisers. The Caribbean customs and traditions are ignored by him.

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