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SUBALTERN STUDIES: “ORIENTALISM IN SUBALTERN PERSPECTIVE OF THE POST COLONIAL PERIOD WITH UNDERLYING SUBJUGATE CONSCIOUSNESS”

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“To be totally free one needs to be totally aware, because our bondage is rooted in our unconsciousness; it does not come from the outside. Nobody can make you unfree. You can be destroyed but freedom cannot be taken away unless you give it away”. Osho, 'Insights for a new way of living'.

This is the major issue of understanding the roots of slavery. Mankind loosing the thought of their individual existence has gone topsy-turvy in unrealistic beliefs and adherence. The facts and issues of subaltern consciousness speak of this situational psychosis. Many writers from the 18th and 19th centuries have focused their writings on this issue of bondage and the crisis to overcome and to create a legacy has been the truth behind subaltern studies and its perspectives to literary achievement.

'Subaltern' concepts reflect on inhumane attitude of the rich, mighty and the powerful of the earlier centuries. It was in themed 18th and 19th centuries that reflexive awareness came into the mind of people to oppose their existence. Many weak governments of the world ruled by powerful nations felt negated of their existence. It is imperative to understand the history of colonialism and its traumatic legacies that has left an indelible mark on the global psyche.

In the words of Paramar Sarkar in his book 'Postcolonial Literatures' reflects the fact that, “Postcolonial Literatures seeks to provide an introduction to this contested area by uncovering the historical, political, cultural and linguistic contexts that have produced some of the most significant literary texts in the past three hundred years'. This is the major prediction of subaltern issue that existed and researched over centuries as a right for freedom of thought and mind. Knowingly or unknowingly our predecessors have succumbed to westernized influence on the pretext of development yet lost their identity and many generations that fell into the hands of foreign influence with a severe setback in reality. Here comes the subaltern interpretation to fight for rights of equality, fraternity and democratic expressions with principles to stand firm in existence.

Very exact to think and to ponder of these subaltern conscious writing to its origin more effectively, many authors and literary writers emerged in different parts of the macrocosm to express their agony in different renditions, having experienced atrocities of imperialism during their period of time. We should reflect on the concept of 'imperialism', a sociological impact being created by the stronger nations of the world. This state of government, authoritative and demanding existed during the colonial regime. A set number of countries imposed imperialism on weaker nations to exploit and outrageously take away the resources available inclusive of human potentials.

As Ania Loomba, an Indian literary scholar explains, “Modern colonialism did more than extract tribute, goods and wealth from the countries that it conquered-it restructured the economies of the latter, drawing them into a complex relationship with their own, so that there was a flow of human and natural resources between colonized and colonial countries”. This was the realism of imperialism and practically many colonial nations faced and underwent these irksome situations for many centuries until their independence to take freedom of existence on their own.

Subjugation was predominant in the rule of their so called stronger nations of the yester years. A well defined fact is that imperialism existed as a major political concept of such nations ruling over the weaker, submissive nations of the world. This scenario dwelt worldwide from north-south and east-west dimensions across the globe. Most subaltern studies of the postcolonial literature would talk about such

subjugation and imperialistic approach defined in the past brought into the focus of the present.

Precisely, the stronger nations stepped into a new land on the pretext of trying to help the people of the new land develop and establish better life styles. It didn't happen. Instead the imperialistic nations misused the ignorance of the people and used them as their man power to develop their ideologies. There was wide spread conquering of lands and swindling of resources causing human atrocities on the innocent leading to poverty and misery. This colonial impact signaled a possible future of overcoming colonialism giving an idea for new forms of domination. Subaltern ideas came into evidence in tune to this practicality that existed in many countries for many centuries. The present existence of our societies is beyond this struggle and we have overcome this challenge through our mighty societal backdrop that fought for the rights of establishment and set us free to be what we are today.

The fight for independence and freedom by many indigenous people of many nations the powerful kingdoms provided a rich evidence for literary established in subaltern avenues. A well referred literary piece of work on such a context is brought forward by Fanon, a psychoanalyst and philosopher born in Martinique. Fanon presented one of the most searing and provocative analyses of the relation between colonized and colonizer in The Wretched of the Earth (1961) as well as in his *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Fanon remains perhaps best known for his explosive justification of violence in *The Wretched of the Earth* which is revelation of imperialism that lead to the subaltern issues taken for discussion.

Language barriers, monetary domination, cultural differences, negation of human values existed at the priority. These disparaging transitions between each of the elements that was created during colonialism ran into existence in the postcolonial period giving evidence for literary expressions of interest to the world. There was curiosity amongst the people to know more of the life form of the past that led into the present scenario. Expressively accepted literary work on such a context would be of Fanon whose work emphasized the complex relation between imperialism and nationalism that remained a critical focus of much postcolonial writing. The aspiration for self-determination at the heart of anti-colonial struggles proved difficult to institutionalize democratically in existing postcolonial states. Most postcolonial theorists whether writing about Africa, South Asia, or elsewhere have been critical of nationalism but also equally critical of the "Nativism". This is the major concept of subaltern study among the masses that is leading to different and varied research analysis. A statistical study of such major issues of multiculturalism, anti-colonialism, orientalism, globalization etc., which are directly related to the days depicting the rise and fall of European imperialism, is a clear picture of subaltern study that can be possibly put into form to the modern world.

Apart from Fanon's impact on imperialism, colonial and postcolonial relevance, Edward Said's 'Orientalism' is unique of subaltern context. Our nation, being a part of the oriental, inclusive of most Asian countries has had an impact of postcolonial subalterns to reflect and discuss in detail. The main importance of Said's 'Orientalism' is in pointing out the fact that the regime of colonialism is allegedly over long years ago and with the coming in of freedom and free expression, the systems of thinking, talking and representing forming the basis of colonial power relations still persist. Said's book became a central text of post colonialism as it exposes the fundamental principles and structures of colonialism embedded within different systems of knowledge and representation to the society that is existing of the modern world bring in a large scope of awareness that existed and what is existing. Orientalism served as a system of representations which served to consolidate the West's authority and supremacy over the East, and not just to reflect or describe it. This is the unique identity of Edward Said, which directly focuses on the impossible existence that was imposed of the west to the easterners. The orient had a specific artifact and state of existence that was deliberately mismatched to the establishments made by the Westerners. This conflict is one of the subaltern challenges that has given an impetus to research and ongoing study of expression. The marginalized or oppressed views were brought into focus by Edward Said, which gave an

added support to the universally accepted hegemonic power structure of the colony and of the colonial homeland.

Post-colonial reflexes show indebtedness to Foucault, French theorist, philosopher, and historian, who has forwarded three methodological forms that support subaltern expressions. The three major concepts are discourse analysis, genealogy, and social constructionist views which are directly referred into discussion by Edward Said in his literary writings. It can well be said that Foucauldian discourse analysis has helped scholars understand the means by which the colonial states that exerted power over its colonial subjects and manifested the ideologies of domination thereby making colonialism possible in the macrocosm. On such a pretext, the post-colonial criticism's inaugural figures, Edward Said, cited Foucault's notion of discourse in order to identify 'Orientalism'. Though there are a few subaltern writers/authors who opposed Foucault, as he expressed his views from the privileged establishment and would not have undergone the agony of the socially and politically weak class of society.

According to Edward Said 'Orientalism' was a supreme power which was made use of by the western powers in their discourse socially and politically at their benefit. According to Said, many pairs of existing establishments like military and literary excursions, political and cultural endeavors, administrative and anthropological practices and theories all served together to establish Europe's superiority over the Orient. This he virtually blamed as it gave rise to supremacy over the weaker society. He negated Eurocentric interpretations as most of the ideologies were copied and taken over from the 'orient'. He justified the fact that the orient became the fantasy of the west and the orient countries were exotic and vibrant, that attracted the westerners and thereby, reign supreme over them.

Said in his essay on 'Orientalism' brings in the fact that the image of the Orient was a cause that made much rich, sophisticated society travel in quest for pilgrimage and discovery. They took to excursions to visit and receive inspiration to dwell in solemn existence while protecting themselves from "its unsettling influences". The purity of the Orientals made them inferior to the sophisticated West. The Orient's innocence was the reason for the West to justify controlling them, even for their own sake. This ideology became viable to the present situation, that the fall of the western domination on many nations of exotic realities and peaceful co-existence has become the dominance of human understanding in the present.

Nevertheless, Edward Said in his writing brings in a contrast between 'Orientalism' and 'Occidentalism'. Two different ideologies, yet how there was dominion over submissiveness that created an indelibly surpassing history of the reality, which can never be forgotten and remain fresh and evergreen in our thoughts. Throughout, in his writings he has relentlessly unmasked the ideological disguises of imperialism. There is anti-colonial influence in his writings which are supportive of the existence of all the nations that suffered in the hands of imperialism of the west

Orientalism as a field of study was aimed to assist the government in finding ways to control non-Western societies. Decolonization processes after World War II did not mean the end of Orientalism. It was explicitly experienced. Even this age of continuous change, the dominion of the past has brought in a mingling of the unified wholeness in every part of the world.

Though Edward Said has brought in varied versions of interpretations in presenting his orientalism from capitalism to colonialism, constructivism to decolonization, thereby critically analyzing the status of life of every human mankind of ethnic existence which he reflects as a sceptic thought 'if the knowledge of orientalism has any meaning, it is in being a reminder of the seductive degradation of knowledge, of any knowledge, anywhere, anytime'

Many renditions for and against exist with Edward Said's 'Orientalism', yet it remains as one of the principle features of intellectual inheritance of post-colonialism.

The effective impact created by oriental approach can be elucidated by pointing the critical

reflection of critic Gauri Vishwanathan as, 'The first phase of British rule in India from the late eighteenth century onwards, was broadly Orientalist in its educational policy, combining the initiation of the west to the vast literary treasures of the east with the reintroduction of the natives to their own cultural heritage....as being buried under the debris of foreign conquests and depredations.'

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