



POSTCOLONIAL THEORY: BETWEEN EDWARD SAID'S ORIENTALISM AND HOMI BHABHA'S HYBRIDITY

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ABSTRACT

Globalization and the inherent shrinking of geographical borders have rendered modern societies progressively culturally heterogeneous spaces. Increased encounters between people from different cultures have thus become a normal occurrence. Postcolonialism is a term largely used to refer to all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the time of Colonization to our own time. Postcolonialism means ongoing issues and debates between East and West since the colonial process started. The present paper Perspectives on Postcolonial Theory: Said's, Orientalism and Bhabha's explores and defines postcolonial theory, its roots, development, major critics, principles, issues, covering area and different forms. Some critics argued that the post colonialism is the continuation of colonialism in the sense that the colonies get freedom only from political rule and there started the complex process of postcolonialism, self-imposed colonialism. Here the focus point is to discuss post colonialism as a literary discourse in Indian context. The British had an extended empire during the nineteenth century and this empire had a fairly strong on all its territories. The process of self-determination and the granting of political independence to each country of Empire brought out postcolonial age in the history of the World. In the closing decades of the twentieth century, the term 'Post colonialism' has gained currency and what is more, it has eclipsed terms like postmodernism, post structuralism and so on.

Key Words: Postcolonial theory- Culture-Orientalism- Hybridity.

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Introduction

The literature and culture are closely connected with each other. It has been widely recognized that the intercultural dimension is an important component in literature learning and teaching. In the study of literature, culture plays many important roles. It serves either as illustration or a starting point for the study. And it is usually understood as part of a specific domestic or foreign

civilization. Thus, literature researches can be carried out from cultural or intercultural perspectives by exploring the social, historical, linguistic and other cultural phenomena in literary texts or critical theories. In this article the postcolonial theory will be taken as an example to show how the cultural factors are related to literary study and demonstrate the importance of cultural research for the literature field. As we know,

postcolonialism is mainly concerned about the study of cultures formerly (or currently) colonized power, struggle between cultures, and intersection of cultures. Culture has been an important concept for the study from the very beginning of this literary theory. Postcolonialism has three pioneers and important theoretical basis. Postcolonialism, as a literary criticism, is different from imperialism, colonialism, and neocolonialism for the major focus on culture. It is a combination of literary research and cultural studies, which offers new perspectives to re-read literary works from the cultural point of view. With the advancement of multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism and globalization, more and more scholars will follow the path of Said, Spivak, and Homi Bhabha. Postcolonialism will continue to be an important topic for literature studies. And the adoption of postcolonialism, especially the cultural factors in it, will in turn influence the study of world literature for a long period of time. Robert Young calls Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha, as the 'Holy Trinity' of postcolonial critics while at the same time Spivak and Bhabha found themselves indebted to Said and his pioneering work, *Orientalism* Bhabha in 'Postcolonial Criticism' (1992) for instance, asserts that 'Orientalism inaugurated the postcolonial field' and Gayatri Spivak describes it in similarly glowing terms as 'the source book in our discipline.'

Postcolonialism as part of intercultural literary studies regard, in so far as it concerns get-togethers between former colonizers and former colonized man goes. These relationships can be left without consideration of certain power relationships do not examine. Postcolonialism presents important clues for intercultural literary studies. Mecklenburg (2008)ⁱⁱ establishes the context by asking the question. To what extent do they show [intercultural thinking and intercultural literary work]? ready to embody the complex of Western dominance that has shaped our whole world-historical era, centrism, imperialism, capitalist globalization, or at least too concerns? Because this complex is likely today directly or indirectly in most intercultural Relationships and studies play a role (Mecklenburg 2008: 270). In addition, when examining African images, it is not possible to estimate the proportion

of Colonialism in the formation of certain images and the continuation of the disregard the related colonial discourse. The new interest in the literature, to deal with the colonial past offers more Clues. The first part of the section focuses on the terminology of the Postcolonialism and its relevance for intercultural studies. Secondly become two theoreticians important for the theory formation and their contributions to the theory Discussion briefly presented. Finally, the connection to the Foreign Literature produced and proved the relevance for the present study.

'Orientalism', 'subalternity' and 'mimicry' are important aspects of the work of the three critics, One of the problems that *Orientalism* (the book) suffers from is (that it assumes) too readily that an unequivocal intention on the part of the West was always realized through its discursive productions. The other two critics do not seem to give enough direct power and role to 'agency' on behalf of the colonized people. Also, Bhabha's style is so involved that an oppositional stance does not come through and is obscured by the meanderings of language.

The main objective of this Paper is to provide some idea of the wide field known as Postcolonial Theory; (in some cases 'colonial discourse analysis'; but the former term is more inclusive). Three key notions will be taken up by us. These are: 'Orientalism' (Said), 'Subalternity' (Spivak) and 'Mimicry' (Bhabha). These three major critics are often taken to be the 'Holy Trinity' of postcolonial theory and limiting ourselves to their work (a significant part of it in any event) is enough to give us a sense of some of the main issues thrown up by the field as a whole.

Orientalism

Orientalism is a Western style for coming to terms with the Orient. For this purpose first the Orient should be known, and scholars, philologists, travellers, administrators, etc. contributed to this end. Later this knowledge of the Orient transforms to power structures and appears in forms of colonialism and imperialism. At this moment the relationship of the Occident and Orient becomes the relationship of "power, of domination, of varying degree of a complex hegemony" (Said, 1978:5). This

discourse is a new study of colonialism and states that the representation of the Orient in European literary canon has contributed to the creation of a binary opposition between Europe's and its other. Although the geographical line between the West and East is an imaginary and artificial one, the acceptance of this binarism with the former as privileged and the latter as unprivileged is taken for granted by the Western scholars.

Orientalism promotes the clear-cut distinction and gulf between Occident .i.e. (Europe, The West, "us") and strange (the Orient, the East, "them") (p43). Said demonstrates how these hard-and-fast distinctions are accepted both by the Orientals and Orientalists. These 'geographical sectors as "Orient" and "Occident" are man-made" (p5).

"Knowledge is not innocent it is always operated by power" this Foucauldian notion informs Edward Said's book *Orientalism*(1978)ⁱⁱⁱ. Orientalism is a term applied to 'the orient' as discovered, observed and described, in a sense, 'invented' by Europe and the West. In literary context it refers to the discourse by the West about the East, in all fields, such as, literary, sociological, and so on, which have no counter point in the east. This discourse aggregates to a "textual universe". It refers to the attitudes of the west towards the east; to the Occident looking in/on/at the east and, explains and interprets it^{iv}.

Orientalism examines the vast tradition of western "construction" of the Orient. It has been a "corporate institution" to discuss, Describe and write about orient by authorizing views about orient and ruling over it^v. Said's book is considered to be one of the influential books of the late 20th century. He points out that the knowledge about the 'orient' produced and circulated in Europe was an ideological accompaniment of colonial power. He refers a range of writers, statesmen, political thinkers, philologists and philosophers who contributed to orientalism as an 'institution'-a lens through which the 'orient' would be viewed and controlled. Said argues that representations of the 'orient' contributed to the creation of a dichotomy between Europe and its 'other'. It maintained and extended European hegemony over other lands.

Orientalism refers to the sum of the western representations of the orient. Said argues that Orientalism has helped Westerners to define a European self-image. He believes that the idea of Orientalism is not far from the collective notion identifying European as 'us' against those non-Europeans. Here European identity and culture is superior to all other cultures and peoples (7).

Critics unanimously regard Said's Orientalism as the cornerstone of postcolonial canon. It was this celebrated work that generated other related books and materials. Orientalism is a Western style for Orientalizing the Orient, i.e. how from knowledge of the Orient particularly from nineteenth century the Orient is defined by a set of recurring images and clichés and how afterwards this knowledge of the Orient is put into practice by colonialism and imperialism. Orientalism is affiliated with the representation of the Self or Occident and the Other or Orient in which the Self is privileged and has upper hand to define, reconstruct the passive, silent and weak Other. For Said, this geographical line made between the Occident and the Orient is arbitrary and numerous Western scholars, orientalists such as Burton, Lane, Lyall, Massignon, among others and literary figures like Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Austin, Flaubert, Kipling, Conrad, etc. contributed to the shaping of this discourse about the Orient and/or misrepresenting the Orient. Orwell as a Western writer was born in India and served five years in Indian Imperial Police in Burma and one of his major concerns during his life was the issue of imperialism and colonialism which is reflected in many works such as *Burmese Days*, *Shooting an Elephant*, *Marrakech* and *Hanging*. One characteristic which is shared among these western works and similar ones is the author's conflicting feelings within them about the Orient and Orientals through Western's lens.

Discussion

Among the most significant contributions to postcolonial theory is Edward W. Said's concept of Orientalism. Said presents the Orient as a construct of the West, a stereotypical term like that of the "savage" or the "primitive" as names of Africa and Altamerika to rule the peoples and exercise the power of the West. It is an accumulation of

knowledge about the Orient, based neither on objective empirical knowledge nor on experience but to "producing a picture" of the Orient, which is clichéd (Hofmann 2003: 33)^{vi}. The principle is based on opposites, on dichotomization and polarization, which expresses the superiority of Europe in the literature (Mecklenburg 2008)^{vii}. The projection of the West serves as legitimation for the rule over the East. To show the inferiority of another culture emphasizes the superiority of one's own. The Representation of the Orient (Arab World of The Middle East and North Africa) in European literature has led to the emergence of a dichotomy between Europe and the "Other", which was important for the extension of European hegemony over other countries, and whose result was the European dominance.

The fascination with the Orient has a centuries-long tradition, and takes for example in the travel reports a special position. The concept of Orientalism, designed by Said, can be transferred throughout history to all territories or places that were at the mercy of a colonial view (Dubiel 2007: 28)^{viii}. The concept, therefore, generally aims at the discursive appropriation of the stranger, which is lacking as a 'representation' of any authenticity (Dubiel 2007: 29).

Criticized by Said's concept was the fact that he had concentrated too much on the imperialist discourse and had neglected the role of other rulers in the construction of Oriental images^{ix}. Thus, Said acts in the context of the binary world, which he tries to criticize. Furthermore, "institutional and material realities are left out, giving the impression that" colonialism was for the most part only an ideological construct "that proved to be a purely textual phenomenon (Dubiel 2007: 32, Mecklenburg 2008: 277). Furthermore, Hofmann (2003) criticizes the generalization of the Western image of the Orient without distinguishing or differentiating the various developments in, for example, France and Great Britain in comparison to Germany (Dubiel 2007: 31). Based on Hofmann raises the objection that it is not about the existence of images of the other, but about the existence of images of the other, and the recognition that "the constitution of an image of the other as the stranger

is constitutive for the determination of one's own identity." Question whether they are considered and presented in a differentiated way, without "fixing the other in the cliché" (ibid: 35). The production of distorted images of the Other is, moreover, not an exclusive European phenomenon, there is also a form of "Oxidentalism" that Europeans call "consumer-oriented, unrestrained, without religion, as alienated metropolitans "(ibid.:35).

Despite widespread criticism, the term "Orientalism" occupies a prominent position in postcolonial discourse, alongside "primitivism" or even "exoticism", and to a certain extent represents a significant gain in the formation of theories of interculturalism Literature is an important point, which Hofmann also emphasizes, and which remains of great importance for the development of post-colonial and intercultural perspectives, is the new knowledge and sensitization regarding the relationship between images of the stranger and power or domination. Europe is confronted with critical questions concerning the historical and current dealings with "euphemistically derogatory countries known as the Third World" (Hofmann 2012: 8)^x. The connection between interculturality and colonialism or postcolonialism is clear in the fact that colonialism would not be possible without the complex representation of cultural processes. Thus, a literary-critical reflection "on ideological demarcation has the co-responsibility of the medium to accept the exploitation of foreign countries and peoples "(Dubiel 2007: 34). The relationships between foreign peoples and cultures and their mastery are particularly important in European discourses on Africa. Hofmann (2012), however, raises one Thesis on the distinction between "Orientalism" and "Africanism" on: "the difference between 'nature' and 'culture', in that Africans are not credited with a genuine, own 'culture', but rather as connected with nature and themselves Nature-loving people are presented "(Hofmann 2012: 9). In the course of history and contacts between Africa and Europe, the thesis of "nature" associated with racist thoughts and the "conviction of the superiority of the 'white race' remains. Both lead to the justification of colonialism as an aspiration to "cultivate" Africa (ibid.). As an

interim conclusion, it can be stated that Said's contribution has led to a critical reflection of the images of the Orient as well as the other world-wide and the importance of such images is also important for human coexistence^{xi}. The intercultural Literary science has the task resulting from these considerations of participating in the overcoming of enemy images and stereotypes and thereby perceive a "civilizing function" (ibid .: 33). Given the pedagogy of children and adolescents, one would speak here of the function of socialization or enculturation.

Homi Bhabha (1994)^{xii} presents a model of postcolonialism that operates against the binary discourses of colonial versus anticolonial. He criticizes the "conventional concept of the European theory," as well as Said's fundamentalist anti-colonial aspirations by saying that Said has "hidden resistance, productive ambivalence and scope of negotiation in the colonial field of discourse "not perceived (Mecklenburg 2008: 273)^{xiii}. Bhabha creates a new perspective on relations between the colonizer and the colonized, which has a destabilization of differences. Accordingly, intercultural encounters are not about the coincidence of distinct, homogeneous individual cultures that are fundamentally different. Rather, it is about the crossroads and oppositions already present in traditional cultures. The post-colonial human being is characterized by hybrid identity, one cannot return to a pure pre-colonial culture, a complete integration into the Western culture is also not possible. Bhabha is critical of the idea of cultural purity and unity and sees culture as "an area of transcendence, of going beyond it." Consequently, for the identity of man, the decisive factor is not the "development of an entrenched system" but the "productive one" Dealing with Divergent Tendencies "(Hofmann 2003: 29). With regard to these arguments, the postcolonial subject has a "third space" that can not be spatially determined. This room is neither the one Original culture, still that of the former colonial power. He is a space, a space of the hybrid. For migrants from former colonial countries, there is a concrete meaning of the "third room" - they never live in a defined space and are culturally neither in the pre-

colonial culture nor are they at home in the cultural space of the colonizer. The new identity is formed through conflict and negotiation.

According to Bhabha, the postcolonial experience proves to be an experience of fractures that people should use. It is a departure from ancient cultural traditions, which should lead to a new staging of the culture of the past. Here, the "mimicry" plays an important role. By imitating the colonizer and colonial culture, colonial discourse and ideology are destabilized. Through "mimicry" the subject makes resistance to fundamental foundations of the colonial Ideology based on differences. This apparent compromise introduces ambivalence between demarcation and identification. Bhabha's model gives the subaltern freedom of action, power to oppose, negotiate, and shape his hybrid identity.

Hofmann (2003) introduces some thoughts on Homi Bhabha's theorizing and its significance for the practice of interpretation in intercultural literary studies. For the formerly colonized the term "hybridity" is important, whereby the new staging of the culture is not based on given traditional patterns. Second, the postcolonial subject should seek a "transcending the convention and a break with the continuum of the past." Interpretation should therefore not the clash of different aspects of the individual cultures, but the unmasking of conflicting attitudes as a basis. Furthermore, the identity of the postcolonial subject is determined by "negotiating" different tendencies and the effects of "mimicry" enlighten the "repressed in the self-image of colonial culture". The following considerations must be borne in mind for the former colonial rulers: a redefinition of European modernity must be developed. Added to this is the finding of the fact that through mimicry dominant ideologies of the colonial discourse. Furthermore, hybridization clarifies those ambivalences at the "origin of dominant discourses", and finally, a critical examination of dominant discourses of colonialism, the revelation of "mechanisms of repression" and the "denunciation of the colonized" applies to interpretation (Hofmann 2003: 32).

THE SAID ON HEART OF DARKNESS

The thrust of Said's 1966 book *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography* is somewhat different from his comments on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in *Culture and Imperialism* (1943). Said states:

This narrative . . . is connected directly with the redemptive force, as well as the waste and horror of Europe's mission in the dark world. 'Whatever is lost or elided or simply made up in Marlow's immensely compelling recitation is compensated for in the narrative's sheer historical momentum, the temporal forward movement (Said, 1943; 25).

To Said, the imperialist politics and aesthetics which *Heart of Darkness* embodies was in the closing years of the nineteenth century an aesthetics, politics and epistemology which were almost unavoidable and inevitable. The strength of Said's reading in this case is in his balancing of the aesthetic and the political. That is something which one cannot say about the reaction of someone like Chinua Achebe who saw *Heart of Darkness* as 'out and out' a racist book. In the same vein Rudyard Kipling's *Kinz* (which does not figure in your course) is seen by Said as a great document of its aesthetic moment, the realization of a great and cumulative process, which, in the closing years of the nineteenth century, is reaching its last major moment before India's independence; on the one hand, surveillance and control over India: on the other, love for and fascinated attention to its every detail (*Culture and Imperialism*, p. 195). These kinds of readings are more open than those which merely refute, challenge and oppose. Most 'high modernist' texts deserve and demand a reading of that kind in view of their complexity and of the irony that mostly goes into their making.

Conclusion

Postcolonialism critically examines the relationship between the colonizers and colonized, from the earliest days of exploration and colonization. Drawing on Foucault's notion of 'discourse', Gramsci's notion of 'hegemony', Derrida's 'deconstruction' postcolonialism focuses on the role of texts, literary and otherwise in the colonial enterprise. It examines how these texts

constructs the colonizers (Masculine) as superior and colonized (effeminate) as inferior. To be fair Said has responded positively to some of the criticism made on him. In recent years he has looked more closely at resistance to Orientalism, covered in his book 'Orientalism Reconsidered' and 'Culture and Imperialism'. However, it would be unfair to conclude that just because Said does not venture into the latter territory he necessarily suggests that the colonialist discourse is all pervasive. Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha are said to be 'the Holy Trinity' of postcolonial, theory. Having said that, it becomes important to point out that their work cannot be clubbed together in any homogeneous way. Each of them is different and important for the contributions she has made to the field. Said's main contribution to the field is the concept of 'orientalism' - the attempt on the part of the West to establish the East as lazy, deceitful and irrational. Spivak answers the question 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' with a 'No'. Women are 'doubly effaced' in Spivak's scheme of things. Bhabha's theorizing about 'mimicry' builds on the potential for irreverence and mockery in the lionizer/colonized relationship. All three critics are influenced by Foucault's views on power and discourse. Additionally, Spivak is influenced by Derrida and Bhabha by Lacan. All three draw on other resources as well.

Notes

ⁱ Sawant, Dr. Datta. (2011). Perspectives on Post-colonial Theory: Said, Spivak and Bhabha. Literary Endeavor. 2. 129-135.

ⁱⁱ Mecklenburg, Nobert 1987. "On Cultural and Poetic Alterity. Cultural and Literary Theoretical Problems of Intercultural German Studies ". In: Dietrich Krutsche and Alois Wierlacher (ed.). Hermeneutics of the stranger. Munich: Ludicium Verlag. 80-102.

ⁱⁱⁱ Loomba Ania (1998). Colonialism and Postcolonial identities. London and New York: Routledge

^{iv} Cuddon J. A. (1998). A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Theory. London: Penguin

^v Said Edward (1978). Orientalism. London: Rutledge

^{vi} Hofmann, Michael 2003. Intercultural Literature. An introduction. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink publishing house.

vii Mecklenburg, Nobert 2008. *The girl from abroad*. German studies as intercultural literature. Munich: Ludicium Verlag.

viii Dubiel, Jochen 2007. *Dialectic of postcolonial hybridity*. The intercultural overcoming of the colonial view in the literature. Bielefeld: Aisthesis publishing house.

ix See Hofmann 2003: 35. Hofmann mentions in connection "the rule Islamic Islamic caliphates in Spain and Sicily, the empires of the Byzantiner, the Mongols and the Indian Mogul realm as well as the Ottoman rule over large parts of Europe "

x Hofmann, Michael 2012. Introduction: German-African Discourses in Past and Present. Literary and Cultural Studies Perspectives. In: Hofmann, Michael and Morrien, Rita (ed.). 2012. *German-African discourses in the past and present*. Literary and Cultural Studies Perspectives. Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi. 7-19.

xi Hofmann (2003: 32) presents as concrete and current examples the meaning of images of the peoples of the East and the events in the USA in September 2001, and the subsequent discussions around Opposites between Christians and Muslims, etc.

xii Bhabha, Homi 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

xiii Mecklenburg, Nobert 2008. *The girl from abroad*. German studies as intercultural literature. Munich: Ludicium Verlag.

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