



EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF 'OTHERNESS' IN POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

Lakshdeep Singh

Ranjitpura, Putlighar, Amritsar, Punjab

Abstract

Postcolonial literature places a significant emphasis on the notion of "Otherness," which functions as a critical prism through which the cultural, political, and psychological repercussions of colonial dominance are analyzed. This term has a crucial position for this reason. Otherness is a concept that has its origins in colonial discourse. It refers to the deliberate portrayal of colonized peoples as inferior, foreign, or marginal in comparison to the colonial self, which is presumably superior. In order to provide light on the ways in which identity, race, language, and culture were created and perverted beneath the influence of imperial authority, postcolonial authors investigate and question this binary opposition. The literature in question opposes Eurocentric conceptions and reclaims voices that have been suppressed via the use of storylines that involve displacement, hybridity, and forms of resistance. Postcolonial writings, via the depiction of the lived experiences of those who are marginalized, shed light on the ways in which Otherness functions not only as an instrument of oppression but also as a site of self-definition and cultural assertion. In this research, the developing representations of Otherness in postcolonial literature are investigated. The writers' transformation of Otherness from a symbol of exclusion into a way of questioning prevailing ideologies and recreating identity in a postcolonial society is highlighted.

Keywords: 'Otherness', Exploring, Postcolonial

Introduction

Postcolonial literature is a product of the historical experience of colonialism and the lasting influence that it had on cultures that had been colonized in the past. The concept of "Otherness," which refers to the process by which colonial powers defined and depicted colonized peoples as fundamentally different, inferior, and foreign, is one of the most crucial ideas that is investigated within this body of work. Due to the fact that it reinforced binary oppositions such as civilized vs uncivilized, logical against irrational, and superior versus inferior, this construction of the "Other" was essential to the justification of imperial dominance. In order to question the skewed representations that are imposed upon indigenous cultures and to uncover the ideological roots of colonial control, postcolonial writers deal with these binaries in a critical manner. There is a strong connection between the concept of Otherness and colonial discourse, as expressed by theorists such as Edward Said. Said's thesis of Orientalism describes how the West built the East as an exotic and backward Other in order to maintain its own cultural superiority. In a similar vein, philosophers such as Homi K. Bhabha and Frantz Fanon investigate the psychological and cultural repercussions of Othering. These repercussions include alienation, imitation, hybridity, and internalized inferiority. These problems are reflected in postcolonial literature through the depiction of individuals who struggle with fragmented identities, cultural displacement, and the friction that exists between indigenous traditions

and the ideals that were imposed by colonial powers. The tales that were suppressed or misunderstood throughout the time of colonial control are reclaimed by postcolonial writers in the mediums of novels, poetry, and plays. Rewriting history from the point of view of those who are marginalized and calling into question the prevailing Western narratives are two of the ways that they utilize literature as a forum for resistance. The image of Otherness in these writings is not static; rather, it transforms from a symbol of oppression into a place of negotiation and self-definition over the course of the texts. Postcolonial literature strives to undermine colonial hierarchies and affirm cultural pluralism via the expression of the voices and experiences of those individuals who are considered to be "Other." throughout this research, the notion of Otherness is investigated as a recurrent and transformational topic that can be found throughout postcolonial literature. The purpose of this study is to investigate the ways in which literary texts disclose the mechanisms of Othering, highlight the psychological and social ramifications of this phenomenon, and ultimately challenge colonial beliefs by redefining identity, belonging, and cultural agency within a postcolonial setting.

By illuminating the ways in which the concept of Otherness continues to exist even after the official end of colonial control, postcolonial literature further confuses the concept of Otherness. Language, education, and socio-economic institutions that were inherited from colonial administrations are frequently the means by which neocolonial structures, globalization, and cultural imperialism continue to replicate forms of marginalization. By highlighting the ways in which these residual power connections impact everyday realities, writers from postcolonial cultures bring attention to the ways in which these interactions reinforce sentiments of exclusion and inferiority among formerly colonized peoples. As a consequence of this, the concept of "otherness" in postcolonial writings is not limited to the colonial era; rather, it continues to be a dynamic and ever-changing situation in the present day. Otherness is constructed and subverted through language, which plays a significant role in both processes. It was common practice to impose colonial languages as instruments of control, giving Western ways of expression more weight than indigenous languages and oral traditions. Postcolonial writers typically use and change the language of the colonizer in order to represent native reality, therefore questioning the hierarchical structure of language. By employing techniques such as code-switching, vernacular language, and narrative fragmentation, authors are able to demonstrate their cultural autonomy and fight the tendency of mainstream discourse to homogenize their writing. By acting in this manner, they change language from a signifier of otherness into a tool that empowers individuals. Furthermore, the experience of diaspora increases the intensity of the investigation of Otherness in postcolonial literature. Whether migration is voluntary or forced, it results in the formation of hybrid identities that are a combination of different cultures, nationalities, and traditions. Diasporic writers frequently show people who are both insiders and outsiders at the same time, navigating their sense of belonging in cultural settings that are new to them on several levels. The notion of the "third space," which Homi Bhabha refers to as a place where new identities are produced beyond the confines of traditional cultural binaries, is reflected in this in-betweenness. These kinds of representations call into question certain preconceived concepts of identity and highlight the fluid and ever-changing character of selfhood in a postcolonial environment. Additionally, there is a substantial intersection between gender and otherness in postcolonial works. Women who live in civilizations that have been colonized frequently face double marginalization: first, they are subjected to colonial dominance, and second, they are marginalized within patriarchal social systems. For the sake of examining the ways in which colonialism and patriarchy work together to construct female

identity and agency, postcolonial women authors pay attention to the complex kinds of Othering that exist. The discourse of Otherness is expanded to incorporate gendered experiences of oppression and empowerment as a result of their narratives, which place an emphasis on resistance, resilience, and self-expression. In the end, the investigation of Otherness in postcolonial literature highlights the moral and political obligation of literature to engage in the questioning of power and representation. Through the deconstruction of colonial clichés and the reclamation of voices that have been marginalized, postcolonial writers encourage readers to reevaluate their ideas regarding identity, diversity, and belonging. This illustrates that postcolonial literature is not only a reaction to historical colonialism; rather, it is a continuing criticism of all forms of cultural dominance and exclusion. The persistent importance of Otherness in these writings is evidence of this.

LIMINALITY AND HYBRIDITY

Various cultural and social experiences and forms have emerged as a result of the rise in migration and communication, adding to the already noticeable cultural variety in Europe. One of the major topics in contemporary conversation is the former colony's transformed national identity. In her description of how the colonizer's treatment of the colonial subject fostered a yearning within the subject to be different from what it is, H. Bhabha singles out liminality and splitting as the two primary aspects of postcolonial identity. But he quickly abandons liminality in favor of hybridity, which he sees as the colonial subject's resistance to the colonizer's attempts to exert control over him—a resistance that did not always lead to compliance. Those were the times when the conquered foreigners absorbed and changed parts of the conquerors' culture. New cultural forms were developing that did not match the colonists' definitions, and the colonizers' attempts to classify the conquered people were thwarted by the emergence of hybrid patterns. Drawing on his work in literary and cultural theory, Bhabha derives the idea of hybridity from the fact that ruling entities (the colonizer) include essentialist ideas into their translation of the colonized's (the Other's) identity. But this "translation" produces something radically new, rather than something that is known to either the colonizer or the colonized.

ORIENTAL VS OCCIDENTAL

Therefore, colonized nations gradually lose their national identity as they absorb aspects of the dominant culture. This process culminates in the emergence of transcultural forms that exist on the cusp between the two extremes. A feeling of inferiority develops in colonized nations as a result of their culture being marginalized due to its lack of advancement. Others encounter the colonists' language, habits, lifestyle, culture, and religion; considering the West's superiority, the Orientals gradually start to adopt certain Occidental traits. Nevertheless, a crucial stance in postcolonial critique holds that the Other's features are fixed and cannot be altered, rendering the total integration of the Oriental into Occidental civilization an impossible dream. This is related to ambivalence, a concept initially used in psychoanalysis to describe the experience of having strong feelings for two things that couldn't be more different from one another. From a postcolonial point of view, Homi K. Bhabha associates this word with the colonizer's and the colonized's conflicting emotions of attraction and repulsion. So, since the colonial subject is never totally opposed to the colonizer but also becomes his accomplice, we can argue that the idea of ambivalence complicates the colonizer-colonized relationship by moving away from the assumption that it is uniform. Colonial discourse, according

to Homi K. Bhabha, is inherently ambivalent since it never intends for colonial subjects to become carbon copies of the colonizer; doing so would give them the strength to fight back. Concerning moral ambiguity, Homi K. Also, Bhabha describes mimicry as the yearning for a transformed, identifiable Other—a subject of difference that is nearly identical but not quite—in his use of the term. In other words, ambivalence is the building block of imitation discourse; for mimicry to work, it has to continually generate its slippage, excess, and difference. He finds a danger in imitation since it may stand in for both the imitated and the imitator, and he notes that this duality is the source of mimicry's power struggles, as it exposes the colonial discourse's ambiguity. According to Bhabha, the Third Space of Enunciation is the site of the construction of all cultural utterances and systems. Bhabha argues that claims for hierarchical purity of cultures are untenable since cultural identity is constantly present in this paradoxical and ambiguous area. Resistant colonial subjects in the Third Space try to shape and alter reality, but their efforts are doomed to fail due to the entrenched, unbreakable Orient-Occident divide in Western civilizations. Bhabha considers hybridity a good aspect of postcolonial discourse, in contrast to the colonists' assertions that pure and unmixed cultures are better. Jacques Derrida argues that the idea that one's identity is predetermined and given is absurd. An individual's education should focus on the ways in which he differs from the other, rather than the other way around; this is how hybrid identities are formed. In his work on signs, structural linguist Ferdinand de Saussure established a system of binary oppositions. Put another way, the foundation of language is oppositions, which implies that a sign only exists in relation to another sign.

What makes one sign different from another is its unique selling point. Postcolonial critique provides another lens through which to view this idea of defining things. Aimé Césaire and other early postcolonial critics looked at colonial writings through the lens of the formation of binary oppositions, such as the colonizer/colonized principle. Similarly, Frantz Fanon discussed identity in *Black Skin, White Masks*, where he argued that white people's stereotypes are built around the denial of Black people's traits. Nevertheless, the main issue with seeing global events via a sequence of polar opposites is that it disregards the areas in between those two extremes. This is precisely why Homi K. Bhabha found fault with Edward Said's *Orientalism* interpretation; Said's theory rested on the dichotomy of East vs. West, colonizer vs. colonized, and he ignored the ways in which these two sides may overlap. The connection with the Other, with what it isn't or what it lacks, is crucial to the construction of an individual's sense of self, as Hall notes. Another thinker who tackled the topic of otherness was Jacques Lacan. According to Lacan, a child's first experience with the other is when he or she looks in the mirror for the very first time. Regarding this type of assertion within the context of the East-West conflict, it portrays the West as the more mature, sensible, and reasonable side, while the East is portrayed as the more illogical, twisted, and "different" side. As a result, these two camps are mutually supportive and cannot function alone. The West relies on the Orient to construct an image of itself, just as the Orient relies on the West to reveal new phenomena to the West. One of the most potent institutions of power, according to Foucault, is knowledge. "Almost everywhere where Europeans established colonies [...] it can be said that they were expected, even desired, in the subconscious of their subjects." Legends announced them everywhere as foreigners who come from the sea and bring prosperity with them. This is according to Fanon, who believes that colonization cannot be carried out on all peoples but that some are more susceptible than others. Orientals are uniformly obedient and used to control. Europe could dominate the vague and unknown East because its culture was stronger. This leads historian Boachen to conclude that the spread of modern

technology was the single most important component in the spread of colonization from the West to the Orient.

Others are people from the Third World, which Fanon defines as follows: "It is known that it is not homogeneous and that it is made up of peoples who are still enslaved, then those who have gained false independence, those who are struggling to gain sovereignty, and finally those who have achieved full freedom but live under the constant threat of imperialist aggression." There are also people from this region who are still battling for sovereignty. (Franz Fanon, 1963, *The Woeful State of the World*) People in colonized territories are constantly interacting with one another, and this leads to the emergence of personalities that are unable to fully identify with any one environment. People in the middle ground fight not only with each other but also with themselves because of the enormous gap between the two realms, which condemns them to a permanent state of struggle. From an Occidental point of view, the Orient is one big mass that is inherently backward, barbaric, and uncivilized; as a result, it is completely accessible to invasion by people who would "ennoble" its lands with negative charge traits. In the Third Space, two factions are at odds with one another and are always trying to prove who's better.

After realizing it could dominate the Orient, the West demanded not just the right to govern its land but also its very existence. Therefore, Occident stands for an inherent quality with normative status; everything that deviates from this paradigm is deemed abnormal and undesirable. The colonized have very little freedom in this society since it embodies all the Western standards that have been accepted.

Literature Review

Juxtaposed sentiments like love and hatred exist inside the thoughts of the in-group (Self) members because of this discriminatory process of creating the Other (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, 2002, p. 3; referenced in Jean-Francois). A common line of thought is that the very definition of "post-colonialism" suggests that "them" are the ones communicating with "us" rather than "we" or "them" engaging in conversation. This demonstrates that studying postcolonial literature is all about classifying things as either central or peripheral. Postcolonial literature, then, is an attempt to shed light on the many power relations that emerge from this binary opposition:

Binary oppositions such as "us" and "them," "first world" and "third world," "white" and "black," and "colonizer" and "colonized" The source provided by Jean-Francois (2008) is Kehinde, Ayobami, page 108. Differences between "self" and "other," "powerful" and "powerless," "torturer" and "tortured," "master" and "slave," "civilized" and "savage," "superior" and "inferior," and "human" and "subhuman" are all defined by Jean-Francois (2008).

The perpetuation of this racist mentality among white people suggests that people of color will always be subservient to white people. Through the use of derogatory terms such as "Others," "uncivilized," "illiterate," "Barbarians," "Savages," and "People of the Color," Westerners throughout the colonial era were able to impose their own categories on other peoples and push them to the outside of humanity. One or more dominated outgroups, "Them" or "Other," are created when a dominant in-group, "Us" or the "Self," stigmatizes a difference, real or imagined, and offers it as a means of reducing one's identity and, by extension, as a hope for possible exploitation and discrimination. To put it simply, the domain of discourse is concerned with otherness, while the domain of truth is

concerned with difference. Gender is the Otherness, whereas biological sex is the difference. Thus, the article would analyze many notions that contribute to the fulfillment of the idea of Self and Other, including Power, Geographical Other, Gender, Segregation, and Exotism, among others.

The West and the Other

Undoubtedly, the never-ending anthropology we're dealing with produces otherness. Every group has a tendency to project an image and set itself apart from the people they desecrate. Over time, several types of stereotyping have emerged via different forms of language and behavior. Some dichotomies, like the heterosexual/homosexual one, appear to be universal, while others, like the male/female one, are more culturally unique. After all, every group uses its own set of categories to construct its own version of the Self and the Other. As a result, male/female, White/Black, heterosexual/homosexual, believer/unbeliever, etc. are just a few of the binary categories that the West uses to construct its identity and the Other. Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1991) argues that cultures construct their social identities independently, and these identities are characterized by a series of dichotomies:

Typically, the power that differentiates one group from another will hide behind an opposing party member in dichotomies that are crucial to both the reality and the ideal of social order. Both members are interdependent; the second is the antithesis of the first and its production, the one that is devalued, suppressed, and banished. In this way, deviation is the polar opposite of law-abiding citizens, health is the polar opposite of abnormality, sanity is the polar opposite of reason, the general public is the polar opposite of experts, and foreigners are the polar opposite of state subjects (cited in Zevallos, 2011).

Power

A key component of otherness is the dissimilarity in power dynamics. The power to discriminate against others and to shame and ridicule their identities (or otherness) can only be exercised by the dominant group. This group may also reinforce the value of its particularity (its identity). Therefore, women are men's other half, and white people are black people's other half, and so on. Beauvoir (1952) and Fanon (1963) argue that this criticism is unfounded:

The inverse is not correct...People who do not belong to the majority are called out-groups..."as a result of being governed by the dominant in-group's behaviors and categories and not having the power to establish their own standards. When members of marginalized groups are able to break free of the in-groups' oppression, they gain a positive, independent identity ('black is beautiful'), advocate for norm-setting policies and discursive legitimacy, and, ultimately, create and assess their own out-groups (cited in Jean-Francois, 2008).

In light of the aforementioned quote, Beauvoir (1952) and Fanon (1963) hold the view that the Other can break free of the in-group's repressive power by re-creating and glorifying its past, present, and future in literature and other forms of artistic expression. In order to provide themselves good and independent identities, they should create their own policies and structures through discourses. As soon as they do this, they will assume the role of the in-group, making them the out-group. So, whereas Europeans can be Others, Blacks and coloreds can be Self.

Geographical Others

Whereas we are the Self, they are the Others. Greek speakers and Barbarians were at odds with one another due to the geographical form of otherness in Ancient Greek. A barbarian is someone who is ignorant in Greek and, by extension, the logos (and democracy). He is from a different civilization and his culture is incomplete. One possible explanation for the geographical component of this otherness is the division of cultural surfaces into seemingly uniform blocs, such as countries, zones, or continents (JeanFrancois, 2008). Here in Nigeria, we are the Self, and those people in Ghana are the Others; that's a basic illustration of the point. This is due to the fact that the sites themselves are distinct. After discovering Africa and other continents, this is really what the Europeans believed. This means that the West represents the Self and other continents stand in for Others. An other means by which the duality of Self and Other is constructed is through the European climate. According to Jean-Francois (2008), the world's most sophisticated cultures emerged in Europe because to the region's favourable temperature and plenty of natural resources. In contrast, mankind will be confined to a more rudimentary evolutionary stage in other regions due to their severe weather and dearth of natural resources.

Gender

In an effort to foster a feeling of community and individuality, Western societies engage in the social construction of gender. They achieve this by constructing a dichotomy between "man" and "woman" in order to influence our perceptions of these terms. "That otherness is a fundamental category of human thought," says Simone de Beauvoir in her early 1950s writing. Therefore, in order for any community to endure, it must pit one group against another. In this way, a woman is positioned as man's Other. The socially created universal standard of masculinity serves as the basis for the definition, discussion, and legislation against societal conceptions about mankind:

So, men rule the world and women are defined by their relationship to men rather than their inherent value as independent beings. She is the secondary, the inessential, as opposed to the essential; she is defined and distinguished in relation to man, not he to her. The subject, the absolute, is he, and the other, the Other, is woman, according to Simone de Beauvoir (cited in Zevallos, 2011).

Exotism

An extreme kind of otherness, exotism pits the strangeness of other places against the regularity of our own. "Exotic" does not denote an exotic locale, item, or individual in this context. It arises from a discursive process that blends the foreign with the foreigner, uses symbolic and material distance, and can only be understood from an outside perspective (Jean-Francois, 2008). In this context, "exotism" refers to the Westerners' tendency to see the world through a Western lens during periods of exploration and colonialism, which in turn leads to the negation of that view. Nowadays, tropical or even colonial are often thought of as synonyms with the word exotic. Prior to decolonization, it was completely unacceptable to characterize Europe as exotic.

Segregation

Another aspect that defines another type of otherness is segregation. Restricting Blacks and Jews to ghettos prevents them from mixing with Christians and Whites, which reduces the risk of contamination. There is a distinct culture and seeming sorrow brought about by relegating "Others"

to communal living within a rundown ghetto, where poverty and isolation amplify each other's impacts. As a sneaky way to impede their advancement, these actions only serve to reinforce the dominant group's belief in its own supremacy. Apartheid is a product of the ghetto itself. Separation of the mentally ill and convicted into institutions like asylums and prisons is also an example of this. Isolation and the deterioration of their state brought on by captivity make them appear quite unique. House confinement is another way women are regarded and divided as Others. They are relegated to the position of housewives and denied entry to public areas. In this culture, gender inequality is not just tolerated but actively promoted. So, males represent the Self and females the Other.

Conclusion

The idea of Otherness is central to postcolonial literature and has persisted throughout its history as a reflection of the pervasive effects of colonial dominance on topics such as culture, power dynamics, and individual identities. Postcolonial authors reveal how colonial rhetoric legitimized exploitation and control by constructing the colonized as the "Other" via literary representations of disadvantaged voices. Postcolonial writings undermine cultural hierarchies and inequalities by critiquing these imposed identities. In postcolonial literature, "Otherness" is no longer seen as a place of marginalization but as a site of agency and defiance. Writers regain control and reimagine their identities outside of colonial constraints via stories of hybridity, diaspora, language experimentation, and gendered experience. The authors of these works stress that people's identities are fluid and subject to change as a result of their engagement with various historical, cultural, and political processes. By doing so, they challenge Eurocentric views and celebrate the diversity of opinion that characterizes postcolonial communities. At its core, postcolonial literature's examination of Otherness is a corrective and critical tool. It helps build more inclusive and dialogic human and cultural understandings while also illuminating the social and psychological effects of colonial and neocolonial activities. Postcolonial literature is an important tool for challenging dominance and envisioning more equitable international relations because it amplifies the voices of the historically marginalized and forces readers to address questions of identity, belonging, and power.

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