

Culture in colonialism and post colonialism period

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Abstract

Orientalism in Said words refers to the historical and ideological process whereby false images, and myths about the eastern or the oriental world have been created in various western discourses. Orientalism which is based in the cultural superiority of the west over the east paved the way for imperialism. In other words, imperialism an upshot of orientalism refers to the power expressed in display and symbolism, as well as in military power. It is mostly a concept used to refer to the expansion of the European nation states, in the early 19th century where European nations sought colonies in foreign lands through colonization. Colonialism is described as an act of extending civilization to other nations in a manner that automatically declares racial and cultural superiority over them.

Keywords: *Orientalism, imperialism, colonialism*

Medeniyette sömürgecilik ve sömürge sonrası dönemi

Özet

Said'in söylemiyle Oryantalizm Doğu ve Doğu dünyası hakkında yanlış yansımalar ve mitler tarihsel süreç içinde Batı söylemlerinde oluşmuş tarihsel ve ideolojik bir süreci ifade eder. Doğu kültürü üzerinde Batı'nın kültürel üstünlüğüne dayanır. Oryantalizm, Emperyalist görüşler için ön açıcı olmuştur. Sonuçta Oryantalizm, Emperyalizm için bir gösterge, sonuç ve sembolist ifade gücünün yanında askeri güç anlamına gelmektedir. Sömürgecilik; 19 yüzyılda Pazar ve yabancı topraklarda sömürge arayan sömürgeci Avrupa ulusları için ulus devletlerini genişlemesini ifade etmekte kullanılan bir kavramdır. Sömürgecilik otomatik olarak diğer milletlerin üzerlerinde ırksal ve kültürel üstünlüğünü ilan eden bir tarzda diğer milletlere ve medeniyet uzanan bir hareket olarak tarif edilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Oryantalizm, emperyalizm, sömürgecilik*

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Introduction

In the nineteenth century, the Americans and the European realm deeply practiced colonization, and racially judged people's language and cultural currency with their political and economical competition. This is evident in the colonization of the Far East within the mid eighteenth and the early nineteenth century where the European people imposed colonialism to the immigrant population. Colonialism in this era entailed consolidation of imperial power in the territory and it also meant the exploitation or development of resources. Moreover, it attempted to govern the indigenous of occupied lands. This situation really made empires like Britain, Germany, Belgium and France support colonialism by inventing theories that defended and made it sound as a civilization to the people.

Edward Said Views on Orientalism and Culture

In the book of Orientalism, the author Edward W. Said describes the world as 'Orient'. A word which meant that the world had been divided by different cultural representations. Representations that mutually existed, but could not be independent of one another, as they all represented different groups of people.

In other words Edward describes Orientals as a concept which represent cultures and ideologies which support doctrines, institutions, imagery, colonial styles and bureaucracies (Said 2). In his view he states orientalism is derived from a particular closeness experienced between countries during the colonial period. He states this by illustrating on how during the beginning of 19th century during world war Two France and Britain had power but since the war ended United States has subjugated the orient.

Orientalism is a feature for the West which was always linked with their position in power and ability to dominate the Orient (Said 3). This brought about the idea of who was politically, culturally and religiously strong or weak between the West and the East world. Europe or West powers made them stronger to the world, therefore, enabling them to expand colonialism to other continents including Africa and Asia.

This made Orientalism a knowledge which was reinforced by the West who always demanded a greater portion of the earth. Hence permitting the Western world to produce the East cultural ways and allow the people of Europe to constrain the occupants of Middle East from upholding their cultural lives. Consequently, making the European appear superior and developed compared to the Middle East or The East who were referred to as oriental inferiors. A situation, that made Orientalism an influence between the Orientals (East), and the Occidental (Westerns) who upheld them as sets of constraint and control of thought (Said 12). Edward Said further indicated that the Western world imposed a theoretical method which is inherent with "Orient concept" as a means of

ignoring the cultural, social and the East people ways of living. They did so by making the orientalist meaning to alternate the West representation on whoever and whatever is oriental or not. The concept was misleading to the East who did not know that it was in support of the western cultural lives, thus allowing them to establish ideas that controlled and defined the Orientals lives and resources. While, on the other hand, Edward Said's Postcolonialism theory is based on Orientalism (1978). Said contribution to postcolonial theory can be understood against his concept on orientalism as explained in his works such as in the *Beginnings* (1975) and *Orientalism* (1978). Orientalism which was based on cultural superiority paved way for imperialism of the West over the East. Postcolonialism being a period after colonisation contributed in helping the native inhabitants to take their places by gaining independence, and conquering political and cultural imperialism. Therefore, making the orientalism, imperialism, colonialism, and post colonialism, as terms interdependent on one another.

Though this statement raised critics on the *Beginnings* (1975), Edward Said went ahead and backed his views by using Foucault's concept of power and correlation between knowledge and power. Said wrote that in *Orientalism*, 'I have found it useful here to employ Foucault's notion of discourse, as described by him in 'The Archeology of Knowledge' and in 'Discipline' and Punish', to identify Orientalism' (Said 3). While basing his arguments with explanations on why an individual may not understand how the European systematic way of culture was able to control, and produce the orient politically, sociologically, ideologically and imaginatively. During, the post enlightenment period, without these individuals not taking time into examining the process of orient.

Edward Said further wrote that he was influenced by Gramsci the Marxist Italian philosopher concept of hegemony. This concept tells of 'the exercise of power through the consent of the ruled by 'incorporating and transforming' their ideologies.' This can be explained as the domination of the rulers over the ones being ruled or the domination of the colonial power over the colonized. A concept which was to be done at two levels, the first, at the level of administration which is through military power, while the second at the social level through educations in schools and churches including other social organizations. This kind of Orientalism gave way to imperialism of which the colonial power had exploited the colonized both politically and culturally. Said does quote this in his works by using the Macaulays extract which shows how the West had tried to brain wash the Indians and Africans to accept the superiority of Occident: "I am ready to take the oriental learning at the valuation of the Orientalists themselves. I have found one among them who deny that a single shelf of a good European Library was worth the whole native literature of India and Africa (Said 12).

These reflects how Said uses the Foucault and Gramsci ideas to formulate his theory of orientalism and concurred his critics like Rajnath who had declared that " Said's

postcolonialism had its roots in 'The Beginnings' and that Orientalism is best viewed as an earlier work rather than a new beginning.

Homi Bhabha Perception on Orientalism and Culture

The books of *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha the author theoretically describes that the Western viewed human life as a world having indifferences in cultural practices other than a world which is integral. Thus making it divide into a world which had Islam's and Christians or the first, second and third world with unequal cultures and defined spaces. The author's perception on culture and orientalism is 'split' due to minority identity production (Bhabha 4).

In his definition of 'un-homed home' the author clearly demonstrates his perception on culture . Bhabha described the 'un-homed home' as the state of being homeless reflecting it to a place that occupies a physical space but figuratively still exists in an intermediary part. Therefore, making it hard for Bhabha to identify where she socially and culturally belonged due to what he describes as the middle passage from old to contemporary culture. The author argues that cultures are as a result of disjunction and displacement of current cultures (8). Bhabha continuously expresses the 'un-homely' theme to a woman's home life by describing the boundary amid her personal and public exposure, a subject which is also reflected in the public and political area. "Ironic boundary between private and open spheres." To Bhabha 'un-homeness' tells the experience within the colonial and postcolonial era (13). It explains how the migrant and the postcolonial people were unwilling forced to relocate to different geographical regions due to the changes brought about by colonial ancient times and present (Bhabha 14).

Another subject of un-homeliness is revealed in the film *Violets Dream*. Violet dream revealed that she was in attendance of Davey her fiancé funeral. In the dream her childish house suddenly appears in the shadows, and she goes ahead and opens the home door which beyond it nothing laid except a moving ocean with whistling wind. Excited she goes ahead and takes a walk along the beach where she incidentally finds a burial service. She's now on a bridal gown and in her background she could hear the slow musical funeral version in Mendelssohn's *March Wedding*, played in low keys. Then suddenly voices of wedding vows between her and Davey are heard and they appear in shadows, but before the vows are completed uttered gun shots are fired making Violet scream, and her veil tears. Suddenly all characters in attendance including her friends Nandita and Samerish vanish and the whole place is left in darkness. (Sen, Arpana. 36 *Chowringhee Lane* movie, 1981).

The film is left with the sad moment of darkness and fog for some time, then immediately Violet is seen arriving at Nandita house holding a Christmas piece of cake.

Opening the door, she was surprised to find that the couples were holding a big holiday celebration which she was neither aware of nor invited to. Hurt by that she stands lonely in the darkness and stares emptily through a window. This is a state of 'un-homeliness' which Bhabha revealed to have been brought about by postcolonial origination from physical displacement of native (14). A thing which Bhabha insist to reflect even decades ahead where postcolonialism still remains culturally unimportant to many who are geographically close, therefore, leading to these displacement.

The film reveals that Violet is "un-homed" leading to displacement by colonialism and post colonialism in both a psychological and social manner. As she tends to realize that the Indian couple she referred to as her friends were just but pretence.

Conclusion

I support Edward Said post colonialism theory especially on the part he insisted that colonialism had negative influence to the cultural and political practices of the non west occupants. There are numerous negative impacts that can be associated with colonialism such as displacement of individuals from their original homeland and their exposure to hard labor in the western empires wher they worked as slaves. In his theory Edward Said is seen as a passionate man who supported human rights and therefore made his book as an influential topic that demanded not to be ignored. Reading Orientalism one cannot fail to realize his urge to protect the victims of post colonization (the East) from imperialism, but at the same time he still suggests that people should move on from the past and stop putting blames on one another. This makes the post colonialism theory argument stronger since it encourages the natives to take control of their land after gaining independence and work towards fighting against cultural and political imperialism. Edward W. Said quotes "Humanism is the only - I would go so far as saying the final-struggle we have against the inhuman practices and unfairness that disfigure human history" (Said 12).

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Works Cited

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72l3DcdxTXQ>