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‘DS View’, an academic activity in which students, researchers and faculty are encouraged to write short academic essays on the Development discourse, aims to generate discussion on issues concurrent to the times we are living in. The topical range may include academic debates on issues such as poverty, inequality, gender, conflict and human security. The essay for DS View can be expository, argumentative, persuasive or analytical.

The topic of 14th DS View is ‘**Postcolonialism or Post-Colonialism?**’ authored by Ms. Ramsha Masood Ahmed (MPhil DS 2018).

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Postcolonialism or Post-Colonialism?

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The term capitalism connotes an economic paradigm in which a society's means of production are held by private individuals or organizations, not the government, and where prices, distribution of goods, and products are determined by a free market (Webster, 2017). The capitalist philosophy thrives on open competition targeted at maximizing profit for the businesses. This urge for improved economic prosperity coupled with hunger for power has, in the past centuries, led many countries to cross their borders and henceforth tread the path of colonialism; a form of exercising power on a group of people belonging to a foreign land in hopes of exploiting economic benefits out of them (Horvath, 1972). The colonial powers explored new markets for profit generation through extraction of local raw materials as well as resources and exploitation of cheap labor in the colonies. Initially the colonizers entered the colonies backed by business deals struck between the country and the foreign business ventures. Subsequently, the sovereignty of the colony was usurped by the colonial powers by dint of sheer military prowess. According to Loomba (1998:3) the invasion on the land and properties of the colonies was most proactively pursued by the Europeans having immense naval power. The countries of Asia and Africa served as favorite hunting grounds for the competing European powers. The colonial masters were not solely focused on exploitation of the indigenous resources but were also visibly motivated to reorganize the entire administrative dispensations of the colonized nations in a way that would make the host country entirely dependent on the invaders for survival. Indian sub-continent suffered the same fate at the hands of the British Raj. And it did not matter what the flow of labor and materials was towards, in the end the profit was only for Britain (Loomba, 1998).

Today the world is ostensibly free from the hardcore colonialism but its aftereffects still reign supreme in the shape of neo-colonialism, which implies a control over decision making processes of under-developed countries by the developed countries without physically subjugating them. The countries may be physically independent but are still trapped in a vicious circle which continues to perpetuate a skewed relationship between the developed and under-developed economies (Huggan, 1996). The decisions having critical economic implications are made outside the under-developed countries. As a result the policies that the colonial powers do devise further convolute the problems of the host country in a way that are bound to benefit the developed economies at the cost of fledgling ones (Nkrumah, n.d.). In this backdrop, despite being cognizant of the fact that colonialism is non-existent in its true essence anymore and that we can call the current stage 'postcolonialism', we need to be mindful of the fact that neo-colonialism still prevails. This makes the very notion of 'postcolonialism' contentious. If neo-colonialism exists with all its ramifications then the world is not in a '*post*' colonial phase (Huggan, 1996). Hence forth it can be argued that 'postcolonialism' doesn't exist at all. And even if it does, Ella Shohat (1993:103) questions as to when it actually began? She also agitates as to when did the last colonial empire recede and whether the whole world may be termed as postcolonial in view of the fact that the people once under colonial rule have now proliferated across the globe (Loomba, 1998). Another interesting fact has been highlighted by Loomba (1998:13) when she observes that colonialism has never been the *only* reality of the area and should not only be credited to what is being experienced in the 'postcolonial' era of that place (Loomba, 1998).

Most of the critique on the subject has emanated from scholars who hail from previously colonized countries and have been exposed to the western style of education in some manner. The critique began when Frantz Fanon (1925–1961) wrote his book titled '*The Wretched of the Earth* (1968)', forcing a whole new perspective to be brought to the limelight for the world (Said 1989: 223). He coined the term 'Other' for the Black person who was colonized by the White person, who in the eyes of the White was a perplexingly unidentifiable unworthy image (Fanon 1986: 161). However this school of thought is perceived to have gained further recognition when theorists like Gayatri Spivak and Ranajit Guha came forward in the early 1980s with the 'Subaltern Studies Group' (SSG) (Peet & Hartwick, 2009). The SSG emerged in the 1980s, inspired by the intellectual attainment of luminaries like Eric Stokes and Ranajit Guha, to attempt to formulate a new narrative of the history of South Asia. The Movement challenged the popular neo-colonialist and neo-nationalist narrative of the Indian freedom movement which, to Ranajit Guha had failed to recognize the contribution made by the people independently "*of the elite*". They underscored the need of examining colonial India's subaltern classes and groups, defined as the "dominated and exploited groups" who had been marginalized in colonial India and hitherto absent from histories of the Indian freedom movement (Young, 2016).

This strategy influenced by the ideas of Gramsci was reverberated in the writings of Ranajit Guha, published in his classic monograph "*The Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*". Despite having a tilt to the left the school of thought was vociferously opposed to the traditional Marxist view of Indian history. In particular, as illustrated above, they felt perturbed by the political contribution attributed to local elites, who according to Marxist portrayal inspired the masses to resistance and jolted them to rebellion against the British. They on the other hand focus on non-elites, subalterns being agents of political and social change.

It is not out of place to mention here that the term 'subaltern' was coined by Italian Marxist intellectual Antonio Gramsci, meaning 'belonging to the inferior military rank' (Childs & Williams, 2013) but has been used to refer to someone who is secondary in terms of caste, culture, gender, race, economic or social lineage (Guha and Spivak 1988). The essays written by authors like Homi K. Bhabha, Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak on the subject have become more famous than the subject itself (Loomba, 1998).

Spivak has raised serious objections to the careless use of the term "subaltern". "Subaltern," to her is not just a classy word for oppressed, for Other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie, it rather signified "proletarian," whose voice could not be heard, being structurally written out of the capitalist bourgeois narrative (MacCabe 1987: xv). In postcolonial terms, "everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern — a space of difference". Advancing the same theme she cited the example of subaltern women, who were subjected to three main domination systems; class, ethnicity, and gender. Based on the understanding that subaltern women had no coherent subject position from which to speak, she was inclined to pronounce that "the subaltern cannot speak" (Spivak 1988: 308). Like Bhabha, she was also wary of simple "binary" oppositions, like colonizer–colonized, and emphasized the need of delving deep into the heterogeneity of colonial powers (Peet & Hartwick, 2009).

Spivak also takes exception to the idea of affirmative action or special regulatory protection to be provided to subaltern so that subaltern could be heard. She refers to the work of the Subaltern Studies Group as an illustration of how this vital task could be accomplished, not by giving the subaltern voice, but through clearing the space to allow it to speak (Spivak, 1987).

Edward Said, a public intellectual on postcolonial studies, in his book titled '*Orientalism*' employed discourse analysis in order to provide meanings for the terminologies like Orient, Orientalist,

Occident and Orientalism. He explained the term 'Orient' meaning thereby the key 'subject' on which knowledge is being produced. He believed that knowledge was being recorded against the 'Orient' or the 'Other' by the European and was done in a way to homogenize them, thus seeking to maintain control and exercise power over them. 'Orientalist' is someone who teaches, talks, writes or researches about the Orient and what they do is in simpler terms Orientalism (if we are to take *one* of the definitions of this word). Occident is someone who produces the knowledge about the Orient, mostly the West. He went on to further state that Orientalism is not a myth but a reality in which the Occident has the upper hand over the Orient and can present him in any way he desires (Said, 1979). As outlined by Loomba (1998:47) Said's basic argument in Orientalism revolved around the modus-operandi used by the West to portray the self-serving image of East (Orient) so as to maintain their supremacy over them.

For Homi Bhabha (1983a, 1983b: 19), colonial discourse, was founded more on anxiety than egotism, hence, colonial stereotypical view of subject people was intricate, unsure, and paradoxical. In order to substantiate his point, Bhabha (1984) contended that when colonized people become "European" the resemblance was both familiar and intimidating to the colonists. Likewise, Baudet (1965: vii) has observed that the European's imagery of non-European man is not a true reflection of real people, but rather projections of his own reminiscence and feelings of inadequacy (Peet & Hartwick, 2009).

Chandra T. Mohanty's in her work titled 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses' (2007) explore the link between 'women' and 'woman'. The 'woman' according to her is just another term for the 'Other' or the 'Third World Woman', on who the colonial discourse is being produced by the West. They are being portrayed as homogenous, singular and monolithic, a powerless being, oppressed and exploited by the society they survive in. 'Women' on the other side are those that are producing the colonial discourse on themselves about themselves and their experiences, learning from their past histories and experiences (Mohanty, 1988).

The relationship between "Woman"-a cultural and ideological Other constructed through varied discourses including scientific, literary, juridical, etc. and "women-real"- material subjects of their collective histories continues to be at the center of feminist debate. This connection between women as historical subjects and the re-presentation of Woman produced by diverse discourses is not a relation of direct identity, or a relation of correspondence or simple implication (Mohanty, 1988).

But no matter who the theorist is, they have all been classified by Loomba (1998) into two categories when she explains the differences between 'postcolonial' and 'post-colonial'. Postcolonialists believe that we cannot detach our present from our history because whatever the current conditions of our countries are they are because we were once colonized. This 'Colonial Syndrome' blames the colonizers for the present state of affairs. Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Chandra Mohanty are all theorists hailing from this particular school of thought.

Post-colonialists on the other hand believe that in the aftermath of physical decolonization and concomitant independence of the countries, the colonizers merit to be absolved of the responsibility of current state of affairs prevailing in the erstwhile colonies. Whatever the current situation is, it is because of the inability of the present day governance structures of these independent countries which have failed to deliver and resolve internal conflicts and differences. We are now geographically bounded, so we should work on finding the solutions to our problems instead of tossing the blame around.

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