

It was Peace Time or they said so: An Exploration of Kashmiriyat as Subalternity Depicted in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*

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Abstract

*The current research is an attempt at doing postcolonial analysis of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) by Arundhati Roy, focusing upon the plight of Kashmiris as the subaltern. “Can the Subaltern Speak” (1988) by Gayatri Spivak and “Can the Subaltern be Heard?” (2007) by Maggie have been used as the theoretical frameworks. The research tries to find out the answers to the research questions that relate to the perpetual silence, coercion and deception of subaltern into oppression, in this case people of Kashmir. Moreover, it also examines the everyday culture of subaltern in order to see whether it can be heard, as suggested by Maggie. The study makes an attempt at hearing the subaltern via translation. Significance of this research can be gauged from the fact that it lays bare the means adopted by hegemonic power, Indian state in this case, to deny subaltern its due right and is a humble contribution in giving voice to Kashmiris.*

Key Words: Subaltern Studies, Hegemonic Power, Translation, Oppression, *Kashmiriyat*

1. Introduction

This research is an attempt at doing the postcolonial analysis of Arundhati Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) by viewing the text from the lens of subaltern studies. Arundhati Roy deals with a broad canvass as she tries to capture the plight of many downtrodden groups like transgenders, Kashmiris, Dalits and Naxals but this study is limited to the people of Kashmir that how they are oppressed via manifest violence and have been denied any access to the revisionist history. Spivak (1988) has defined subaltern to be those disenfranchised groups that are pushed to the periphery and have no voice, power or agency to speak. While Tyson (2006) suggests that colonialist ideology does not involve one nation subjugating a different country but it can also be manifested when a minority is coerced

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and suppressed into subservience by majority, similarly the people of Kashmir are made to suffer.

The Kashmiris, a whopping number of almost thirteen million are living a miserable life under occupation, as they are trying to assert their right to self-determination. It is a disputed territory whose status is yet to be determined and the kind of treatment the Kashmiris are met with, makes them a text book example of Neo-Colonialism which is explained by Selden (2005) as "...a continuation and intensification of the system" (p. 228) of oppression and subjugation that colonizers so dearly devised for exploiting the colonized nations.

Waheed (2019) has given a detailed account of how the long war over the territory of Kashmir began right after the decolonisation process of South Asia in 1947, and the way Kashmiris have been made to pay the price. After relinquishing a violent struggle the occupied people have chosen to protest differently, Waheed adds that, "Rivers of the young and old, men and women, on the streets every year. But India responded in the same manner as it had to the armed uprising, with limitless force: killing, maiming and blinding hundreds including children" (2019).

Postcolonialism primarily deals with the idea of decentralization and is bent upon exposing certain mechanisms through which colonial powers had been able to exploit the colonized people for so long. This literary canon also deals with that literature which has been written by the colonized as an attempt to reclaim their past and imprint their identity (Barry, 1995). Postcolonial literary theory takes into account the whole rationale of colonialism which it then deconstructs and comes up with a counter to those ideologies hence, it is politics of control and resistance.

Kalpana (2018) has done a stylistic analysis of the novel and mentions that different stylistic devices and grammatical deviations are copiously used. She mentions that, "Arundhati Roy in her novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* employs these devices liberally to bring in the same effects." Most reviewers of Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* have chosen to talk about the novel's engagement with the larger political history of India spread over last two decades and how the Kashmir issue has been represented. Amit (2017) contends that novel concerns itself with presence and absence in history.

This research has been conducted upon the grounds that colonist ideology is not only the thing of the past, been wiped out with the advent of decolonization. Rather it has managed to survive and has taken more subtle forms, resurrected in the form of neo-colonialism, which is even more ironic provided the scenario that this time around the *others* are not actually others rather fellow countrymen and women. Roy (2017) herself states that, "But India is colonizing itself. The army and paramilitary organizations are waging war against the poorest,"(2017).

The present research makes an attempt at answering the following questions:

- How hegemonic power coerces and deceives the subaltern into oppression?
- Can the subaltern be heard through the phenomenon of translation?

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Basically, Subaltern Studies is more of a social theory that is anti-colonial and anti-bourgeois nationalism in nature. It takes up the task of representing marginalized, the deprived, and those tribes who are often left out in the national history. Chakravarty (1986) considers that the Subaltern Studies is more like a postcolonial project which aims at writing the history. Gramsci (1996) talks about the subaltern studies in terms of hegemony that how it relies upon the consent of the subaltern and the role of intellectuals in contesting it. He is of the view that subalterns have a complex history as it was mainly shadowed by the dominant classes.

Young (2012) has done a study in order to talk to the subaltern as she is intrigued by the idea that, what subaltern would say if given a chance to speak. She has concluded that each one of the interviewees have certain level of personal subaltern consciousness. McCandles (2015) has conducted a study in the field of Subaltern Studies, in order to situate her own voice in the field of development theory and practice after she spent a year in Arusha, Tanzania. She has used Gayatri Spivak's 1988 essay, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' that offered her a critique of the role that Western intellectual plays in representing the subaltern.

Dhakal (2016) has done the analysis of *The White Tiger* by Arvind Adiga from the perspective of subaltern and brought to the fore that how the text deals with these issues. She asserts that Subaltern can speak at times and proves this by pointing out the protagonist of the novel is transformed into a certified businessman from being just a village simpleton. Örtquist

(2017) has conducted a field research in Lebanon with a focus upon the Lebanese Red Cross and has attempted to decipher the methods of communication used by them with the victims. She has used Spivak's essay and has concluded that these organizations need to relinquish their essentialist way with which they choose to look at the subaltern, which she argues continuously deprives them of their subject position.

2.1.1 Can the subaltern speak?

Spivak (1988) proposes that the world is epitomized, represented and seen from the perspective of the 'First world' and this perspective is dominant and has a specific geopolitical position and this is done at the cost of excluding the disenfranchised groups. By using the strategies of Deconstruction and applying them on post-colonialism, Gayatri Spivak tries to challenge the power that the centralized discourses hold, with the aim of clearing a space for the marginalized voices, that go unheard. Spivak is not after challenging the truths straight away, on the other hand she chooses to descend at the cultural and political levels to see how these formations play a role in the production of truth.

2.1.2 Can the subaltern be heard?

Despite being immensely influential and well received Spivak's stance over the speaking of subaltern has been challenged. Maggio (2007) has come up with an alternative as his essay is titled "Can the Subaltern be Heard", while his emphasis is upon the idea of translation. He contends that, Given the limits of understanding implied by Spivak's essay, I advocate a reading of culture(s) based on the assumption that all actions, to a certain extent, offer a communicative role. Hence, one can understand a culture by translating the various conducts of their cultures. (Maggio, 2007 p. 419)

It means there is a sense in which communication is possible. Contrary to this Spivak suggests that subaltern does not even consent to oppression as opposed by post structuralism, as she says that there is no communication between the subaltern and the hegemonic power hence the subaltern is coerced and deceived into oppression. While Maggio suggests that although not an exact and well refined system of communication exists but a semblance of it is in place somehow. He suggests "... that these limits can be (partially) overcome." He has based his argument upon the fact that "Spivak's terms of engagement always imply a liberal-independent subject that is actively speaking."

This frame has partially been adapted as in this research it is not the western discourse that is unable to duly represent and understand the third world subaltern. In spite, this thesis argues that dominant discourse of a hegemonic power helps in the institutional oppression of Kashmiris and denies them any access to revisionist history and guarantees their perpetual coercion into oppression.

3. Data Analysis and Discussion

Spivak is of the view that subaltern cannot speak because any agency, power and voice is denied to them, however one alternative suggested by Maggio (2007) is that even if subaltern cannot speak, they can be translated. He suggests that by looking for the arguments and assertions made by everyday culture of subalterns one can materialize this goal of hearing them speak.

3.1 Oppression of Subaltern by Hegemonic Power

This analysis deals with the idea that hegemonic power deceives and coerces subaltern into oppression. Spivak (1988) defines subaltern as an individual who is oppressed and has a very limited hegemonic power or even access to hegemony/power. The subaltern has virtually no accessibility to the historical narrative i.e., orthodoxy. As it is totally under the control of those who wield the power and steer hegemony. In reality the subaltern lacks recognition, even of its oppression, that is why it cannot contribute to revisionist history. A subaltern's existence becomes valid only when it is acknowledged that it is oppressed, which never takes place.

The plight of Kashmiris is many folds as they have to fight at so many fronts and have to face a lot of hostility. As subaltern they are snubbed and their voice is silenced when through a press conference, they try to make their misery know. Roy captures it in following words, "The women were heckled and threatened at their roadside press conference in the afternoon and eventually the police had had to intervene and throw a cordon around the Mothers. "Muslim Terrorists do not deserve Human Rights!" (p. 115) The dominant discourse is employed by the hegemonic power to deny any recognition of the oppression. Different tactics like harassment and intimidation are employed when a space for speaking, through the press conference has been generated, hence they are silenced as subaltern. The signifiers have been shifted instead of calling attention to their status of being victims, they have been dubbed as the perpetrators of the violence. This robs them the legitimacy of their cause and denies them any agency by turning the tables over.

“I have never understood how that storm of dull, misguided vanity—the absurd notion that Kashmir could have “freedom”—swept him up as it did a whole generation of young Kashmiri men.” (p. 160) This comment is made by Biplap Das Gupta, who is the only character in the entire novel who has been given the first-person narration, perhaps to provide a window in the minds of hegemonic power’s representatives. Mr. Gupta is a bureaucrat who serves as the instrument of hegemonic power that is why it is beyond his ability to understand subaltern. This inability on his part actually leads to the notion that subaltern is non-sense which justifies it being *othered*. Moreover, the rules are bent by the hegemonic power to go to any limit to oppress and language serves as the scaffolding for the justification. He goes on to say that “An administration that was at war with a ruthless insurgency cannot be held to the same standards as one that is functioning in ordinary, peaceful conditions” (p. 163).

Arundhati Roy shows that how subaltern’s self and its subjectivity is heterogenous, particularly when she discusses that Kashmiris, who want freedom vehemently, are divided

The irony was—is—that if you put four Kashmiris in a room and ask them to specify what exactly they mean by *Azadi*, what exactly are its ideological and geographic contours, they would probably end up slitting each other’s throats (p. 181).

But Roy is of the view that, “And yet it would be a mistake to chalk this down to confusion. Their problem is not confusion, not really. It’s more like a terrible clarity that exists outside the language of modern geopolitics.” As the subaltern is to be represented viz-a-viz dominant discourse which does not accommodate it and lacks the proper signifiers for its representation. For Spivak the class consciousness is the political identity which is construed by two different narratives. One is the narrative of orthodoxy which is historical narrative and is controlled by the hegemonic power. While heterodoxy deals with revisionist history which is kept out of the access of the subaltern. Both of these narratives/discourses of orthodoxy and heterodoxy are responsible for creating two different potential identities. In Kashmiris’ case their identity is built as heterogenous while ironically, they are tried to be represented as homogenous. This creates the problem and as the author has suggested they are not non-sense rather the vocabulary and syntax are not there which can capture their subjectivity. This point has been endorsed by Spivak’s theorization too.

Roy further has pointed out that the divided self and class consciousness in the form of subjectivity is exploited by the hegemonic power. “All the protagonists on all sides of the conflict, especially us, exploited this fault line mercilessly. It made for a perfect war—a war that can never be won or lost, a war without end.” (p. 181) It becomes apparent here that the oppressor never acknowledges that it is responsible for the oppression of subaltern. Because the oppressor does not have any interest in acknowledging it, instead even there is no urge to acknowledge the existence as the oppressed has nothing in return of value to offer to the oppressor. That is why the dream of freedom for Kashmiris will remain ever elusive.

Hegemonic power has a lot of resources at its disposal to undermine the struggles and build a fallacious version of truth so that the legitimacy of any other version is strictly outlawed. This is to be found in the novel when Laveleen, wife of an army officer posted in Kashmir, fabricates her family’s misery in a letter written to US immigration office. Her husband is the oppressor and inhumanely tortures the innocent Kashmiri youth. She flips the truth totally and gives a detailed gruesome account of the ways of torture she and her husband are made to face. Roy brings out the irony of the situation “...because it *was* true, except that the victims and the perpetrators had swapped roles?” (p. 202) The hegemonic apparatus instead of acknowledging its own brutality inverts the truth and takes benefit of its own devised mechanisms of control, doubly marginalizing the subaltern.

Oppressor of the subaltern relies heavily upon the construction of truth and it takes full benefit of the divided self of the subaltern and its discordant subjectivity, in the form of class consciousness. The tactics used by the hegemonic power involve the idea of divide and rule. The Kashmiris in this case are handled intricately by making them question their own goals which means every aspect of their life is under siege “...he knew how carefully this seed of self-doubt had been sown by an administration that had clawed its way back into control from the brink of utter chaos” (p. 222).

Ashfaq Mir, although himself a Kashmiri by origin, is in the police and serves as one of the instruments of the state, which represents the hegemonic power here. He acts as the native informant who himself exists on the margins. He chooses to stay loyal to the people who have given him the job to control his fellow countrymen and women and this he does without any qualms. This is another strategy adopted by the oppressor in order to normalize its control and gain legitimacy. Ashfaq Mir, the native

informant is there to represent the people of Kashmir but the distance between his oppressor and those oppressed is so large that his effort of representation is “turned into a persistent disruption.” He is unable to communicate the desires of subaltern, because he is ultimately just a paw in the larger structure of power. He is himself at the mercy of dominant discourse. Spivak points out that the native informant has been co-opted to speak for the “New Empire” which is the neo-colonial set up of Indian state, in the case of Kashmir.

The oppression faced by subaltern is of a very special kind, that is why Spivak says that all subalterns are oppressed while not all those who are oppressed are subaltern. The heightened tensions in Kashmir, as the Indian state ups the ante every few days, is very precarious and somebody in the novel comments that “These days in Kashmir, you can be killed for surviving.” (p. 268) It shows how there is no escape and Roy has been able to show that even the ones who are tangentially involved in the conflict have to pay the price heavily and in Kashmir this price is no less than one’s life.

Truth is moulded and spun in a manner that even the most brazen lie seems plausible. Be it the truth of one’s struggle or identity it is no more than a construct. This means that identities are also constructed via storytelling and constant repetition. This leads to a specific image of subaltern which stands for its identity. When the innocent people die at the hands of monstrous Indian army it chooses to spin a tale of lie and “The story in the national press appeared as follows: *Gruesome Beheading of Innocent Civilian by Militants*” (p. 274). A specific version of the truth is designed and then adopted to not only hide its own oppression rather the blame has totally been shifted. The Kashmiris call themselves as freedom fighters while Indian state apparatus terms them as militants, insurgents and most menacingly terrorists. Once the subaltern is represented in a different light it gets easier to silence it.

The cycle of violence as a tool of oppression is quite readily used by the representatives of the oppressors in the valley of Kashmir. The soldiers face a short dilemma of choice and then, “All they have to do is to turn around and shoot. All the people have to do is to lie down and die.” (p. 282) All of this is exercised so that the subaltern is denied having any access to revisionist history so it is written out and silenced. This silence in the case of Kashmiris is of most brutal kind as it involves taking of their lives. As it is further echoed by Gupta that

I would like to write one of those sophisticated stories in which even though nothing much happens there's lots to write about. That can't be done in Kashmir. It's not sophisticated, what happens here. There's too much blood for good literature (p. 283).

The oppressor is not familiar with the vocabulary of the oppressed and neither is it interested in learning. Roy demonstrates by remarking about the officers of army posted in Kashmir,

Cold soldiers from a warm climate patrolling the icy highway that circled their neighborhood cocked their ears and uncocked the safety catches of their guns. *Who's there? What's that sound? Stop or we'll shoot!* They came from far away and did not know the words in Kashmiri for *Stop* or *Shoot* or *Who*. They had guns, so they didn't need to (p. 316).

The oppressor's dominant discourse lacks the vocabulary for communicating with the subaltern but that is not taken into consideration. In fact, the guns that are instruments of destruction hence, a symbol of coercion, are used to communicate.

When Roy comes to Kashmir question, the reference towards the truth; its construction and dissemination becomes more recurrent. It proves that truth in an anarchic situation and especially in a war zone is no less than a strategy for winning the war itself. At one point in the novel after a lot of bloodshed the normalcy is declared and Roy does not shy away in pointing out the role of language in constructing a particular type of truth as she writes that "normalcy was always a declaration." (p. 324) Hence she states that even to achieve a sense of negative peace, when no violence is taking place despite the hostility, the verbal reassurance is used ignoring the ground reality. She comments that "The facts were never established. Nobody was blamed. This was Kashmir. It was Kashmir's fault. Life went on. Death went on. The war went on." (p. 324) It underpins the idea that truth is additional and there is no need to look for hard and non-refutable facts, fabricated ones work even better in war settings. By assigning Kashmir a special status so many wrongdoings are justified and the price is paid by Kashmiris, the subaltern.

Subjugation of the subaltern is done by coercing it into oppression and violence is adopted as the first and last resort by Indian army, an instrument of the state. This has been shown in the following words, "And because they were in the rifle-sights of a soldier, whatever they might be

doing—walking, praying, bathing, cracking jokes, shelling walnuts, making love or taking a bus-ride home—they were a legitimate target” (p. 347). This oppression is done on a grand scale as the whole valley is under siege and most importantly each and every aspect of subaltern is shadowed and their lives at stake.

Spivak rejects any claim that tries to essentialize and homogenize the subaltern’s voice because in reality they are heterogenous. Their divided self is incoherent and full of inconsistencies. This is quite apparent when Musa pledges that “I’ll never take what happened to my family personally. But I’ll never *not* take it personally. Because that is important too.” (P. 368) This inherent contradiction essentially defines him as subaltern but hegemonic power rejects and dismisses this as non-sensical.

Dominant discourse which is available in the form of meta narrative is mainly responsible for silencing the subaltern, such signifiers are used which result in undermining the image of subaltern and strengthening the high handedness of oppressor. The language provides the ideological basis needed for subjugation. Roy highlights this phenomenon “Though the sign on the door said *Interrogation Center*, it was in truth torture center. In Kashmir, “interrogation” was not a real category. There was “questioning,” which meant a few slaps and kicks, and “interrogation,” which meant torture” (P. 380). Not only the signifiers have been swapped, their truth has also been sifted.

3.2 Can the Subaltern be Heard Through Translation?

Spivak (1988) presents the subaltern to be just like child of a broken marriage, whose parents are divorcing and s/he is unable to speak. But despite that subaltern is considered as a resistant and a quisling, whose own voice never makes it to any hearing being. “This was Kashmir; the Separatists spoke in slogans and our men spoke in press releases...” (p. 176). This very statement relates to the use of discourse in pushing an ideology and how it is employed to gain certain results. The slogan versus the press releases is a game of narratives and counter narratives. It shows that oppressor uses language to take subaltern down while subaltern uses its own language to resist this domination. It is a perfect example of politics of dominance and resistance.

The particular discourse for the sake of connection and a sense of belonging is there for every type of subaltern. This means it might not be available to an outsider but the connections within the subaltern people are

of a different kind. Musa tells Tilo that his community as Kashmiris, “We do terrible things to each other, we wound and betray and kill each other, but we understand each other.” (p. 194) This level of understanding is created by a shared common culture and by relying upon a language which is not heavily reliant upon dominant modes of expression, that does not account for subaltern. Now in order to understand what language is spoken by subaltern the translation comes into play as it helps in understanding and respecting the subaltern. As translation makes it possible for the hearer to gain access to vocabulary of subaltern who has been put outside the ambit of influential discourse.

Subaltern has to be understood in its own language and for that matter its everyday life as a phenomenon needs to be taken into account. For example, Roy has presented a dictionary of Kashmiri subaltern’s lexicon. She has titled it as “Kashmiri-English Alphabet” and has given a long list of all the alphabets and what they particularly signify for Kashmiris as an oppressed nation. She says that in Kashmir, “H: Hizb-ul-Mujahidin (half-widows/half-orphans)” (p.208).

Hizbul-ul-Mujahidin is the militant organisation which has taken up arms against the state of India and is trying to liberate Kashmir. “K: Kashmiriyat” (p. 209). In local language this expression means the very essence of being from Kashmir, it is an all-encompassing term which covers all the aspects of belonging to a specific people. From the perceptive of subaltern, it can be assumed that only the people of Kashmir have any idea about what it actually takes to belong to Kashmir. Then there is another alphabet, “V: Violence, Version (local/official/ police/army/victory)” (p. 210) the first word that pops up is violence which in this case is self-explanatory that how violence is the means which is being used by Indian state to maintain its hegemonic rule. Version is the expression which presents a lot of variety within the parenthesis. It pertains to the idea of truth in a war that how it is contested and at the same time there can be a lot of versions available. This variety helps in pushing a certain agenda. For example, the official and police along with army’s version will demonise the locals and justify their use of violence while local version would be different marking as an act of subversion and an attempt at being heard. The last expression includes the word victory which is the most coveted phenomenon on both sides of the spectrum.

The people of Kashmir possess their own identity and channelize their own specific means of resistance. All of this gets reflected when Roy

shows that people of Kashmir rely upon the media and press to get their stories heard across continents. They lay their dead on the ground in the graveyard and let the journalists and reporters to capture what has surpassed. Roy remarks about the crowd that “It knew that without the journalists and photographers the massacre would be erased and the dead would truly die.” They find a way to make a mark by being photographed and written about. They do so with the intent of, “So the bodies were offered to them, in hope and anger.” Roy has compared it to “A banquet of death.” The whole scene turns into spectacle when mourning relatives are asked to come in the frame so their sorrow can be augmented and enhanced. This gesture by the media is actually an attempt at translating the subaltern. As they are there to give a semblance of a mouthpiece to the people of Kashmir, “Their sorrow was to be archived” (p. 327). This record keeping in the future will serve as the data base for, “films and photo exhibitions curated around the theme of Kashmir’s grief and loss” (p. 327). It indicates that the tragic loss of life of Kashmir can be recorded somehow despite the gaps and absences in the dominant political, historical narrative.

The subaltern has a way of living where it acts according to its culture and has a sense of solidarity, like Tilo is quite admirable of Musa’s love for his fellow Kashmiri men, she adores, “the way he belonged so completely to a people whom he loved and laughed at, complained about and swore at, but never separated himself from” (p. 358). Roy has shown that subaltern is not merely an automaton whose strings are in the hands of its oppressor rather she takes pains to depict that through its little ways the subaltern is able to assert itself and tries to create a crack in the thick mask of subjugation. It becomes apparent when Musa has to leave Tilo and go out and it has been mentioned that, “There wasn’t much time. He had to leave while the tide was high and the streets still belonged to the people” (p. 388). This sense of safety that Musa derives from the presence of his fellows around adds that solidarity does exist among subaltern and helps in its survival.

Another strong feature of subalternity pertaining to Kashmir is their resilience and resolve. As Musa comments, “One day Kashmir will make India self-destruct in the same way. You may have blinded all of us, every one of us, with your pellet guns by then. But you will still have eyes to see what you have done to us.” He as a subaltern has not given up and goes on to make itself heard, despite the attempts by dominant discourse of muting it. He adds, “You’re not destroying us. You are constructing us. It’s yourselves that you are destroying.” (p. 431) By truing the table over and

calling the so-called act of destruction as construction Musa is trying to speak in the vocabulary of subaltern which is different and has its own hermeneutic domain.

As Selden et al (2005) points out that, “But if the oppressed subalterns cannot be spoken for by Western intellectuals – because this would not alter the most important fact of their position – nor speak for themselves, there can apparently be no non- or anti-colonial discourse” (p. 224). This is a valid point as it proves that for subaltern it is impossible to break the vicious cycle of oppression on their own while even their oppression and erasure are not acknowledged. Ranciere (2011) provided a potential solution, “In order to enter into political exchange, it becomes necessary to invent the scene upon which spoken words may be audible, in which objects become visible, and individuals themselves may be recognized. It is in this respect that we speak of a poetics of politics” (p. 115). This is evident in the text when Kashmiri women form associations, arrange press conferences, travel to New Delhi and the men write slogans on walls and chant them at the top of their voices. All of these spaces are actually the platform by standing upon which subaltern tries to speak and it is in these spaces one can manage to hear them.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The text being enriched with different forms of political struggles and games at outmaneuvering them serve the cause of writing the things from the platform of a postcolonial country. Although it has been decades since the last country on earth was decolonized but still the struggle is alive today as colonist and imperialist ideology has supplanted it in many other forms. It has been found during the analysis that the text is heavily loaded with politics of identity, representation and resistance. There have been so many reinforcing instances found that point towards the slow descent of India into an autocratic state, although it claims to be the biggest democracy of the world, and how it is emulating the ways of its colonial rulers against whom they put up resistance and got independence.

This research tries to highlight the mechanisms and underpinnings of a system that employs epistemic violence in the guise of structural, cultural and institutional discrimination. For example, Kashmiris as subaltern suffer cultural, structural and even manifest violence as they seem to be a text book example of oppression through coercion and unbridled use of force. The study has found the people of Kashmir have been oppressed through manifest violence and as pointed out by Spivak, they are not given

any access to the revisionist history which they can ultimately rewrite and buy their way to freedom. Rather their struggle is demonized as terrorism and signifiers along with roles have been swiped.

Subaltern is in most tricky situation than all the other oppressed people, as its oppression is not acknowledged. It is evident by the hard-handed tactics of Indian army that it wants to crush the innocent people of Kashmir via brutal force and dubbing their just show of resistance as terrorism. Hence, as long as the oppressor does not recognize that wrong is being done the dream of freedom for the people of Kashmir will remain elusive, forever.

Maggio (2007) has propagated the idea of translation as he claims that although the subaltern postulated by Spivak is denied any voice it still is actively speaking. The only problem is that there is no one ready to lend it an ear. This has also been found in the case of Kashmiris that their discourse is not shared by their oppressor and their culture and even resistance has a color of its own. They are not non-sense, being heterogenous and apparently full of contradictions rather it is their unique identity as a subaltern self. Hence, whenever an attempt is made at essentializing them and make their ends tidy this turns out to be impossible which results in their *othering*. This study has shown that for a subaltern to be heard it requires empathic ears and the skills to translate what they have to say. For further endeavors, it is suggested that the text should be studied from different other canonical lenses of Feminism, Marxism and also purely from the Deconstructive perspective.

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