



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## Orientalism And The Politics Of Empire In British Colonial Literature

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### Abstract

This dissertation focuses on Orientalism and imperial power, and literary representations on the basis of Heart of Darkness and Untouchable, which is read in the perspective of Orientalism as proposed by Edward Said. It states that the empire functions not by the conquest of territories and the administration of the economy, but by the epistemological rule, by structures of knowledge, which determine, classify and describe the colonized world. Literature is not a neutral form of aesthetics as it is an active participant in the building and challenging of these systems of representation.

The analysis begins with the study of Heart of Darkness as a discourse that both criticizes and recreates imperial discourse. Although the novella reveals how the European expansion has corrupted its ethical practices, it perpetuates the Orientalist rationality by making Africa an abstract, symbolic space and confining narrative power to European intelligence. Africa is more of metaphysical land where European anxieties are conducted as a historical subject. In its criticism, therefore, the text continues to maintain the epistemic centrality of Europe.

Conversely, Untouchable switches narrative authority to the colonized subject because of foregrounding the inner world of Bakha. The novel questions the objectifying representation by psychological realism and the material specificity. Nevertheless, it also shows how colonial modernity reinvents aspiration, language and social imagination on the inside. The text makes it difficult to just see the opposition between colonizer and colonized as it reveals the overlaps between empire and caste order. There is no resistance which appears beyond imperial structures but there is a negotiation with imperial structures.

By using this comparative framework, the dissertation will argue that Orientalism is not an essential ideology but a flexible discursive practice that is reproduced, challenged and restructured throughout literary forms. Collectively, these readings show that imperial epistemology is still with us even in criticism, that its politics is most vicious at the very representation level.

### Introduction: Orientalism, Empire, and the Literary Imagination

It was not only the growth of European imperial authority over Asia and Africa that took place in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but also the development of a strong stock of knowledge concerning the colonized world. The Empire was not only run by conquering using military or controlling using economics; it also was run by representation. The important role in this process was played by literature. British colonial fiction did not simply narrate imperial adventure, it assisted in the formation of the imaginative structures in which the colonized societies were to be perceived. In such writings, the East is not necessarily a space of existence but an imaginary site where Western superiority was being marked off.

It is at this overlap of power and representation that this dissertation poses its query.

This paper explores the politics of representation within British colonial literature by comparing two works of Heart of Darkness and Untouchable. The former is a result of the European imperial imagination and the latter is the voice of the colonized subject. The positioning of these texts in a dialogue, however, allows to follow the functioning of the Orientalist discourse not only as a form of domination but also as a place of tension, negotiation and partial resistance.

This theoretical analysis is based mainly on the book by Edward Said, Orientalism. The main point that Said makes that the Orient is not merely a geographic term but an outcome of discourse created by the Western systems of knowledge essentially changes the way colonial literature should be interpreted. In this context, orientalism cannot be attributed to prejudice. It is an organized way of thinking, a system of gestures that legitimize political control by the way it dictates what the East can be like. Literary form became politicized once it is interpreted as power.

### **Research Problem**

The use of the theme of Orientalism in colonized and metropolitan works has been an area of less concern in spite of the fact that colonial literature has undergone extensive research. The major controversies about Joseph Conrad depend on the perception that Heart of Darkness was anti-imperialist or imperialist in its ideas. However the issue is even more complicated when one puts the text against the background of Untouchable by Mulk Raj Anand who does not only negotiates the influence of the colonial power but also the hierarchies based on caste.

The main question that will be followed by this dissertation is:

In what ways does Heart of Darkness and Untouchable construct, reproduce or disturb the work of an Orientalist discourse and what have these constructions suggested about the politics of the empire as it was being changed?

Instead of taking the colonizer and colonized view as the contrasting side of the same coin, this paper will focus on the skewed nature in which imperial knowledge is perpetuated even in texts that seem to cast imperialism in a negative light.

### **Thesis Statement**

This dissertation holds that heart of darkness is involved in the reproduction of Orientalist discourses because it makes Africa an abstracted zone of darkness, an imaginative geography that ends up displacing the European epistemic authority even in the criticizing process. Conrad reveals the brutalities of the imperialism, but the African subject is mostly denied storytelling freedom.

Untouchable on the other hand disrupts Orientalist structures by predicting subaltern awareness. Anand retrieves narrative agency to the colonized subject through the interiority of Bakha. However, the novel also shows the way in which colonial modernity transforms desire, hierarchy and aspiration internally. This way, it shows that Orientalism is not erased at the moment of resistance, but it transforms and becomes internalized and rearticulated by local arrangements.

All these writings hint at the idea that Orientalism is not a fixed ideology but a dynamic area where the imperial power is reproduced, challenged, and restructured.

### **Orientalism as Discourse and Power**

The idea of the inseparability of knowledge and power, which Said got heavily from Michel Foucault, is an important part of the formulation of Orientalism. Orientalism is a practice: a regime of utterances that gives rise to the Orient as an object of knowledge. More importantly, this insight does not only state how it regulates, classifies and permits intervention.

In a colonial literature, the process can be traced in the narrative voice, imagery and metaphor. Space is turned into symbolism, cultures into types, difference into hierarchy. The representation is a fine tool of government.

Africa in Heart of Darkness is often primordial, inexplicable and somehow outside modern history. The continent is not represented as a social reality that can be inhabited but the metaphysical landscape where European anxieties are projected. Even in cases when Conrad criticizes the Belgian exploitation, the reference point is the European moral consciousness. Africa is used to provide a setting to a crisis within Europe.

In *Untouchable*, the axis is shifted, however. Anand predicts the awareness of Bakha, an untouchable sweeper who is forced to negotiate indignity and ambition in a colonial India. The story demands particularity of the experienced caste oppression. But British presence lingers AAAAambivalently around the background: the one that is repressive and the one that is reformist, the one that is external and the one that is networked with the local structures. The novel therefore makes it hard to simply have a clear dichotomy between colonizer and colonized.

### **Literature and the Politics of Empire**

In order to interpret British colonial literature as pure aesthetic production is to overlook its political entrapment. The emergence of the English novel was coincidental with the growth of the empire and form itself commonly reflects the patterns of classification, ordering and surveillance. Fiction is not merely a reflection of empire, it is involved in the process of constructing its imaginative legitimacy.

The expedition of Marlow to Congo in *Heart of Darkness* seems, at least at the surface, to be an eye opener to imperial corruption. But the renowned saying "The horror! The horror!" eventually focuses on European existential crisis and not colonial agony. Africa is turned into the land where Europe itself faces its weakness. The colonized subject is marginal to the meaning-making.

In comparison, *Untouchable* allows only one day in the life of Bakha to be narrowed down to the frame of time. This compression increases immediacy. The novel is opposed to abstraction; it demands the weight of the day-to-day humiliation. Nonetheless, reform here too is mediated by the Gandhian rhetoric, Christian discourse and technological modernity all of which are a result of colonial engagement. Empire is not merely the form of outer control, but it is a form that was internalized in the social imagination.

What comes out of this introductory framework is the understanding that empire is epistemology rather than governance. It determines who is talking, who is observed and who whose suffering is narrable. Literature is not a witness of the imperial history passively it is one of its most persistent archives.

### **Darkness, Knowledge, and the Imperial Gaze in *Heart of Darkness***

*Heart of Darkness* takes a precarious place in the colonial literature study. It has been read since long as a critique of imperial brutality, it is deeply embedded in the epistemological arrangements that enabled the empire to exist. The novella disturbs imperial confidence, but not thoroughly emerges out of imperial ways of seeing. What seems initially as a revelation slowly turns out to be a more complex relationship: a criticism that works out of the very discourse it challenges.

Based on *Orientalism* by Edward Said, this chapter holds that even though Conrad reveals the corruption of what goes on by the Europeans during the expansion, he ends up perpetuating the Orientalist reasoning by refusing to give Africa a narrative and historically drive agency. The writing criticizes the excesses of the empire, yet it does not challenge the power of Europe to define and interpret.

### **Africa as Abstraction: The Production of the "Dark Continent"**

Africa is abstracted in the novella, which is one of the most vivid aspects. And the continent is hardly ever represented as a socialized terrain with a complicated community. It rather manifests itself by metaphor: dark, inaccessible, prehistoric. Such descriptions not only evoke a sense of atmosphere: they put Africa back into an out-of-time situation.

This is an important temporal displacement. The vision of Africa is not as a modern to Europe, but rather the one that is at the lower level of human development. This framing is very much in line with Said and his imaginative geography, the reshaping of real spaces into symbolic spaces as dictated by Western projection as opposed to lived space.

The Congo River which seems to be a geographical location turns into a gateway to the metaphysical darkness. The trip back up the river is calculated as retrogression, as going backward into primeval causes. Africa is therefore not really a historical place, but a European psychological drama.

Even in the instances of the text denouncing exploitation, abstraction is at work. The narrative implicitly reinstates epistemic centrality of Europe by making Africa unintelligible and chaotic. The continent can be ethically problematic, yet remains put as an object of perception, and not a source of meaning.

## The Imperial Gaze and Narrative Mediation

This chain of command is supported by the narrative structure of the novella. The narrative is presented to the reader in a multidimensional manner: an unnamed frame narrator describes oral narration done by Marlow. Africa is thus completely filtered through European consciousness. It is not interrupted and complicated by any independent African point of view.

This pattern is a reflection of what Said refers to as the Orientalist gaze a gaze where the West looks and categorizes the non-West without any visibility. Africa becomes a spectacle. Its residents are represented in pictorial snippets: the figures, shadows, motions in the undergrowth. The individuality evaporates into the air.

Even the stages of seemingly perceived recognition are brief. Marlow sometimes recognizes some distant relation to the African characters he notices but as we have seen, such recognitions never disrupt narrative power. The ethical hub is European. The misery of the colonized subjects is present, however, it is seconded by the self-reflection of Marlow and the tragic disintegration of Kurtz.

The novella denounces brutality and still maintains the asymmetry of perception. Europe sees; Africa is seen.

### Kurtz and the Logic of Civilizing Mission

Kurtz represents the paradoxes of the ideology of the empire. He comes to Africa as a symbol of enlightenment and progress only to degenerate into despotism and violence. On a surface level, this course is seen to belittle the myth of the civilizing mission. Nevertheless, the criticism is in-house European.

Horror! The horror! it is the final words spoken by Kurtz. The horror!" distillate moral vision of the novella. But the terror is explained as an expression of European decadence and not colonial destruction. The story is not focused on the systematic oppression of African communities at length, but rather, it underlines the demise of an ideal in Europe.

Within the context of Said, Orientalism does not just deal with positive/negative representations; it is the right to construct reality. This authority can be seen in the report that Kurtz wrote to the International Society to Suppression of Savage Customs. Even its hypocrisy supposes the right of Europe to judge and reform Africa. The violence of the empire is positioned as nonconformity to civilizational ideals, but not structural determinism.

This distinction is crucial. The novella is also critical of excess but does not question the epistemological premise that Europe has a moral right to intervene.

### Silence, Sound, and the Limits of Representation

The most telling aspect of the novella is perhaps its use of silence which is strategic. African characters seldom get interiority. Their words seem to be disjointed, untreated or turned into noise. The meaning is indefinable as it cannot be accessed by the narrator and the reader.

This absence is not neutral. Orientalist representation is constitutive of it. Orientalism as Said puts it functions by means of control in the form of who is allowed to speak and who is to be spoken. European narrators have monopolized representation in the text by Conrad. Africa is grounded on which meaning is imposed, but not created.

This dynamism is supported by the repetition of the theme of darkness. The symbolic meaning of darkness being attached to Africa and light to knowledge is evident when the knowledge is morally corrupt. The metaphor maintains a civilizational disparity on imagery level.

The novel itself points at complicating this dichotomy as the Thames is remembered as once having been one of the dark places of the earth. Nonetheless, this is not the reversal of the hierarchy; it generalizes darkness instead of reallocating narrative agency. Europe understands that it was barbaric in the past, but Africa is not subjected to it.

### **Ambivalence and the Limits of Anti-Imperial Critique**

It would be insufficient to call Conrad an apologist of the empire. The pessimistic image of colonial exploitation in the novella breaks into triumphalist accounts of progress. But its criticism is limited by the discursive paradigms inherited.

What is evident is that *Heart of Darkness* remains in the destabilizing phase without breaking the Orientalist representation. Africa is still a metaphor and not a history actor. The narrative field is still ordered by European consciousness. Epistemic authority is never given up, the Empire is ethically challenged.

This ambiguity demonstrates the extent to which Orientalism is ruptured into Western cultural production. The structures they challenge may be reproduced even in critical texts. The cracks in the ideology of the imperial are shown in the novella, but it never goes beyond its terms.

### **Conclusion: Empire as Epistemological Authority**

*Heart of Darkness* reveals the depictions of the moral contradiction of the European imperialism, but it is also involved in the representational logic that perpetuates the empire. Africa is built up as unknown, primitive, and subordinate through the abstraction, narrative mediation, and symbolic imagery.

The outcome is that of a paradox: there is coexistence of critique and complicity. Conrad undermines the ethical right of the imperial practice, yet the right to determine reality is European. Africa is the reflection of Europe upon itself.

In this respect, the novella validates the fact that Orientalism is not just a political ideology; it is a widespread pattern of thought as Said would say. The Empire does not exist just by conquest only, but by the ability to describe, categorize and define the Other. And it is this narrative power delicate, aesthetic, and lasting which is the hardest to destroy.

### **Subaltern Consciousness, Colonial Modernity, and the Limits of Resistance in *Untouchable***

Where *Heart of Darkness* reveals the epistemological organization of the empire in the discourse of the metropolis, *Untouchable* is a re-orientation of the field of vision in whole. The novel, written in 1935, reverses the authority in the narration of the story toward the imperial viewer and the colonized subject. However, this reversal does not result in the unproblematic reversal of power. Rather, it demonstrates the extent of the transformation of colonial modernity on the level of consciousness itself.

In this chapter, the author presents the thesis that *Untouchable* is a counter-discourse to Orientalism and at the same time reflects upon its interiorization. Anand disrupts the colonial representation by foregrounding the interior world of Bakha. Meanwhile, the novel also clarifies that the empire is not just a foreign body but also enters into desire, aspiration, and social imagination.

### **Reclaiming Subjectivity: The Politics of Perspective**

The closest distinction between the novella of Conrad and the novel of Anand is the focalization of the narrative. In *Untouchable* the story is very much in line with the line of thinking of Bakha. The reader is introduced to India not as seen through impassive imperial eyes but through experienced humiliation, a rush of pride, disorientation, rage, and erotic desire.

This is politically important. Anand insists on subjectivity where the Orientalist discourse conceptualized by Edward Said in *Orientalism* makes the colonized subject an object of knowledge. Bakha is not only described, he thinks. He reflects. He goes through contradictions. His disgrace is inwardized but he also wonders about its reasoning.

The novel is anti-abstractionist. Bakha is not such a symbolic darkness or an allegorical character; he is a young man who has to cope with a certain social world that has its organization by caste and the presence of colonialism. The requirement of the story to be psychologically complex disrupts the flattening nature of Orientalist representation.

But power is not torn down by subjectivity only. The interior consciousness that Bakha possesses is not directly transformed into agency. The realism in the novel highlights the boundaries that the consciousness should work in.

### **Colonial Modernity and Mimicry**

The interest of Bakha in the British soldiers, in particular their uniforms, their cleanliness, and their bearing brings about a finer element of dynamism. The fact that he admires is not in any way a naive celebration of empire, but it shows the way colonial modernity re-configures symbolic value. Britishness is related to dignity, discipline and hygiene since it is aspirational due to imperial structures.

Here the novel becomes involved in what would be termed by later theorists such as Homi K. Bhabha, as mimicry: a colonial desire that is not quite a pure imitation or a total resistance. Bakha is not aimed to be made British in any literal meaning. Instead, he identifies British signs with the escape of caste degradation. Modern selfhood seems possible through the colonizer.

What is notable though is how the novel is adamant in trying to prove this aspiration redemptive. Structural inequality is not solved when British presence is present. It coexists with it. The admiration is also still a dream, suspended between the hopes and the illusion.

The text shows that Orientalism is not operating purely at the level of the externally imposed representation through the longing of Bakha. It is also working on repackaged desire. The imperial categories start the colonized subject to consider dignity, which is an empowering yet limiting transformation.

### **Caste, Empire, and the Politics of Internal Orientalism**

Conrad externalizes otherness to the geographic level, but Anand internalizes otherness to the levels of the colonized society. It works in a caste system, using logic that, uncannily, is akin to that of the Orientalists: categorization, hierarchy, ritual exclusion, dehumanization.

Bakha is constantly degraded to his caste. And he is not touchable, contaminant, socially invisible. His body turns to contamination to upper-caste Hindus. Language traps him in a system that is pre-colonial but magnified by the colonial rule.

The novel, in such a way, makes any simplistic story of colonizer and colonized hard. Other forms of domination already in place do not replace the Empire. Even as it preys on caste relations, colonial modernity transforms them. Oppression is not a one-dimensional phenomenon.

This stratified presentation avoids the idealization of indigenous culture as uncompromising victimhood in this novel. Anand will not sell India as a single entity, which is victimized only by outside forces. Rather, he exposes a social cloth that already exists through exclusion. The Empire doesn't create any part of hierarchy out of nothing, it only inserts this fabric and changes its tensions.

### **Language, Realism, and Narrative Authority**

In contrast to the Heart of Darkness and its metaphoric abstraction of the African continent, the portrait of an Indian town created by Anand is concrete and material. Tactile specificity has been made to the streets, temples, latrines, and markets. Space is socially mapped. Humiliation takes place in places which are determinable. No fall back into allegory.

But the novel has been written in English language of colonial rule and education. This option presents complexity and not contradiction. The English language enables Anand to intrude into the imperial literary space, to talk to the colonial as well as global audiences. Simultaneously, it indicates the inevitability of the colonial linguistic heritage.

There is the use of vernacular rhythms and Indian idioms in the prose which is slightly distorting English to local reality. The opposition, then, is not expressed in the refusal to accept the novelistic tradition wholesale. Rather it is a matter of occupying and transformation of it.

The novel is in a kind of a two-sided arrangement: it criticizes colonial discourse, but it is written using the language and literary structure historically linked with empire. This tension is not a weakness; it is an indication of the circumstances in which colonial modernity is generating resistance.

### **Reform, Gandhi, and the Ambiguity of Resolution**

The end of Untouchable proposes three possible avenues of social change: conversion to Christianity, reform through Gandhianism and modernization through the flush system. All these are not offered as the final-way out.

The Gandhian speech is morally urgent but not structurally implemented. The Christian discourse is an assurance of equality, but with hierarchies to maintain. The technological reform is pointing towards material change, yet it cannot overthrow caste ideology on its own.

The ambiguity is deliberate. Anand is opposed to narrative closure. The future of Bakha is unpredictable, caught between conflicting reforming visions. According to the novel, electronic technology and moral influence cannot be enough to destroy the established order of things.

This open-endedness in *Untouchable* brings out the challenges of breaking free of stratified structures of power. The issues of Empire, caste, religion, and class overlap to make finding a single solution difficult.

### **Conclusion: Counter-Discourse and Structural Entanglement**

*Untouchable* opposes the epistemological violence that the discourse of Orientalism has focused on by making subaltern consciousness the central figure. Bakha is neither a target of imperial knowledge, but he is a subject of thought whose agony can not be turned into a metaphor.

The novel however also shows that the empire transforms internal social relations and personal desire. Colonial modernity has an effect on the way dignity is fantasized and reform conceptualized. The development of resistance occurs not out of the inherited frameworks but in their frameworks.

What comes about there is not a mere reversal of Orientalism but Orientalism changed. In the event that the novella by Conrad unveils the wavering of imperial self-confidence, the novel by Anand reflects the intricacy of the process of decolonization. The power exists in the variation forms. With new forms, hierarchy returns. In this regard, *Untouchable* is not just the refutation of imperial discourse, but a clarification of the complex ground on which postcolonial consciousness has to be negotiating its freedom.

### **Representation, Authority, and the Shifting Politics of Empire: A Comparative Analysis**

After an individual analysis of *Heart of Darkness* and *Untouchable*, in this chapter they are taken into their long term critical discussion. This is not aimed at building a mere dichotomy between colonizer and colonized interpretations, but at following the development of the Orientalist discourse in terms of the historical stance, the narratives and the literary genre.

Read the structure of Orientalism by Edward Said, both the texts demonstrate the existence of imperial epistemology in dramatically different forms. The novella is a dramatization of the moral anxiety in Europe by Conrad, without losing interpretive power. The new novel by Anand re-centres the subaltern consciousness but this time, this novel cannot be completely divested of the mechanisms which the colonial modernity has already put into motion.

What comes to mind is not binary opposition, but a negotiation spectrum.

#### **The Question of Voice: Who Speaks for the Colonized?**

The most obvious deviation of the two works is the narrative voice. The mediation of Africa in *Heart of Darkness* is done wholly through the European consciousness. The African subject is mostly silent even when imperial violence has been brought to light. The colonized emerge as subjects of the morality of Marlow as opposed to the subjects of narration of their own.

In *Untouchable*, the interiority of Bakha, on the contrary, becomes the basis of the story. The colonized subject exists not only as the appearance of the appearance, he experiences, reflects and interprets. The representational asymmetry that held in Orientalism is upset by this change. Voice is a political action.

But there is not an absolute difference. The consciousness of Bakha works in limited social frames. His consciousness is not necessarily sufficient to give an agency. The story has a psychological depth, but not much social mobility.

What the comparison finally concludes is that voice makes power difficult rather than eliminating it. Conrad confines narrative authority to Europe; Anand reallocates it but within certain boundaries that are determined by caste and colonial modernity. Power is transferred, but the hierarchy does not disappear.

### **Space and Geography: Metaphor versus Materiality**

Geography serves as a very important point of contrast. According to Conrad, in his novella Africa is symbolic darkness, backwardness, indecipherability. The scenery is often abstracted and turned into allegory. It is not as much a social space as it is symbolic landscape through which European or European self is tried. This space change is in line with the idea of imaginative geography that Said formulates: the reconstruction of actual places into ideologically loaded symbolic zones. Africa is not brought out in its historical particularity; it is aestheticized into a moral context.

In the novel of Anand, space is real and socially constructed. The town is urbanized using the caste divisions, labor patterns and body motion. The latrine, the temple, the marketplace these are realities, structuring

realities, not metaphors. There are certain places where humiliation takes place. The spatial structuring of power occurs.

The contrast is revealing. Conrad generalizes Africa into the existential drama. Anand demands locality and social texture. However, in both instances, space is political. In one it justifies exploration and self-reflection; in the other, carries out ostracism. Geography is either an abstracted or concretized location of power.

### **Empire as Moral Crisis versus Social Structure**

Another difference is also present in the conceptualization of the empire itself. Moral degeneration is the main manifestation of imperialism in the book *Heart of Darkness*. The failure of the European ideals is embodied by Kurtz. The center lies in moral corruption amongst the colonizer.

In *Untouchable*, the empire is not simply a moral failure, it is also a structural condition. British presence cuts across caste hierarchy, economic inequality, and religious authority. Oppression seems institutional more than extraordinary.

This change of place is an indication of a change of place in history. Conrad writes at a time when the imperial expansion is at its peak and the criticism is expressed in the form of a sense of anxiety in the confidence. Anand is writing in the context of tightening anti-colonial struggle at a time when the empire is already feeling the pressure in terms of ideology. This transition is manifested in the politics of representation.

Nevertheless, however, both the texts are not entirely escaping ambivalence. Conrad recriminates savagery and retains European centrality. Anand previews experience of subalterns yet cannot completely remove himself out of colonial language and structures. The Empire is also there even during interrogation.

### **The Production of Otherness**

Orientalism works in a manner of creating alterity. The African characters in the text by Conrad are frequently referred to as a mass, forms, bodies, which are not individualized. Otherness is racialized and alienated.

Otherness in *Untouchable* is an inward process. Europeans are not the only ones who isolate Bakha but his own society does. Untouchability identifies him as contaminated, unseen, out of the structure. The exclusion mechanism resembles the classificatory desire of the colonial discourse.

The comparative vision, in this case, is crucial: the empire does not exist in a vacuum, but it is in interaction with the already existing hierarchies. Orientalism is reliant on classification and caste works on analogous logics of fixity and difference. The story Anand tells us all about the extent to which systems of othering can be ingrained into social fabric.

However, in contrast to the presentation of Conrad, who tends to romanticize the difference, the violence of Anand is also prefigured. The humiliation of Bakha is not a metaphorical event or a remote one, but it is imminent and concrete. The reader is not able to withdraw into allegory.

### **Language and the Limits of Representation**

Both authors use English which has a long history of being connected with the imperial expansion. Conrad aestheticizes the landscape in his prose by overloading it with metaphors and at times it builds a distance between the reader and the colonized subjugated. Language is a medium of atmospheric abstraction.

The English in which Anand acts is different. Although influenced by the colonial education, it includes the local rhythms and idioms. This prose lags toward lived Indian experience as opposed to it. English is an intervention area instead of an inheritance.

Nevertheless, neither work is out of the imperial form of literature. The realist novel and its stress on the psychological interiority and linear narrative came up together with the imperial modernity. To compose in this form is already to create in a charged historical structure.

It does not matter how pure the resistance is, but the extent to which it is transformed. Conrad maintains aesthetic distance. Anand narrows it.

### **Historical Position and Discursive Shift**

The time difference between the two texts is significant. Conrad had authored in 1899 when the European imperial hold was consolidating. The book *Anand* was published in 1935, when there was organized anti-colonial resistance against the British in India.

This historical change has an impact on story power. In *Heart of Darkness*, the empire is seen to be disturbed and still standing. The territory of the empire in *Untouchable* is a battlefield. The issue of reform, resistance and modernization openly discusses in the narrative world.

Orientalist discourse, thus, never dies out; it develops. Its power is more noticeably unsettled. The comparison presents the shift toward the imperial introspection to the colonized articulation. Power is still unequal, but it is the conditions of power that are put more and more into question.

### **Synthesis: Complicity, Resistance, and the Afterlife of Empire**

Combined, these readings reveal that the politics of empire are being practiced within various registers: voice, space, language, symbolism and social structure. The novella by Conrad exposes the fractures of the imperial ideology, but is rooted in the European epistemology. This is because *Anand* presents, in his novel, the subaltern consciousness that is anticipated, at the same time revealing the extent to which modernity in colonialism infiltrates social and psychological life.

The analogy opposes grammatical labeling. Both texts are both complicit and emancipatory to some extent. They both occupy a common discursive space that is influenced by the empire. The angle of negotiation is what varies.

It is in this sense that orientalism does not appear as dogmatic doctrine but as the fluid form that is reproduced, confronted, internalized and revisited in various literary genres. It is not only the territorial occupation, but the narrative authority and representational habitation, that continues with the Empire.

These works are to be read in order to experience the same thing namely persistence and also to see how literature is formed as an archive of domination and place where this domination is reviewed.

### **Rewriting Empire: Orientalism, Representation, and the Persistence of Power**

This dissertation attempted to explore the problem of Orientalism at work in British colonialism and the way in which it is both replicated and subverted in literary works. By a comparative analysis of *Heart of Darkness* and *Untouchable* as viewed through the theoretical context that exists within Orientalism as put forward by Edward Said, this paper has argued that

empire is not just a matter of territorial control, it is also epistemological in the sense that it is directing in the representation itself.

What is made more evident in both texts is that power does act by narrative authority just as much as by political domination. Literature is not only a reflection of imperial history, it is also a part of the construction of the imaginative environment in accordance with which the empire can become intelligible and, at other times, justified.

### **Orientalism as Epistemological Power**

One of the main participants of this study has been to treat Orientalism as a knowledge system and not isolated prejudice. *Heart of Darkness* reinvented Africa in a manner which makes it symbolic terrain or a place where Europe throws its moral anxieties. Even the cruelties of imperialism are revealed with the continent being abstracted and aestheticized. The action of critique takes place, but the authority of epistemology has remained European.

And this is a paradox: one can criticize empire and still be at its interpretive centre. Conrad disrupts the imperial conviction, but he does not lose control of narration. Africa is much silent, to be mediated by European consciousness. Orientalism continues to exist not so much as the direct exultation but as structural framing.

Contrary to this, *Untouchable* moves the narrative focalization to the subject colonized. The interiority of Bakha overcomes the objectifying description and demands the experiential immediacy. The novel does not want to make India allegoric, it bases the sufferings on material and social reality.

but rebelling is not running. Colonial modernity influences the aspirations, language and symbolic value even in the novel itself. The presence of British informs the imaginary status of dignity. English language acts as an intermediary of narration. The afterlife of orientalism even persists in the criticism.

This is what the comparison always proves, ultimately, Orientalism transforms. It is criticized, assimilated,

rethought but never forgotten.

### **Complicity and Resistance Beyond Binary Logic**

The weakness of binary thinking is one of the most significant conclusions in the dissertation. It would be simplistic to call Conrad entirely complicit and Anand entirely resistant. Ambivalence is revealed in both texts.

Conrad reveals imperial violence but the crisis is mostly described as European moral corruption. Anand anticipates subaltern victimhood but also recognizes the caste structure to have existed prior to colonialism and crosses into colonialism. The empire does not superimpose itself on the native structures; it implants itself in them.

This stratified view makes postcolonial analysis more difficult. Domination systems are not independent of each other. Orientalism cuts across caste, religion and class. There are many circulating axes of powers.

Through positioning these works in conversation, the dissertation has attempted to ascertain that there is nothing like imperial discourse. It is developed based on the influence of history and the repositioning of the story. Critique is a structural phenomenon and not extrinsic.

### **Representation and the Ethics of Literary Form**

Another aspect that is highlighted in the study is the ethical aspect of the literary form. There is no such thing as neutral representation. Voice distribution, creation of space and application of metaphor provide the sense of difference.

Heart of Darkness uses metaphorical darkness to universalize Africa into existential allegory and develop aesthetic distance. In Untouchable, realism recovers material specificity but is done in a novelistic form historically associated with imperial modernity. Both texts are not totally outside of the traditions they occupy.

Decolonizing representation, in this case, cannot imply giving up inherited forms altogether. It involves bargaining them, distorting them, reshaping them, revealing their flaws. Literature constitutes a store of imperial fantasy and one of the places in which that fantasy can be challenged.

### **Contemporary Relevance**

Despite the fact that both primary texts are of the colonial period, the questions they bring up are still topical. The orientalist patterns have still been involved in informing the political rhetoric worldwide, media representation, and cultural discourse. The imaginative geographies of the nineteenth century are replicated in the framing of some areas as unstable, backward, and threatening.

Similarly, the internal hierarchies that remain even after the end of formal empires in terms of caste, race, or even class reveal that the destruction of empires of formal control does not necessarily eliminate othering systems. The legacy of the empire endures in categories, institutional structures and patterns of perception.

Rediscovering these writings in the context of Said goes beyond mere interest in history. It provides a prism in which the modern forms of representation can be questioned.

### **Final Reflection: The Afterlife of Empire**

This dissertation has finally held the argument that the politics of empire last as discursive formation. Orientalism serves on the authority of narrative, symbolic geography and on the logic of categories. It may be revealed and disrupted, but it is likely to reoccur in distorted form.

Heart of Darkness shows fissures in imperial confidence and retains interpretative control. Untouchable recaptures the subaltern consciousness without ignoring the fact that colonial modernity has gone very deep with the hierarchy of the natives. The texts together bring about an understanding of the changing yet constant frameworks of power that determine who has the ability to speak and who has to be addressed.

Reading these works does not simply take one back to colonial history. It is to acknowledge the way representation still defines the world knowledge. Such structures are preserved, challenged, and recreated in literature, as it is one of the spaces.

The political history of the empire, however, does not exist in the past. They live in narrative practices, in epistemological guesses and in the perpetual discursive bargaining of voice and power. Herein lies the work of postcolonial criticism and the urgency has not been blurred.

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