



“POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE OF JOHN MILTON’S PARADISE LOST”; A STUDY THROUGH HEGEMONY; INTERPELLATION AND STATE APPARATUS.

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Abstract.

In *John Milton’s Paradise Lost* religion and colonialism are closely associated. Many important works since The English renaissance have postcolonial aspects. By using *Antonio Gramsci’s ‘Hegemony’* and *Louis Althusser’s ‘Interpellation & State Apparatus’* theories, this paper enacts a post-colonial perspective of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. It also covers the impacts of colonization in society during the period of Milton and its resemblance in his great epic. Since every reading is a misreading, my misreading is a study of *Paradise Lost* with a post-colonial lens.

Keywords: John Milton, Post Colonialism, Hegemony, Interpellation, State Apparatus.

Colonization of England began in the period of Queen Elizabeth I and it was made effectively by King James I. It dominated people all over the world by its power and forcible actions. People from the colonized countries were used as slaves to implement the ideas of the colonizer. Raw materials and human resources of the colonized countries were used to enhance the wealth of the colonizers. People who protested or opposed or questioned the colonizers were punished and executed.

“There is nothing mysterious or natural about authority. It is formed, irradiated, disseminated; it is instrumental, it is persuasive; it has status, it establishes the canons of taste of value; it is virtually indistinguishable from certain ideas it dignifies as true, and from traditions, perceptions, and judgment it forms, transmits, reproduces. All above, authority can indeed be analyzed. All these attributes of authority apply to Orientalism ... “(SAID, 1979, p. 19 – 20)

Milton who was born at that time virtualized the effects of colonization. Milton was a strong believer in Christianity and supporter of The Republican form of Government. When he wrote his great epic, the power of colonialism in society has an impact on his works unconsciously. Though Milton intended to write *Paradise lost* as a religious epic, the features like Superiority of the God and his Son over the Angels, Gods dominant acts over the Angels while they questioned about the power position gave the colonial effects. The Angels who disobeyed Gods order and demands equal rights were punished and sent to hell. Milton, who was a supporter of The Republican Government indirectly supports Richard Cromwell’s inheritance of the throne after his father Oliver Cromwell’s death.

According to the ‘*Hegemony*’, A term coined by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, the ruling class was so successful in promoting its interests in society. Hegemony is the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all. Dominance is thus exerted not only by forcing the people and active persuasion, but also by the more subtle and inclusive power over the economy and over state-apparatus, by which the interest of ruling classes are made to believe as common sense. The term is used to describe the success of imperial power over the colonized people.

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton tries to implant the ideas of Christianity to the readers as common sense. He presented God as a supreme power, so his ideas. Fallen Angels are represented as human beings, who disobey the rules of religion and questions the existence of god will be sent to hell.

Louis Althusser in his essay '*Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus*' explain the theory of Ideological and repressive state apparatus. It represents the dominance and repression of people through ideology to the people who obey the rules and use of active forces to the people who disobey the Government. Likewise, in *Paradise Lost*, Milton dominated the Angels to God by State Apparatus. The good angels who believe and obey the rules of God were dominated by the ideologies of religion and God. Where the fallen angels who opposed the superiority of God and his son were dominated by repressive state apparatus by throwing them into hell forcibly. Here God can be compared to the Kings, colonial heads, Leaders of the colonizing countries, and Angels to the people and class of the colonized countries.

Conclusion.

As a text has endless interpretations, my interpretation of *Paradise Lost* is to present the epic as a guidebook of colonialism. Milton failed to strike the balance of equality between God and the Angels. However, Milton talked more about fallen angels than god. He ends the work by standing in the shoes of God with an authoritarian and colonizers view. According to Reader Response Theory, the meaning of the text depends upon the reader's mind. So by my interpretation, *Paradise lost* has post-colonial ideologies along with religious beliefs. As the text is open to all, the conclusion may vary according to the reader's views of the work.

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