

Politics of Silencing the Subaltern in Robert Harris's *Conclave*

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Bharat Neupne has completed his thesis, "Politics of Silencing the Subaltern in Robert Harris's *Conclave*" under my supervision. He has completed his research on April 2019. I hereby recommend this thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

The thesis entitled "Politics of Silencing the Subaltern in Robert Harris's *Conclave*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Bharat Neupane has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This research project probes into why and how, Robert Harris represents the Subalterns in his novel Conclave. Harris chooses the subject of subaltern for the characterization of his female and non-white male characters in order to argue that the politics of silencing the Subalterns by the those in power through the means of hegemony aims at maintaining their supremacy. The characters representing the Subalterns are given a lower position of power whereas the minor roles are assigned to the female characters as they perform manual works and serve the male members in Church. On the other hand, the writer deploys the African and Asian, more importantly middle East Asian characters, and Muslim characters who are stereotyped as savage, barbaric and uncivilized in the world of white-controlled Church. In order to strengthen the argument that the subalterns are always subordinated and excluded at the marginalized position by the powerful ones via discourse of hegemony, the research incorporates the theoretical insight on hegemony proposed by Antonio Gramsci and notion of subalternity is proposed by Depesh Chakarvarty, Amin Shahid and Ranjit Guha. On the basis of these insights, the study shows the working of hegemonic power and voiceless conditions of subalterns over on the part of the female nuns and non-white candidate for the post of Pope. The paper finally reveals how the subalterns are always subordinated and excluded from the mainstream discourse.

Keywords: Hegemony, Subalterns, Subordination, Oppression, Discourse, Exclusion

Robert Harris's novel *Conclave* articulates conspiracy and western Eurocentric world view towards the people who belongs to the Non-western origin and the females. They are treated as the Subalterns culturally-socially historically excluded from the front line history in the world. Manual worker's females, African

blacks, Eastern–Asian Muslims and the South–Eastern Asian people living in the Western the so–called educated and civilized world are treated distinctly as ill–tempered, terrorists, uncivilized and poor as in this novel *Conclave*.

Robert Harris, in his novel *Conclave* artistically gives no voice to the characters that follow basically the manual works and the nuns from black African origins as well as other Asian characters in order to pictorize the social realities objectively even existing in the modern advanced society in the world. He, through the help of fictional characterizations, ignores the social realities of the Subalterns by keeping them in their marginal position. He silences the Subalterns in his novel in order for not giving voice to the people excluded from the mainstream historiography in general irrespective of the geographical, cultural, religious and social–gender variations. It is his artistic tact to raise the issue of hegemonic power structure in the modern world that marginalizes certain groups of people like the African, Muslim and female characters in the novel.

A word 'Conclave' which denotes the secret meeting where the discussion is kept very secret about the election process and the upheaval at the time of very election in Vatican church. In the novel when all the cardinals come to inside the Sistine chapel to cast their vote to elect the supreme pope. The word “Eligo in summum pontificem” state which means ‘I elect supreme pope’. Voting continues until and unless the pope elected. Ballot are burnt after each session inside the chapel. If there is no winner, it is burnt with chemical that gives of black smoke telling the crowd that the new pope has not yet been selected. When there is winner there appears white smoke; sign from the cardinal that they have chosen new pope to lead the church.

Robert Harris's *Conclave* delineates the real story of the Subalterns in the

western European world postulating the characters from both the Subalterns class and the elite class. He, deploying the Subalterns in the story as they are destined to face the grimy world—ever, tries to urge for the social—cultural respects and economic and equalities in the world through the pieces of literary endeavors. In the story the female nuns are destined to serve the cardinals and the senior males in the church as they are gathered for the election of new successor of the recently killed pope, The Pope Francis. Though there are white European nuns, the black African nuns are treated oppressively by the white European male cardinals in the very spiritual ceremony.

Similarly, Lomeli, the central character, a dean of the college, sees the nuns and even other non—western cardinals through the lens of white and non—whites, Westerner and non—westerners, male/female. The cardinals Adeyemi and Tedesco represent the non—western world and both of them are supposed to be as equally important person as the other white cardinals are, but they seem to be oppressed by the whites as they belong to African origin and representative and the middle Eastern Asian representative from Iraq, respectively in the Vatican church on the verse of election. They both are accused to be disqualifying for conclave.

The story is set around seventytwo hours after the sudden killing of the Pope Francis in the European land; Vatican City the country surrounded by Rome. The novel begins with the death of the pope and grows with the investigating upon the causes and reasons of sudden killing of the pope and at the same time the election process of the new pope, the greatest spiritual and religious person in the world in the Christian cultural—religious domain. One hundred and eighteen cardinals are gathered in the yard of the Vatican church in order for the very election of the new pope. Different cardinals comes to the Vatican Church to elect the supreme pope. They belong to the different geographical, cultural, racial identity. The protagonist has duty

to elect the new pope through the election because the pope has died to elect new pope they go to different ballots to get required number of vote. When they could not get required vote, then, they start to make conspiracy to downfall the cardinals by bringing different issues. Especially the non-westerner becomes the victim of issue. At last the dean, Lomeli becomes the supreme pope. As detecting process Lomeli, as a senior and responsible person for investigation of the Pope's sudden death, suspects Tedesco as he belongs to the Muslim world- the Middle East. To select the new pope they have to undergo different processes of ballot in the church.

White and European exclude the Non-westerner in Vatican City while casting their vote to elect pope. More than hundred cardinals from various Christian countries are gathered in the Catholic Church, the Sistine Chapel. They have to continue the process of election until and unless one candidate of the pope scored majority of the votes. They cast vote many times but no one can get required number of electoral, so that the cardinals begin their ideological conspiracy and make their poles, basically of the white westerners excluding the non-westerners and the blacks as they have few numbers of cardinals to play significant roles to elect the non-western candidate of pope. This very event exemplifies how the geographical origin, color and culture effects in such a glorious and spiritual place and spiritual ceremony of the election of the new pope of all the Christians.

As the story contemplates, Robert Harris, though he belongs to European white cultural origin, tries to postulate the hidden realities of the Vatican Church and the auspicious ceremony of the election of the new pope just after the death of former pope Peter. He precisely through the very story contemplates how the subalterns are silenced and deprived in such a historical and spiritually-respected positions and posts—along with the picture of domination of female nuns, Africans, Asians and other

non-westerners in the novel *Conclave*.

Robert Harris is a former journalist and BBC reporter .Although he began his career in non-fiction, his fame rests upon his works of historical fiction. He is the author of eleven bestselling novels. Which won four prizes including the *Walter Scott* prize for historical fiction and *Conclave*? Several books have been filmed .His books have been translated in to thirty seven languages and he is the fellow of the Royal society of literature. He lives in West Berkshire with his wife Gill Hornby. Robert Harris has used real title throughout the *Conclave* such as Archbishop of Milan, Dean of the College of Cardinals and so on.

Robert Harris, through the literary enterprise *Conclave* raises the voice of minorities and the marginalized people projecting worldly reality with the help of fictional characters. He makes non-western characters; like Adeyemi, Nigerian cardinal, Tedesco, Iraqi cardinal, African black nuns and some other middle-East-Asian characters in order to ironize the logo centric European attitude towards the others. He criticizes the othering tendencies fertilized in the westerners' stereotype to the non-westerners as he postulates the dominating and derogatory oppression of the whites towards the blacks, African nuns, females and the non-westerners.

Robert Harris also depicts the issue of power as he surrounds the story within the electoral process of the pope in the Vatican Church and timely the seventy two hours business of election and conspiracy takes place among the cardinals. He very tactically projecting the story of electoral process of pope articulates the grim story of the minorities and the socially, racially, culturally and geographically excluded one. He minutely knits the story of the minor characters and their lifestyles with due emphasis on femininity and the gender issue in *Conclave*. The dean of the Electoral College, Lomeli a white European 75 years old man represents the western notion of

'Othering' as he sees Adeyemi and Tedesco in suspicious eyes. At the same time, Bellini a white cardinal and candidate of the Pope oppressed the females typically the nuns in the ceremony. He sees derogatively to Tedesco and some other cardinals as they seem to be liberal towards the female. Bellini due to the very notion of discrimination and domination makes a pole against those who subtly seemed to be liberal towards the nuns and the femininity. This shows how the females are forced to be subaltern.

Robert Harris, has written more than ten fictions like *Pompeii*, *The Fear Index*, *Dictator*, *Enigma*, *Fatherland* etc. And many other non-fictions have been read from various angles of analysis. But indeed, the issue of subalternities has been raised by none of the readers. So, that relying on the library materials and some reviews on Robert Harris and his literary endeavors the researcher examines the traits of subalterns in the novel *Conclave* and tries to dig out his politics of raising the issue of Subalterns.

Robert Harris, novel *Conclave* constitutes the story of subalterns along with the issue of power, conspiracy, gender, social and racial discriminations as the subalterns are destined to face. Harris, as Alfred A. Knopf in "Robert Harris's Thriller Goes inside the Vatican" argues the study of power and Vatican conspiracy. Alfred A. Knopf states:

Harris, a writer who has made the study of power, with all its potentials for corruption and intrigues his subject of choice, from power in western democracies ("The Ghost" a thriller about an amoral, easily manipulated former prime minister, whom many reviewer saw as a thinly described doppelganger of Tony Blair) to power in ancient Rome (the Cicero Trilogy). The Latest canon is *Conclave*, a tightly woven tale about power machinations

at the top of the Roman Catholic Church. Taking place over only seventy two hours, within the barricaded, claustrophobic confines . . . denouncement that too many will seem so provocatively scandalous. (23)

Alfred A. Knopf talks about the author's mostly raised subject matter of power along with the existing conspiracy in the Roman Vatican Church for the power that is the position of pope. He furthermore, examines the electoral processes takes place in the church while the cardinals gather to elect the successor of the previous pope.

Talking about Robert Harris's style of fiction writing along with his subject the critic Ian Sansom states:

Nonetheless, there is only one possible word to describe Robert Harris's new novel, *Conclave* is unputdownable in exactly the same way that the work of Henry James. *Conclave* doggedly sets out to provide readers with fundamental satisfactions story of sequence, configuration and organization. I have no idea if Harris Shapes his books as he proceeds –like a potter at the wheel–or if he work from some complex set of outlines and notes in *conclave* the sequence is very simple and pleasing indeed: the pope dies, the cardinals gather, there is the first ballot, there is the second ballot, there in the third ballot, and so on, each stage begin accompanied by another twist, some new mystery or complication. (18)

Sansom hereby sees *Conclave* from the ordinary reader's perspective of the issues explored by the author. As Sansom states, *Conclave* simply follow a simple flow of writing as it hovers around the election process of a new pope and the investigation of the sudden death of former pope at the sometime. The plot structure goes on smoothly as it covers the every minute detail of the events taking place within the period of seventy two hours. Robert Harris, as Sansom argues, in a smooth plot line, very

minutely explores the issue of suppression, negligence, domination and racialization.

In the same manner, as Ian Sansom glorifies Robert Harris's writing style and his exploration of minor details of the events and actions with a great message to the world, John Boyne rightly states:

As someone fascinated by all things political, I looked forward to learning about an election that has always been cloaked in secrecy, expecting great things from an author whose works, from *Hitler Reimaginings* to Blair reinterpretations to Cicero rediscoveries, has always been steeped in the art of the possible. The Clandestine nature of a Papal vote offers the novelist a degree of imaginative freedom as there are no visible Campaigns, no Twitters wars and no television cameras. No one is supposed to want the job, but once you have it, it's yours for life. (34)

John Boyne, instead of examining the issue of power corruption, conspiracy, emphasizes more on his technicalities of exploring the things along with the election procedures and its importance for the one who destines to the field. Moreover, Boyne talks about the author's imaginative flow writing in *Conclave*. He again says that *Conclave* is "a thoughtful novel about the intellectual would be a fine thing to reading" (15).

Mary Jo Anderson, a Catholic journalist and speaker in "A Conclave for Camelot" about Robert Harris states, "A former political journalist. Harris has written popular political thrillers, whose fictitious central character is a barely veiled version of the social realities" (2). As Anderson states, Robert Harris artifies that social realities with the help of fictitious characters where Lomeli, Bellini and other cardinal's along with pope represent the upper class elite people while the nuns specially the black African nuns, and other non-western characters represent the

lower class people. He projects the characters from the genders and the classes in order to explore the social realities as the society consists of these all sorts of people thoughts and practices. Anderson moreover and comments:

Conclave exchanges the political wrangling of smoke-filled back rooms for scheming prelates in an incensed-filled Sistine Chapel. Beyond the Vatican walls helicopters hover while terrorists plot an attack. Within the College of Cardinals is laced with enough IED candidates to blast apart any vestige of orthodox resistance to the progressive . . . the story gets off to a tense start amidst the turmoil following the sudden death of the pope. Even his loyalist cardinals are thrown into confusion by recent outbreaks of papal favorite, clandestine meeting and the rumor of an appointment *enpectore*. (3-4)

Anderson, hereby along with the conspiracy and cunning events taken place inside the church; the locked chamber, raises the issue of terrorism, a burning issue of the world in Robert Harris's *Conclave*. As the pope meets a sudden death in an explosion of the bombs, possibility of suicide blast by the terrorists in a very close distance to the palace where the pope lives and the Vatican Church.

As Anderson argues that, Robert Harrison through this literary endeavour *Conclave* raises to burning issue of liberal movements taken place throughout the world as in the novel. In the novel during the process of the election of new pope the cardinals are divided into fractions like tradition/orthodox Catholic and the reformists since the progressive march rises against the conventional Catholicism under a reformist church, they seek a newly religious leader who can lead all sorts of religious thoughts and beliefs accordingly as per the time demands. She moreover, analyzes:

The novel is perfectly paced. *Conclave* speeds along, peppered with enough Vatican details to make it a plausible 'thriller'. Harris is not a believer, though

he is politely respectful of the concept of God. But he does believe in the progressive view of human history; that is, we will eventually get this political power–liberty dynamic right and live happily ever after. The secular world of real power has no room for old fashioned orthodoxy. Harris has been critical of the church's teachings, saying the church's "attitude towards the ordination of women is not, I think, sustainable." Thus, *Conclave* weaves progressive fantasies into a near future for the Catholic Church. (12)

As Anderson states, Harris seeks to establish a new worldview that is the humanitarian world where one lived a dignified and respected life detaching him/her from the conventionalities and discriminatory world views as the subalterns are destined to face. Harris has given no room to the traditional oppressive thoughts and practices in *Conclave* and makes a real secular world where male–female, Catholics, Protestants, poor–rich, uneducated–elite, black–white, non–westerners–westerners can live a happy life ever.

Although, all the critics examine Robert Harris's *Conclave* from various perspectives and simply to authors and critics are not endorsed with the ideas that how/why he presents the subalterns and their livelihoods. More precisely, how a text, *Conclave* that speaks in favors of those subalterns, excluded and the marginalized from the front line activities and the positions in the social panoramas even in today's world of science and technology as the novel sets and publishes twenty–first century.

The term “Subaltern” was originated in the medieval age, where this term applied to the lower people such as vassals and peasants. Eighteenth century onward , however, it came to denote lower ranks in military suggesting peasant origin. From the nineteenth century in America and Indian , historian and writers began to writing about military campaign from the subaltern point of view. The term “subaltern” ,

when Antonio Gramsci adopted this term got authentic voice to refer to those group of people ,who are always the subject of the ruling class people. He used the term interchangeably with” subordinate” or sometimes instrumental to denote “[n] on hegemonic groups or class”(214) He further argues about the subaltern” the unorganized group of ruling peasants who had no social or political consciousness as a group and therefore susceptible to ruling ideas, culture and leadership of the state “(216) Gramsci used the term Subaltern denotes the people that happen to undergo social, economic, political and cultural challenges due to race, caste, creed, ethnicity, religion, geography, community, class, and gender. Antonio Gramsci states, in his “ Prison Note Books”, Hegemony , to Gramsci, is the ‘cultural, moral, and ideological’ leadership of a group over allied and subaltern group’. It means hegemony is cultural or political dominance over the subordinate people or group of people like female, black people Asian, Eastern, Middle East. Similarly, Gayetri Chakarvarty Spivak states ‘An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization’ regarding the subaltern; “removed from all lines of social smobility. “ This statement shows the inaccessible condition of subaltern from the power and they are excluded from the power. ". Likely depicts Chakraborty in "Invitation to a Dialogue", further argues:

The central aim of the Subaltern Studies is to understand the consciousness that informed and still informs political actions taken by the subaltern classes on their own, independently of any elite initiatives. It is only by giving this consciousness a central place in historical analysis that we see the subaltern as the marker of the history s/he lives out. (374)

Chakraborty emphasizes on the consciousness that is raised in the subalterns due to suppressive and depressed life. Subaltern studies highlights the pain plight, sufferings and the struggling lives of the down–trodden people irrespective of caste, creed,

gender, class, race, religion and geographical origins and urges them to resist the hegemonic power structure in order to redefine/re-write the history of the successions.

Regarding the origin of Subaltern Studies Sabah Zaibh states,

.Although the term 'subaltern' has several diverse meanings in social sciences, from psychology to anthropology, it became an operative research concept through the work of the Italian Marxist leader, Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), who used it to refer to any group of 'inferior' rank based on ethnic, class, gender or identity extraction. (213)

The subaltern informs to a member of group that is basically, politically, culturally and geographically excluded by the hegemonic power structure and/or out sided from the national-internal history and the mainstream of the society. The issue of subaltern has emerged aftermaths of the decolonization. Since its origin it is very debatable regarding the identification of the exact subalterns as it covers up numerous groups of people who are down-trodden in respect of caste, creed, gender, class, race, community, nation continent or the geographical origins and so on.

Ranjit Guha, an critic, defining subaltern in a narrow sense, in *Subaltern Studies I* states that the subaltern, "will be used as a name for the general attributes of subordination in South Asian Society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any way" (vii) Guha moreover argues that the subaltern studies study, "the history, politics, economics and sociology of subalternity, in short, the culture informing that condition" As he argues that subaltern studies simply tries to rectify the elitist bias and the social-historical exclusions in the society. That is means to say, subaltern studies grows interest on the marginalized and excluded people from the mainstream social structure. These are black people, female, Asian, Middle Eastern, ethnic, who are far from the mainstream power.

Robert Harris fictional rendering *Conclave* embodies the traits of Subaltern that is the story and the characters constitutes the traits of subalternities. Harris, through *Conclave*, depicts the earthly reality of domination in the name of race, gender culture, religion, and geographical location in order to raise their voice against the hegemonic and discriminatory notions of the westerners towards the non-westerners as in the novel *Conclave*.

The researcher hereby examines the marginalization of subaltern in Robert Harris's *Conclave* as it veers around the racial and class conflicts along with the geographical variations drawing the theoretical parameters from Ranjit Guha's, Dipesh Chakraborty and Amin Shahid's, Peter Gran's "Subaltern Studies, Racism and Class struggle" and Antonio Gramsci and Gayatri Chakravati Spivak's ideas of 'Subaltern and Subaltern Studies' along with some other theorists like Ranjit Guha, Gyan Prakash, David Ludden, Michael Foucault and critics ideas on the issue raised in their project.

Generally many people believe that those who are on the margin and are cut off from the power-hold are subalterns. Such people are always in the periphery or the margin due to their inaccessible presence in the authority and the mainstream history as in the novel *Conclave* by Robert Harris.

The female and Non westerners are dominated and hegemonized by those who entertain social, economical and political power, which creates hierarchy in the society in one or another form and pushes the world towards the pit hole of misery and sufferings. Sunit Singh in his " *Subalterns and their Plight*" defining the term 'subaltern' states that, "subaltern is a term that commonly refers to the perspective of persons from regions and groups outside of the dominating power structure"(23). As he defines the term subaltern makes it clear that subalterns are deprived of power and

rather they are as puppets at the hands of those who constitute policies and implement them on the powerless forcibly.

'Subaltern studies' as a new theoretical parameter and/or the concept/issue emerged during the postcolonial period and flourished in the South Asian postcolonial countries in order to attribute the subordinated and down-trodden people's pain and plights. Unlike the traditional definition of subalterns and subalternity as an act of rejection, denying and countering the upper class vertical social structure and the colonial supremacy, nowadays it is concerned with the history from the below including the conscious raising like due to racial, cultural, political, social, gender orientations and geographical variations throughout the world. Gyan Prakash, talking about the establishment and ideological shifting, in his article "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism", states:

the establishment of subaltern studies was aimed to promote, as the preface by Guha to the first volume declared, the study and discussion of subalternist themes in South Asian studies.⁶ The term "subaltern," drawn from Antonio Gramsci's writings, refers to subordination in terms of class, caste, gender, race, language, and culture and was used to signify the centrality of dominant/dominated relationships in history. Guha suggested that while Subaltern Studies would not ignore the dominant, because the subalterns are always subject to their activity, its aim was to "rectify the elitist bias characteristic of much research and academic work." (1477)

The subalternity becomes a novelty, invented by subaltern studies, which gives old terms' new meanings and domination, subordination, hegemony, resistance, revolt and other old concepts can now be subalternised. David Ludden in *Reading Subaltern Studies* argues that, "Subalternity had been ignored by all scholars in the past; thus all

the old research became elitist" (16). In the same vein, Micheal Foucault, about the politics of subalternity, argues, "Politics and representations are two aspects of subalternity which historically the historians study in records of action and discourse. Two sides if on coin, they both evoke anti–hegemonic possibilities" (17).

As Laudden and Foucault argue, the subalternity eventually urges for the historical re-reading of the mainstream history inculcating lives and livelihoods of the excluded and unheard people from the history onward. As Robert Harris in *Conclave* constitutes the down–trodden's and discriminations' of the westerners to the non–westerners, blacks and the women, the subalternatory social realities. In this sense, the literature or the story of subalterns eventually ranks their position in the upper history that is what Robert Harris tries to do with the help of his recent enterprise *Conclave*.

Regarding the subjects what the subalternity depicts and studies, Ranjit Guha states:

The meaning of subalternity in subaltern studies shifted as the framework of study increasingly stressed the clash of unequal cultures under colonialism and the dominance of colonial modernity-over India's resistant, indigenous culture. Subalterns in India became fragments of a nation; their identity and consciousness reflected India's colonial subjugation. (19)

Subalternity focuses on the constant conflict over extant among people of unequal classes and cultures. The marginalized cultures are ever exploited and indeed they are the subalterns. Subalternity in this sense not only sees the historical consciousness rather focuses more on the socio–economic cultural artifacts which are prime to force people towards the category of subalterns. Javeed Alam in "Peasantry, politics and Historiography: Critique of New Trend in Relation to Marxism" making a close tie with Marxist concept of class, hierarchy domination and struggle against the power,

states:

Between the world of politics on the hand and the economic process of capitalist transformation on the other, there is a kind of mental space within which the social forms of existence and consciousness of the people are all their own strong and enduring in their own right and therefore free of manipulations by the dominant groups. However, much the ruling classes may control the themes and content of politics or the sources of history, the subalterns that is the people will always manage to make themselves heard. In other words, this intermediate space represents the subjectivity; the people and therefore the basis on which they act as subjects of history and not just its objects, being merely acted upon. (43)

As Robert Harris's *Conclave* contemplates on the political and cultural inequalities along with racial, geographical and gender dominations. Javed Alam argues that politics and economic conditions play prime role to force the minority culture people and economically weak people on the one hand and the very conditions bestows a consciousness that one should struggle against the hegemonic social, political structure on the other. Therefore, the political consciousness and economic consciousness among the down trodden people 'subject' of history instead of being 'object'. And that will definitely reforms the society into the equality, equity, peace and harmony as the novel *Conclave* tries to constitutes.

Although, this novel is sets in the Romanian landlocked spiritual country Vatican city and hovers' very tactically delineates the cultural, social, geographical, racial, sexual and political inequalities even around the holy place the church as the subalternity defines. In the novel, 118 cardinals are gathered to elect a new pope. Among them some persons are regarded as best candidates for the upcoming Vatican

pope from different geographical locations. But Lomeli, Bellini and other candidates along with other cardinals make thus poles for and against the candidates and the white Americans and Europeans discarding Tremblay and Adeyemis's candidacy stands in favor of their own localities. The narrator describing the very conspiracy emerged due to suppressive attitude of the Westerners towards the non-western Africans and people of third world, says:

Eventually Lomeli said, "May I suggest that we amend the documents to include Holy Father's attendance at vespers, but otherwise issue it as it stands? And that as a precaution we also prepare a second document listening the Holy Father's appointments for the entire day, and keep it in reserve in case it becomes necessary : Adeyemi and Tremblay exchanged brief looks, then nodded, and Bellini said drily, 'Thank God for our Dean. I can see we may have need of his diplomatic skills in the days to come. (19)

As Lomeli and Bellini represent the white European whereas Adeyemi, the African Nigerian and Tremblay, from the third world nation, Bellini supports Lomeli and his ideas and praises his thoughts and diplomacy though he makes a bias decisions. But on the other hand Tremblay and Adeyemi powerlessly just have a brief looks to each other. This event clearly exemplifies how the western colonial power still hegemonizes the world. This clearly pictorize the geographical and cultural inequalities as they are existing ever at present in the world.

The narrator goes on continue evoking the plain reality of how power functions and how they subalternize the non-westerners/ Exploring Lomeli and Bellini's suspicious mind against both Adeyemi and Tremblay states:

‘All three cardinals were known to have factions of supporters inside the electoral college, Bellini, the great intellectual hope of the liberals for as long

as Lomeli could remember, a former rector of the Gregorian University and former Archbishop of Milan; Tremblay, who as well as serving as Camerlengo was perfect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of peoples, a candidate therefore with links to the Third World, who had the advantage of seeming to be an American without the disadvantage of actually being one; and Adeyemi who carried within him like divine spark the revolutionary possibility, endlessly fascinating to the media, that he might one day become 'the first black Pope'. (19)

As the narrator narrates using third person point of view seems to be unbiased as he objectifies the subjects –the ideological conspiracy takes place in the due process of election. Above mentioned line indicates that the Eurocentric power and the idea of domination to the subaltern the concept of viewing the world is very bitter from the white prospective. The white have fear that one day the respected position would be snatched by black people. The whites, hereby tries to exclude the non-whites who bears non-western worlds. They present Adeyemi as 'a revolutionary man' instead of the spiritual personality that is what requires the position of the holy pope. Similarly, Tremblay, as he belongs to the third world country, is not judged by his qualifications he owns, instead, they see some advantages of his facial colour; closely seemed as American. Here, they again valorize the western world, which American also belongs.

Since, subalternity inculcates the issue geographical, social, cultural, and political, gender, racial biases and discriminations including other socio-historical exclusions of the marginalized. It also explores the stereotypical Euro-centric male gaze towards the non-westerners whether they are African, Asian, Middle East Asian or the people from the third world and resist against the very biased and in human thoughts and behaviours. Robert Harris's Conclave with the pictorial depiction of

Vatican politics, objectives postulates the very discriminations and hegemonic dominations. Tedesco, a cardinal among 118 cardinals gathered in the church belong Middle Eastern Asian. Due to his origin in Middle East Asia, the dean of the cardinal college and others suspiciously regards him as a terrorist and/or his involvement in the suicide bomb explosion in the church and the death of the former pope though he does not have any involvement in the event. They said that:

'Has anyone telephoned cardinal Tedesco?'

'No', said Tremblay, 'Tedesco, of all people? Why? Do you think we need to?'

'Well, given his position in the church, it would be a courtesy.'

'A courtesy?' cried Bellini. 'what has he done to deserve courtesy? If any one man can be said to have killed the Holy Father, he did!Of all the late Pope's critics Tedesco had been the most savage. (20)

They not only suspect him, but also accuse him of the designer of the Holy Father's deaths that is the design of suicide bombardiers in the church. Being black or non-western; Tedesco, Adeyemi, are accused of being killer of the pope. If they had killed the pope first they had to investigate and find out the culprit but they did not. In the mentioned line, the word “savage” postulate the barbaric meaning. It means having no any humanistic nature. It shows that the westerners are the civilized and the rest of other who don't belong to the western like Islam, Black, Asian are uncivilized .The only reason they dare to accuse him is that he belongs the non-western world geographically in general and his origin of Middle East Asia—the place called Muslim world.

The researcher hereby borrows the literary reference from masterpiece novel *Jane Eyre* in order to shed a historical light on how the western discourse of othering through the means of stereotyping existed during the time of the colonization. Such

borrowing also serves to strengthen the argument of the research that the politics of silencing the powerless ones by those in power through the exploitative as well as manipulative exercise of power was at its peak in the history of Western history. It was fiercely rampant in the discourse of the racism. In the novel, *Hind Ezzeldin* degenerates Bertha as animal. Below mentioned lines shows the animalistic nature to the Bertha Mason, an Indian origin girl. Bertha Mason who is always seen as an incarnation of disturbance and disruption. The female character, Jane, who represents the elite class with the powerful position, was just on the verge of getting married to Rochester and living 'happily ever after' when this 'gagged' lady appears and turns their dream into a nightmare. The description given by Jane in which she expresses her indignation and anger upon seeing Bertha dehumanizes and stereotypes the captivated woman and generalizes her into a 'figure' that resembles animals more than humans:

In that deep shade, at the further end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not tell: it grovelled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing, and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mare, hid its head and face. (C. Bronte 416-17)

The novel *Jane Eyre*, which belongs to Victorian novel, presents the character like savage. When one places a spectacle of scrutiny at the historical backdrop of the time the text was produced, one can vividly historicizes the fact that the world was ruled by British. Most of the countries were under the colonization of British along with Africa, Indian as well. Description of figure of lady 'beast or human' points out the negative mark even she is women. She has been portrayed as uncivilized and savage which is the outcome of the hegemonic structure of power system in which the

voiceless are misrepresented and dominated by the ones in power in order to serve their vested motives as presented of Adeyemi in *Conclave*, the case of bomb blast. Lomeli's frequent conspiracy for the exclusion of Adeyemi from being elected as the Pope evidently illustrates the working of hegemonic power in which the condition of subalterns is powerless and speechless. The novelist intends to expose the hypocritical nature of powerful authorities and reveal the internal reality of power-system that is repressive and oppressive towards the helpless subalterns. The women in the form of nuns in the novel are placed at the subordinate roles as the service provider. They are expected to show their hospitality through domestic service but are deprived of their rights to cast their vote of confidence in the process of the election. Neither the male characters belonging to African and Asian nor the female nuns are granted their fundamental right to voting. The authority is controlled and monopolized by the White characters.

Likewise, Rober Harris's in *Conclave*, being a European white, objectively unveils the European notion of othering as they themselves regard the chosen people by the Holy Father, the God, This very event more vehemently deploys the religious, racial and geographical marginalization. They accused him as a designer of suicide bombardment upon the pope and church in order to sideline him from the candidacy so that, they (whites) themselves can be the pope as it is said that, "All that can be said for certain after today's vote is that the next pope will be one of four men: Bellini, Tedesco, Adeyemi or Tremblay" (178). Here, the line textually illustrates the play of hegemonic power in which the voice of the white is more assertive over the voice of non-western members. The politics of silencing non-western this way discloses the truth that the subalterns are always repressed by the oppressive distribution of power and privileges

As a matter of fact subalterns are those groups that have ever been marginalized and exploited due to race, gender, caste, religion, and the geographical locations. Robert Harris's *Conclave* rightly pictorize the miserable condition of the color people, female and the non-western people by the westerners the white European male. He also deploys that how the whites play with conspiracy for the power in hand. In the story Lomeli, dean of the college of Cardinal playing a conspiratory role finally achieves the position of the pope of the Vatican Church depriving the other candidates especially from non-western world as Ademye, Nigerian African black, Tedesco, a Middle Western Asian, Trembly and Beniter female Philippines.

Eurocentric view towards the non-western specially black female have different. Sister Shanumi, Nigerian nun, she had been working in past twenty years in Iwaro Oko community .She worked there as nurse , helping women suffering from HIV/AIDs But here in church she is maid , her duty is only to serve the cardinals ,nothing more.

‘Were you happy there?’

‘Very much so, Your Eminence.’

‘Your work must have been somewhat different from what you have to do here, I would imagine?’

‘Oh yes. There I was a nurse. Here I am a maid.’(222)

In the conversation above , the Nigerian nun named Sister Shanumi reflects the rise of subaltern consciousness when she explains how she is treated in the church. Her dialogue " There I was a nurse. Here I am maid " shows the overtone of subaltern consciousness in her. It testifies the hegemonic exploitation upon female in the power structure of the Church that privilege men more power and position.

Similarly, the case of female characters in the novel is also suppressive and docile. Harris gives very minor role as the server/service provider, the nun, to the cardinals in the ball of performances inside the church. The female characters are silenced as they are regarded as they cannot deserve the higher positions and voice against other. Among the nuns, majority of them are African blacks and treated in a derogatory manner by the cardinals while they are performing their duty in the church. Females are considered to be the second class people as they have provided only the manual works. Cooking, cleaning and servicing is supposed to be of women's duty as no men works such works in the novel *Conclave* as the narrator narrates, "The nuns had been in to clean while the conclave was voting" (168). Female are confined within the wall of houses as in the church while the male are choosing the leader of all the Christian the pope. Once, when Lomeli takes a seat for a while:

When the others went up to collect their food from the buffet, he watched the nuns as they moved between the tables serving coffee. To his shame, he realized he had never bothered to take any notice of them until now. Their average age, he guessed, was around fifty. They were of all races, but without exception short of stature. (189–90)

As Lomeli realizes the silencing of women's voice, Harris with the help of Conclave advocates for the equal treatment to all the human races irrespective of gender, social, political geographical and racial orientations. For him, the sense of harmony, Love and respect among the human beings provides the dignified and sound life where there is no subaltern and no lords or the upper class superior people. For the very purpose being a white European objectively explores the plightful conditions of the subalterns silencing their voice against the power and in order for their inclusion in the history "The first black pope would be a tremendous thing for the world who

could blame a man if he felt exhilarated at the prospect of being the vehicle of such a manifestation of the divine will? (169). The quoted line demonstrates the fear of black candidate as pope. The white people have fear that what would happen if the black would elect in powerful position as pope. Then he try to dig out the past of the black candidate. The line “But rumors are not the same as fact. In this case they are. You know as well as I do that if there is one thing that terrifies our colleagues above all others, it is the thought of yet more sexual scandals” (220) shows the curiosity of the white people toward the black. In this line, it shows the perspective of white towards the black. Lomeli has raised a question about the relationship between nuns and Adeyemi, the black Cardinal, as sexual scandal when Adeyemi had scored highest vote than his best friend Bellini. Indeed, he started to run after the negative rumors of Adeyemi. Therefore, Adeyemi seems suspicious. Indeed, he cannot be pope “you want to destroy my reputation so that you can be pope!”(219). Adeyemi had scored 57 vote in tenth ballot which is the highest vote in comparison to other cardinals but after that rumor he did not pick up the same ratio as before. He scored only 9 votes in eleventh ballot. It was just rumor, was not proved yet.

Conclave ionizes the western inhuman and biased treatment towards the subalterns the racially suppressed and oppressed Africans, culturally and religiously targeted Middle East Asian Muslim, with due focuses on gender biases throughout the world. As in the today's outer world the Muslims are simply blamed as terrorist barbaric and savage the story depicts the very event, the narrator, about the bombardment taken place at the church and death of the pope, narrator Lomeli and others speech:

'May God have mercy on their souls. Has anyone claimed responsibility?'

"mandroff said, 'Not yet'.

'But if will be Islamists, presumably?'

I'm afraid that several eye witnesses in the Piazzadel Risorgimento report that the suicide bomber shouted "Allaha Akbar", so there cannot be much doubt" (330).

The whites, including Lomeli and Bellini, gathered together in the process of investigation of Pope's deaths see the Muslim people through the biased eyes and easily accuse those (Muslims) as terrorist and savage.

Robert Harris, even constituting this event unveiled the inner heart of the white westerners, tries to change the very in humanistic thoughts and biases and to uplift or empower the subalternies people with one or another bag of inferiority. Thus, the research report hereby can rightly argue that Harris's *Conclave* ironically criticizes that Harris's discriminatory and inhumane of the white European towards the non-western people's simply the subalterns culturally or racially or politically or geographically. When the Adeyemi got higher score of vote then the Lomeli brought out the relationship between Adeyemi and woman.” They knit the plot to lose the Adeyemi and make conspiracy “ I’m the victim of the disgraceful plot to ruin my reputation, Jacopo. Someone brought that woman here and staged this entire melodrama solely to my election as pope” (215).

Throughout this mentioned that it clearly projects the conspiracy. When the non -western cardinal scored higher vote then they knit the plot to downfall him. Lomeli is always in favor of then Bellini. He has desired to elect him as pope so every election he cast his vote to him only who belong to the western country, a white .Adeyemi would be elected pontiff .They prophecy was sure.

Subaltern postulates alterity, difference, inferiority, and subordination. This theory has been foregrounded by the writings of Antonio Gramsci, Ranajit Guha, and

Gayatri Spivak. Spivak declares the impossibility of representing the subaltern groups or giving them voices in narratives written by powerful parties as the typical representation of the subaltern groups often obscures in their voice. Harris has given typical name to the subaltern, Nun. The word 'Nun' typically represents the servant whose duty is to serve the pope. Even the word 'nun' comes from Christianity, a religion where it is said that the main duty of female is to serve the male. Even the religion is not fair to them.

In this novel, *Conclave*, the main protagonist, Lomeli, a dean of the spiritual college, seems very responsible person. He has responsibility to elect the new pope and in the same time he has to find out the murderer of the late pope. The novel begins with the sudden murder of pope. So, somehow it seems that it is the detective novel. The author has presented the different character that belongs to the different geographical area. There are African Cardinal, Middle east cardinal, Asian cardinal, western cardinal and nuns, Nigerian so on. But, the novelist is totally bias toward the non-western origin and female, especially nuns. Specially, black nuns are more than white in Vatican church. They are treated as the subaltern culturally –socially historically excluded from the front line of the history. Lots of the people live in the western world that belong to the different geographical region but they treated as the ill tempered, terrorist, uncivilized, savage in the novel *Conclave*.

Protagonist, Lomeli, a white, dean of the college and his friend Bellini also belong to the same race. Cardinal Adeyemi and Tedesco represent the non-western world. The female nuns are oppressed and suppressed as they belong to the African and the Middle Eastern Asian representative cardinals are gazed by the Eurocentric world postulating the terrorist and uncivilized. Story sets around the seventy two hours after the killing of the pope Francis. The main character duty is to elect the new

pope and the find out the cause of the murder of the pope. So, more hundred cardinals gathered in the Vatican City to elect the new pope. Moreover, to elect the new pope they have to go through different ballot until the one could not get the majority of the vote. Lomeli, the central character has friend and he is always stands in his side. He always cast his vote referring to Bellini “The first vote cast in the second ballot for cardinal Lomeli” (196). From the beginning of the ballot the non- western cardinal Adeyemi, Tedesco are leading the vote to be pope. But none of them are able to get majority of the vote. Then the westerners start ideological conspiracy blaming them uncivilized, terrorist so on. In the novel the author has postulated the power politics and how the power play vital role to present typical either negative or positive.

In this way, the novelist, Harris through the artistic medium of the novel *Conclave* has manifested the hidden realities of the Vatican church by presenting the characters from different caste, race, creed, ethnicity, geography, gender and auspicious ceremony of the election of the new pope. He presents how the subalterns are silenced and deprived from the historical and spiritual or respected position of post with the help of the helpless, voiceless and powerless characters: the African, Asian and Muslim candidates claiming the candidacy for the post of the Pope and the nuns submissively subscribing themselves to the service of the male church members. Setting the fictional backdrop of the election for the appointment of New Pope after the mysterious death of the previous Pope, the novelist artistically demonstrates the hypocrisy and hegemony of the White Church candidates who plot a conspiracy to diffuse the possibility of the rise of non-white Pope in the Church. Lomeli and Bellini representing hegemonic mindset of white candidates fabricate a set of accusations to defame and defeat the non-white candidates such as Adeyemi and Tedesco. Their constant exercise of hypocritical conspiracy to disqualify the non-white candidates

evidently unearths the deep-seated exploitation and manipulation of power by those in power in order to maintain their supremacy. As a consequence, there is another group of individuals who are marginalized at the bottom of the system which ultimately creates the voiceless subalterns. The writer's portrayal of such marginalized subalterns exposes the politics of powerful ones at their hegemonic at of silencing the powerless ones for the strength of their supremacy. The writer further displays the double marginalization of nuns who, despite being the members of the Church, are confined to become a source of service to the Church. They are deprived of the basic right to voting or exercising the powerful position. The nuns are obliged to dedicate themselves for the purity and the hospitality of the Church along with the Church whereas the non-white candidates are trapped within the stereotyping scandal which testifies the working of power over the subalterns. The novelist, despite being belonging to European origin, adopts the neutral and humanitarian position and dismantles the system of hegemonic power distribution. He applies the artistic license to show the characters under the light of subaltern and render them silenced and voiceless positions along with the minor roles so that he succeeds in unfolding the hidden politics of silencing the subalterns at the margin by the powerful ones through an illegitimate exercise of power. So, the subalterns are the voiceless groups of individuals who are always subordinated and excluded from the mainstream through the exercise of hegemonic discourse.

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