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The Treatment of History in Gita Mehta's *Raj*

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Dilli Ram Baral has completed his thesis entitled “The Treatment of History in Gita Mehta's *Raj*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from August 2009 to July 2010 A.D. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Abstract

Gita Mehta in her historical fiction *Raj* critiques colonialist as well as nationalist historiography because of their use of elitist approach to the early twentieth century Indian history. In this novel she points out the blind spots of both of these historiographies. She opines that colonialist historiography unnecessarily valorizes colonization as a civilizational mission and ignores the suffering of the colonized. Likewise, Indian nationalist historiography is also guided by the politics of inclusion and exclusion, i.e. Hindus are treated as 'us' and non-Hindus as 'them'. So, the voices of the people from other religion are deliberately ousted. Besides, it is Indian National Congress's version of historiography which is written from the perspective of the elites like Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and so on. Therefore, in order to rewrite the histories of the marginalized people such as females, peasants, factory workers, Gita Mehta advocates for postcolonial subaltern historiography in *Raj*. For Mehta, the subaltern people in terms gender, class, caste, ethnicity can raise their voice in the historical fiction like *Raj* because it is written from the perspective of the subaltern people.

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Chapter – 1

Gita Mehta and Her Novel *Raj*

In this novel Mehta by showing her dissatisfaction with the officially recorded history presents counter history in the form of fiction which is more trustworthy because it encompasses the voice of the marginalized and suppressed people who are neglected in the process of recording the history in the written form. In course of dealing with historical figures and events along with the completely fictional characters and events concomitantly to portray more credible history of subaltern people and to raise their voices against domination indirectly in spite of her belief that the official recorded history is merely the history of elites and is written on behalf of their interest to maintain their status quo.

Raj recounts the life of a sheltered Indian princess, Princess Jaya as she witnesses the end of British imperial rule in India. However, it has received a mixed critical reaction, with arguing that the protagonist is overtly passive and the narrative is lacking plot. It focuses too heavily on historical minutia and fails to create compelling characterizations.

Mehta's *Raj* (published in 1989) is a historical novel about princely India under the British Raj. This novel is a fascinating study of India's political turmoil and the outcome of eight years of strenuous research. The novel spins around the central character Jaya Singh who is born in the Royal House of Balmer. Here is a Parade of political leaders, Raj Gurus, cultural consultants like Lady Modi, Mrs. Roy apart from the *Maharanis*, *Maharajh*, Captains and so on. Jaya, the protagonist of *Raj*, spends most of her early years in purdah and emerges from the women's quarter which is quite encountering to western hegemony.

Gita Mehta, an Indian writer with strong American and European links, opens her first novel, *Raj in 1897* the 60th year of Victoria's reign. It is clear at once that there will be no sentiment lost on the British. In a small and remote princely kingdom, a son is born to the Maharajah, but his joy is tempered by his concern at a great famine. A visiting noble from Udaipur advises him that he must go to see the queen in London and "Tell Victoria the speech of Britain is golden, but her taxes are more savage than the sword of the Moghuls" (1). Mehta further opines that "Britain cripples us with her greed. Half of India's money goes to fatten England. The other half is spent on an army in which no Indian can be an officer. But the Maharajah is only fully persuaded by his wife's words: India's Empress cannot ignore India's suffering" (3).

Raj is fictional tale of princess of Bamler and later regent Maharani of Sirpur, trying to save her kingdom first from the grip of British Empire, and then from the Petit-Bourgeoisie. *Raj* targeted at the western readers. There are two groups of main characters: those who are in support of Royal India and those Indians and Angrez (Britishers) who are in support of the Raj. The Petit-Bourgeoisie and expertise nationalists superficially attempt against Indian Independence Movement. Here, Mahatma Gandhi and thousands of his countrymen attempt to break the legacy of British Colonialism. Aahimsa, Civil Disobedience, Partition, Quit-India Movement and struggle for Independence can be seen most vividly in the text *Raj*.

Gita Mehta is a novelist of the most acclaimed novelists in modern India. She mostly deals with the issues like political, cultural and partition violence, instability and economic boom of contemporary society. She obviously shows her interest in post-colonial subaltern historiography that addresses the problems of the subaltern people. In most of her fiction South Asian settings like India or Pakistan also has significant trace to play the game of Ace for the colonial countries having the errand

which keeps on their vigilance to fulfill their innermost desires of being superior. Therefore, it is not surprising to look her works through the post-colonial subaltern historiographies and politico-cultural spectacles. Nevertheless, the economic boom of contemporary society in the so-called oriental third world can be viewed with some repercussions upon the people dwelling in this world through her works. In addition to this the issues of war, violence destruction, gruesome killings, murder, rape and even the issues of harmony among the people of different cultures, religions and regions have also remarkable roles in her writings.

Gita Mehta is a writer in every sense of the word. She is a journalist, documentary filmmaker, promoter of the Indian experience and a versatile writer as well. She is a witty opinionated person who is always open to new ideas and experiences .She writes non fiction, books and novels because she has something to say about her varied experiences to world .As such, her books are smart investigations into the ideas, people, history and personalities that have determined and shaped modern India and ultimately into herself as woman of Indian descent.

Gita Mehta was born in Delhi in 1943, to a family, which was active in the freedom movement of India. It was a unique family and juncture in India's evolution that energized people with the dream of what India could be. Her father, Biju Patnaik, was a political activist in the Indian Independence Movement who was arrested for his activism three weeks after the birth of daughter. Mrs. Mehta was sent to travel and campaign for her husband's release. After India regained sovereignty from Great Britain in 1947 Mehta's father was released from prison and resumed his political career. Mehta traveled to England for higher education earning her university degree at Cambridge University .While at Cambridge, she met and later married Ajai Singh "Sonny" Mehta, with whom she has a son. Having chosen a career in journalism,

Mehta has covered a number of significant world events, including the Bangladesh war of 1971 and the first elections in the former princely. She has also written and directed several television documentaries for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the National Broadcasting Company (NBC).

Gita Mehta is one of the novelist and a political commentator. She is probably the first Indian woman writer dealing with the political theme as a strong base. Born in prominent political family of India she has closely witnessed the independence Movement. India's freedom sows the seeds of representation in the ground of much contestation in postcolonial historiography and subaltern historiography. The official history has always considered women, untouchable people, poor and Muslims as subordinate and subsidiary human beings. They are never included in power and politics nor are they involved in decision making position. Being kept in the home confinements, women are rarely seen as political animal which should have been taken as inborn quality like that of men. Women are exploited and treated like mute animals in the officially documented history. But her attempt is to quest an incomprehensible truth for both East and West that results-endless rows soul- questers pouring in from the West to India.

Gita Mehta has been acclaimed as an international cross-cultural critic and a postcolonial novelist. Her three texts *Karma Cola* (1980), *Raj* (1989) and *A River Sutra* (1993) are powerful critiques on modern life exposing the shallowness of the spiritual, political and secular modes of living. *Raj* and *Karma Cola* are poignant studies on the hypocrisy and sham of the princely class in colonial India and the pretentious gurus who ostentatiously profess and promise enlightenment to the westerners coming in search of the 'missing magic' in their lives, in a post-colonial India. Just like *Journey to Ithaca* by Anita Desai, Mehta's *Karma Cola* concerns India

and spirituality. In *Karma Cola*, Mehta has done a great job of contrasting the Eastern and western view of life and death.

Mehta is a camera and the reader can see through her eyes. Queen Victoria, old and near the end of her life, has no interest in or influence over the fate of her kingdom so far from the center of British Government in India. Mehta writes with realistic period from Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee to the violent and bloody civil war for Independence. Windy Smith opines:

Queen Victoria loved India with the same kind of patronizing affection that has colored so much writing before and after independence. The many high-minded Britons who devoted their lives to India have tended to obscure and romanticize the ugliness of colonial rule. (2)

The cultural encounter between the diametrically opposite east and west is the context of human relationship of *Raj*. The mode of thoughts and the ways of life is adopted by the people belonging to these cultures. In this connection, Mehta's novel attempts to explore the impacts of spiritual and material values on human existence. While foregrounding the traditional spiritual heritage of Indian society Mehta sustains the orientalized image of the east. However, by making fun of the wave of foreigners swarming into the search of spiritual bliss.

Critic R.K. Dhawan points out:

And then they arrived dressed as Indians mouthing Indian platitudes and mantras – in book is about that and our longing for the adolescent irresponsibility guaranteed by American culture and our shock when we didn't find it. And the occidental longing for salvation and their shocked when they didn't find it. It was sad misreading of the goals and

desires of other civilizations. The westerners wanted every Indian to be non-materialistic and engaged in higher metaphysical activity. (128)

The eastern and the western cultural life find fictional reinforcement in the small world and confining spaces inhabited by Gita Mehta's characters. She explains the cultural differences between east-west and she does it in a playful, satirical, and truthful way, and obviously with compassion for those who have become lost and whose lives have been destroyed. The east-west encounter is depicted along lines of religion, love, sex, among other things Gita Mehta's strategies of characterization play a great role for the treatment of cultural encounter. She shows the conflict and victory of eastern thought over the western ideas. Mehta presents herself as having been among the hundreds of western aristocrats who are included towards the eastern Mysticism and try to lead the life according to the Hindu philosophy.

The Times of India comments on Mehta's *Raj* : “[It]is at heart the spanning nearly half a century, the novel takes in its sweep both Jaya's coming of age as the ruler of her state, Balmer, as well as the drama of Indian's struggle for Independence. Powerful, enlightening and compulsively readable, *Raj* is one of the great historical novels of our time” (qtd in cover page of Mehta's *Raj*). British asserted that India was not country but the continent of subalternity.

R. K. Dhawan the critic of India Women Novelist with whom she does interview about *Raj*. Gita Mehta says:

It was the product of my own experience. I was at university when Ginsberg arrived and there was the business of the Dharna University and I came back from university when John Lennon and the Beatles hit India. I had been watching this whole caravanserai arrive and also the

anticipation of Indians who said at last the west is coming to us, at last the rock'n show is on. (127)

Criticisms and reviews make clear that though this novel has been analyzed from various perspectives, it has not been approached as a critique of colonialist as well as nationalist historiography. So, the present researcher attempts to analyze why Mehta critiques them. It is hypothesized that Gita Mehta, in her historical fiction *Raj*, critiques the British colonial history as well as Indian nationalist history because they are guided by the elitist rationale and therefore have excluded marginalized people's voice in their so-called official history.

Indeed, *Raj* has several potentialities to dig out the theoretical approaches; body and performance, production and consumption, universality and difference, representation and resistance, the third world feminism, as well as diasporic issues. To enhance the methodological application, the present researcher will be in the boundary of postcolonial historiography in general and subaltern historiography in specific theoretical modality

This study will delve into the novel *Raj* and dig out the innermost seed of Indian Nationalism and the encountering voice to the voiceless people of India. Similarly, this study will probe into the novel throwing light upon to make visible the history and legacy of European imperialism. It will also explore how Mehta takes for colonized subjects to move from alienation to revolution, from recognition of injustice to resistance. The case of nationalism is unique and it makes linkage between different histories of nation and looks for general pattern. It is special about nation forged by struggles against colonialism. In this regard, the ruled or the colonized were invited to become one of the rulers. The present researcher attempts to analyze why Mehta revisits colonial history of India in the postcolonial era. To justify the

theoretical modality the poetics and politics of historiography is essential to show the equilibrium between form and content produced by the academician. The poetics refers to the form and politics refers to the content of historiography. So, the present research revolves round the poetics and politics of historiography in Gita Mehta's *Raj*.

To explore the historical happenings of post-partition India and specially the repercussion of war upon the common people will be analyzed in Mehta's *Raj*. The present researcher is going to discuss and utilize the theoretical tool of postcolonial subaltern historiography which critiques colonialist and nationalist historiography in the succeeding chapter.

Chapter- II

Post Colonial Subaltern Historiography and Its Types

2.1 General Introduction to Historiography and Its Types

The word 'history' is derived from the Greek word *istoria* meaning inquiry, research, exploration or information. In a sense, history is a systematic account of origin and development of humankind, a record of the unique events and movements in its life. In this sense, historiography literally means art of writing history. It is history of history or the history of historical writings. So, historiography refers to the politics of writing history. Historiography tells the story of the successive stages of the evolution or development of historical writings. Marx opines "history is not smooth evolutionary process rather it is marked by significant breaks and discontinuities of modes of production. The transformation from ancient modes of production and thence to the capitalist mode of production"(Chris Barker¹³). It has come to include the evolution of the ideas and techniques associated with the writings of history, and the changing attitudes towards the nature of history itself. Ultimately it comprises the study of the development of man's sense for the past. Historiography depicts the nature and quality as well as the quantity of historical literature in the different ages and among different peoples. These differences have generally reflected changes in social life and beliefs and the presence or absence of a sense of history.

Historiography first started to be applied in the historical writing that were quite widespread by the 1970s under the impact of the historians such as E. P Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm and host of others. Historiography could be seen as postcolonial project of writing history. It concerns on the theorists of diverse discipline in the contemporary critiques of history construction of social science and knowledge. Historiography now stands as a general designation for a field of studies

often seen as a close relative of postcolonialism. The historiography is the response to the problem of writing history which gave rise to a fascination among the urban educated youth in India.

Historiography is an approach of writing history which throws light on history from subaltern perspective. Historiography itself tends to be a form of knowledge. So, it is the parameter of operating in political intervention. It entails a relative separation of the history of power from any universalist histories of capital. It is associated with the relationship between power, knowledge and discourse. Dipesh Chakraborty opines:

History of power in age when capital and the governing institution of modernity increasingly develop a global reach. The rule of capital entails transmission to capitalist relation of power. Institution of modernity that originated in the west, the juridical model of sovereignty celebrated in modern European political thought has to be supplemented by the notion of discipline, biopower and governmentality. (7-8)

History is invested in power networks. Institutions of modernity are also originated in the west. So, cultures do not remain wholly static or isolated but change over periods of time and interact with other cultures. Similarly, Ultimately Meditations” On the Use and Abuse of History for life(1873) Nietzsche remarks T[he] historical sense, through which living comes to harm and finally is destroyed, whether it is a person or a people or a culture”(182). Cultures interact both in peace and war. Civilization in all its varied aspects constitutes the subject matter of historiography. Such a cultural approach to history would make it a biography of civilization. For instance, Michael Foucault points out “Power is mediated through the forms

prescribed in the great juridical and philosophical theories and that there is a fundamental, immutable gulf between those who exercise power and those who undergo it” (1140). So, historiography comprehends everything assembles a mass of facts in which the historians practice empathy. It indicates every moment or everywhere there is power domination. In fact, history is articulation of power and power domination can not give the real truth.

Historiography recasts history as a battle over fictions, a battle of communication. It also colonizes; it colonizes other discourse, proclaiming its skeptical activism, neglecting native protocols for its own ends while still observing the overall power structure of the discourse. It exhibits power without taking responsibility for it, saying it as only telling a story about power yet impugning that fictional distance in its concurrent claim that power is nothing but the stories itself about itself. History, on the other hand, is full of examples of victory snatched from the jaws of defeat, or vice versa, in total defiance of what we expect to happen, of all probability. History has become textual. We never encounter the real thing “only the images and figurations by which is repeatedly parodied” (qtd in Hamilton 90). Hamilton makes a references of Marx’s attack is on those who ‘who hide themselves the limited bourgeois content of their struggles’ (91).

History is the historian’s reconstruction of the past. The principal material of reconstruction at the disposal of the historian is records or remains that the past has left behind. They serve him as evidence of the facts that he establishes by means of buildings, inscriptions, medals, coins edicts, chronicles, travelogues, decrees, treaties, official correspondence, private letters and diaries. It is through the study of such history -as-records that the historian gains knowledge of history -as-events. History deals with evidence. Hence, the dictum 'no records, no history'.

In 1982, a new trend emerged in India with the aim of writing the historiography of the people ignored by colonialist as well as bourgeois nationalist historiographies. The group led by Ranajit Guha was very much interested about providing the subaltern people with their own voice. The question may emerge: what is the historiography of colonialist as well as bourgeois in opposition to postcolonial subaltern historiography. The postcolonial subaltern historiographers opine that the history should narrate not only thoughts of the rulers but also the feelings and sentiments of the ruled. Historiography is a new area of historical study to make the account more comprehensive and up to date of post-second war developments in history writing--generally labeled 'poststructuralist' and 'postmodernist'--and also to give relatively full coverage to ancient medieval and modern Indian historiography.

The ultimate goal of postcolonial subaltern historiography is to seek and redraw the boundaries of history and recover the erased or missed history of marginalized people such as women, untouchable, poor, non-Hindus. So, it focuses on the activities and the muted voice of marginalized people. Subaltern historiography itself proves an important event in the writing of history of subaltern. These people have their own recognition, identity, history, culture and also their own way to be identified. Despite the domination of the mass by the elite group, they relentlessly try to resist the colonizers and elites. This group has tried its best to provide a fertile platform to the third world voices, which is supposed to get enough attention. In this regard, Gautam Bharda tries to focus on certain features called the 'subaltern mentality' which is "not only defiance but also submissiveness to authority in the characteristic of the behavior of subaltern classes" (qtd in Shreedharan 496).

In a wide ranging critique of postcolonial studies, Arif Dirlik suggests that while the historiography the historiographic innovations of subaltern studies are

welcome, they are mere applications of methods pioneered by British Marxist historians, albeit modified by Third world sensibilities: “[T]he historical writing of subaltern studies historians represent the application in Indian historiography of trends in historical writings that were quite widespread by the 1970s under the impact of social historians such as E.P. Thomson, Eric Hobsbawm and a host of others”(qtd in Chakrabarty 3). Subaltern studies could never be a mere reproduction in India of the English tradition of writing history from below. Here we are within Micheal Foucault’s own discipline of history and with people who acknowledge his influence. Their project is to think Indian colonial Historiography as well as bourgeois nationalist historiography from the perspective of the discontinuous chain or peasant insurgencies during the colonial occupation and afterwards. Ranajit Guha et al. opine:

The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism- colonialist elitism and bourgeois nationalist elitism ... shar[ing] the prejudice that the making of the Indian nationalism-which confirmed this process were exclusively or predominantly elite achievements. In the colonialist and neo colonialist historiographies these achievements are to British colonial rulers, administrators, polices, institutions, and culture, in the nationalist and neo-nationalist writings- to Indian elite personalities, institutions, activities and ideas. (1)

Historiography performs on behalf of the class for which it speaks to change the world and maintain discourse of dual function. At first, it depicts the bourgeois discourse par excellence and helps to them to change in the periods of its ascendancy, and since then to consolidate dominance. Colonialist as well as nationalist historiography speaks from the bourgeois consciousness. In this way there are mainly

three types of historiographies in Indian context: colonialist, nationalist and subaltern historiography.

Spivak in her book *Can Subaltern Speak?* Throws light upon the project of historiography that certain members of the Indian elite are of course native informants for first world intellectuals interested in the voice of the other. But one must nevertheless insist that the colonized subaltern subject is irretrievably heterogeneous. Against the indigenous elite we may set what Guha calls "Politics of the People", both out side ("this was an autonomous domain, for it neither originated from elite politics nor did its existence depend on the latter") and inside ("it continued to operate vigorously in spite of [colonialism], adjusting itself to the condition to prevailing under the *Raj* and in many respects developing entirely new strains in both form and content") the circuit of colonial production (270).

For Mehta the binding of historical and fictional events makes her more inclusive because it gives 'voice' to the voiceless marginalized subaltern. She comments colonialists as well as nationalist historiography because of their use of elitist approach to Indian history.

2.2 Colonialist Historiography and its Problem

Ania Loomba in *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* points out the problem in colonial historiography: "Colonial historiography intensifies patriarchal oppression often because native men increasingly disenfranchised and excluded from public sphere, it becomes more tyrannical at home" (142). European colonialism often justified its civilizing mission by claiming that it was rescuing native women from oppressive patriarchal domination: "The colonialist bourgeoisie had in fact deeply implants the minds of colonized intellectual that the essential qualities remain eternal in spite of the west of course. The native intellectuals accept the cogency of these

ideas” (144). The western history is projected on the assumptions of patriarchal ideologies and needless to say that such historiography attempts to sow the seed of domination and exploitation rather they weave the net of civilizing mission to guide the third world intellectuals but the failure of these men to understand they are influenced by their ideology and institution. Boehmer opines “Colonialism dehumanized the colonizers as much as it brutalized the colonized. The relationship it produced was akin that in a family headed by a tyrannical husband and father who maintain authority by sheer terror” (149). The colonialist historiographers are hungry for power and material comfort for generating discourse. The bourgeois historiographers are also entangled in such spiders net. Dipesh Chakrabarty says “histories tend to become on a master narrative that could be called “history of European” (263). So, Indian history is positioned in the dark territory of subalternity.

It is significant that no society ever attained full freedom from the colonial system by the involuntary, active disengagement of the colonial power until it was provoked by a considerable internal struggle for self-determination or, most usually by extended and active violent opposition by the colonized. Benita Parry depicts T[he] colonial is the product of ideological machinery, the formation of its differentiated and incommensurable subjectivities is the effects of many determinants numerous interpellations and various social practices (qtd in Mongia 85).The construction of ideology of late nineteenth- century imperialism is, in which the representation of the colonized is on the policies of racial discrimination and cultural exploitation. The colonialism was, no doubt, against the will and wish of the people. They resisted it with great courage and hope but the colonial historiography simply observes their resistance and always busy in providing the British rule as based on people’s wish and will. It undermines their political sensibility. Colonial

historiography intensifies patriarchal oppression, often because native men increasingly disenfranchised and excluded from the public sphere because it is, more tyrannical at home. Colonialism erodes many matrilineal or women-friendly cultures and practices or intensified women's subordination in colonized lands:

Colonial historiography restructures customs by taking the texts and practices of elites as the basis on which changes should be made.

British Colonialism often justified its civilizing mission by claiming that it was rescuing native woman from oppressive patriarchal (qtd in Loomba 144).

Colonialist historiography is the voice of the colonizer not of the colonized. Such types of historiography are recorded on the basis of biasness and prejudice of the colonizer. Their mantra was democracy but behavior was associated with autocracy.

The colonialist bourgeoisie historiography is the software projection of western hegemony to subordinate the Eastern people. It moves in vertical dimension and ignores the voice of women, untouchables, non-Hindus, and low class people, subaltern and so on. Western passion for seeking power and capital is bided in one-sided ruling hierarchy and the British regime becomes and activates itself to hold mind, money and muscle to dominate the so-called underdeveloped or Third World country. Colonialist historiography is recorded for the further expansion of the territory of the colonial state. It has a mission to civilize, democratize and provide sympathy to tribal group and ethnic communities. Actually it distorts the reality and constructs the language of violence. So, it justifies the colonial mission and vision. It also launches the language of violence and exercises power by excluding the voice, actions, deeds and roles of subaltern while creating the mainstream history. Such type of history pins on the batch of superiority over other cultures.

The colonialist history never assimilates the significance of the decisive roles of marginalized people in the official history. Such type of historiography never regards the unity in diversity rather it is influenced by the motives of individualistic assumptions. It violates harmony, creates racial segregation, injustice, domination and exploitation among the encountering history. There is no agency given for the subordinate people in the colonialist historiography rather it justifies itself and keeps others' culture, historic episodes and deeds in the bay. Both history and culture are man made part of environment. But the colonialist historiography generalizes the history of India on the basis of particular person and ideology. Colonialists' historiographers make their own destiny and impose different sets of institution and practice the notion of center seeking tendency as their dharma, whereas Indian dharma is based on communal diversity and unity. This type of history is influenced by the motives of omnipresent and omnipotent configuration.

Colonialist historiography sows the seed of rationale thinking .There is no space for love, emotions and sentiments rather it is like a machine. It only produces the thing and seeks the consumers and tries to valorize the hegemony. They [colonialists] only observe outside circumstances and generalize the Indian historical events but it is false referring. Colonialist historiography worships power domination. So historiography of colonial era is based on articulation power. For this every truth depends upon power. In such Historiography, history is written from power domination. But power domination cannot give the real truth .In this matter, historiography invalidates the original history. For Nietzsche, "historical truth is nothing but the mobile armies of metaphor" (711). Therefore, this historiography keeps itself in a transcendental position and others in a stereotypical. Indeed, their ideology is propounded on the basis of exclusiveness. There is space to raise the voice

of marginalized group and people who are in suffering. So such brand of history provides sympathy but the marginalized subaltern has to be felt empathy. The colonialist historiography is not still experimented and tested because it is outdated and old fashioned.

This technique of writing history is failure because it only pays heed to the fabrication with enamels on the dirty wall. Samuel P. Huntington in his prominent book *The Clash of Civilization and Remaking of The World Order* says “elites in western dominated non-western societies who wished to seduce the talked in terms of self-determination and democracy those who wished to confront the west invoked revolution and national liberation” (142). Colonialist historiographer wears black goggles and wants to observe white panoramas. It is elision and seamy with bias, controversial, monotonous, exclusive, individualistic, undemocratic, barbaric, indifferent, inhumane, cruel, elitist and rationalist in its nature. Therefore colonialist historiography is a failure to speak about the muted voice of subaltern people rather it creates great gap and demarcation between western and eastern civilization progress, advancement and betterment in the modern era. In fact it deeply implants in the minds of the colonized intellectual that the essential qualities remain eternal qualities of the west.

The preliminary exercise in colonialist historiography, whether done on a local or global scale abetted directly in laying the foundation of the Raj. It concentrates on nothing more better than the way the Indian past was mobilized by all the contending parties in the debates within the company’s administration during the last three decades of the eighteenth century. The critique of colonialism can hardly be overestimated. For the representation of the colonial project of European bourgeoisie is a mission 'Europe reaches out'. Viswanathan throws says “British colonial

administrators, provoked by missionaries on the one hand and fears of native insubordination on the other discovered an ally in English literature to support them in maintaining control of the natives under the guise of a liberal education”(qtd in Ashcroft et al/ *The Empire Writes Back* 3). It has the tendency of convincing examples of universalist mission with academic teaching as witness among the curricula of liberal education. Historiography has got itself trapped in an abstract universalism. It is unable to distinguish between the ideal of capital’s striving towards self-realization and the reality of its failure to do so, colonialism has specific tenet, i.e. misrepresentation.

Colonialist historiography reflected British attitude towards India. It provides a theoretical tool to justify the continuance of British rule. Colonialist historiography in India was the dominance of the political ideology. British prejudice, the tendency to moralize, intense bias and value loaded statements found free play .The colonizers had little interest in Indian life and culture, rather keen eyes to economic treasure of Indian continent. Economic issues were only treated in so far as they had political application. Colonialist history was confined and concerned mostly to the British period and British activities .They always presented history from the perspectives of the Britishers. Only short descriptions of Indian cultures, manners, customs and belief were included to emphasize their diversity and reiterate their decadence. Sreedharan says:

The thrilling story of the British conquest of India ,and the consequent benevolence with the writers and readers agreeing that the benevolence should continue. It was not strange then that every kind of discrimination was shown in denying self-government to India which

Britain had granted to Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. (423-4)

The history of India came not from the Indian writers but from the British .To understand the nature and character of British Indian historical writings, it is necessary to acquaint the major assumptions, attitudes, and purposes of the dominant schools of thought to which they belonged.

Outwardly they provide sympathy for Indians and their ancient institutions but not genuine empathy. Sreedharan further says “The political history of ancient India is meager and inadequate There is only a bare enumeration of the succession list of the royal dynasties based on Purans” (407). British Indian historiography largely treats in biological terms. It offers history written as string of biographical studies. It deals with invariably extolled the virtues of the British national character. He again writes

The British Indian domination came as a result of sudden miraculous accident. It was the result of long working forces and inseparable part of the history of Europe and Britain. The colonial historians tried to interpret British Indian history largely in terms of individual character, the philosophic historians seemed to reduce that history to the interplay of impersonal forces. (413)

The colonialist historiography influences the new intellectuals in the Indian territory to diminish the gap between India and Europe but it is a white mask in a black skin. E.T. Stokes observes:

The result of the new intellectual influences was in this way rather to emphasize than diminish the gap between India and Europe and this historical view provided [...] for a rational and dispassionate

justification for the continued maintenance of British rule. (qtd in Shreedharan 413)

The colonialist historiography tries to show the emphasis on the link between west and east only in discourse but it is totally biased and prejudiced in its behavior. On the other hand, the Indian Marxist historiographer, Bipan Chandra argues:

The primary anti-imperialist contradiction and the secondary inner contradictions, and tend to counter pose the anti-imperialist struggle to the class struggle or social struggle. They also tend to see the movement as a structured bourgeois movement, and miss its open-ended and all class character. (qtd in Shreedharan 483)

Colonial historiography is the historic failure of the nation to its own a failure due to inadequacy of the bourgeoisie as well as of the working class to lead into decisive victory over colonialism and bourgeoisie democratic revolution of either the classic nineteenth century type under hegemony of the bourgeoisie or more modern type under the hegemony of workers and peasants.

Colonialism was, no doubt, against the will and wish of colonized people. Subaltern resisted it with great courage and hope but the colonial historiography simply observes their resistance and always busy in proving the British rule as based on people's wish and will. It undermines their political sensibility. There was a remarkable participation of the subaltern in the great anti-imperialist movements like Civil Disobedience, Non-Co operation and Quit India. But the actions and deeds of subaltern were simply ignored. Because of this tendency of drawing the historiographies, a new type of history writing was essential. In order to counter such exclusive politics of colonialist historiography, nationalist historiography emerged.

2.3 Nationalist Historiography and Its Blind Spot

Nationalist historiography projects the historical events and circumstances encountering force to resist the imperial hegemony in the home confinement. Actually nationalism means patriotic feelings, homage, and loving to the motherland. The sense of nationalism seems to emerge along with armed resistance in places as diverse assertions of nationalist identities, and, in the political realm, the creation of associations and parties whose common goal becomes self-determination and national sovereignty creates the notion of nationalism. If we cast our glance upon European form of nationalism it originated along with the expansion of imperialism, the racial, religious and political divisions imposed by the rulers themselves. In the context of India nationalist discourse comes into existence as to encounter the British raj in India. The importance of nationalism in postcolonial historiography, is attested by the sheer scale of the political decolonization, especially that after 1945, that created so many new nations. Its crucial issue of political subject hood within the new Independent nation was not only the manifestation of the vital part that nationalism plays as post colonialism. Nationalism supersedes religion and culture. It has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies but with the large cultural system that preceded it, out of which as well as against which it came into being.

Nationalist Historiography projects the historical events and circumstance from the perspective neo-colonialist spectacle. Nationalist historiography is a encountering force that resist the imperial hegemony at motherland. Nationalist historians are promoted tendency to exceed the self-imposed limits of the nationalist political agenda by protesting the oppression meted out to them not only by British but by the indigenous ruling groups as well. The conflict between the elite nationalist

and their socially subordinate followers or assimilating to a nationalist historiographical history writing in India follow the imitation of western life, dress, manners and customs an urge began to develop among the really educated Indians to make more Indian less English. Nationalist historiography had to meet the imperialist challenge and the Hindu religion and its sacred literature. Nationalist historiography engaged in an eager search for national identity by meeting European changes against Indian life and cultures.

India became conscious of her nationhood and there was a growing demand for a history of India which would try and reconstruct the past. That would give them an idea of their heritage. History of Nationalism is as the work of tiny elite recreated in the educational institutions the British set up in India. The intellectuals of nationalist Historiography both 'competed' and collaborated with Britishers in the search for power and privilege. Partha Chatterjee Opines:

Nationalism in the rest of world have to choose their imagined community from certain 'modular' forms already made available to them by European and the Americans, What do they have left to imagine? History, it would seem' has decreed that we in the postcolonial world shall be perpetual consumers of modernity Europe and the America, the only subjects of history, have though only script of colonial enlightenment and exploitation, but also that of our anticolonial resistance and post colonial misery. Even our imagination must remain forever colonized. (qtd in Loomba 159)

Chatterjee strongly raises the voice against tactics of Nationalist historiography because the neo-colonialist were the consumers of European Civilization. Actually they could not play the significant role of formulate harmony,

justice and brotherhood among Hindus and Muslims. He strongly opines that such type of historiography is irrelevant because the nationalist historian imitated the scripts of Europeans and American historians. In the name of anti-colonial resistance they assimilated the legacy of being colonized.

Nationalists were caged in the stream of knowledge, institution even ideology itself because the slogan of uniting people and ruling these people is not new vision and mission in the Indian context. The social institutions, political knowledge and economic structures are still influenced by the European bureaucracy. Salman Rushdie argues:

The idea of nationalism in India had grown more and more chauvinistic had become narrower and narrower. The ideas of Hindu nationalism had infected it. I was struck by a remarkable paradox that in a country created by the Congress's nationalist campaign the well being of the people might now require that all nationalist rhetoric be abandoned. (33)

Unfortunately the Hindu fundamentalist and the idea of the nation ultimately go together. At the initial phase both Muslims and Hindus participated in war to chase Angrez from the country. Indeedly India is increasingly defined as Hindu Rastra and Sikh and Muslims fundamentalism grows ever fiercer and entrenched. Rushdie belongs from Muslim family. India has always based on ideas of multiplicity, pluralism, hybridity but the nationalist exclude women, peasants, untouchables, class and Muslim from the mainstream history. Elite Indian nationalists found their subject and power position as nationalists within the transition of narrative that at various times as well as depending on one's ideology.

Nationalist historiography has to undergo in order to prepare precisely for what the British denied but extolled as the end of all history. Sreedharan further says, " inability of the Indian nationalist to untie and rule themselves made the permanence of British rule absolutely. They were constantly reminded that freedom had never dawned on their native land"(427).

Indian Nationalist historiography tries to glorify the past by eliding the dark side of history. Indian mutiny (1857-59) asserted that the civil rebellions which accompanied the mutiny give it the character of a national war of independence. The British government held out that Hindu-Muslim differences were the chief obstacle in granting domination to India. Some nationalist historians realize the harmful effects of communalism. The reinterpretation and reconstruction of medieval history of India in order to prove that the Hindus and Muslims always behaved like good brothers toward each other and that they formed one nation.

Historically, nationalism has often played a progressive role in opposition to colonial conquest. Nationalism is mainly a resistance to foreign occupation and tends to politicize populations. Nations have some preordained right to exclusive sovereignty. It remained outside the domains of modern politics and raises the question off the rights of the people thus politicized. Nationalism plays a vital role to create solidarity. The notion of nationalism is what most animates oppositional cultural practices in the so-called third world. Partha Chatterjee opines:

Nationalism seeks to represent itself in the image of the Enlightenment and fails to do so. For Enlightenment itself, to assert its sovereignty as the universal ideal needs its others, if it could never actualize itself in the real world as the truly universal, it would in fact destroy itself. (qtd in Ashcroft et al. *Postcolonial Studies Reader* 130)

The nation is precisely a political structure. The insistence on nation –forming creates the sense of nationalism. His identity is with a country whose artificiality and exclusiveness have driven him/her into a kind of exile. Gellner argues:

Nationalism isn't what seems itself [...] the cultural shreds and patches used by nationalism are often arbitrary historical inventions. Any old shred would have served as well. But in no way does it follow that the principle of nationalism [...] itself in the least contingent and accidental. (qtd in Ashcroft et al./ *Postcolonial Studies Reader*130)

To write the discourse of the nation demands that we articulate that archaic ambivalence that informs modernity. Nation is an imagined community. It is because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communication. According to Sumit Sarkar:

For Nandy, Tagore, like Gandhi was among the 'dissenter among dissenters' who sought the alternative to nationalism not in any homogenized universalism' still grounded in some version of the Enlightenment concept of freedom, but in 'a distinctive civilization concept of universalism embedded in the tolerance encoded in various traditional ways of life in a highly diverse plural society. (117)

Nationalism invents where they do exist. These all imagined communities are larger than primordial village of face to face contact. Communities are to be distinguished Nationalists do not dream of a day when the member of the human race will join their nation in the way that it is possible. People die for nations, fight wars for them, and write fictions on their behalf. Others have emphasized the creative side of nation forming.

The seed of nationalism is seen as the reuniting and regaining force; Gandhi and Nehru were the authors of mobilizing the Indian people in anti-imperial movement for unity of the nation. The most ponderable point is that the conflict of interest and ideology between the colonizers and the Indian People was the most important conflict of British India. In this regard, Bipan Chandra says:

Nationalism is different contrasting light. He saw it as a regenerative force, as the antithesis of colonialism, something that united and produced an "Indian People" by mobilizing them for struggle against the British nationalist leaders such as Gandhi and Nehru were the authors of such an anti-imperial movement for unity of the nation. (qtd in Chakrabarty 3)

Because of the desire for freedom from colonial rule, the nationalist themselves experienced politics without ideas or idealism in the subcontinent. The nationalist historian's story of their having been a 'Moral War' between colonialism and nationalism brought new material to light in India. The nationalist Marxist thesis glossing over real conflicts of ideas and interests between the elite nationalists and their socially subordinate followers- or assimilating to a nationalist historiographical agenda was an adequate response to the problems of post-colonial history writing in India. The war between India and China in 1962 can be taken as the persistence of religious and caste conflict in post independence India.

The official nationalism sounds hollow and eventually gives rise to a fascination with Maoism among the urban educated youth in India. The outbreak of violent Maoist political movement in India drew many youths into the countryside in the late 1960s and early 1970s. All these and many other factors combined to alienate younger historians from nationalist historiography.

The search for identity took various forms and covered a wide range of attitudes. 'Nationalist historiography' and 'nationalist historians' are only terms used in a comparative sense, in contrast to the colonial or imperialist attitudes of foreign writers-particularly British-in the writings of Indian history. Filled with legitimate national pride, arising generation of Indian scholars sought to vindicate their national culture against the unfounded charges of European writers. Though there were occasional lapses of the principles of historical reconstruction, the terms in question should not be taken to mean a body of historical writers or writing whose sole object was the glorification of India's past.

The history of India recorded only the story of the bourgeois and could not explain nationalism ultimately. The subaltern studies historian tries their best to rewrite historiography of India. Though they blame Marxism of developing complicity to bourgeois nationalism, they bring some materials from Marxist historiography. Guha, the leading figure of subaltern group insists that it excludes the voice of people. He calls this as politics of people. People here refer to subaltern group. Guha brings about a parallelism between colonialism and bourgeois nationalism in his writings because both give emphasis only to the actions and deeds of the elite group and ignored the efforts of the subaltern groups. Both historiographies are 'assent' of people as a cover to hide the cruelties and injustices they inflicted on the people.

Indian nationalism and ideology of educated Indians in British India were demanding the establishment of representative institutions and a share in the administration of the country. Nationalist historiography consciously fanned hatred of the British government and of individual Englishmen. As the freedom struggle developed, nationalist historiography attempted "a deliberate re-interpretation of

Indian history in order to infuse enthusiasm in the fight for freedom [...] The British government held that Hindu –Muslim differences were the chief obstacle in granting domination status to India. Nationalist historians assimilated the harmful effects of communalism"(Shreedharan 432) .They became able to prove that the entire medieval history of India that was the Hindus and Muslims always behaved like brothers toward each other and they formed nation. Indian nationalist historiography engaged in search of national identity by meeting European charges against Indian life and culture, at times betrayed a complete lack of historical propriety. Shreedharan says “The imperialist historians were prone to see everything bad in Indian past and nationalist counterparts betrayed a tendency to see everything good in it” (433). It was guilty of methodological lapses of deviation from the ideal of objectivity which is the marrow of all the history. It is the inevitable result of making history provides service for current issues. Gyanendra Pandey, in his essay “Remembering Partition” opines:

Communities are constructed and national as well as local traditions are reconstructed through the language of violence. In its course, we have observed that the reconstruction of community and of local sociality depends upon particular reconstructions of community and of the past and sought to emphasize the instability of new subject positions. (204)

In this regard, he argues that, community are constructed and reconstructed to achieve the power and politics to govern human collectives. There was an unashamed glorification of the ancient Indian past. The glorification of the past was also the compensation for the humiliating present. Nationalist historiography could be seen as asserting and justifying contradictory position', military power and the values of non-violence, democratic traditions.

Nationalist Historiography also cannot address the women, the untouchables, the poor and the non Hindus. So, postcolonial subaltern historiography emerged to provide the space to the subaltern in mainstream history.

2.4 Postcolonial Subaltern Historiography

Postcolonial debate on history has a number of complex ramifications. Postcolonial historians assert that history is the discourse through which west launches hegemony over the rest of the world. History can be taken as the grand narrative through which Eurocentrism is totalized as the proper account of all humanity. Postcolonial historiography runs the risk of paradoxically reunifying the diversity and alterity of the colonized world under the sign and spectra of Europe-- forcing all temporalities and cultures into a hyphenated relationship with colonialism. In other words, postcolonialism semantically delivers the idea of a world historicized through the single category of colonialism and its aftermath. Chakrabarty argues:

Historiography is primarily within elite institutions-- whether colonial or nationalist-- that 'history' acquires visibility and structure. Writers within this collective argue that the archival version of 'Colonial' history frequently fails to accommodate or speak to the opaque and contradictory processes which characterize the politics of people. These politics comprise, in, those 'plural and heterogeneous struggles whose outcomes are never predictable, even retrospectively, in accordance with schemas which seek to naturalize and domesticate this heterogeneity. (*Habitations of Modernity* 20)

Elite politics is always involved in vertical mobilization. It is a greater reliance on adoptions of British parliamentary instruction. It tended to be relatively more legalistic and constitutional in orientation. The domain of subaltern politics depends

on horizontal affiliations and the traditional organization of kinship and territoriality. Similarly, this depends on class consciousness of the people to be more violent than elite politics. Elite politics put apart the experience and exploitation and labour endowed by the subaltern group. Likewise, Stephen Mortan in his book *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak* writes:

“The subaltern can not speak because the voice and agency of subaltern are so embedded in Hindu patriarchal codes of moral conduct and British colonial representation of subaltern women as victims of a barbaric Hindu culture that they are impossible to recover”. (64)

Peasant uprising in colonial India is a notion of resistance to elite domination. Subaltern can not speak themselves because they have to be represented. They are deprived of their agency.

Guha emphasizes in an anachronism of colonial world. The peasant was not 'backward' consciousness. Postcolonial subaltern historiography is a project of mentality left over from the past. It is baffled by modern political and economic institutions. Yet, it is a resistance to them. Subaltern historian explain these gestures as expressing a false consciousness, and/ or performing a “safety valve” function in the overall social system. Elitist histories of peasant upbringings missed the signification of these gestures by seeing it as “prepolitical”. Culturally inscribed dominant mindsets that are defective for capitalism should rather be nurtured for grafting onto dominant thoughts so that they can learn from them. To assure that they do not forever remain outside the lines of mobility. Ashcroft, Bill Hellen Tiffin and Gareth Griffiths in their book *Key concepts in Postcolonial Studies* say:

The purpose of subaltern studies project was to redress the imbalance created in academic work by a tendency to focus on elites and elite

culture in South Asian Historiography. Recognizing that subordination can not be understood except in a binary relationship with dominance, the group aimed to examine, the subaltern as an objective assessment of the role of elite. (217)

Postmodernism has made a great impact on the field of historiography. It has developed its own way of historical writing by denouncing the conventional history. It rejects the master narrative as hegemonic stories told by those in power. The dominant class, through hegemony--domination by consent-- creates an imperative upon the consciousness or the whole way of social life, value system, norms, beliefs, practices and attitudes. By doing so, it gets the consensus to formulate values as general, common and indispensable social values that are constructed by power holder's discursive ethos and incentives. The ruling class exercises its power upon the ruled class not through force and fraud but through shaping the common sense into consensus that is hegemony.

The history of colonial modernity in India created a domain of the political that was heteroglossic in its idioms, irreducibly plural in its structure, interlocking within itself strands of different types of relations that did not make up logical whole. Subaltern studies as the stand of domination and subordination ubiquitous in relationships of power in India was traditional only in so archaic in the sense of being outmoded.

The nationalist movement sought to establish a bourgeois outlook throughout society. Bipan Chandra views that nationalists such as Jawaharlal Nehru could not pit against the story of a regressive colonialism. Elite nationalists in India sought to mobilize the subaltern classes. It shows a political domain in which the secular

language of law and constitutional frameworks coexisted and interacted with non-constmensible strategies of domination and subordination.

Postcolonial subaltern historiography was also a post-nationalist form of historiography. Subaltern studies from the beginning emerged to counter official or statist nationalism and its attendant historiography. Historians of peasants have emphasized with recuperating peasant “experience” in history. Postcolonial Subaltern historiography positions itself as an unorthodox territory of the left. It opens the influences of literary and narrative theory. Representation is as an aspect of power relations between elite and subaltern history from below approach of Marxist Historiography moved away from the guiding assumptions.

Indian Postcolonial subaltern historians like Gyanendra Pandey, Dipesh Chakrabarty, and Sumit Sarkar comments the nationalist historiography. Marxists historiographer charge that the postmodernist valorization of the fragment in subaltern historiography hurts the cause of the unity of the oppressed. In this regard Gayatri Chakrovarty, Spivak insists on strategic essentialism for unity with diversity not unity in diversity so that differences diversities and heterogeneities among people can be acknowledge and respected.

Subaltern studies began as a critique of two contending schools of history. In the course of introducing a volume of subaltern studies Guha puts “We are indeed opposed to much of the prevailing academic practice in historiography [...] for its failure to acknowledge the subaltern as the maker of his own destiny. This critique lies at the very heart of our project” (SS VII). His separation of elite and subaltern medians of the political had some radical implication for social theory and historiography. The standard tendency in global Marxist historiography until the seventies was to look on peasant revolts organized along the axes of kinship, religion,

caste and so on as movements exhibiting a “backward consciousness” and peasant's consciousness as pre-political and by avoiding evolutionary models of consciousness” (Chakrabarty 5).

Elite politics gets always involved in vertical mobilization. It is a greater reliance on Indian adaptations of British parliamentary institution. It tended to be relatively more legalistic and constitutional in orientation. The domain of subaltern politics depends on horizontal affiliations and the traditional organization of kinship and territoriality. Similarly this depends on class consciousness of the people to be more violent than elite politics. Elite politics puts apart the experience and exploitation and labour endowed by the subaltern group. A peasant uprising in colonial India is a notion of resistance to elite domination.

Colonialism could continue as a relation of power in the subcontinent only on the condition that the colonizing bourgeoisie should fail to live up to its own universalizing project. The nature of the state it had created by the sword made this historically necessary. Guha, says "the result was a society that no doubt changed under the impact of colonial capitalism but in which vast areas in the life and consciousness of the people escaped and kind of [bourgeois] hegemony" (8).

According to Bill Ashcroft, Helen Tiffin and Gareth Griffiths, post colonial subaltern historiography analyzes the impact of European colonization and its aftermath:

[I] includes the study and analysis of European territorial conquest, the various institutions of European colonialism, the discursive operations of empire the subtleties of subject construction in colonial discourse and the resistance of those subject and most importantly perhaps, the differing responses to such incursions and their contemporary colonial

legacies in both pre and post independence nations and communities.

(Key Concepts in Postcolonial Study 187)

Postcolonial Historiography, in literary field, analyses literature produced by cultures that developed in response to colonial domination from the first point of colonial contact to the present. Some of this literature was written by the colonizers and most of it was written and is being written by the formerly colonized people.

The postcolonial literary analysis seeks to understand the operations politically, socially, culturally and psychologically of colonialist and anti-colonialist ideologies. Post colonialism analyses:

[those] ideological forces that pressed the colonized to internalize the colonizer's values [as well as those] promoted the resistance of colonized people against their oppressors, a resistance of colonized people against their oppressors a resistance that is as old as the colonialism itself. (Tyson 365)

Subaltern studies can be seen as postcolonial project of writing history. It spots light on the relationship between post colonialism and historiography. It overlooks to the interdisciplinary relationship among other disciplines. This research is motivated by a question that has history in focus. The original historiographic agenda of subaltern study is radical in postcolonial outlook. Subaltern studies raised question about history writing that made a radical departure from Marxist historiographic traditions.

The subaltern historiography is recent development after the end of British rule in India. Actually an ongoing struggle between tendencies affiliated with imperialist desire on the part of historians in India to decolonize the past, the clash of Hindu-Muslim resulted the formation of the two states of Pakistan and India. It was

the policy of British Raj 'to divide and rule'. The official documents of British government of India reflect divisions internal to south Asian Society. It always portrays colonial rule as beneficial to India and her people. The bourgeois applauded the British for bringing to the subcontinent political unity, modern educational institutions, modern nationalism, a rule of law, and so forth. Indian historians in the 1960s had degrees and most of whom belonged to generation that grew up in the final years of British rule. Colonialism had had deleterious effects on economic and cultural developments. Nationalism and colonialism thus emerged as the two major areas of the research and defining the field of modern Indian history in the 1960s. Elites of modern Indian history focus on the field of both "competed and collaborated "with the British educational institutional set up in India" (Chakrabarty 2).

Indian elites drew into the colonial governmental process .Indian's involvement in colonial institutions set off a scramble among the indigenous elites .For power and privilege within the limited opportunities for self rule provided by the British the real dynamic of that which outside observers or naive historians may have mistaken for an idealistic struggle for freedom. He further says "nationalism and colonialism both came out in this history as straw and foil characters" (3). The history of Indian nationalism was the rivalry between British colonialism and Indian elitism. Indian history of the colonial period is an epic battle between the forces of nationalism and colonialism. Actually colonialism can be taken as a regressive force that all distorted all developments in India's society and polity. He emphasizes" Social, political and economic ills of the past in-dependence India including those of mass poverty and religious and caste conflict- could be blamed on the political economy of colonialism" (3).

Subaltern historiography endeavors to establish the subaltern people as the subject of insurgency. So, they propose to focus on subaltern consciousness as their central theme so that subaltern people become conscious of themselves first Dipesh Chakrabarty writes:

The central aim of the Subaltern Studies is to understand the consciousness that formed and still forms 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 maker of the history s/he lives out. (374)

Chakrabarty throws light on the consciousness of subaltern to change the political, social and economic institution of the elite bourgeois. It is only the consciousness of subaltern which can change the society. The history of an individual is not only determinant but also the groups, classes, religions and other communities are also remarkable to gain success. About this Sumit Sarker opines:

The history of an individual or set of individuals but of a nation coming into its own and to give his complex argument its due of groups, classes and communities caught in the difficult moment of a change in the state power and the establishment of new states and ruling classes. The primary subject position is occupied here not so much very great men (good or evil) though they also figure in account, by longer impersonal forces – economic development, class interests, mass motions. (210)

Sumit Sarkar insists on the fact that unlike in official history subaltern historians should write about the cause of marginalized people and subjugated knowledge in counter history like historical fiction.

Subaltern consciousness has been always a critical point of subaltern. The peasants or subaltern groups tend to resist the elite domination. It emerges as an invariant feature about subaltern group, which makes the discussion on the subaltern mentality fruitful. The subaltern people resisted the bourgeois nationalists as well as indigenous elite leaders by disobeying their orders. They would take part in the anti-imperialist movements in their own way. They would derive the terms from the idioms of their every day life so that they could make these struggles their own. The colonial and the bourgeois nationalist historiography included the legacies, thoughts and deeds of elites only. They totally ignored the deeds and voices of subaltern who had played the significant role to chase the 'Angrez' away from India. So, it avoids European theoretical models and recovers subaltern consciousness as a tool. It attempts to write "history from below"(Ludden 120). The remarkable role of subaltern was being dismissed from history by Indian bourgeois nationalist as well as the colonialist historians. Post-independence movement turned to be a curse to subaltern. Therefore, postcolonial subaltern history should be written from the perspective of the subalterns.

Chapter III

The Treatment of History in Mehta's *Raj*

As an exceptional literary figure for criticizing as well as embracing some of the Western cultural values in the non-western literary panorama, Gita Mehta has produced history of the early twentieth century India in her masterpiece of postcolonial subaltern historical fiction, *Raj*. It is basically produced on the ground of bilateral dispute between colonialist and nationalist historiography. The encounter between the diametrically opposite, east and west in the context of human civilization history and cultural values is constantly raised by Mehta from the perspective of the marginalized people - - poor, women, untouchables and others. In *Raj*, Mehta has done a great job of contrasting colonialist and nationalist historiography and tries to search for the space for the marginalized people in her postcolonial subaltern historiography of *Raj*.

In course of explaining the fact/history that stands as a pillar besides the officially recorded history which is taken as a roof, Mehta deliberately uses some fictitious characters, circumstances, episodes and experiences to provide more details from the perspective of the subaltern people. For this it is very important to know that the background - - spatial and temporal dimension which comes forward - - foregrounded in the form of her text. It is also important to inspect the hands behind writing the colonialist history as well as the nationalist history and the persons who take this as only a benefit for them and use it in the same way to stick in power by maintaining their 'status quo'.

To historicize the fictional events in *Raj*, Mehta gives voice to Jaya, the protagonist who is marginalized and suppressed from gender prospective. Historical fiction *Raj* includes the fictional elements along with the embedded socio-economic

and politico-cultural aspects of the society as human fabrication to textualize history so that, the subaltern people can get their voice. Traditional notion of viewing official historical discourse as an absolutely authentic and objective source has been dismantled, and the assumptions such as neutrality of language, the universal truth in history have been challenged. So, Mehta comments on colonialist and nationalist historiography for their elitist politics and asserts the need of postcolonial subaltern historiography for writing more inclusive histories of the marginalized people.

3.1 Colonialist Historiography and Its Critique in Mehta's *Raj*

British colonialism must be analyzed in defining the specific form of cultural exploitation that developed with the expansions of Europe over the last 300 years in India. Colonialist historians tried to represent the colonizers as the civilized people, colonization as the civilizational enterprise, whereas the colonized were represented as the barbaric people lacking civilization. The relation between the colonizer and the colonized was locked into rigid hierarchy of difference deeply resistant to fair and equitable exchanges, whether economic, cultural and social. Colonialist historiography tries to justify it legally as its current general usage as a distinctive kind of political ideology as Mehta points out in *Raj*:

Jai Singh took his place on a sofa, a young Indian lawyer in English suit and wing collar perched nervously next to him, his ministers on chairs behind. 'Tell the Angrez there is famine in British India. Our trade routes pass through British India. We are landlocked kingdoms. Everything that enters or leaves our borders is taxed twice over by British India. Now the famine in British India is crippling us. (19)

The British company shipped Indian goods and Indian labor around the world. The fruits of the earth fed only the appetites of the British Empire. The British

officials were totally ignorant about suffering and pains about the common people. The lawyers translated Jaya Singh's words into English but the English men were totally indifferent to Indians and their suffering caused by famine. There was not any defiance of the laws of Imperial British rule in India. Britain exploited the human resources and food from the Indian continent. The lawyers represent the bureaucratic member of that colonial rule. The use of mother tongue was restricted and the foreign language was asserted to legitimize imperial rule in the native land. The Angrez were weaving the spider's net to exploit and dominate the Maharjahs and Maharani of the Indian motherland. Indians were corrupted along with the nation. People were dying and getting pain by the shortage of food.

Colonialist Historiography tends to exclude the importance to domestic politics. Rather, it spreads statement about the inferiority of the colonized, the primitive nature of other races, the barbaric depravity of colonized society and therefore the duty of the imperial power to reproduce itself in the colonial society, to advance the civilization of the colony through trade administration, cultural and moral improvement. Colonialist Historiography as pointed out by Gita Mehta in *Raj* constructs the dichotomy between superior colonizing subject and inferior colonized. Rules of inclusion and exclusion operate on the assumption of the superiority of the colonizer's culture, history, language ,art, political structures, social convention and the assertion of the need for the colonized to be raised up through colonial contact. In this regard Mehta narrates:

The vield threat hung like smoke in the air. Even now the British were preparing to hang the Maharajah of Manipur, who had challenged the British, as a common criminal. Jai Singh could feel the anger of the

Balmer delegation pressing like a knife against his spine at his reply.

'Balmer is grateful for the protection of the British Empire. (19)

The British came into India for the expansion of the territory of England with the mission of civilizing the colonized. The colonialists want to present themselves as more civilized, democratic, cultured and educated figures in the colonial land. The practice of undemocratic and inhuman behavior is presented in the colonialist historiography. Balmer is the colony of Britain, whereas Lord Mayor's fund is full of little use in the famine. Sir Pratap was forced to carry the sword. India's honor was placed at Victoria's feet. The gap between the colonizer and the colonized was widened. Mehta writes:

At the English lesson, Mrs. Roy thrust a newspaper into Jaya's hands.

The British nearly lost India in 1857 because they made Muslim soldiers grease their bullets with pork fat. Think how much worse it will be when war is declared and India's Muslim are asked to fight against the head of their faith, the Sultan of Turkey. (99)

The colonialist tactics is to divide and rule in India. Different religions can be compared and constructed as essentially the same in the above excerpt. Religions are inherently fundamentalist but Christian religious discourse gets diffused and redistributed as ethics, morals and culture in modernity. It is typically understood to be doctrine that is different to or excludes religions or religious considerations, which are hence forth constituted as other-worldly. To provide the legacy of British colonization, they used British names. Tikka is guided with the Western decadent education. British colonialism constructs the demarcation between the ruler and the ruled. It is a British policy to cause conflict among the religious sects. Colonialist mind is guided with the rationalist thinking which ignores the value of human

sentiments, emotion and suffering. Mrs. Roy is against this view because she expresses her dissatisfaction with the colonial oppression, domination and exploitation in India. Maharajah Jai Singh seems worried about his son Tikka's stay in Europe. There was unity, tolerance, the tendency of assimilating other cultures among the Hindus and the Muslim during the pre-colonial era but the Europeans brought the idea of division and rule in the British India.

The possibility of multi-religious and multicultural co-existence within the nation and the complex question of the place of religious minorities in a liberal democratic state with the view of expanding European mission they tried to use Muslim sect to create anarchy, violence, crime and disorder in the nation. So, the colonialist history is single-minded obsession in Gita Mehta's *Raj*. To valorize colonialism, colonizer historiography is written from the perspective of the ruler who is biased, selfish and has no ethics of assimilating other's culture. It is based on the majority and neglects the voice of the minority. Rather these Muslim sects are represented as violent.

The Colonialist historiography violates harmony, creates racial segregation and valorizes itself as superior among other cultures. Native cultures are much more important in their own territory. The tendency to launch the individual subjectivity in the colonialist historiography is noticeable. In this regard, Mehta depicts:

Mrs. Roy led Jaya down a corridor lined with heavy wooden cupboards. Felt hats, rolled black umbrellas and three-piece suits were hanging inside them. This is where our husbands take off their European clothes. In British India, Indians are not allowed to dress in their own clothes when they visit government offices, but our elder

ladies will not allow the men into the main house until they have taken off their uniforms of slavery. (240)

In a sense, colonialist discourse is always on the way of persuasion of power and hegemony whether it be accepted or excluded. Native culture, customs, and language is also in the grip of Europe.

Another aspect Mehta discusses about colonialist historiography that it is oriented towards, and situates the Britishers themselves on the terrain of common people's aspect. Colonialist hegemony distorts the native cultures: "Royalty is hemmed in with officials who represent tradition and power. But society concerns itself solely with fashion" (200).

The benefits or fruits of national resources will be provided on the basis of power. The Prince of Wales regularly visits Sirpur. The British tradition and culture is that which pays no attention to the powerless subaltern people. This extract conspicuously exhibits the total collapse of identity, the total dismantle of hierarchical relationship. Despite the opposing tendency of native women, untouchables and non-Christians the British colonialist historiography concerned and confined mostly to the discrimination, denying self-government to India, rather they undermine the cultures, beliefs, morals, harmony, brotherhood and fraternity in the country. They imposed the rule and power. It was their politics and inseparable part of colonialist history. The colonialist official history was written from the perspective of Britishers. So, there is a vast gap between Indian culture and European civilization. They tried to become familiar with Indian systems, cultures and institutions. It is noted that India is called the Jewel of British empire. All the colonizers governed themselves but India was extremely dominated, not given freedom to rule.

Actually the Indians in majority were ruled by European minority. The British company in India expanded the policy of England. It was a colonial and imperial cultural project and political institution to counter the politics and power of majoritarian. The Angrez in India were the money lenders for Maharajahs. Their mission is how to gain profit. There is no sense of humanity, feelings and love but they are selfish giants having vulturous eyes. The characters Henry Conroy, James Osborne, Viceroy and Vicerne are fictional but the historical characters like Jaya, Prince Pratap, Victor Maharajan and Maharani are depicted to show the western hegemony into the land of eastern territory. The westerners present themselves as materially powerful, whereas easterners exotic and mystic.

The colonialist historiography creates vast misunderstanding, keeps West in a transcendental position, whereas India in a stereotypical position. Their vision of democracy-encapsulates in the coercive way. Rather Indian people were treated as slaves and animals. The British imperialism exercises the heart touching criminal behavior and there was not feelings of love and empathy. They were seamy and tried to valorize the British rule in India. Mehta narrates:

The men sitting at the table tried to organize an antislavery movement in Royal India. They were treated as animals by the Indian Kings. And the great British Empire called them seditious. But frankly, the slaves are only an extreme examples of conditions under which everyone in the Indian kingdoms lives – unprotected by laws, subject to their rulers' whims. (330)

In course of having conversation with lady Modi, Mrs. Roy and Jaya depict the miserable condition of women, concubines, untouchables, non-Hindus. But the British colonizers were absolutely biased, indifferent and ignorant about the common

people. Instead they made alliance with the elite groups to continue their rule longer in India. Their feelings, emotions and ideas were restricted in the colonizing India. Such type of history is guided and recorded with the will and wish of colonizing people. Colonialism becomes the only legitimate form of collective identity in the practice of barbarism, autocracy, cruelty and rationality.

The British elite ideology is motivated with exploitation of Peti-bourgeois Indians and provide legacy to colonialism. In this way, the Britishers were celebrating, whereas British India is in famine and peasants are spiritually praying for their god to give relief from the starvation. The politics of bourgeois is to suck the blood and labour of the peasants and treat grain producers as slaves and animals. They say one thing but do just the opposite thing. In this regard Mehta writes:

'Our rulers are preparing to travel to London for Diamond Jubilee of the white widow, the Empress Victoria.'

'The retinues and gifts they must take to impress the British Empire will dangerously impoverish their treasures.'

At least in London they speak together. Here Britain still fears conspiracy and will not allow the kings to meet in the presence of Englishmen.'

But our astrologers are reminding their Maharajahs that famine has come every twenty years since the rise of British power.'

'And twenty years have passed since the last famine.'

The brads shook their heads, dismissing astrology for the reality they had witnessed on the road. They had seen the villagers praying for rain.

The farmers knew already. Another famine had begun. (10)

Thus, colonialism influences the motives of individualistic thinking. It violates harmony rather one can feel exploitation and domination within the boundary of western hegemony. The rulers of British India are preparing to travel to London to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the white widow, the Empress Victoria. The treasure of a nation is looted by the colonizing power. The astrologers of the contemporary society reminded the Maharajah such famine continues in every 20 years. The colonialist never assimilates the significant and decisive roles of marginalized people. The peasants are praying for the change in the country but the bourgeoisie of the country are ignorant about the suffering and pain of the subalterns even if they are in their own land. The peasants are doubly ruled.

Mehta shows the two contradictions between west and east. The people of the west are materialistic and corrupted, whereas the eastern peasants and ordinary people are spiritual. West fears with the unity in diversity so, their colonial history absorbs the human resources and power in their grip. Politically, socially and economically British hegemony propounds the plot of exclusiveness. Only bourgeois and elites of British India are taken to England because they surrender to the British women. The intellectuals of British India were married to the widows of England. The violence of language is used in the colonialist historiography. Colonialist worships the power holders and disregards the subaltern people.

The West sees easterners as weak, uncivilized and barbaric peoples. The West calls itself as male and east as female and tries to inject the anarchy and exploitation creating demarcation on the basis of class, caste, gender and sex. Mehta presents:

It is probably true, daring. It is a sort of thing that always happens when east meets west. I suppose it's just as well as that the British Empire insists marriage between Indian rulers and foreign women can

only be morganatic, and their children can never sit on the thrones.

Drink your chocolate and guess what the Spanish Maharani's

companion did she became Maharani herself. (230)

We can see the change in thinking of the main character, Jaya. At the very beginning she is portrayed as fragile and weak that she is unable to make a decision. This struggle for existence has made her bolder than before. She is now mentally grown up and strong enough to make decision and choices on her own. Lady Modi, a cultural consultant, directly intervene the power position of the eastern women. In this excerpt the subordination of women and colonial subjects can be seen. The colonialists take the conquered land as the female body. European man is a feature of colonial narrative and women are represented as victims and slaves in the western history. But not all margins are equally removed from the centre; skin, color and female behavior come together in establishing a cultural hierarchy with white Europe and the apex and Indians at the bottom. Non-Europeans were marginalized as more easily given to same sex relationships, while cross-cultural sexual contact was certainly transgressive. We should not forget that colonial sexual encounters both heterosexual and homosexual, often exploited inequalities of class, age, gender, race and power as well.

Anita Delgado, the Spanish Maharani became a flamenco dancer until she married the Maharaj of Kapurthala. She was in the center of attraction. The ambitions and desires to be superior among the marginal people by creating the discourse of west and east is explicit here. Colonizer is categorized in the apex of patriarchy, whereas eastern is considered as weak, west as speech and east as silence. The notion of male dominated assumption of westerners think themselves having phallus and arrogant and Indians as women having weak body and silence in the manner. These

images show the exploitation of the colonized by the colonizer. The exercise of power rather than harmony, love, co-existence and unity can be felt in British India:

But Mrs. Roy, imagine a whole city made of tents!

When will you learn that life is not a fairy tale, Bai-sa? Even now, there is a famine throughout western India. Indians are dying like flies, but the indifferent British Raj has spent a million pounds of Indian's money on tents, and another half-million pounds on an imperial crown. 'But the king is going to be crowned Emperor you have to have a crown for that. (81)

This excerpt shows that colonialist historiographies are silent to the suffering of the subaltern people. They only attempt to record the parties, celebration and victories of the colonial elitist rulers. Colonialist historiography depicts how the British India is ignorant about basic norms of democracy. There was censorship to speak, write and to enjoy human right. About this the narrator presents:

The man who had thrown the bomb Bhagat Singh, defended his action in an overcrowded Delhi courtroom: 'The attack not directed against any individual but against an institution. We are next to none in our love for humanity. We hold human life sacred beyond words. But freedom is imperishable birthright of all mankind for this faith we shall welcome any suffering to which we may be condemned. (347)

This shows the presence of the Indians in the legislative and judiciary is mere decoration. There was widespread unemployment, and general strike rises in the summit. While the viceroy was sitting on his scarlet and gold Viceregal throne in the legislative assembly suddenly, a bomb was thrown from visitors' gallery. The implication of widespread insurrection shocks the empire. This attempt was against

the colonial institutions, beurocracy and demanding the guarantees of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness in colonial India.

To historicize the fictional events in *Raj*, Mehta gives voice to Jaya, the protagonist who is marginalized and suppressed. Historical fiction includes the fictional elements along with the embedded socio-economic politico-cultural aspect of the society as human fabrication to textualize history. Traditional notion of viewing official historical discourse as an absolutely authentic and objective source has been dismantled, and the assumptions such as neutrality of language, the universal truth in history have been challenged.

The colonialist present themselves rich in culture and tradition but they are pleased in the Indian culture. Culture is that which creates harmony and assimilating co-existence but the Angrez are arrogant. Here, Lady Mody and Jaya talk about the significance of Indian culture which is based on diversity with unity. The colonialists are guided with the notion of divide and rule policy in British India. In this regard Mehta narrates:

Don't lose them darling,' Lady Modi warned over Chantal's curling tongs.'

I don't need them, Baspy.'

Lady Mody gave a little scream. 'You can't possibly meet the Prince of Wales without them.'

'He is our guest, Baspy. Surely our tradition will please him more than his own. (218)

Colonialist think their culture, norms, values and traditions are only the worth having. They wanted to conduct a violence to intervne the peaceful movement in

British India. The creation of 'us' versus 'them' and othering tendency of British Raj is based on biasness and prejudice. Mehta shows:

Gandhi's volunteers tried to stop the violence, sir. 'Rubbish', Osborn. The man's an anarchist, unpleasing, dangerous, passions, that will turn this whole continent into a Sea of blood. Only we British can control India. That's same thing these nationalists should understand. (214)

People of India severely suffered from famine and political crisis. So, they had to launch a non-violence movement but the officials of British India get shocked. They had fear of the unfamiliar culture. Non-violence is guided by motives of harmony and humanitarian perspective. They blame Indian people as savage, barbaric, anarchist, dangerous and aggressive, because it is their biasness and prejudice by creating demarcation between 'us' and 'them' in the discourse of imaginary communities. They generalize that the men who represent the British Empire in the Indian kingdoms have no training in diplomacy or administration, although they exert as much power as the ruler himself. So, we can assume how the Britishers were arrogant in their power and politics by creating dominance without hegemony.

3.2 Nationalist Historiography and Its Critique in Mehta's *Raj*

Nationalist thought does not always equate the notion of a shared memory or experience with the nation understood as a distinct geographical or political entity. European nationalism was discredited over the course of the twentieth century by its association with fascism and colonialism and at the same time, its third world variant was legitimized through its connection with anti-colonialism.

Nationalism in the rest of the world has to choose the imagined community from certain modular forms already made available to the Indian nationalists by

Europe and the Americas. History has decreed that the Indian nationalists in the postcolonial world shall be perpetual consumers of modernity. Then the script of colonial enlightenment, postcolonial misery and imaginations remained forever in the heart and mind of these Indian nationalists.

Mehta in Raj points out the fact that Indian nationalism, in the context of India, is exclusively Hindu nationalism which is fully oriented towards majoritarian, militaristic with exclusive vision. But on the other hand, Hindu nationalism always spoke beliefs and systems which had its biasness toward non-Hindu, females, untouchables and working class people.

Mehta praises the nationalism of Mahatma Gandhi and Miss Naidu Sarojini as they were in favor of co-existence, tolerance, fraternity, brotherhood, racial harmony and self-government domination in India. Mahatma Gandhi delivers a remarkable speech in front of millions of Indian nationalists. She writes:

Brothers and sisters, in the name of god I greet you. The high nervous voice immediately silenced the noise around him. 'We fear the British Empire has no intention of granting us self-government when even the salt a peasant needs for strength to till his fields under the burning sun is taxed and any Indian who dares make his own salt is called criminal by the empire. Any voices yelled agreement. A thin hand lifted to silence them. But we do not hate the British, brothers and sisters. We seek to make them recognize the wickedness of their system through non-violent protest. As a soldier must learn to kill a Satyagrahi must learn to suffer, to die if need be, to prove the righteousness of this cause.(371)

It shows that nationalism is not a problem in itself but the misuse of power of nationalist created innumerable problem in India. For instance, Gandhi's anti-colonial nationalism was used as a successful tool to unite the people from different classes, genders castes and ethnicities in for the decolonization of their colonized nation.

Nationalism launches itself against the colonial state. Anti-colonial nationalism attempts to create its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society. The issue of nationalism and its exclusive tendency reflects on religion, caste, class, minorities, gender and subaltern. It is an important domination axis of inequality in its own right in liberal secular nation states. Nationalism does not represent the transcendence of religious or cultural differences. Majorities are identified with the nation and minorities are constituted as marginal and excessive to the nation. The pervasive content of majority is thus rendered transparent and invisible, whereas minoritarian beliefs and practices are constructed as threatening and hyper-visible. In Indian landscape, the Muslim, women, untouchables, concubines, peasants and the poor become site or the repository of this "excess" – and hence they were constituted as the stranger within the nation.

Mehta points out positive as well as negative sides of nationalism. She opines that Sardar Patel, who speaks for the Indian National Congress, the major nationalist party is known as the 'Iron Man of India'. He does not threaten. He acts. As for Jinnah, the president of the Muslim League, he is reputed to have the most acute legal mind in the subcontinent. Unfortunately, that brilliant mind has been sharpened to a dangerous edge by bitterness. In this regard, Mehta narrates:

'Why is he bitter?'

Sir Akbar turned to Jaya, pleased by her curiosity. 'Jinnah was once president of the Indian National Congress, hukam. And a great

president. Under his leadership, Hindus and Muslims briefly buried the religious enmities that divide our great subcontinent. When he was ousted from prominence by the ambitions of younger men, he left public life and practiced law abroad. Now he has returned, as president of Muslim league. With the brilliant and bitter Jinnah as spokesman for India's Muslims, the Indian National Congress will find it hard to ignore their demand. (317-8)

Actually, Mehta praises the spirit of nationalism in ideas not in any geographical boundaries because ideas have no boundaries. Jaya in her mutual conversation with Sir Akbar, the prime minister of Sirpur, says that Jinnah is the man who is influenced by the individualistic notion of thinking. Mehta thinks that exclusive nationalism is the cause of the partition of Indian .The discrimination of Muslims in government service, the imposition of Hindi language or the lack of protection for Muslims during communal disturbances led to the subdivision of Indian sub-continent in 1947. It was separation movement led by Mohammad Ali Jinnah. So, India was divided into Pakistan and Hindustan, Muslim-majority and Hindu-majority provinces, respectively. Jinnah's political party, the Muslim League had no political support until 1940s. This separation movement led to the division of India in less than a decade. His two nation theory presented partition as the logical and inevitable outcome of the irreconcilable differences between Hindus and Muslims. As for this the narrator opines:

There is to be a huge rally tomorrow demanding a separate nation for Muslims. Muslims from all parts of the country are attending, and the Hindus are erecting barricades to prevent more Muslims from coming into the city during their night. (442)

It shows that nationalist ideology based on a single religious group or political party causes antagonism between privileged community and marginalized communities.

In fact, nationalism works rendering certain cultural practices and institutions as national myth. Nationalists habitually draw upon particular cultural identities and long standing associations with territory to base their claims for distinct statehood and sovereignty. Thus, certain ethnic groups come to constitute the repository of the nation, while minority customs, traditions and narrative are marginalized, delegitimized and rendered as strange and foreign. Jaya's mother and Jaya have conversation on colonizers' potential response to nationalist movement: "But the British will arrest him hukam. Will you follow him to jail?' 'I am free to follow the path of truth even if it leads to jail. You are not Bia-sa. Go back to Sirpur and guard. Your son's throne" (374). Thousands of peasants, women and other common people participated in the anti-British demonstrations but Mahatma was at the center.

Even British Indian reformists and common people keep an eye on Gandhi's manner: "Crowds of nationalists waited at every railway stations" (380). Chandni and other maidservants shouted by saying salt for India's freedom. Similarly, colonialists ignored the role of Vicerne, Lady Mody and Mrs. Roys's significant role to make them successful. Both Jinnah and Nehru are representatives of the dark side of nationalist, although, Nehru advocated for secularism in India, his secularism is Hindu Secularism which is more dangerous than religious fundamentalism. It is very close to Hindu fundamentalism on the other hand. Similarly, Mehta says "Jaya understood Gandhi's genius in challenging this alien empire with the very elements that terrified the Angrez, poverty instead of power, humility instead of exclusivity"(221). Gandhi's life was permeated with his commitment to religion. Gandhi defined his religion

“politics” in opposition to a state – centered politics and to modern practice of governing. Gandhi’s notion of politics is more kin to ethics. His demarcation between self – other relationship was to moderate, mediate or manage such relationship. However, Gandhi's unnecessary valorization of traditional values and non-violence helps the elitists to maintain their status quo.

So, nationalism is the organic ideology that corresponds to the national institution and this institution rests upon the formulation of a rule of exclusion, of visible or invisible borders materialized in laws and practices. According to Mehta Indian nationalism is Hindu nationalism or Indian National Congress's version of nationalism; therefore, the cause of the non-Hindus is excluded from the so-called national ideology. It is based on politics of inclusion and exclusion. Moreover, as it is elitist nationalism, it cannot address the problems of the peasants and other working class people.

3.3 Exploration of Affinity between Colonialist and Nationalist Historiography in *Raj*

The encounter between the colonizer and the colonized always affects both. Colonialism with the displacements and terrible uncertainties that it bring, is such a radically unsettling, affective experience of marginality that the colonized subject split can be seen as prefiguring indeterminacy and fragmentation. Colonial experiences affect the colonizers. More specifically the colonizer cannot escape a complex and paradoxical relationship with the colonized. Colonialist identity is constructed among the interaction with other. Here, nationalist resists against the colonizer to gain the power and position what colonizer holds. The colonizer’s partial dependency and the nationalists’ process of identity formation in that it constructs not only those who are stereotyped, but also the stereotype himself- in opposition to the stereotyped. Colonial historiography subordinates the role of females, poor, peasants,

workers or the marginalized peoples and so does nationalist historiography. It is because both forms of historiographies are elitist.

Due to the divide and rule policy of the British, Jinnah led the League of Muslim and Nehru led the National Congress so British became able to locate colonial rule in India. Mehta shows:

The tragedy often offer delayed too long was the absence of an authority into which the power of the British Empire could safely be placed. Jinnah remained intransigent in his demands for Pakistan, while Nehru maintained that only the National Congress spoke for India. (439)

Actually colonialist historiography always advocates for majority and neglects the minority. Due to their misunderstanding between majority and minority demarcation there emerged instability, liquidity and religious as well as cultural segregation. History of colonialism and nationalism are closely interlinked because both were influenced by the system of domination to constitute the field of truth by imposing specific knowledge, disciplines and values upon dominated groups. As a social formulation both of these histories work to constitute reality not only, for the objects, they appear to represent but also for the subjects who form the community on which these depend. Consequently, colonialist and nationalist histories are the complex of signs and practice that organize social existence and social reproduction within power politics. To show the influence of colonial values upon the leaders of the so-called nationalist party like Motilal Nehru, his son Jawahar Lal Nehru and others, Mehta says:

That is Moti Lal Nehru. He used to be very European until Gandhi inspired him to become an Indian. Then he threw his decanters, is

Savile Row suits and his French shirts into a huge bonfire. What do you think of that, Princess?. (240)

Most of the nationalist leaders who got their education in England followed the British way of norms, language, values and cultures. So, their resistance against to the colonizer seemed to be contradictory and in some respect very homogeneous with the colonizers. Their adoption of foreign language, culture and power and politics to govern the common people shows their inner most desire to become the center of attraction. Jawaharal Nehru is considered the freedom fighter of Quit India Movement, Non Co-operation and Indian Independence Movement accompanying with Gandhi. But the aforementioned extract shows how the nationalists were guided by elitist ideology, cultures and customs of the colonizers.

Britishers were greedy, elitist, undemocratic and cruel in their behavior and manner. Similarly, the motive of launching nationalists' movement was not for the betterment and advancement of the common people but for replacing and reproducing the new ruler in the nation.

Mrs. Roy and Jaya interact about the dignity and sovereignty of nation. Both colonialist and nationalist were guided with the motives of power politics. Colonialists ruled in the name of civilizing with gun, whereas nationalists ruled these subalterns in the name of representative of the subaltern but the failure of these bourgeoisies to speak for the nation is harmful for the people of India. Millions of people were crossing the borders. Women became homeless, refugee, widows and children became orphans but communal violence continued. Britishers tried to rule over India. But the elites of India tried to rule over the innocent, poor, weak and voiceless marginalized people. Their history was a rational, self-conscious through which the incomplete human spirit exists. Both historiographies are responsible for

creating hierarchies of privileged and marginalized people. Mehta presents, “Is it our fault that Jinnah is being hailed as the saviour of India’s Muslim? The fight between the Muslim League and the National Congress is a fight to govern British India. We live in Sirpur. What have we to do with” (420).

Actually the fight between Muslim League and the National Congress is to govern the people of India. So, the nationalism approved by only the one party cannot be fruitful and beneficial. Mehta comments on the idea of the nationalist which is deceptive in the sense that it has not been able to include the voices of marginalized people like women, subaltern, non- Hindus, working class people, concubines and servants in their discourse.

These historiographies have postulated the principal means of legitimizing the power domination in British India. Colonial refusal to occupy subaltern as domination created misunderstanding in the progressive dimension of history. Nationalism resisted colonialism due to the anxiety of power and the politics of Britishers. If they were real patriotic why would they be influenced by western education and ruling system. Both historiographies seek centrality, power and domination over the people. Gandhi and Nehru were only the authors of this anti-imperial movement for unity and to become powerful elites in the nation. Actually they valorize Hindu nationalism and create demarcation between Hindu majority and Jinnah's Muslim majority. “Muslim preferred the Great leader of the Muslim League [Jinnah] to Gandhi, the Great Soul of the National Congress”(420).

Colonialism emerged in England to expand the country. Similarly, nationalism first appeared as the resistance force against British colonizers. The cultural, religious and ethnic nationalism tragically distorts the foundational modernity of nation-ness: "At the fort in Lahore, the very place where Nehru announced that India would

become republic, in front of hundred thousand followers, Jinnah has announced a separate country for Muslims" (424).

So, Mehta shows affinity between these nationalist and colonialist historiographies in the contemporary era. India is known as unity in diversity. So that heterogeneities, diversities and differences among different classes, castes, genders and ethnicities can be acknowledged. But due to the failure of these historiographies Mehta valorizes to postcolonial historiography in *Raj*.

3.4 Valorization of Postcolonial Subaltern Historiography in *Raj*

A subaltern is one who is marginalized and is out of mainstream history, institution, education, socio-political and economic organization. Postcolonial subaltern historiography deliberately pays attention to the historical records, administrative and scientific writing of historians in a circular way. English history and literary production emphasized as less a series of domestically inspired changes and progressions. It emanates form through the imperial process. Thus, for instance, modernism can be argued to be product of Europe's contact with the so-called 'savage' culture of Africa and south pacific zone. Subaltern refers to the meaning of inferior rank to those groups in society who are subjects to the hegemony of the ruling classes. Subaltern classes include peasants, workers, women, non-Hindus, concubines, prostitutes and other groups who are denied access to hegemonic power.

The history of the winner is recorded and is told by the historians of the colonialist and nationalist but the central aim of the subaltern historians is to understand the consciousness that formed and still forms and political actions taken by the Subaltern Classes. The historiography of postcolonial era emerges as an invariant features about the subalterns. It means the subalterns are not slaves rather they are the creators of their own history. Their voices are muted in the mainstream

historiography-- colonialist as well as nationalists. To redraw and to reconstruct the mainstream history, the significant role of Subaltern has to be restructured, reconstructed and recorded in the mainstream history.

Gita Mehta, in her historical fiction *Raj* valorizes the Subaltern's voices by revisiting the Indian Colonial as well as Nationalist historiography. The purpose of the postcolonial subaltern historiography's project is to redress the imbalance created in the official history by a tendency to focus on elite and elite culture in South Asian historiography. Subordination cannot be understood except in binary relationship with dominance, the group aim to examine the subaltern 'as an objective assessment of the role of the elite and as a critique of elitist interpretations.

To historicize the fictional events in *Raj*, Mehta gives voice to the women, peasants, poor, untouchables in her text. Historical text includes along with the embedded socio-economic, politico-cultural aspects of the society as human fabrication to textualize historiography. Traditional notion of writing official history as an authentic, absolute and objective source has been dismantled by Mehta who resists and opposes this tendency of recording of history from the perspective of people in power. In this regard she writes:

Line of weary peasants stumble beside the railway tracks leading of Bombay, where Jai Singh would board ship for England and Jai Singh stared at the devastation that had overtaken British India in the past year as frightened passengers told his ministers of the riots that had broken out when British officials had evacuated whole villages before setting every house on fire to prevent the spread of plague. (17)

Thus, the railway stations were crowded with the families fleeing the famine and disease in Bombay itself. But the rich Indian Merchants who managed British

interest were totally ignorant about this miserable condition. They were individualistic and monolithic. Both histories were in the seeking of center position. British officials were a few in numbers. They ruled with the gun and took India as an imaginary homeland. If we go through the nationalist and colonialist historiography of the contemporary society both histories are unable to provide the voice and subjectivity of the subalterns who played significant role in the creation of mainstream history. At this time Cargo ships robbed grain and exporting Indian wheat to foreign markets. But the factory workers were starving.

Here, Mehta criticizes both sorts of histories which were written from the perspective of power holders. Due to the expansion of capitalism, the means and modes of production were under the control of these elite groups. Many peasants, women, subaltern, non-Hindus played significant role to resist the colonialist rule in India but the official history excluded the deeds and voices in the elitist. Afore mentioned text shows Jai Singh was the king of Balmer but his power and position was looted by the colonizers. He is in favor of the margined people but he himself is captivated in home exile. We can assume how the Britishers were cruel, barbaric, undemocratic and inhumane to Indians. Actually peasants were not poor but the blood-sucking vampire, the colonizers, squeezed their blood and labor. The political ideology of the ruler is always seeking people as ruled, but the ruled ones cannot bear the inhumanity and cruel behavior. Mehta shows that these people produce the grains but die of starvation. Postcolonial subaltern history is also a post nationalist form of history. Elite politics gets always involved in a vertical mobilization. The domain of both colonialist and nationalist history also depended on vertical power shifting and ignored the values of traditional organization of kinship which were dominant and powerful at that time. Mehta narrates:

Everyday more tribals attached themselves to Maharajah's procession. Sometimes the tribal men went hunting for deer. When they returned they skinned off the pelts with their long knives, and Jaya watched the tribal women turn the slaughtered animals on spits in ditches dug during the night, before slinging the cooked carcasses onto poles to carry on their naked shoulders. (284)

Actually the tribals and natives were supporting for the harmony, peace and dignity of the nation .But women are victimized in the official history .When Jaya was small she was taken to jungles to make her bold enough . Similarly, women were hard worker to accompany their husband Maharajah but their miserable condition is not presented by the colonialist and nationalist in their text. In fact, they were active, strong, self-motivated protagonist of that time. But these elites misrepresented and marginalized the decisive role of women, peasants, and working class people. Mehta further narrates: "Young men queue in front of British recruiting offices while starving peasants flood into the city. The viceroy has given orders for the machine gunning of students from the air in Bihar and Bengal to stop the Quit India Movement" (430).

Mrs. Roy is humanitarian to all Indians. She is kind and reports that the elite intellectuals were in queue to be the recruit but the old peasants entered into the city to resist the cruelty and barbaric nature of the Britishers. Similarly, Quit India Movement, non-cooperation movement and Independence were made successful by the peasants not by the so-called nationalists but the colonialist and nationalist historians ignored the remarkable role of these people. In Mehta's *Raj* many Sirpur lancers and even Pratap Singh was in favour of British domination because he was

educated in Britain. Quit India Movement was the relentlessly resistance of these peasants but the mainstream history gives no space for them.

Mehta presents her history writing technique in a different way. *Raj* is a fictional tale of Princess, Jaya, of Balmer, and later regent Maharjani of Sirpur, trying to save her kingdom first from the grip of the British empire, and then from the so-called nationalists who turned to be elitists. Jaya belongs to the representative of subaltern group because she provides voice to the voiceless people. Mehta sees:

A familiar flash of anger crossed Mrs. Roy's sharp eyes. 'White teeth will not make your skin white, Baisa. Nor French perfumes and eyebrows plucked like a European woman's. The British have taught your husband to hate himself. Don't become like him or you will belong nowhere'. Jaya averted her eyes. 'I don't want to become like him, Mrs. Roy. I just want him to treat me as a wife. (338)

We can vividly see how the women are ill-treated and unwanted in the male dominated society. Jaya's husband Pratap Singh was schooled in the west. He feels self-humiliation but Jaya is confident and becomes bold enough to regard him as husband even if she is in critical situation. She fulfills the role of male to protect the sovereignty of Sirpur. West sees India as a female body and tries to govern the female body. Here, her husband dominates and subordinates her because her skin is not white. The discrimination between gender, sex, class, margin and subaltern is practiced in colonial as well as nationalist ideology. Both histories did not represent woman as the part of whole. Rather they categorized them as the second sex. But in Mehta's *Raj* women are in dominant position. They are shown to challenge the western hegemony and present themselves as strong and creators of the mainstream history. In Mehta's novel subaltern can speak. By attempting to write the postcolonial

subaltern history, Mehta uses subalterns' perspective in *Raj*. The feeling of empathy only can create the assimilating of pain, suffering and obstacles faced by the subaltern. Mehta narrates:

Jaya sat at the Duwager Maharani's side while she spoke of her grandsons. 'Poor Victor'. He was only seven years old when he became Mahrajah. In spite of his youth, Sir Henry Conroy, the British Resident, forced him and Pratap to leave immediately for school in England. The old woman gave Jaya a grim smile, 'But each time the boys returned to Sirpur, I told the younger concubines to remind of their own customs. (179-80)

When Jaya is the main subaltern character on the basis of her gender and sexuality, here the concubines are represented as the protectors of culture and diverse custom of India. Indeed, Victor was seven years old when he had to ride on gaddi, but the British Resident, Sir Henry Conroy forced him to leave England. Actually Rajputs were the defender of the country. The lion of India is captured when it is a cub. The decadent cultures, education and systems are imposed in colonial era. The nationalist history and colonialist history are criticized in this historical fiction.

Many western political theorists have conception of political community. Postcolonial historiography tries to practice the politics of justice and equity. These are implemented at the level of state and citizenship. This will be able to think about possibilities of cohabitation among disparate religious, political and cultural influences to state and national culture. Postcolonial historiography disregards women's position within family and within the religious practice as indicative of degenerate native culture. The Subaltern historiography demands of humanitarian

notion of empathy. It has to be projected in the history. History should be written even from the perspective of minorities, women, Subaltern and powerless people also.

Subaltern history could never be a mere reproduction of the English tradition of writing history from below in India. So, modern Indian history is relatively recent development, a result of research and discussion in various universities mainly in India, the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia after the end of British Imperial rule in August 1947. Postcolonial Subaltern Historiography always resists the official documents of the British India and traditions of imperial history writing. It raises voice against colonial rule that was supposed to be beneficial to India and its people.

Jaya fulfils her *dharma* of the warrior because British India pollutes the mind of her husband who obliged to adopt the western culture. But the barbaric and in humanitarian behaviour of British Raj vividly can be seen here. Mehta narrates:

I saw the British beat defenseless men with lathis and rifle butts. They did not cringe. They did not complain. But most important, they did not retreat. Their silent courage made them invincible. The British Raj is finished 'Bai-sa .I wish your father had lived to see this day. (378)

In fact, the Maharajah of Balmer, Jai Singh was against the British hegemony in India. Jaya later becomes the Regent Maharani of Sirpur and presents herself as safety volve of her kingdom and her son's throne very successively. Then, she abandons the regime and takes part in elections. But the Viceroy visits India and orders the police to arrest the demonstrators in course of Indian Independence Movement. Indian people unified and made a coalition of Muslims and Hindus. British police were brutal and inhumane to suppress the common people. These indigenous people made them be obliged to end the British Raj in India. Mehta

narrates Indian history from the perspective of margin which is dedicated to cause revolutionary change in the country. Mass is marginalized and petty-bourgeois are dominating with the support of Britishers. Mehta resists for this notion of writing historiography:

The last viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, said Sirpur could make its own terms with the new nations of Pakistan and India. He betrayed us. The Indian leaders said we could remain free if we agreed to common policies. They betrayed us if I had not signed the Instrument of Accession, there would have been more bloodshed .(458)

In 1947, Partition became as a founding trauma in the history of the sub-continent. Here, Viceroy Lord Mountbatten claims that he signed the instrument of accession to stop more bloodshed in the country. He blames others and justifies the deeds of himself: "We British are not all monsters, Bai-sa. In spite of attempts on his life, and deep resentment back in England. Lord Irwin is about to release Gandhi and invite him to talks to viceroy's house. Half of England will call Irwin a traitor" (386).

Hereby, Mr. Osborne assures Jaya and tries to prove that all Angrez are not monsters. Some of them are good for Indians. Gandhi was kept in a prison due to his civil disobedience movement. Mahatma resisted with the producing of salt in their own country but British government proved it as an illegal or criminal act. They insulted Mahatma. Wiston Churchill described the Mahatma to the British parliament as the naked fakir. The defense of Mr. James Osborne that all Britishers are not monsters means they are also getting anxiety with the rulers. Mehta gives voice to the voiceless people to resist the Angrez's hegemony by providing the notion of peoples' consciousness. Due to the excessive domination of the elitist and making the gap on the basis of power, knowledge, gender, sex, caste and subaltern, the marginalized

people raised their voice that has to be heard by the ruler. These people have to be the subject of their own fate or destiny. This is the voice of voiceless people. Gandhi was searching for a means to unite people of the subcontinent without bloodshed.

There was a tussle between violence and non-violence, among Indians and Angrez. But violence was defeated by the strength of non-violence. Jaya Devi is the speaker of dominated people. So, she gives her candidacy for the election. She speaks:

‘I want to be a candidate in the elections’

He motioned her to the chair opposite him. Your party

‘I have no party’

‘Independent, in spidery copperplate he wrote the word down on a form. ‘Your good name madam?’

‘Jaya Devi’.

A sudden smile illuminated the serious face. ‘The name means victory, Madam. May I wish you good luck in your endeavors?’ (460)

Mehta presents female protagonist, Jaya, to participate in elections to defeat nationalist lawyer who wants to be next Maharajah of Sirpur. She knows his ignorance about Sirpur. He belongs to Calcutta. James Osborne became more anxious at this moment. Arun Roy is a lawyer and he wants to get victory in the election but her presence in election proves the counter of women to male domination and elitist rationality. The lawyer, who was the supporter of British Raj in India, now wears white mask in a black skin and wants to win the election. His ultimate desire is to rule over the minorities but Jaya makes it failure. Mehta writes:

‘True justice lies in the claims of the majority. I say to you, the princess of India have forfeited their chance to share in the governing of India. By their refusal to enact simple reforms, they continue to keep

millions of Indians in chains. Demand elections in every Indian kingdom. Let history say, it was the subjects, not the kings of Royal India who freed every Indian from the shackles of slavery. (418)

British India had no dignity, no ethics and no humanity. The rulers of India ignored the pleas of common people. According to bourgeois, perspective of majority should govern the country but Mehta provides the voice to the voiceless people. It is Jaya's resistance power against the elitist hegemony. Needless to say that millions of Indians were chained by the mission of democracy and representation boundary of colonialist as well as nationalist who ignored the basic norms of democracy. The elections uplift only the person who are in power and politics. The bourgeois nationalist cannot be the representative of the voiceless people. Jaya was the Regent Maharani and Sir Akbar was the Prime minister of Sirpur. She abandons the regime and wants to take part in the election. But the inhumanity and barbaric nature of British India can be seen in the blood-shed . Sir Akhbar's manhood is cut off. So, she is blamed by Osborne in this way:

'Your son died like a true warrior, Bia-sa'.

'Savaged by a bloodthirsty mob, trying to protect the dignity of his Prime Minister? You call that war?

She smashed her clenched fist into his mouth. Blood dribbled from James Osborne's lips. With academic interest she watched it stain his shirt. (446)

Actually she takes action against the domination and brutal, cruel tendency of Angrez. They want to hold power and politics in a superior position. Anyway, the Britishers were blood thirsty. James Osborne blames her to be a blood thirsty and greedy in power and position but she strongly resists it. Jaya turns away from his

surprise, “In our kingdoms we have to consider the needs of all our subjects, Mr. Menon. Not merely those who represent majority” (457). Jaya throws light on the significant role of minority in the country. Both Muslims and Hindus are the subjects of India. Jaya knew that despite the defeat of the Hindu nationalist led coalition in the last elections, the anti-Muslim rhetoric of Hindu nationalist has come to consolidate a kind of popular common sense among many Indians.

It was the vision and mission of Angrez as well as Indian nationalist to make Indians civilize and grasp the power and position in the Indian continent. Jaya is the representative member of Subaltern group. As to this Mehta narrates. "It was the dream of British Empire to teach the princess of India about democracy. ‘What did the British Empire know about democracy?’ Arun Roy demanded ‘We taught the Indian rulers that lesson" (461). The freedom of choice is not only the property of these elites rather they can adopt the cultures and values for the spiritual salvation. Jaya, becomes the prominent figure to teach the norms of democracy and representation in a different way.

The question here emerges as what is the principle of *Rajniti*? The ultimate response is the people. Britishers did not know the spirit of democracy in depth. It is fabricated with the melodious tune but inwardly the British colonizers were corrupted. Similarly, nationalist also adopted the notion of majority. They ignored minority. So, in India there occurred partition and peasants’ revolutions even after the introduction of democracy. The situation of women in British India is miserable. This part of letter is addressed to Mrs. Roy and it was given to Jaya. She finds in it.

We are treated like chattels. We are taught to be slaves. Our duty is merely to satisfy the whims of our masters. We are deprived of our self respect. Our existence is mere cipher. We are toys of our master [...] I

want my status to be regularly defined. I want to fight for the many voiceless women who are being ill- treated. You politically minded men will say there is morbid exaggeration in my account – but will you not listen to the tragic appeal of your Indian sisters? . (238)

Mehta includes the voice of marginalized women like prostitutes in her novel. The relationship between British colonizers and Indian women was like that of a master- slave relation. They were treated as unwanted and unloved beings. There was no self- respect of women. They were treated like animals in a cage. They were sexually exploited. They wanted to fight for the many voiceless people but they are exiled even in their own country.

Gita Mehta's *Raj* as post Independent and post partition document, especially, valorizes the postcolonial subalterns, like Jaya, concubines, peasants, Muslims, untouchables and so on and takes both historiographies, the historiography of the mainstream elite culture on the one hand and the other historiography of those deserted unsung heroines on the other simultaneously to expose the decades veiled historiography of subaltern marginal and under privileged people by giving equal weight on these colonialist, nationalist and postcolonial subaltern historiography. Mehta revisits and redraws the officially recorded colonialist monolithic singular historiography of *Angrez* to present the more trustworthy historiography from the postcolonial subaltern people's perspective. And this revisited and redrawn counter historiography embodies all the embedded spatial- temporal, religio-cultural, socio-political and economic aspect of contemporary society. This revisiting and revisionary technique helps Mehta to raise the voice of those voiceless, marginal and subaltern people and overview the then contemporary society minutely.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

Gita Mehta in her historical fiction *Raj* critiques colonialist as well as nationalist historiography because of their use of elitist approach to Indian history. In this novel she points out the blind spots of both of these historiographies. She opines that colonialist historiography unnecessarily valorizes colonization as a civilizational mission and ignores the suffering of the colonized. Mehta has mixed up the real historical characters with fictional characters and has made them interesting, which redraws the Indian history of the postcolonial era by rewriting and reinterpreting from marginalized people's perspectives. The main character Jaya, a historical character fights for the freedom in very radical way in the real early twentieth century panorama. She seizes the crux of a historical personality.

Therefore, Mehta through this fiction tries to inject the penicillin of tolerance, coexistent, love, forgiveness and understanding which are keys to unlock the door of humanity, fraternity, brotherhood among the various religious, cultural, political groups in the global world including India of this twenty first century. This simultaneous and concomitant binding of historical and fictional events makes this historical fiction more inclusive because it gives 'voice' to the voiceless marginalized subaltern at the same time challenges the authenticity of the so-called official recorded history. Jaya, a historical character makes love with Pratap Singh, a fictional character which strengthens the claim of postcolonial subaltern historiographers that history and fiction are alike for they interact with each other and share the spirits of narratives and complement each other.

The personal histories of the fictional characters and their involvement versions of the events other than those described in the official history of India about

the era as progressive, peaceful and just has been put under erasure by the novelist-cum historiographers of *Raj* Gita Mehta. She by making the historical and fictional characters interact and by presenting the detailed events of the postcolonial era different from those recorded in the official history describes and presents the new version of history in postcolonial India. Mehta represents the subaltern issues at the core. While presenting the non-Western text in the Western landscape, Mehta makes several distortions. The politics behind such turns and twists from real history to text is to represent the subalterns.

Writing about the past of British India is the interpretation of the past by the historian who cannot be free from his/her human nature, prejudices and pre-occupations. So, the historiography cannot be free from the human fabrication like fiction. Mehta's *Raj* blurs the boundary between fact and fiction that results into historical fiction of the colonial and the postcolonial era. Therefore, in order to rewrite the histories of the marginalized people such as females, peasants, factory workers, Gita Mehta advocates for postcolonial subaltern historiography in *Raj*. For Mehta, the subaltern people in terms gender class caste, ethnicity can raise their voice in the historical fiction like *Raj* because it is written from the perspective of the subaltern people.

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