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Redefining Identity: A New Historicist Approach in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Redefining Identity: A New Historicist Approach in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Binod Padal has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

The advocacy for equality and unique identity is provoked in people of margin since the time of their consciousness towards equality and freedom. In The Autobiography of Malcolm X also, Malcolm X represents the voice of repressed for distinct identity basing on their historical significance, capacity, skill and strength of performance. There are several factors like social, political and economic to dominate the minority group people. In order to reflect the real sense of such people's identity these factors should be taken in grant in order to redefine the identity and perception towards such dominated people. In order to trace such aspect New Historicist thinkers like Michael Foucault, Aram Vesser and Stephen Greenblatt form the theoretical surrounding of this research. This research depicts even Black people have capacity and confidence to form their own identity even in adverse environment, if they are not misrepresented and unidentified in the society.

Keywords: Identity, Advocacy, Marginal, New Historicism

This research examines how Alex Haley's *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* depicts revision of Malcolm X's identity. He is always projected as an aggressive, religious orthodox and violent person in American history. He is susceptible to falsehood, exaggerations, and alternative facts because of the influence of the dominant culture. Afro-American's identity is tagged as savage, unintellectual and ugly. Not only this, even Malcolm X is blamed as religious orthodox while he tries to advocate for suppressed and suffered people and excavate the real identity. This identity includes their culture, tradition, religion, intellectuality and their way of life which is always foreshadowed by the dominant culture of American society. Through

this autobiography he tries to unmask the reality to the outer world by challenging the official claim of the state agency of United States.

In American society Black people are dominated not only in terms of physical level but they are also dominated in terms of social, political, economic and even in their cognitive level. Despite their capacity to perform well they are biased in the name of colour identity. They are blamed as uncivilized and lazy people who need their masters to rule over them. Their history includes their real identity which is away from their access. People like Malcolm X try to shed light upon their real identity by challenging the mainstream history. Even in their schools and in society, Blacks are deprived of their real sense of self. Whatever, their white masters taught them they have to follow it without any objection. In this autobiography also, Malcolm X was a brilliant student who wants to make career in law, but his white teacher insists him to be a carpenter than a lawyer because it is practical for Negro. This type of behavior shows that even the teacher who is considered as a neutral person is guided by the supremacy prevailing in the society. Only because Malcolm X belongs to Black community, he could not be a lawyer. It reflects how American society is guided by false consciousness. The Black's only identity is to be manual worker rather than any other white color job or intellectual performance.

Due to such misrepresentation Blacks are demotivated and they are ready to accept the identity given by the white people to them. So he tries to resist against such social phenomenon that is built on the basis of power structure where marginalized voice is foreshadowed. From the early age he tries to resist such false identity, but he is blamed as racist, religious orthodox and an aggressive person who promotes violence in American society. But his movement was beyond such controversies and fallacies. He is in quest of distinct identity which includes their social, political,

religious and cultural rights. Such rights are given to them in American history after slaves were freed, but it was only in documentation. In daily practice it is beyond the reach of common people specially Blacks. These people are considered as secondary people who do not have any social, political and economic rights. They are born just for slavery, so that they can serve White people.

The Black community is living colonial life within their own country. Despite the citizen of the same country they are living a secondary life without any culture and tradition that they have got by their ancestors. By imposing colonial power structure within the country, African-Americans ability to progress psychologically, advance economically and to receive equal respect and treatment is blocked. In this autobiography also Malcolm X realizes the environment and cultural forces that have negatively impacted black men, America's racist society influences him to act in an aggressive way. He felt in order to get dignity and identified in a right way Black race have to be a bit radical. The society has produced and nourishes a psychology which brings out the Black people as lowest, most base part of human being in American history. Whenever the question is raised by black's movement, it is twisted and turned in order to spread false message. Such situation has led to justify the false identity of blacks that is given by white supremacist society that these people are lazy and dull ones who are born to serve the white masters. Such prevailing concept in Whites is the dominant factor to subjugate these coloured people.

This research has used New Historicist theoretical concept as methodology. This theory encourages connecting historical and political circumstances to people's daily lives especially those in groups who are mostly impacted by history and politics. Their real identity, tradition and culture are misinterpreted in the main stream media and other state agency which is also the part of official history.

As for Michael Foucault's interest in the issue of power, subjectivity, and ideologies has influenced critics not only in literary studies but also political, science, history, anthropology and governmentality. In Montrose's opinion, "the complete recovery of meanings in a diverse historical outlook is considered necessary since whiter historical criticism is "illusory," in that it attempts to "recover meaning that are in any final or absolute sense authentic, correct, and complete," because scholarship constantly "construct and delimits " the objects" (24). While another theorist Harold A. Veesser argues, "It has stuck down the doctrine of noninterference that forbade humanities to intrude on question of politics, power, indeed on all matters that deeply affect people's public life" (9). Here Vessers idea reflects that the elements affecting people's life should be taken in grant in order to represent them. Greenblatt is able to illustrate difference and contingency in the haunting disturbance to the "real" of history. He opines:

The historical evidence-"mere anecdotes"- conventionally invoked in literary criticism to assist in the explication of a text seemed to me dead precisely because it was enemy of wonder: it was brought in to lay contingency and disturbance to rest. I do not want history to enable me to escape the effect of the literary but to deepen it by making it touch the effect of the real, a touch that would reciprocally deepen and complicate history. (5-6)

It focuses on the fact that any literary works should attach with history implicitly or explicitly. It should reflect the reality of the people of marginal group. The voice of unheard should be noticed in order to find out it's real essence.

This autobiography tries to unmask the hidden pains and suffering of African-American people that is always foreshadowed. It is the experience of a common man to a famous leader and activist. This text reflects how the American society imposes a

false identity to the marginalized people in U.S. Society. Different authors who represent the mainstream society they and their texts are clearly impacted by postcolonial American culture and other several occurrences. Different racist and corrupt individuals inside institution such as media, religious and political structure unfairly represent them.

Malcolm X realizes the environment and cultural forces that have negatively impacted upon Black people. They are forced to adopt the white supremacist orthodoxy. They do not have any sense of their originality and real identity. In every working capacity blacks are questioned about their performance, as he is also charged inferior several times for his quest to search Blacks' identity. Even state agency and society mistreated him in his childhood only because of his coloured identity. But after the realization of domination prevailing in the then society he tried to resist such system and tried to establish a distinct identity which would make him to compete equally with White Americans. Such change made him an activist and advocator of suppressed people in American society.

The issue that is depicted in this autobiography is the common issue in American society during 1860s and even after the declaration of Emancipation Proclamation in the United States. He was deprived from his parental love as his father was brutally murdered and mother was sent to mental asylum. The time of his living, is the period of high time of racial discrimination. Several researchers and critics have raised the issue of racial violation, traumatic experiences of Blacks as well as the issue of religion towards the attitude of Malcolm X. Likewise, Susan S. Vogel in her article argues religion was dominant to bring change in him. She states, "The movement had transformed Malcolm little into Malcolm X. And after experiencing with Malcolm little his conversion to the Muslims, one might well

wonder how any negro, so long the victim of white man's society could resist the muslim call" (3). But Malcolm X projects that religion is not only the source to resist against white supremacy. He has been misrepresented for such, his hatred is not towards Christianity but hypocritical Christianity especially a white supremacist form of Christianity that always subjugate black minority and their identity which increase white domination. Such changes towards the religion could be seen in the text when he visited Mecca. He is only represented as anti-Christianity. Likewise scholars Raymond Rodger and Jimmie N. Regers argue on their article about this autobiography "Even his attitude towards whites was affected by his experiences in that holy place...He became less and doctrinairely antagonistic toward whites because Malcolm himself in his recounting trip to mecca said that morning was the start of a radical alteration in my whole outlook about white men" (110). But the American mainstream media and publication houses have shown him as the radical and violent activist who is going to dismantle the Americas unity and peace through his quest of getting distinct identity. But actually he is advocating for his as well as all Afro-Americans real identity which is always misrepresented for those blacks in America. Their real identity is hidden and they only knew what their White masters told them. In the similar way, the pioneer of new historicist Greenblatt argues:

there is 'no end of subversion' of power relations if we adopt the perspective of the historian and look at configurations of power other than the ones in which we find ourselves. But there is no subversion "for us," because our subjectivity is a product of the particular cultural power that in reality fashions each of us, however tenacious the illusion that we fashion ourselves may be. Any subversion of that power configuration by "us"—and ultimately this

means by any human subject or group of subjects—can thus only reinforce it. (458-9)

New historicists argue that power relation plays a significant role to create and shape the distinct identity. In order to understand such circumstances the root level of socio-political and cultural situation should be understood which the main stream history is lacking to depict every context as it is written from the perspective of upper class. The New Historicism can provide a new way and direction for the creation of their self-identity for the people who are physically, mentally as well as economically exploited. Blacks' history is marginalized as they are the exploited group in American society, such situation of exploitation and identity crisis occurs in Black people because they lack their voice. The scholar Nancy Clasby also argues in his article that, " Deprived of an effective national myth, colonized man has had, in a sense, no biography which is not chartered and authorized by the oppressor. Today these people are emerging into history-politically, economically, and, of most importance, spiritually. They represent a new expression of human consciousness" (8). Here Clasby claims how the dominant group has suppressed marginal group peoples historical, political and other circumstances. But the self-expressing of their real experience is challenging the established notion.

The autobiographies, memoir, novel and other literary genres can bring new voice to the suppressed group as they are coming to main stream society to create their own identity and raise the voice against the domination. They are reflecting their actual experiences about the way they were treated in an adverse society which is based on the thought to exploit people on the basis of color. Different researcher has talked on several issues in this autobiography like racial violation and autobiographical tools but this review of literature is focused towards the new

historicist perspective to change the identity. This research explores how the established notion is biased towards the marginalized group. It highlights new voice should be raised which should include marginalized peoples social, political, economic as well as their personal ability to redefine the identity that is projected in main stream history.

In the autobiography, Malcolm X advocates the voice of repressed. These repressed people are always dominated and mistreated on the basis of their color. His advocacy mainly focuses for the true identity which has been foreshadowed from ages. In American society the state agency, bureaucracy and other social agencies plays pivotal role for suppressing and hindering marginalized voice in the society. He believes that as long as the black man is identified on the basis of color discrimination he will lose his real identity which includes his belief, customs and freedom. In the similar way this research also explores that the identity he was given during the course of his life should be analyzed and reviewed from new perspective which would help to give justice and voice to the dominated people in the American society. Specially, these dominated people are Afro-Americans. If we deeply observe the history of slavery, the Blacks are commoditized. They are considered only as the goods sold in the market whose value and significance is determined by the White supremacy. Every White man dealt Black as a part of his property which can be twisted and turned as per the choice of White Americans. The whites as the members of higher class are inclined to oppress the Blacks on the basis of colour, race and socio-economic status. By such attributes they can impose their own ideology and rule upon them. Whites consider themselves as the members of civilized and high class who valorized their race and colour. While supporting this idea writer presents the evidence in the very beginning of the text as, "The Klansmen shouted threats and

warnings at her that we had better get out of town because 'the good Christian white people' were not going to stand for my father" (1). In this sense, whiteness is associated with beauty, happiness, good and intellect which in contrast, Blacks depicts as 'the other', savage and ugly in mainstream American society.

New historicism is a theoretical concept which challenges the dominant culture and it tries to give the justice and voice to the marginalized literature and culture. It is based on the assumption that literary work is the product of time, place and circumstances of certain composition. Such circumstances shape the general identity of certain group or people who are suppressed by the main stream society. While supporting this argument the critic Habib Rafey postulates, "New historicists variously recognize the ability of literature to challenge social and political authority" (762). In the same way, Malcolm X challenges the social and political authority to redefine their position on the basis of their knowledge, cognition and culture that they are possessing from their ancestors. He is advocating against the American postcolonial hegemony which intentionally repressed African-Americans. As he talks about the situation to raise voice, "As the other ethnic groups have done, let black people, wherever possible, however possible patronize their own kind, hire their own kind and start in those ways to build up the black race's ability to do for itself. That's the only way the American black man is ever going to respect" (281). He raised the voice against unjust system of prevailing hegemonic domination and it supports that such revolutionary voice would advocate for others and collaborate with the dominated mass and they would continue their campaign against the false identity which has been attached for the long period of time. Such misrepresentation is the root cause for lacking the self-respect of Black people in American racist society.

Hegemony is a Greek term which refers to 'rule' or 'leadership' initially

referring to the domination of one state within confederation. This concept was propounded by Italian activist and philosopher Antonio Gramsci, who investigates why the ruling class is so successful in promoting its own interest and why it is able to persuade other class with their interest in the society. 'Hegemony' then is understood as domination. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffins in the book *Key Concept in post- colonial Studies* opines:

Fundamentally, hegemony is the power of ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all. Domination is thus exerted not by force, nor even necessarily by active persuasion, but by more subtle and inclusive power over the economy and over the state apparatuses such as education and the media by which the ruling class's interest is presented as the common interest and thus comes to be taken for granted. (116)

Thus, Hegemony is a kind of power which persuades in dominating all facts of the colonized world. It aims to persuade the majority of population as ruling class by imposing economic and cultural legitimacy. On the basis of such legitimacy ruling class identifies Black as inferior race which is not listed in the hierarchies of White society.

Various critics' have given significant ideas to support the system against unjust prevailing in the mainstream society. In the similar way, Hans Bertens Literary Theory opines the idea of Foucauldian discourse in the following way.

In any case, power works through discourses and discursive formations. In its policing of abnormal behavior, the power of human sciences derives from what claimed to be knowledge is what Foucault calls a 'discourse'. To be more precise, a discourse is a loose structure of interconnection assumptions that makes knowledge possible. (120)

Discourses in the societies are created through various acts of representation by the people who are in power. Thus, in a way discourse means an authoritative way of interpreting or representing something and whatever is represented within a discourse propped by the power and time, becomes the truth about certain thing in the world. These truths later on become subjects of knowledge for the people. On such basis African American people are treated as the inferior being. And they are prone to belief on such assumption given by the people in the power. This autobiography introduces several discourses such as discourse of power, racial discrimination and discourse of white supremacy. Dominance constitutes power abuse which is based on the dominance of one social group over another based on and legitimated by belief system. Such belief gives the certain identity to the African-American based on White supremacy. In the text too we can see the glimpses, "They called us "nigger" and "darkie" and "Rastus" so much that we thought those were our natural names. But they didn't think of it as an insult; it was just the way they thought about us" (9).

Dominance formulates on the basis of power abuse which is regulated by one social group over another based on the authoritative power. Such group on power supposes to dominate and insult the marginalized group as a natural phenomenon. Specially the relation of these two groups are impacted and constrained on the basis of institutional, political, cultural and economic system of subordination based on the racial difference.

These social construct phenomenon emphasis the domination on the basis of false assumption prevailing in the society which is constructed by White supremacy. Similarly in 1861, Alexander H. Stephens vice president of the Confederate States of America was convinced that:

[The Confederacy] foundation are laid, its corner stone rests, upon the great truth that the Negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery sub-ordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition. This, our new Government is the first, in the history of the world, based on this great physical, philosophical and moral truth. (3)

In the above lines it is crystal clear about white's position in the society. It also depicts the inherent assumption of White people toward Blacks. The identity of Blacks is inferior only because of colored race; on such assumption White dominates Black. The person on such high and authoritative position also has negative and dominating perception towards marginalized group. It shows the racist American society which always shapes Blacks position, status and its identity in the society.

The suffering and problems faced by these people is always repressed. The domination is considered as trivial and natural. As Malcolm X states such ideas in his autobiography, "There had been centuries of the worst kind of outrages against southern black people- lynchings, rapings, shootings, beatings! But you know history has been triggered by trivial-seeming incidents" (274). In such case it can be clearly assumed the real position, significance and identity of Black people in American society. It shapes the concept that the suffering is natural to Black and they are prone to bear it.

American postcolonial hegemony intentionally represses African-American. This autobiography is also advocating against such unequal social structure and wrong perception towards Blacks. Malcolm X appears as the advocator of dominated and marginalized group to speak for justice and identity. His main appeal for the common people is to raise voice against such domination and investigate their own identity which has been misrepresented by the White Americans. As he claims

"Whites have always hidden or justified all of the guilt's they could by ridiculing or blaming Negroes" (16). African-Americans are marginalized; however it is the outcome or assumption of false images and identities. Such situation leads to suffer people specially the poor and the youth one. False representation is one of the major reason of domination and suffering of Black people. Being a good student he has to suffer in his youthful days only because of his representation as a Black. He is questioned on his ability and performance though he was a genius student. In such situation the theoretical concept helps to reveal the issues, complexity and truths about him that he faced during his life.

He is susceptible to falsehood, exaggerations and alternative facts because of the influence of the dominant culture. Such situation would help to promote his false identity that is constructed. Hans Berten formulates his idea in *Literary Theory: The Basics* which helps to support this concept as he postulates, "The self is always a construction that our identity is never given but always the product of an interaction between the way we want to represent ourselves through the stories we tell (or the incidents we suppress) and our actual presentation and the power relations of which we are part" (157). Such concept provides an image of how our dominant surrounding shapes our individual as well as communal identity. Despite our ability and better performance our identity is shaped according to the choice of social phenomenon. Malcolm X also microcosmically displays this situation in his autobiography. In order to get rid of such socially constructed identity he resists against such social structure and struggles to shift his identity from marginalized to a prophetic voice of representation.

He realizes that the prevailing environment has negatively identified Black men. And the White men also have been forced to act upon it accordingly. "The white

man is not inherently evil, but American racist society influences him to act evilly. The society has produced and nourishes a psychology which brings out the lowest, most base part of human being" (378). From such experiences of autobiographer it widely projects the Blacks identity as an inferior race prevailing in the then American society. Racist thought has always dehumanized black as 'the other'. Their identities are tagged like the products sold in the market. To implement such situation even the state agency and social factors spread false or sensational images and statements regarding those marginalized people.

Even Malcolm X's history teacher Mr. Williams would intentionally degrade image and misrepresent the history of African-American, causing deep wounds upon his identity and self-image. As he often states his history teacher's words, "Mr. Williams laughed through [the only short paragraph discussing Negro history] in a single breath, reading aloud how the Negroes had been slaves and then were freed, and how they were usually lazy and dumb and shiftless" (30). Such humiliating and wrong perception towards Blacks by well literate White Americans reflects the condition of Blacks history which is a prominent factor to determine their identity. The condition is very painful and suppressed. Blacks are always treated as other being that has not any role and significance in the society. Their only job is to serve White people and keep their voice suppressed.

The continuous misrepresentation and false consciousness has demotivated Blacks to raise their voice. When marginal group members internalize oppression they do not challenge social order and may even lead towards self-destructive path such as drug abuse, violence or depression. Even Malcolm X was habituated in addiction and started the wrong path of life when he faced the misrepresentation in extremity. But later when he was in contact with El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz he learned much about

the Afro- Americans history, their contribution and their suffering. By acknowledging such knowledge from another Black activist he transformed his way of life and started raising voice for marginalized and creating his own identity which is subjugated by mainstream history. Later he converted himself into a prophetic leader to give voice and justice to the suppressed and victim of being called a savage and uncivilized by White Americans.

His advocacy is focused to dismantle the wrong perception towards them and establish their own identity which would give them self- dignity in society. He raises such voice frequently in this autobiography. As he mentions, "Human rights! Respect as human beings! That's what America's black masses want. That's the true problem. The black masses want not to shrunk from as though they are plague ridden" (287). The people of color are considered as the degrading human being. Their basic human right is hijacked from them. In such condition the identity is lost so, inorder to get all basic human rights and establish their own identity Malcolm X advocates by representing the suppressed voice.

Most of titles given in this autobiography clearly display how influential other perspectives are upon Malcolm X's identity. He implies that his projection of image can become the projection of identity. 'Mascot', 'Homeboy', 'Detroit Red', 'Hustlers', 'Satan', are chapter titles and are all degrading nicknames given to him by others during the course of his life. According to the superstitious belief in American society "Detroit Red" signifies red-headed blacks were literally sons of the devil, quick-tempered and capable of cruel violence. In such situation Malcolm's advocacy for equal right becomes a false identity of the Black race. In the autobiography the titles itself are the vivid projection of his personality, for his advocacy of equality. Such identity, that he bears in course of his life reflects how he was given a false identity

only because he is from Black community. His good qualities were foreshadowed or subjugated in order to portray his negative image to the outer world. Such situation is the outcome of the web of power structure that is prevailing in White American society. Michael Foucault also argues about such power structure of the society, "One elements of this critical phase, therefore involves an attention to subjugated or marginal knowledge, especially those which have disqualified, taken less than seriously or deemed inadequate by official histories. These might be called naïve knowledge, they are located low down on most official hierarchies of ideas" (15). From this we can infer that Blacks are considered as the secondary citizen right to the bottom of the social ladder who are denied of social identity by the White supremacists. The official history suppressed and ignored their position in the society.

Malcolm X highlights the situation about how the real identity of Black people has been hidden and they are kept away from their real identity. As in this autobiography he mentions, "History has been so 'whitened' by the white man that even the black professors have known little more than the most ignorant black man about the talents and rich civilizations and cultures of black man of millenniums ago" (184). These people are always kept away from their real sense of self. Even the conscious people are kept away from their real identity which highlights the level of misrepresentation of Black people in American society. They are kept away from their real history in order to dominate these people on the basis of their color identity.

This autobiography is the resistance and counterpart on the belief system of White supremacy towards Black people in America. It questions how the web of power structure oppresses the African- American while they try to create their own identity which is capable of competing with White people. Not only this historically, it questions how these people are segregated or silenced from their capability to resist

the domination and their false identity. Their history, way of life and their ability has been snatched from them and they are made prone to believe as the inferior being. Despite their abilities and position to stand and compete in parallel with Whites they are treated as an animal and worker of low grade task. This situation is the outcome of social structure and power politics which do not allow them to move in progression and live a dignified life. The prevalent social phenomenon that existed in the White dominated society always dominated these Black people and treated them as inferior. This reflects the oppressive mentality of White supremacy. Such goal is achieved by showing them as 'other' and 'inferior' to Whites. Such situation is mostly experienced by Malcolm X himself. He tries to reflect such situation and overcome from such condition. As he states, "The white man wants black man to stay immoral, unclean and ignorant. As long as we stay in these conditions we will keep on begging him and he will control us. We never can win freedom and justice and equality until we are doing something for ourselves" (225). The White American society always tries to segregate and falsified the Blacks in order to have control over resources and economy. In such situation they are deprived from the resources and they cannot enhance their economic, social and political situation. This condition always let them remain as the inferior being in mainstream society. Their main problems are always in depth and unnoticed. The official history is unable to dig out and redefine their position, sufferings and pain which they are facing in every situation of their life.

Malcolm X represents a subversive voice, who resists the dominant culture through which he can open a space for the other Black men to show up themselves as an equal citizen to Whites. He aims to show how the dominant discourses exerts their power on the Black people and how these marginalized parts of the society are influenced by these sociopolitical conditions. Such situation impacts on these

marginalized groups of people. This autobiography depicts as a mirror for helping Black people to see, to cope with, and to redefine their own human identity. The Whites have the dominant discourse and Blacks have to accept it. Even they are not considered as human being. They are categorized as the low graded or bunch of thieves. These Blacks are named using several humiliating identities by hijacking their original identities. "this white named things like 'Mulatto' and 'Quadroon' and 'Octoroon' and all those other things that he has called us- you and me- when he is not calling us 'nigger !' " (206). They are forced to follow what Whites order. The whites always considered them inferior and the people of minority class without any social significance. Due to such situation he advocates to establish their own identity. The inferiority that is prevailing in the society is hurtful to him. He is the sophisticated man in Black community who is advocating for their lost identity which has been hidden since the time of slavery. He is against the narrow boundary constructed by the White racist society. His advocacy is always for equality and humanity. He tries to reconstruct the gap between the walls of misrepresentation and humiliation.

A Black should not be satisfied with the life given to him by the White supremacy. He should always be trying to ask for more. He needs to ask and should seek to get more from his life. He should always be challenging and not let the white man make them adjust to their will. Malcolm insists this situation because he was aware that Black race is capable to build his own world. This can be reflected in the following lines of his autobiography:

We the black people here in America, we never have been free to find out what we really can do! We have knowledge and experience to pool to do for ourselves. All of our lives we have framed we can grow our own food. We can set up factories to manufacture our own necessities! We can build other kinds

of business, to establish trade and commerce and become independent, as other civilized people are. (261)

Despite such qualities and abilities Black race is dominated, unidentified and forced to live the humiliating life which is given by others. These people are kept under suppression and minority. This situation led Blacks to live the unidentified life in their own country. Their ability is questioned on the basis of colour, but the situation and their capacity is different. This is the main cause to determine how the dominant culture is playing role to dominate over the marginalized by imposing several weaknesses upon such group. The products of certain historical context are wrongly conceived as natural and unchangeable. They are misrepresented to justify the inequality and domination without considering how social powers, economic forces, and political institutions have brought the divisions. Though they have their own culture, way of life and ability to perform they are considered as the inferior being in comparison to other dominant group in mainstream social phenomenon.

He taught his fellow African-Americans to stand up for themselves, to defend themselves and to not just passively wait for things to improve. He is trying to justify the reasons that the “Blacks” should fight by any means necessary to achieve justice and their lost identity. His beliefs and arguments have ensured that he has gone down in history as one of the true great African-American activists. He has helped to empower numerous African-Americans. Furthermore, it also remains largely relevant today, making the book prophetic in parts. The Black Americans still suffer from the same police brutality that it did fifty years ago only because, in the present context also, blacks are considered as inferior and are involved in criminal activities. They are only supposed to conduct criminal activities that do not have any good qualities of behavior. Though they are capable and skillful they are kept away from dignified and

prestigious works. Their education is not trustworthy to the dominant group of people. As Malcolm X in this autobiography depicts the situation, "The old colonial railroaders had told me about Washington having a lot of middle-class Negroes with Howard University degrees, who were working as laborers, janitors, porters, guards, taxi drivers, and the like. For the Negro in Washington mail carrying was a prestige job" (75). Such depiction of social structure reflects the gap between what is portrayed to the outer world and what actually is the situation. Despite their quality and skills they are kept beneath the social structure only because of the assumption that Black race is inferior to White Americans.

While raising the voice against misrepresentation and inferiority, he brings the reference of Black Nationalism and Marcus Garvey's back to Africa movement. These movements are especially focused to construct their own identity for oppressed African-Americans. While raising such voice and resisting against injustice these Black people are identified as the villainous character in the official histories of American society. These negative, nihilistic and self-deprecating identities of Blacks are being constantly reinforced by the several state organs like media, bureaucracy and even legislative bodies. Such responsible and law enforcing state agencies also portrays Blacks as negative people in the society. Such depiction is apparent when Malcolm X vividly presents the situation faced by him as well as the Black people. He states the condition faced by him as, " 'black segregationists' . . . 'black supremacists', and the like. And the newspaper ink wasn't dry before the big national weekly news magazines started: 'hate teachers' . . . 'violence seekers' . . . 'black racists' . . . 'black fascist' 'anti- Christian' . . . possibly communist inspired" (243). Such condition reflects the power politics of American system as well as the status of Black people. In every situation the identity of African-American is only negative and it is widely spread to

the larger sphere. On such basis these people are judged and evaluated and it becomes their identity. Due to such situation they have lost their culture, and space of origin, their way of living and their real intellectual capacity.

The misrepresented fact or truth in the history or fiction is the outcome of the discourse that constructs the body of knowledge and the knowledge further helps the ruling class to exercise the power over the multiple voices. By acknowledging 'knowledge as power' Malcolm becomes the learner who constantly examined and re-examined history which brought the constant redefinition of the Black Americans to show the imbedded structure of truth. While supporting this idea Foucault asserts:

Truth is of the world; it is produced there by virtue of multiple constraints
 Each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth; that is the types of discourse it harbors and causes to function as true; the mechanism instances which enable one to distinguish true from false statements, the way in which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures which are valorized for obtaining truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (46)

Thus, Foucault analyzes the discursive construction of the truth. The discourse formation is responsible for the construction of the truth serving the interest of the ruling class. Knowledge is manipulated and constructed in such a way that it works as the meaning procedure of the observation and all other statements. Such condition is similar in American society. The dominant society has shaped the social and mental structure in such a way that inferiority has become the synonymous identity for Blacks.

In every step of their life feeling of inferiority prevails in such a way that Black people think that it is their natural phenomenon to accept it; rather it is a social

construct. In this autobiography such experiences are very much clearly reflected by Malcolm X. As he states, "Little black children seeing, before they could talk, their parents considered themselves inferior" (185). Such perception toward themselves is created by the dominant group in order to give the false identity to Blacks, as a result it will be easy for them to impose their suppression and domination over them on the basis of false identity. Even the false consciousness has become reality for these marginalized people as it is spread by the dominant group of people in the society. In order to clarify such misrepresentation and false identity this autobiography challenges the notion established on false assumption as the authoritative voice of marginalized people in existing society. He further appeals to the oppressed Black mass to dig out their own real identity. As he states, "My black brothers and sisters-no one will know who we are. . .until we know we are! We never will be able to go anywhere until we know where we are" (257). He is mainly raising voice to resist against the wrong identity which is lost in the oppressive American society. On the basis of such wrong identity people of colour have to suffer.

Malcolm began searching the disparities of high and low brought by misrepresentation. He asserts to read between the lines of traditional histories to find the history of his people of color which is always blocked and misrepresented among the White American people. Black Nationalism is the action program that he advocates throughout his declaration of independence conference. He emphasizes Blacks' social, political and economic control through which they can make their own identity with the effort and ability that they inherit naturally.

According to accounts in his autobiography Malcolm's experiences in Mecca and in Africa broadened his understanding of himself, his faith in change and about the future of Blacks. His advocacy here is a revolutionary idea that developed as a

rejection of the self about the acceptance of the so-called superior qualities of the White man's society. While talking about the historical circumstances he points out, "History is a people's memory and without a memory a man is denoted to the level of lower animals. When you have no knowledge of your history, you're just another animal, in fact you're negro; something that's nothing" (447). Due to his awareness about the historical significance he challenges the existing history which has always identified Black minority as the inferior human being in comparison to White supremacy. These people are kept away from the significance of their history which includes their culture, origin and the effective contribution to make the nation. So, from the time of his self-consciousness, he started challenging the existing notion of false identity towards the Black people.

He is not trying to create a new history rather he is exposing a veiled history to redefine their identity based on his life experiences and homemade education. All he is doing so is to dismantle the hierarchy created by the existing norms and values of White supremacy. In an attempt to dig out the disparity he comes to know in classical literature such as the work of Socrates, Aesop, Shakespeare and Mendel are the major texts writer who presented the little or no reference to the deeds of the so-called Negro. Such situation occurs because colored people are considered as inferior being who cannot perform any intellectual task. In order to stress on such misrepresentation he declares how such false identity is highlighted to keep them suppress in the society. He asserts:

this is why the white man . . . his little children, he tells them about George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, all these white heroes, but we are never taught about any Black heroes, only someone were shown in history is my grandfather . . . he is picking cotton...picking cotton do not move me! No, but

when it comes to teaching the black men, who stood their ground, who were scientists, who were civilizers, who were fathers of culture and civilization, the white man has shrewdly written that role out of the text book. (345)

These assumption of literary work reflects how there is absence of any hero, who could represent a glorious and identified person in Black community. But these people are just the slaves and the manual worker of White owner. This situation leads towards the black as inferior race and they could not do any kind of intellectual performance. This happens only because the dominant society rejects the voice of margin even in the field of art and literature which reflects one's identity. As literary genre is also the medium of representing history and reflects society. The Black community is away from such access because of illiteracy and suppression. In order to present unequal and incapable all sources are kept away from Blacks access so they could be treated in a wrong way and they could be blamed as the lower status people who are not able to compete in a cognitive way because they are kept in a category of 'slave' and lower than animal in American society. But the situation is different, even these people are able and they can stand as equal as Whites. In order to make this idea more precise Louis A. Montrose in his essay "Professing the Renaissance: The poetics and politics of culture" argues:

The practice of new historical criticism invites rhetorical strategies by which to foreground the constitutive acts of textuality that traditional modes of literary history efface or misrecognize. It also necessitates efforts to historicize the present as well the part and to historicize the dialectic between those reciprocal historical pressure by which the past has shaped the present and the present reshapes the past. (24-25)

From this theoretical concept it assists to excavate the reality of the marginalized

peoples actual pain and suffering. It unmask the false consciousness and tries to reanalyze the situation of the past which promotes to reshape the present identity of these people.

The inherent qualities makes possible to discover the hidden truth and create a distinct identity in a society. Only because of dominant factors are blocking those qualities to come out and make a competitive identity. Due to all these factors the inherent quality is suppressed and judged on the basis of certain historical circumstances in Black people and they are advertised as a low graded human being on such basis. But when the perspectives towards these people changes, their literature, art, culture, and identity also changes in new way which is able to flourish in the mainstream society.

This autobiography raises voice against the dominating mentality of American society. It attacks and tries to justify the Black people are able and capable to construct their own identity. But they are trapped and kept away from their real sense of self which includes their culture, history, way of life and even religion. They are always subjugated and misrepresented by spreading nihilistic point of view, accompanied by immorality and shortsightedness. Either such people have no worthwhile contribution to make or they are in valueless state. Such manifestation towards Blacks on the basis of their skin should be banned, rather their heritage should be dig out, because even Black people are capable, they are witty, wise and decent who can earn their glory. Malcolm X is also not university graduate but he is able to build his reputed identity as Whites. Power is not just in the hand of Whites, but it is scattered among all members of the society in different ways and by different means. Malcolm X challenges the established conviction and raises voice against it. It reflects even Black people have ability to perform well like Whites. So, on the basis

of color these people should not be judged, identified and underestimated because these people are also the man of cognition who can uplift their identity from a manual worker to a prophetic speaker.

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