



Postcolonial Space: Platform for Resisting Predisposed Architectural Discourses

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Abstract

Study of space has unquestionably turned into an important research focus in humanities and social sciences. In earlier stages space was read as an empty abstraction without history and unable to possess or evince meaning. While on the other hand place was considered as a location with a name and an ability to corroborate significance. In the second half of the 20th century however study of the space has increasingly found a renaissance and with the result of this spatial renaissance space has emerged with greater prominence assigned by constructive terminology with the opportunity of resistance and suggestive of new possibilities and interpretations. Especially, the depiction of space in postcolonial literature added much complexity to it as postcolonial space is inscribed by differential identities that challenge perpetual (Continuous) and formalist (Framed rules) modes of narratives created by the architectural constructionists. Identity created in such a space quite often portrays the indigenous citizen as an absolute space also, because authentic and essentialist conceptions of identity are often associated with exclusivist claims to territory and space.

Keywords: Space; Postcolonial Space; Renaissance; Identity; Resistance

Introduction

The notion of space explored wider and wider and encapsulated not only physical location but also abstract conceptual space (Upstone 3). Due to such tremendous exploration great dominant philosophical thinkers interest led towards the emerging concept of space and their attention perhaps had the most tangible impact. Thinkers like Edward Soja, Henry Lefebvre and Michel Foucault defined space a step ahead than the conventional meanings related to space and spatiality and expands the scope, critical sensibility of already established spatial or geographical imaginations (Soja 1). Most notably it is Michel Foucault's comment that the present "epoch will perhaps be above all else the epoch of space" (Foucault 22) appears to have opened the way for greater consideration of

spaces as an important context for considering issues such as power relationships and negotiations of identity. So the new meaning these philosophical thinkers attached to space in a way deconstructs the dominant power structures and gives rise to a spatial turn with connotations that are direct relevant to post colonialism.

Space has emerged in recent years as a radical category in the range of related disciplines across the humanities. Until recently space has been reduced to such grand conceptual schemas as centre and periphery, and this does an injustice to the complexity of the spaces postcolonial literature describe (Moore 3). Postcolonial literature is an attempt of retrieval and reversal to own pre colonial pasts and to find ways and modes of resistance if possible. Postcolonial literature holds



greater value and immense importance to the people once colonised, because it involves the challenge to colonial ways of knowing and writing back in opposition to such views. In real sense it is a negotiation and critique to a specific historical event I-e Colonial rule. It is the literature of resistance, anger, protest, hope and seeks to dig deep into the past, to understand it for an enhanced future.

Post colonialism puts a stop to colonialism or colonial hegemony and bestows the necessary authority, political and cultural freedom to the native people to move on and create their own space. In real sense post colonialism is a means for the native or indigenous people to gain independence in going against the colonizers and overcoming political and cultural imperialism. So the space where in the native people feel authorized to express themselves, no longer felt compelled to adhere to European norms and what has been gained after a lot of struggle against the colonizers is termed as postcolonial space. Regarding this G. Nalbantoglu and W. Thai write:

Postcolonial Space is both a reminder of a colonial past and a salutary gesture towards the future. It conveys both a negative moment that displays and displaces binary constructions and fixed categories and a positive one of a promise of becoming for new languages, new subject positions and new modes of spatiality (Nalbantoglu, 7).

Postcolonial space provides access to the colonized people to know about their description and also acts as a space of intrusion into the setting of architectural constructionists who created predisposed

narratives about the colonized people. Postcolonial space acts as a platform to show off the views of the colonizers regarding the exclusion or repression of the disadvantaged ethnicities, communities and people. This space acts as means to create narratives of once destitute people and also a mode to come out of the traumatic situation into which the underprivileged people has been living under the colonizers rule. Regarding this Sara Upstone describes:

Postcolonial space refuses to follow the colonial in denying the fact that the territory is everywhere constructed and provisional. Instead space must be reclaimed for its inherent diversity and for the possibilities for moving beyond colonial experience that it consequently contains. (Upstone 13)

Being in the middle of Postcolonial space itself indicates the end or conclusion of the colonization in the colonies once colonized and the termination of such totalisation in the colony impacts not only on the physical locality and the civil rights of the native population but also acts to support particular construction of identity. Because idea of the space plays a significant role in how one defines one's own identity and equally how that identity is defined by others (Taverson 2).

So, at the centre of the postcolonial space identity gains an important stature and therefore, is the declaration of the fact that what is really being negotiated in the rewriting of the space is the right to identity, the privilege to feel secure within a language and protected from violence by a set of boundaries and the laws outlined in them. The right to be



in the space must be seen as a key to very real because it is this space which helps in creating the identity for the colonized people. As imperial eyes uses spaces to refer either to the operation of identity during encounters between the colonizer and the colonized (Moore 16)

The identity created in such a space quite often portrays the indigenous citizen as an absolute space also, with a body marked by characteristics that can quite easily not be his or her own (Upstone 6). Status of belonging to one empire or another is accorded not on the basis of community, but on the basis of an imperial perception: a fixed boundary and a foreign language. Language plays an influential role in granting identity of an individual as discussed by Frantz Fanon in one his most remarkable book entitled *Black Skin White Mask*. Fanon says that when an individual learns any foreign language, he/she in turn learns the ideology and the culture of that nation. In the colonial command of space it is identity that risks being lost, as the imposition of an absolute threatens to oppress all it includes. Regarding this Clive Barnett in *Post colonialism: Space, Textuality and Power* describe:

Authentic and essentialist conceptions of identity are often associated with exclusivist claims to territory and space. In turn, this geographical imagination of identity leads to the persistent understanding of colonialism in terms of simple opposition between colonizers and colonized. (Barnett 8)

Identity of a postcolonial subject in the postcolonial space becomes a challenging task to tackle with because identities keep on

varying as Homi K. Bhaba in one of his prominent books *The Location of Culture* opines that identities are ever-changing and impossible to fix: the need to negotiate identities is therefore constant (Bhabha 73). Postcolonial Space in a realistic sense is a space of transformation where real resistance occurs, a fluid space where different personalities with different ideological sets juxtapose altogether which in an authentic sense is incompatible. Such a space in a postcolonial context where irreconcilable personalities unite ultimately moves towards the possibilities of new identities. Regarding this Nalbantoglu opines:

A critical study of post colonial space which is inscribed by differential identities challenges perpetual and formalist modes of the narratives created by the architectural constructionists and negotiates with the very concepts posited by architecture as its natural epistemological grounds (Nalbantoglu, 8).

The space where possibility of new identities emerges in turn defines what may be seen as a process of growth (Upstone 15) and it is the process of growth that unites the incompatible identities to stand firm and makes them a common entity. So the space in the postcolonial context becomes an affirmative scenario for the once destitute people who don't had authentic identities and this space in turn actually becomes a stage that bestows them the reliable identity. The members of the postcolonial space with unparalleled or diverse identities represent themselves in response to the common experience of identity crisis in the same



manner as Stuart Hall in *New Ethnicities* considers the way in which members of the Black British Diaspora have represented themselves in response to the common experience of racism and marginalization in Britain (Hall 441).

Individual and collective identities are things which we fashion for ourselves to a degree but the Space we live in affects more immensely whether we like it or not. The space is used as a way of uniting people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds that organizes them in unified communities of resistance against any infiltration. In asserting the common experience of identity crisis the post colonial subjects create a single and unifying framework based on the building up of identity across and ethnic and cultural difference between the different communities from any colonized part.

As long as the post colonial subjects emphasize on a common goal they remain unified but these unified modes of representation becomes contested from within the space as individuals begin to question the existence and purpose of believing in an essential subject. This inner tension creates a challenge for identifying the postcolonial subject in space and how can a politics be constructed which works with and through difference, which is able to build those forms of solidarity and identification which makes common struggle and resistance possible but without suppressing the real heterogeneity of interests and identities (Hall 444). This inner tension or chaos doesn't mean moving into a world of complete disorder, violence or destruction but it is actually a way of describing a way of postcolonial reimagining of space. In postcolonial space if at times chaos is employed it is in the context of the perception of the chaos itself not at a complete

breakdown of all stability, but rather as a removal of the fixed to open up new patterns of understanding and experiences (Upstone 12).

In the field of postcolonial studies, space has always been central. From its very beginnings, those involved in developing knowledge of colonial and postcolonial discourses have identified space in all its forms as integral to the postcolonial experience. In such postcolonial spaces oppression seemingly becomes marvelously transformed into resistance offering new radical perspectives, new signs of imagination and creativity, from which the colonial representation of territory can be excised, and perhaps overcome.

Conclusion

While concluding this research paper it can be said that postcolonial space plays an important role in acting as a platform for incompatible identities in resisting against the common predisposed architectural discourses. This space provides a universal goal for all diverse postcolonial citizens to stand against the constructed discourses and throw off the shackles of colonization and create a space of their own. Ultimately, it can be said that the postcolonial space acts as an arena where postcolonial subjects are given opportunity to write back to express a clear sense of agency, and the possibility of overturning.

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