

Postcolonial Studies: An Analysis

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Abstract

Postcolonial studies became a matter of debate for many western theorists in various universities since three decades and it emerged in criticism as a distinct category only in the 1990s. Since then postcolonial studies have become even more institutionalized in western academy, with many more books and critical papers but still it encouraged questions of a rarefied approach to culture and Literature, and newer grounds of being unable to account for the complexities of globalization. Since the events of 11 September 2001, and the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, questions of 'empire' are more urgent than ever, as advocates of the 'new American empire' exhort the U.S. to learn from European imperialism.

In last two decades postcolonial studies became influential in the 1987 works of Gayatri spivak (*In other worlds*), Bill Ashcroft (*The Empire writes Back*, 1989) Homi Bhabha (*Nation and Narration* 1990) Edward said (*culture and Imperialism*, 1993) and in words of stuart Hall 'the bearer of such powerful unconscious investments a sign of design for sum, and equally for a signifier of danger.'

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In the views of Marxist Critics, earlier colonialisms were recapitalize but contrary to it modern colonialism is not more than wealth conqueror of countries in which it is colonizing. The distinction between pre-capitalist and capitalist colonialisms is often made by referring to the later as imperialism. OED defines 'imperial' as 'pertaining to empire and 'imperialism' as the 'rule of an emperor'.

Lenin argues in his 'Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism (1947),' that the growth of finance-capitalism and industry in the Western countries had created an enormous superabundance of capital. This money could not be profitably invested at home where labour was limited.

For new current ways of discussing colonial and postcolonial studies, it is necessary to put them within two broad contexts. First, the decolonization, in which intellectuals and activists who fought against colonial rule and their successors who now engage with its containing legacy, challenged and revised dominant definitions of race, culture language and class in the process of making their voices heard. The second context is the revolutions, with 'Western' intellectuals traditions, in thinking about some of the same issues-language and how it articulates experience, how ideologies work, how human subjectivities are formed, and what we might mean by

culture. However, Marxism's penetrating critique of colonialism as capitalism was inspirational for many anti-colonial struggles.

Aime cesaire's 'Discovers on Colonialism (1950)' indicts colonial brutality in terms that are clearly inflected by Marxist analysis of capitalism. Marx emphasized that under capitalism money and commodities begin to stand in for human relations and for human beings, objectifying them and robbing them of their human essence, Frantz Fanon in 'The wretched of the Earth' stated :

This world cut in tow is inhabited by two different species. The originality of the colonial context is that economic reality when you examine at close quarters the colonial content, it is evident that what parcels out the world is to begin with the fact belonging to or not belonging to a given race, given species. In the colonies the economic sub-structure is also a super structure.

In 'The German Ideology' (1846) Marx and Engels suggested that ideology is basically a distorted or false consciousness of the world which disguise people's real relationship to their world. This is so because the ideologies that most circulate or gain currency in any society reflect and reproduce the interests of the dominant social classes. A white worker might mistakenly think that his joblessness is the fault of black immigrants. This process of obfuscation or misrepresentation appeared in 'camera obscura', a term by Marx and Engels. The work of the French communist theorist Louis Althusser on ideology has been central in this regard. Althusser opened up certain important and new areas of inquiry such as how ideologies are internalized, how human beings make dominant ideas their own, how they express socially determined views spontaneously. He makes a useful distinction between what we call state power and state control through ideological structure. In this regard new historian Michel Foucault collapses the nation of ideology. All ideas are ordered through some material medium, this ordering imposes a pattern on them a pattern which Foucault calls 'discourse'. Through these 'discourses' a modern nation control its citizens by circulating these ideologies.

Edward said

'Orientalism' can be said to inaugurated a new kind of study of colonialism. Said presented Orient' as an allegory in which all is superior what is European and all is inferior what is non-European. Said's project is to show how 'knowledge' about non-European was part of the process of maintaining power over them; thus the status of knowledge is demystified. Europeans were 'telling' lies', or that they individually disliked non-Western peoples or cultures. In their view if colonized people are irrational, Europeans are rational, if the former are barbaric, sensual, and lazy, Europe is civilization itself, if Orient is static, Europe can be seen as developing and marching ahead; the Orient has to be feminine so that Europe can be masculine.

There had been a long discussion about how literature works in politics and what is its role in Colonial and anti – Colonial discourse. Since plato it has been acknowledged that literature mediated the real and the imaginary. Marxist and post structuralist debates on ideology increasingly try to define the nature of this mediation. If, language and signs' are the sites where different ideologies intersect and clash with one another, then literary tents, being complex clusters of languages and signs, can be identified as extremely fecund sites for such ideological interactions. Literature written on both sides of the colonial divide often absorbs, appropriates and

inscribes aspects of the other culture creating new genres, ideas and identities in the process. Finally, literature is also an important means of representation and colonial ideologies.

Racism and classicism and ethnicity can be traced in Colonial works in two ways; the first, which stems from Marxist analysis, can be referred to the 'economic' because it regards social groupings, including racial ones, Colonialism was the means through which capitalism achieved its global expansion. Racism simply facilitated this process, and was the conduit through which the labour of colonized people was appropriated. The second approach, which has been called, 'sociological', and derives partly from the work of Marx weber, argues that economic explanations are insufficient for understanding the racial features of colonized societies. While the first approach can be functionalist in its understanding of race, the second tends to ignore economic questions.

In Das Capital Marx has suggested that capitalism depends upon 'the free labourer selling his labor power' to the owner of the means of production. But in South Africa, as in variety of other colonial situations, the laborer of colonized people was commissioned through a variety of coercive measures. It was not a free labor at all. The ideology of racial superiority translated easily into class terms. The superiority of the white races, one colonist argues, clearly implied that the black men must for ever remain cheap labour sand slaves'. Since critics have suggested that racial hierarchies are the 'magic formula' which allow capitalism to expand and find all the labor power it needs.

Psychoanalysis and colonial subjects

The discourse of colonial psychology and psychiatry was unable to contain any notion of difference that was not direct tied to the question of inferiority and the necessity of subordination. We know how nations of the 'universal' can also be deeply ethnocentric because they are formulated in the image of the dominant culture. A highly specific image of culture or in this case psyche, is projected as globally applicable. Such a projections works to dehistoricise or dejected the nation of the psychic because it does not adequately confront the relation between social structures and the inner lives of human beings. Frantz Fanon's work (*Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*) directly intervened in the legacy of racist theories of biological and psychological development. It pushed to its logical conclusion the view that 'modernization' led to native madness by suggestion that it was not modernization as such but colonialism that dislocated and distorted the psyche of the oppressed. There were some who challenged such absolute nations of psychic difference between races. The South African psychoanalyst and doctor wolf argues that there was no fundamental difference between his black and white patients. An African mind or Psyche is different that of European and is it at all possible then, to use Psychoanalytic paradigms to think productively about colonial relations, or are they too bound up with colonialist ways of ordering culture and biology? Despite the problems outline above, psychoanalytical theories of subject-formation have been widely deployed within postcolonial studies, even by those who otherwise strongly disagree with one another such as Abdul Jan Mohammad who emphasizes the 'Manichean' opposition between colonized and colonizers and Homi Bhabha who suggested the fuzziness and ambiguity of this divide.

Apart from these fields colonialism in recent time emerged as a distinction among modern theories and criticism. It developed last in a form of post Colonial criticism. Postcolonial criticism emerged as a distinct category only in the 1990s.

One significant effect of postcolonial criticism is to further undermine the universalist claims. We claim that great literature has timeless and universal significance. We disregard cultural social, regional and national differences in experience and outlook, preferring instead to judge all literature by a single, supposedly 'Universal' standard, Frantz Fanon. In *Wretched of the Earth* 1961, pub. in France sort voicing what might be called 'Cultural resistance' to France's African empire, Fanon, (a psychiatrist) argued that the first step for 'colonials' people in finding a voice and an identity is to reclaim their own past. If the first step is to reclaim one's own past, then the second is to begin to erode the colonialist ideology by which that past had been devalued.

More controversial trends, like hybridity, the notion of the double, or divided or fluid identity which is characteristic of the post colonial writers explain the attraction which post-structuralist and deconstructionist have proved to be for the post colonial critic. These controversial trends, hybridity, post colonialism and liberal postcolonial are probably reactions to the communitarian history of post colonialism which was and still is embedded in identity politics.

Ethnic studies, sometimes referred to as minority studies, has an obvious historical relationship with postcolonial criticism in that Euro-American imperialism and colonization in the last four centuries, whether external (empire) or internal (slavery has been directed at recognizable ethnic groups; African and African-American, Chinese, the subaltern people of India, Irish, Latino, Native American, Pilipino and among others. Ethnic studies concerns itself generally with art and literature produced by identifiable ethnic group either marginalized or in subordinate position to a dominant culture. Postcolonial criticism investigated the relationship between colonizers and colonized in the period of post colonization. Though the two fields are increasingly finding points in intersection the work of the bell hooks, for example, both activist intellectual enterprises Ethnic studies and postcolonial criticism have significant differences in their history and ideas.

In the field of African-American Criticism in postcolonial period it's major theorist. Henry Louis gates, directs his attention to other African-American critics declaring that they and he must refine 'Theory' itself from within (their) own black cultures, refusing to grant the premise that theory is somewhat what white people do "we are all heir to critical theory, but we black critics are heir to the black vernacular as well". Gates developed the idea that African-American literature draws on two voices and cultures, the white and the black. Thus African-American feminist critics, Houston Baker and other believe that they must develop a culturally specific theory of African-American literature.

Colonial studies and post-colonial criticism, in short, is a form of Marxist criticism, feminism, close to post-structuralism, ethnic studies and psychoanalytic criticism.

Anti colonial approach challenged Colonialism on political or intellectual level and gave rise to the notion of nationalism as in fourteenth century nationalistic spirit opposed French influence, but in modern history anti-colonial study has been 'a minor industry' until it remained a curiously 'indertheorised' phenomenon, specially in

relation to non-European societies. Aim cesaire's in 'Discourse on Colonialism's made an announcement.

The colonialists may kill in Indochina to stare in Madagascar, imprison in black Africa, crack down in the West Indies. Hence forth the colonized know that they have an advantage over them. They know that their temporary 'masters' are lying and therefore that their masters are weak. (P.C.I - 154)

Benedict Anderson in recent study 'Imagine Communities' Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (1991), defines the nation as an 'imagined community' born with the demise of feudalism and the rise of capitalism. Through print-capitalism in form of novels, newspapers, books etc. created standardized language which set the basic stage for modern nation.

As mentioned above the result of nationalism, serfdom or legal slavery ended. New kind of nationalism arose in response of popular national movement and European dynasties and aristocrats forged new identifications with the people they ruled: Romanovs discovered they were great Russians. Hanoverians that they were English and so on. Such official nationalism was 'an anticipatory strategy adopted by dominant groups so that they might not be excluded from newer communities struggling to be born. Such a reactionary conservative nationalism was not confined to Europe, but extended to the colonies in Asia or Africa. There was a world-wide contradiction whereby the ruled and the colonized were invited to become one of the rulers.

After first and second world wars native colonized intelligentsia played crucial role in forging nationalist consciousness in other words anti-Colonial nationalism is itself made possible and shaped by European political and intellectual history.

Chatterjee attempts to break from European frame by identifying 'ideological sieve' through which nationalism filtered European ideas; Gandhi's nationalist was anti-industrialist, but strengthened the idea of an eastern anti-materialism, spiritualism and asceticism where as Nehru's views were socialistic.

Several critics have suggested that 'Imagined Communities' pays so much attention to who is included in the nation that it fails to consider those who were excluded, marginalized or co-opted, such as women, or lower classes, races or castes for example, in Napoleonic France, women were openly excluded from citizenship. Chandra Bhan Prasad argued for the lower castes in India, British colonialism represented a progressive force because it challenged some of the orthodoxies of the upper caste such as Brahmin domination over educational and space for Dalits education.

Since the events of 11 September 2001, so called global war on terror, and the U.S. of Afghanistan and Iraq it is harder than ever to see our world as imply 'Postcolonial'. As the New American empire develops, openly and shrilly advocated by policy-makers, politicians and academics within the U.S. and else where it is more urgent than ever to think about the questions of domination and resistance that have been raised by anti-colonial movements and postcolonial studies world wide at the same time, these violent events are also part of the phenomenon we think of as globalization. Which has provided fresh ground for examining the relevance of postcolonial perspectives to the world which we now inhabit. Globalization seems to have transformed the world so radically, many of its advocates and critics suggest, that it has rendered obsolete a critical and analytical perspective which takes the

history and legacy of European colonialism as its focal point. It is meaningless to continue to define our world in relation to the dynamics of Europeans colonialism or decolonization. Globalization, they argue, cannot be analysed using concepts like margins and centres so central to postcolonial studies. Today's economies, politics, cultures and identities are all better described in terms of transnational networks, regional and international flows and the dissolution of geographic and cultural border, paradigms which are familiar to postcolonial critics but which are now invoked to suggest a radical break with the narratives of colonization and anti-colonialism. (C.P.I. P. 213)

Michael Hardt and Antonio's empire argues that contemporary global order has produced a new form of sovereignty which should be called 'empire' which was marked by the competition between different European powers. New order or single power overdetermine all. Hardt and Negri do not identify the united states as this new power, although they do argue that 'empire is born through the global expansion of the internal U.S. constitutional project.

Supporters of globalization see new economics order for better lives for people and these orders cultural, economic and political offers new possibilities to the force of liberation. Etienne Balibar's work on Neo-racism gives understanding of cultural-based difference for him, there is no differences between Europeans and Africans seen to be genetic in origin, rather they are the products of disparate cultures. This doctrine of new racial ideologies are not less rigid simply because they invoke culture instead of nature, but today culture also function like nature. Muslims are supposed to be violent, ideas that dominated the media coverage of Islam after the attacks on the world Trade centre and the Pentagon in the united states on 11 September 2001. In contemporary views of cultural difference present no accident which proves that it is Muslims who are regarded as barbaric and given to acts of violence and Asians who are seen as diligent but attached to their own rules of business and family, both modes of being which are seen as differently incommensurate with the western world.

Globalization, as P. Sainath observes, has made information and technology more widely available, resulted in its own fundamentalism which was reacted in catalyses doctrine.

Market fundamental destroys more human lives than any other simply because it cuts across all national, cultural geographic religious and other boundaries. It's as much at home at home in Moscow as in Mumbai or Minnesota. A South Africa – whose advances in the early 1990s thrilled the world-moved swiftly from apartheid to neo-liberalism:

It sits as easily in Hindu, Islamic or Christian societies. And it contributes angry, despairing recruits to the armies of all religious fundamentalism. Based on the premise that the marked is the solution to all the problems of the human race, it is, too, a very religious fundamentalism. It has its own gospel: The gospel of St. Growth of St. Choice..... (C.P.I.P.218)

Hardt and Negri's suggestion that stated acts as an imperial power not as function of its own motives but in the name of global right thus confuses the discursive self-promotion of us leaders with the actual dynamics of us military power.

Today Instead of counter posing the new global order against nations and nationalist ideologies, it is better to see them as both forming new allians, and also engaging in new conflict. North Korea and India's nuclear programmes are developed in defiance of the U.S. and challenged the right of new power full nations which concern U.S. universities to train their students for careers in national security, defence and intelligence agencies and foreign service. These study centre became Anti-American under the influence of Postcolonial scholarship and specially Edward Said's 'Orientalism.'

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