

A Seminar
On
“Postcolonialism: An Introduction”

By

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Report

An extramural seminar was organized by Department of English, Pattamundai College, Pattamundai on dated **17/02/2020** on the topic "Postcolonialism: An Introduction". The resource person of the seminar was **Mr. Binayak Prasad Pradhan**, Lecturer in English, Govt. Science College Ayaba, Kendrapar. **Mr. Adhikar Laxmi Narayan Dash**, Principal of this college chaired the session. **Dr. Sarat Chandra Das**, Head of the Department, introduced and welcomed the guest on the dais and to the participants. **Dr. Manas Kumar Nayak**, Lecturer in English, gave a key note talk on the topic. The meeting was anchored by **Ms. Sadhana Rout**, +3 II Year honours student of the Department of English. Most of the students of the +3 English honours were present in the seminar. The meeting was ended with vote of thanks by **Mr. Rakesh Chandra Dash**, +3 II year honours student of the Department of English.

Postcolonialism: An Introduction

Resisting colonialism in all its forms has been the preoccupation of postcolonialism starting from its inception. So far postcolonial criticism in literature is concerned, postcolonial critics basically attempt to reread and reinterpret certain canonical texts with a view to expose the way colonial masters reinforce the colonial values and dominance over the natives in explicit or implicit ways. Apart from the process of reading against the grains, postcolonial criticism involves the process of writing back which is quite conspicuous in the writings of the writers hailing from the once-colonized countries. An attempt to subvert the so-called colonial domination over the natives in terms of culture, literature, language so on and so forth characterizes the gamut of postcolonial literature.

Colonialism was presented as "the extension of civilization", which ideologically justified the self-ascribed racial and cultural superiority of the Western world over the non-Western world. This concept was espoused by Joseph-Ernest Renan *La Réforme intellectuelle et morale* (1871), whereby imperial stewardship was thought to affect the intellectual and moral reformation of the coloured peoples of the lesser cultures of the world. That such a divinely established, natural harmony among the human races of the world would be possible, because everyone has an assigned cultural identity, a social place, and an economic role within an imperial colony.

From the mid- to the late-nineteenth century, such racialist group-identity language was the cultural common-currency justifying geopolitical competition amongst the European and American empires and meant to protect their over-extended economies. Especially in the colonization of the

Far East and in the late-nineteenth century Scramble for Africa, the representation of a homogeneous European identity justified colonization. Hence, Belgium and Britain, and France and Germany proffered theories of national superiority that justified colonialism as delivering the light of civilization to unenlightened peoples. Notably, *la mission civilisatrice*, the self-ascribed 'civilizing mission' of the French Empire, proposed that some races and cultures have a higher purpose in life, whereby the more powerful, more developed, and more civilized races have the right to colonize other peoples, in service to the noble idea of "civilization" and its economic benefits.

Postcolonial theory holds that decolonized people develop a postcolonial identity that is based on cultural interactions between different identities (cultural, national, and ethnic as well as gender and class based) which are assigned varying degrees of social power by the colonial society. In postcolonial literature, the anti-conquest narrative analyzes the identity politics that are the social and cultural perspectives of the subaltern colonial subjects—their creative resistance to the culture of the colonizer; how such cultural resistance complicated the establishment of a colonial society; how the colonizers developed their postcolonial identity; and how neocolonialism actively employs the Us-and-Them binary social relation to view the non-Western world as inhabited by The Other.

The neo-colonial discourse of geopolitical homogeneity relegating the decolonized peoples, their cultures, and their countries, to an imaginary place, such as "the Third World", an over-inclusive term that usually comprises continents and seas, i.e. Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania. The postcolonial critique analyzes the self-justifying discourse of neocolonialism and the functions (philosophic and political) of its over-

inclusive terms, to establish the factual and cultural inaccuracy of homogeneous concepts, such as "the Arabs" and "the First World", "Christendom" and "the Ummah", actually comprise heterogeneous peoples, cultures, and geography, and that accurate descriptions of the world's peoples, places, and things require nuanced and accurate terms.

As contemporary history term, postcolonialism occasionally is applied temporally, to denote the immediate time after the period during which imperial powers retreated from their colonial territories, which is a problematic application of the term, because the immediate, historical, political time is not included in the categories of critical identity-discourse, which deals with over-inclusive terms of cultural representation, which are abrogated and replaced by postcolonial criticism. As such, the terms *postcolonial* and *postcolonialism* denote aspects of the subject matter, which indicate that the decolonised world is an intellectual space "of contradictions, of half-finished processes, of confusions, of liminalities, and of liminalities". *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), the psychiatrist and philosopher Frantz Fanon analysed and medically described the nature of colonialism as essentially destructive. Its societal effects—the imposition of a subjugating colonial identity—are harmful to the mental health of the native peoples who were subjugated into colonies. Fanon wrote the ideological essence of colonialism is the systematic denial of "all attributes of humanity" of the colonized people. Such dehumanisation is achieved with physical and mental violence, by which the colonist means to inculcate a servile mentality upon the natives. For Fanon the natives must violently resist colonial subjugation. Hence, Fanon describes violent resistance to colonialism as a mentally cathartic practice, which purges colonial servility from the native psyche, and restores self-respect to the

subjugated. Thus, Fanon actively supported and participated in the Algerian Revolution (1954–62) for independence from France as a member and representative of the *Front de Libération Nationale*.

As postcolonial praxis, Fanon's mental-health analyses of colonialism and imperialism, and the supporting economic theories, were partly derived from the essay *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), wherein Vladimir Lenin described colonial imperialism as a degenerate form of capitalism, which requires greater degrees of human exploitation to ensure continually consistent profit for investment

Cultural critic Edward Said is considered by E. San Juan, Jr. as "the originator and inspiring patron-saint of postcolonial theory and discourse" due to his interpretation of the theory of Orientalism explained in his 1978 book of the same name. To describe the us-and-them "binary social relation" with which Western Europe intellectually divided the world—into the "Occident" and the "Orient"—Said developed the denotations and connotations of the term *Orientalism* (an art-history term for Western depictions and the study of the Orient). Said's concept (which he also termed "Orientalism") is that the cultural representations generated with the us-and-them binary relation are social constructs, which are mutually constitutive and cannot exist independent of each other, because each exists on account of and for the other.

Notably, "the West" created the cultural concept of "the East", which according to Said allowed the Europeans to suppress the peoples of the Middle East, of the Indian Subcontinent, and of Asia, from expressing and representing themselves as discrete peoples and cultures. Orientalism thus conflated and reduced the non-Western world into the homogeneous cultural entity known as "the East". Therefore, in service to the colonial type of

imperialism, the us-and-them Orientalist paradigm allowed European scholars to represent the Oriental World as inferior and backward, irrational and wild, as opposed to a Western Europe that was superior and progressive, rational and civil—the opposite of the Oriental Other. In "Edward Said: The Exile as Interpreter" (1993), about Said's *Orientalism* (1978), A. Madhavan said that "Said's passionate thesis in that book, now an 'almost canonical study', represented Orientalism as a 'style of thought' based on the antinomy of East and West in their world-views, and also as a 'corporate institution' for dealing with the Orient."

In concordance with the philosopher Michel Foucault, Said established that power and knowledge are the inseparable components of the intellectual binary relationship with which Occidentals claim "knowledge of the Orient". That the applied power of such cultural knowledge allowed Europeans to rename, re-define, and thereby control Oriental peoples, places, and things, into imperial colonies. The power–knowledge binary relation is conceptually essential to identify and understand colonialism in general, and European colonialism in particular.

Nonetheless, critics of the homogeneous "Occident–Orient" binary social relation, said that Orientalism is of limited descriptive capability and practical application, and proposed that there are variants of Orientalism that apply to Africa and to Latin America. Said replied that the European West applied Orientalism as a *homogeneous* form of The Other, in order to facilitate the formation of the cohesive, collective European cultural identity denoted by the term "The West".

With this described binary logic, the West generally constructs the Orient subconsciously as its alter ego. Therefore, descriptions of the Orient by the Occident lack material attributes, grounded within land. This

inventive, or imaginative interpretation subscribes female characteristics to the Orient and plays into fantasies that are inherent within the West's alter ego. It should be understood that this process draws creativity, amounting an entire domain and discourse.

In *Orientalism*, Said mentions the production of "philology (the study of the history of languages), lexicography (dictionary making), history, biology, political and economic theory, novel-writing and lyric poetry". Therefore, there is an entire industry that exploits the Orient for its own subjective purposes that lack a native and intimate understanding. Such industries become institutionalized and eventually become a resource for manifest Orientalism, or a compilation of misinformation about the Orient.

Spivak also introduced the terms *essentialism* and *strategic essentialism* to describe the social functions of postcolonialism. The term *essentialism* denotes the perceptual dangers inherent to reviving subaltern voices in ways that might (over) simplify the cultural identity of heterogeneous social groups and, thereby, create stereotyped representations of the different identities of the people who compose a given social group. The term *strategic essentialism* denotes a temporary, essential group-identity used in the praxis of discourse among peoples. Furthermore, essentialism can occasionally be applied—by the so-described people—to facilitate the subaltern's communication in being heeded, heard, and understood, because a strategic essentialism (a fixed and established subaltern identity) is more readily grasped, and accepted, by the popular majority, in the course of inter-group discourse. The important distinction, between the terms, is that strategic essentialism does not ignore the diversity of identities (cultural and ethnic) in a social group, but that, in its practical function, strategic

essentialism temporarily minimizes inter-group diversity to pragmatically support the essential group-identity.

Spivak developed and applied Foucault's term *epistemic violence* to describe the destruction of non-Western ways of perceiving the world and the resultant dominance of the Western ways of perceiving the world. Conceptually, epistemic violence specifically relates to women, whereby the "Subaltern [woman] must always be caught in translation, never [allowed to be] truly expressing herself", because the colonial power's destruction of her culture pushed to the social margins her non-Western ways of perceiving, understanding, and knowing the world.

In June of the year 1600, the Afro-Iberian woman Francisca de Figueroa requested from the King of Spain his permission for her to emigrate from Europe to New Spain, and reunite with her daughter, Juana de Figueroa. As a subaltern woman, Francisca repressed her native African language, and spoke her request in Peninsular Spanish, the official language of Colonial Latin America.

Moreover, Spivak further cautioned against ignoring subaltern peoples as "cultural Others", and said that the West could progress—beyond the colonial perspective—by means of introspective self-criticism of the basic ideals and investigative methods that establish a culturally superior West studying the culturally inferior non-Western peoples. Hence, the integration of the subaltern voice to the intellectual spaces of social studies is problematic, because of the unrealistic opposition to the idea of studying "Others"; Spivak rejected such an anti-intellectual stance by social scientists, and about them said that "to refuse to represent a cultural Other is salving your conscience [...] allowing you not to do any homework."^[22] Moreover, postcolonial studies also reject the colonial cultural depiction of subaltern

peoples as hollow mimics of the European colonists and their Western ways; and rejects the depiction of subaltern peoples as the passive recipient-vessels of the imperial and colonial power of the Mother Country. Consequent to Foucault's philosophic model of the binary relationship of power and knowledge, scholars from the Subaltern Studies Collective, proposed that anti-colonial resistance always counters every exercise of colonial power

In *The Location of Culture* (1994), the theoretician Homi K. Bhabha argued that viewing the human world as composed of separate and unequal cultures, rather than as an integral human world, perpetuates the belief in the existence of imaginary peoples and places—"Christendom" and "The Islamic World", "The First World", "The Second World", and "The Third World". To counter such linguistic and sociologic reductionism, postcolonial praxis establishes the philosophic value of hybrid intellectual spaces, wherein ambiguity abrogates truth and authenticity; thereby, *hybridity* is the philosophic condition that most substantively challenges the ideological validity of colonialism

However, for a better understanding of postcolonial studies it is imperative to get into the nitty-gritty of colonialism. The main apogee of this talk is to touch upon some of the basic tenets of postcolonialism with recourse to colonialism.

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Department of English, Pattamundai College, Pattamundai
Students' Attendance in the Seminar on "Postcolonialism: An
Introduction" on 17/02/2020

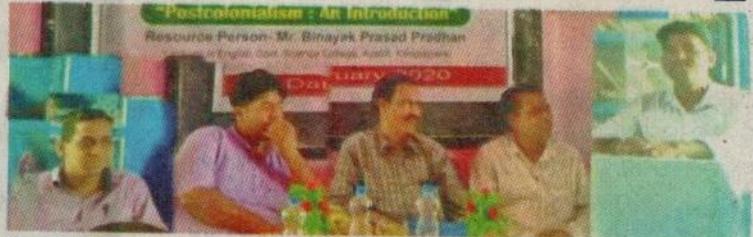
Sl No	Roll No	Signature of the Student
1	BA19-086	Roshna Pradhan.
2	BA19-190	Debashree Parida
3	BA19-131	Prayanka Das
4	BA19-212	Monalisa Rout
5	BA19-189	Smriti Pragnya Nayak
6	BA-19-067	Abhisra Rout
7	BA-19-098	Chinmayee Nath
8	BA-19-859	pragnya ranj Das
9	BA-19-193	Manoj Malik
10	BA-19-160	Rasindra Mondal.
11	BA-19-087	Prasant Kumar Nath
12	BA-19-243	Sunjan Sriya Nayak
13	BA-19-102	Hishree pradhan.
14	BA-18-122	Parosh Chandra Das
15	BA-18-055	Salutree Das
16	BA-18-049	Soumyashree Parida
17	BA-18-246	Sadhana Rout
18	BA-18-167	Prakash D.
19	BA-18-212	Bismuti Nayak





ପଢ଼ାମୁଣ୍ଡାଇ କଲେଜ ଇଂରାଜୀ ବିଭାଗରେ ଆଲୋଚନାଚକ୍ର

ପଢ଼ାମୁଣ୍ଡାଇ, ୨୨/୨(ଆପ୍): ପଢ଼ାମୁଣ୍ଡାଇ କଲେଜ ଇଂରାଜୀ ବିଭାଗ ପକ୍ଷରୁ ଉପ ନିବେଶବାଦ ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଇଂରାଜୀ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଶୀର୍ଷକ ଆଲୋଚନାଚକ୍ର ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । ପଢ଼ାମୁଣ୍ଡାଇ କଲେଜ ଇଂରାଜୀ ବିଭାଗ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଡ. ଶରତ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦାଶଙ୍କ ପୌରହିତ୍ୟରେ ଆୟୋଜିତ ଆଲୋଚନାଚକ୍ରରେ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରାପଡ଼ା ଆୟୋଗୀ ସରକାରୀ ବିଜ୍ଞାନ କଲେଜର ସହକାରୀ ପ୍ରଫେସର ବିନାୟକ ପ୍ରଧାନ ମୁଖ୍ୟଅତିଥି ଭାବେ ଯୋଗଦେଇ ଉପନିବେଶବାଦ ଓ ଇଂରାଜୀ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଉପରେ ଏହାର ପ୍ରଭାବ ସଂପର୍କରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିଥିଲେ । ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ ଡ. ମାନସ ନାୟକ ଭିତ୍ତି ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ



ପାଠ କରିଥିଲେ । ସ୍ୱଳ୍ପ ୩ ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ବର୍ଷ ଛାତ୍ରୀ ସାଧନା ରାଉତଙ୍କ ସଂଯୋଜନାରେ ଆୟୋଜିତ ଉତ୍ସବରେ ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ ଅନୀୟ କୁମାର ଦାସ ସ୍ୱାଗତଭାଷଣ ଓ ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ ସରୋଜକାନ୍ତ ନାୟକ ଅତିଥିପରିଚୟ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିଥିଲେ । ରାଜକେଶ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦାସ

ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମକୁ ସୁମନଶ୍ରୀୟା ନାୟକ, ଚିନ୍ମୟା ନାଥ, ଅବିନାଶ ଦାସ, ସୁଦିପ୍ତା ଦାସ, ସାବିତ୍ରୀ ପ୍ରଧାନ, ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀରେଖା ଦାସ, ଅର୍ପିତା ବିଶ୍ୱାଳ, ଦେବଶ୍ରୀ ପରିଡ଼ା ପ୍ରମୁଖ ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀ ଏହାକୁ ପରିଚାଳନା କରିଥିଲେ ।

23-02-2020 Samaja

ପଢ଼ାମୁଣ୍ଡାଇ କଲେଜ ଇଂରାଜୀ ବିଭାଗ ଆଲୋଚନାଚକ୍ର



ପଢ଼ାମୁଣ୍ଡାଇ, (ସବୁ): ପଢ଼ାମୁଣ୍ଡାଇ କଲେଜ ଇଂରାଜୀ ବିଭାଗ ପକ୍ଷରୁ ଉପନିବେଶବାଦ ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଇଂରାଜୀ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଶୀର୍ଷକ ଆଲୋଚନାଚକ୍ର ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । ପଢ଼ାମୁଣ୍ଡାଇ କଲେଜ ଇଂରାଜୀ ବିଭାଗ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଡ. ଶରତ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦାଶଙ୍କ ପୌରହିତ୍ୟରେ ଆୟୋଜିତ ଆଲୋଚନାଚକ୍ରରେ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରାପଡ଼ା ଆୟୋଗୀ ସରକାରୀ ବିଜ୍ଞାନ କଲେଜ

ସହକାରୀ ପ୍ରଫେସର ବିନାୟକ ପ୍ରଧାନ ମୁଖ୍ୟଅତିଥି ଭାବେ ଯୋଗ ଦେଇ ଉପନିବେଶବାଦ ଓ ଇଂରାଜୀ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଉପରେ ଏହାର ପ୍ରଭାବ ସଂପର୍କରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିଥିଲେ । ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ ଡ. ମାନସ ନାୟକ ଭିତ୍ତିପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ପାଠ କରିଥିଲେ । ୩ ୨ୟ ବର୍ଷ ଛାତ୍ରୀ ସାଧନା ରାଉତଙ୍କ ସଂଯୋଜନାରେ ଆୟୋଜିତ ଉତ୍ସବରେ ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ ଅନୀୟ କୁମାର ଦାସ ସ୍ୱାଗତଭାଷଣ

ଓ ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ ସରୋଜକାନ୍ତ ନାୟକ ଅତିଥିପରିଚୟ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିଥିଲେ । ଶେଷରେ ରାଜକେଶ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦାସ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ଏହି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମକୁ ସୁମନଶ୍ରୀୟା ନାୟକ, ଚିନ୍ମୟା ନାଥ, ଅବିନାଶ ଦାସ, ସୁଦିପ୍ତା ଦାସ, ସାବିତ୍ରୀ ପ୍ରଧାନ, ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀରେଖା ଦାସ, ଅର୍ପିତା ବିଶ୍ୱାଳ, ଦେବଶ୍ରୀ ପରିଡ଼ା ପ୍ରମୁଖ ଇଂରାଜୀ ବିଭାଗର ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀମାନେ ପରିଚାଳନା କରିଥିଲେ ।

23-02-2020 Samaja