

REVISITING THE KEY CONCEPTS IN POSTCOLONIAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract

Postcolonialism as a theory emerged due to colonialism, especially European colonialism and it dwells on colonialism and its aftermath. Postcolonial discourse is out to kick out all Eurocentric ideas, and this study makes reference to some of the terms used in analyzing colonialism. The study maintains that colonial discourse existed before the emergence of postcolonial discourse. Colonial discourse has emanated from the Eurocentric views of the coloniser, as they portrayed the natives as savages. Colonial discourse tarnished the reputation of the natives in a bid to justify colonialism. Postcolonial discourse is out to redeem this negative image of the colonised people and strongly disagree with all the issues put forward by the imperialists. This study identifies abrogation, appropriation, representation, transformation, translation as key terms in postcolonial discourse. The study notes that the issue of language—whether to use the colonisers language or not—is a contentious one as postcolonial theorists and critics recommend abrogation while others call for appropriation of the coloniser’s language. This study concludes that appropriation of the coloniser’s language in postcolonial nations is easier than abrogation. Abrogation which calls for the total rejection of the coloniser’s language may not be possible in multilingual nations.

Keywords: postcolonialism, colonial discourse, abrogation, appropriation,

Introduction

Postcolonialism dwells on the event of colonialism, especially European colonialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth century and its aftermath. Colonialism affected the colonised nations negatively, especially the emergence of hybridity—biological, linguistic and cultural hybrids. To be able to justify colonialism, the imperialists claimed that the natives were savages and heathens without a culture. The imperialist’s claim of pacifying the natives is an issue that is seriously contested in postcolonial discourse. Colonial discourse which demonized the natives, harbored Eurocentric issues and ideas must now be set aside as baseless clichés. Postcolonial theoreticians and critics are out to refute this wrong impression created in colonial discourse.

Postcolonialism is a counter discourse that has emerged to debunk the Eurocentric ideas inherent in colonial discourse. Postcolonial discourse has some key concepts which shall be analysed so as to point out the loop holes in colonial discourse. Postcolonial discourse has for instance maintained that the continuous use of the language of the coloniser is an extension of colonialism. They call for the abrogation (rejection) of English in all postcolonial nations but the English language can only be abrogated in nations where a single mother tongue exists. This study has set out to revisit the concepts in postcolonial discourse so as to contribute to the existing debate on postcolonialism and its impact in the postcolonial nations.

Postcolonial Discourse

Postcolonial discourse according to Stein Olsen is the “interpretative vocabulary [of postcolonialism]” (155). Postcolonialism itself is a reaction to colonialism and it employs some terms in analysing colonialism which Olsen here refers to as interpretative vocabulary. In *Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies*, Bill Ashcroft, Helen Tiffin and Gareth Griffiths observe

that the word “discourse” was used in the past to “describe any kind of speaking, talk or conversation, but became increasingly used to describe a more formal speech, a narration or a statement of any subject at length, a treatise, dissertation or sermon. More recently, discourse has been used in a technical sense by linguists to describe any unit of speech longer than a sentence.” (70) Postcolonial discourse actually classifies and interprets the cultural practices of the postcolonial nation. Andrew Aba takes time to examine the place of postcolonial discourse in literary aesthetics and he concludes that presently,

Post-colonial discourse is more accessible to the reader. The level of difficulty in grasping it may, therefore, be less than that of theory. Still post-colonial discourse cuts out the post-colonial mode of theory and criticism, as an alien field that exacts a rigorous “catching up,” on the part of even literary aficionados who, are not abreast of the most recent trends in the field (35).

The analysis of postcolonial discourse must begin with colonial discourse which existed before it. This is the reason why Ashcroft, Tiffin and Griffiths in *Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies*, trace the origin of postcolonial discourse back to the concept of “colonial discourse” introduced by Edward Said who adopted the concept of discourse as earlier put forward by Michael Foucault. They add that Said had seen that “Foucault’s notion of a discourse as valuable for describing that system within which that range of practices termed “colonial” come into being.” (41). Foucault had theorized that discourse refers to a set of statements through which the world can be known. He had opined that discourse refers to the system by which people or groups of people

in a society maintain a field of truth that imposes disciplines, knowledge and values on a group of dominated (colonised) people.

Colonial discourse is dominated by the belief that Europe is the centre of the world and the superiority of European modernity, language, literature and technology. Colonial discourse also deals with that which is said or can be said about the colonised people and that which is said about the colonising nation as well as the relationship between these nations. Colonial discourse in most cases is generated by the imperial nation but becomes the discourse within which those who are colonised are made to see themselves as inferior to the colonial masters. Ashcroft concludes that colonial discourse is always partial or in favour of the imperial nation because,

colonial discourse tends to exclude, of course, statements about the exploitation of the resources of the colonised, the political status accruing to colonising powers, the importance to domestic politics of the development of an empire, all of which may be compelling reasons for maintaining colonial ties. Rather it conceals these benefits in statements about the inferiority of the colonised, the primitive nature of other races, the barbaric depravity of colonised societies, and therefore the duty of the imperial power to produce itself in the colonial society, and to advance the civilization of the colony through trade, administration, culture and moral improvement. (*Key Concepts*, 43)

It is obvious from the views of Ashcroft Bill, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin on colonial discourse that, it preceded postcolonial discourse and that postcolonial discourse has emerged as a reaction to colonial discourse. Ashcroft's analysis of colonial discourse as

seen here also sheds light on the concept of postcolonial discourse as well. Andrew Aba sums it up that,

Postcolonial discourse is a code or register for theorizing on human and organizational realities in ways that help the colonised to order the colonial space according to his image and purpose. Postcolonial discourse is therefore, the counter-action to colonial discourse, whereby the indigene redefines, restructures and reverses colonial discourse to his/her purposes. (36)

Some of these terms commonly used in post-colonial discourse are, abrogation, appropriation, transformation, representation, translation, filiation and affiliation. What follows is a brief examination of some of these commonly used terms in postcolonial discourse.

Abrogation

In postcolonial discourse, abrogation refers to that conscious effort by those who are colonised to set aside the language of the coloniser and replace it with an indigenous language. The issue of language and how it is used by the coloniser and the colonised has always been a crucial one. English is even seen as the language of the oppressor. The issue of language is a primary concern of the postcolonial theorists, considering the difficulty of expressing the experiences of the oppressed in English—the language of the coloniser. Ashcroft Bill, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin identify language as one of the features that can be noticed in association with imperial oppression. The imperialists, right from the beginning of colonialism exercised control over language in the colonies. They add that, “the imperial education system installs a “standard” version of the metropolitan language as the norm and marginalizes all “variants” as impurities”

(*Empire Writes Back*, 7). Language is a means through which a structure of power is “perpetuated and the medium through which conceptions of “truth,” “order” and “reality” become established. Such power is rejected in the emergence of an effective postcolonial voice” (*Empire Writes Back*, 7). This means that with the attainment of independence, a postcolonial nation may choose to abrogate the language of the coloniser. Postcolonial discourse is built on the rejection of the special privilege accorded the language of the imperialist.

Moreover abrogation is seen as important in postcolonial discourse because of the issue of alienation. The acquisition of the knowledge of white culture and language leads to what is known in postcolonialism as linguistic alienation. Ashcroft Bill goes further to explain that, “imperialism which results in a profound linguistic alienation is obviously the case in cultures in which a pre-colonial culture is suppressed by military conquest or enslavement.” (*Empire Writes Back*, 10). Postcolonialism frowns at this linguistic alienation and calls for a set of intellectuals who will abrogate the language. Postcolonialism seeks to restore the pre-colonial cultural practices and this includes the task of reviving and revaluing local languages in the once colonised nations. Today, the communication of the elite is dominated by the use of the language of the coloniser (English) which acquired its power from the historical event of colonialism as the largest empire and its use by United States of America. Realizing the importance of the indigenous languages, postcolonial theorists call for a return to the indigenous languages and culture. Ashcroft Bill, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin add that,

in postcolonial societies in which alternatives exist, it has been suggested that a return to indigenous languages can restructure attitudes to

the local and the indigenous cultures, and can also form a more effective bridge to the bulk of the population whose lives have continued to be conducted largely in their mother tongues. (*Key Concepts*, 57)

So many postcolonial writers call for the abrogation of the English language as the language of the coloniser and a return to native languages. For instance, Ngugi wa Thiongo's bitter renouncement of English language and his decision to write his novels in his native Gikuyu amount to abrogation. As a matter of fact, Ngugi considers Chinua Achebe's usage of English as an "Afro-European" act of betrayal and complicity with the imperium. "Ngugi Wa' Thiongo has also argued that the continuous use of the language of the coloniser is a form of self-inflicted neo-colonisation". (cited in Bentens, 195). However, other writers do not accept Ngugi's view on abrogation as the only means of "decolonising the mind". Andrew Aba for instance opines that abrogation is not the only way out because a language like English is the language of the coloniser but

Post-colonial writers and critics have transformed it into a means of self-expression. For that reason, the way forward is not to abrogate these resources but for colonised societies to adapt them to local needs, and value them as providing control over their future. They go as far as adding that the resources have enhanced self-representation. (43)

Moreover some indigenous writers in the postcolonial nations have no other option than to continue writing in English. They realize that they have acquired the knowledge of English and may not effectively use other languages as a medium for writing their books. Nigerian writer, Chinua Achebe clearly indicates why

he must prefers writing in English. “For me, there is no other choice. I have been given the language and I intend to use it” (62). Abrogation is also very difficult as other postcolonial writers argue that the indigenous people have different languages and may not understand each other when using their native languages. English becomes a common language that they can use and as a matter of fact cannot do without. This difficulty in abrogating the language of the coloniser in some postcolonial nations is what leads to the concept of appropriation in postcolonial discourse as discussed below.

Appropriation

In postcolonial discourse, appropriation is closely related to abrogation which has been discussed above and this is based on the fact that both have to do with a reaction of the colonised people to the language of the imperial nation. Appropriation is seen as the process of adapting to the coloniser’s language or effecting variations in such a language and no longer holding onto the coloniser’s view that “marginal variants” or “dialects” are inferior to the “standard” or “correct” form of the language as used by the native speakers.

The process of appropriation is sometimes used to refer to the coloniser’s strategy by which they take up a territory or culture that has been surveyed and invaded. Appropriation may also describe the ways of usurping cultural domains however the concept of appropriation is more useful in postcolonial discourse with regard to how “the dominant language and its discursive forms are appropriated to express widely differing cultural experiences, and to interpolate these experiences into the dominant modes of representation to reach the widest possible audience.” (*Key Concepts*, 19).

Appropriation as a postcolonial discourse is seen as a powerful concept and this point is established as Ashcroft mentions Achebe who quotes James Baldwin who observes that when the coloniser's language is appropriated, it is made to "bear the burden of another experience" (*Key Concepts*, 19). This means that the coloniser's language is made to adapt to its new environment instead of using it exactly as the coloniser uses it. In their analysis of appropriation in postcolonial discourse, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin note the fact that Ngugi who is a Kenyan writer insists that the English language should be abrogated yet "Ngugi continues to appropriate the novel form itself, and it has been argued that the very success of his political tactic of renouncing English has relied on his reputation as a writer in that tongue." (Key Concept, 19). This observation by Ashcroft is a clear indication that abrogation is not easy to hold onto. Ngugi wants to abrogate English but still finds himself translating his stories in English so as to attract patronage which he will not have access to if his novel remains untranslated. Aside from that, he still holds onto the English novel form which means he actually appropriating English instead of abrogating it as he claims.

Postcolonial writers and critics who have now chosen to take part in the appropriation of English and other ex-colonial languages argue that "although language may create powerful emotive contexts through which local identities are formed, and whilst the use of non-indigenous languages may, as a result, appear to such communities to be less authentic than texts in indigenous languages, such languages do not, in themselves, constitute an irrecoverably alien form, and they may be appropriated to render views that are just as powerful in constructing anti-colonial texts." (Ashcroft, *Key Concepts*. 20). This point of view is based on the fact that when a language like English is appropriated, the writer

may even achieve more that way than when a native language is used. The English language enjoys a wider coverage than local or native languages. Pramond K. Nayar emphasizes the fact that English language is important and useful to both the coloniser and the colonised. The language should therefore, be appropriated instead of trying to set it aside. He concludes that,

In each case the postcolonial writer asserts her identity not in an abandonment of the former European master's language, but in its appropriation. A postcolonial identity is forged, in many cases, not in a return to pre-colonial language or a 'pure' form, but in a hybridisation where political independence means that the postcolonial is empowered through the colonial past to fashion a new identity. While it is possible to argue that this makes postcolonialism a derivative discourse and form, it is also clear that, hybridisation is an act of agency and freedom where the writer creatively uses English in order to show how the crucial weapon of colonisation can become a weapon of the postcolonial as well. (85)

Appropriation of the coloniser's language is upheld in postcolonial discourse since it is seen as a strategy that affords the formerly colonised nations the opportunity to participate in international or what we may call dominant discourse and even sell their culture and tradition to the world. Appropriation of English enables the writer to use it to describe the realities of his nation to a wider audience of readers.

Translation

Translation according to Rushdie “comes, etymologically, from the Latin “to carry or bear across”(81). Translation is fundamental to the establishment of a colony as the imperial nation sets out to acquire new territory. According to Andrew Aba, translation is important in “the first instance whereby a “facsimile” or miniature of a place on the coloniser’s home map is “reproduced” or “recreated” in the colony.” (36). Translation then is the process of establishing a colony as the coloniser translates his own territory to the target territory. Robert Young draws an analogy of translation by comparing postcolonial translation to “textual translation”, using the distinction between “original” and “copy” to clarify the crossbreeding involved. Young explains that in this process of translation, the “copy” which is intended to correct, or at least mitigate the felt “deficiencies in the native version” (139-141) is made to appear as more authentic than the original. This can be understood against the background or the belief that the “barbarian” subject is tamable only through education which may also be understood as the transfer of Anglo-Saxon culture. Again this process of educating the colonised (barbarian) is reinforced by the impression of the colonised as a child that needs to be transformed into an adult “self”. This can be seen then as a translation from childhood to adulthood designed to overwrite the “child’s sense of reality and value. To Young, translation is a “discourse for how languages, people and cultures are transformed while in operation and also by changing their sense of self and of their place in society” (138). He further describes the process as:

The closest to central activity and political dynamic of post-colonialism [...which analysis is] centrally concerned with... linguistic, cultural and geographical transfer, [and] transformation of

positive and negative kinds, changing things into things which they are not. Or showing that they were never that way in the first instance (138 - 9).

Young also observes that translation was first practiced by the imperialists unilaterally in order to hold onto its benefit, but thanks to the dynamic nature of man, and human organization, it later turned into “cultural interaction and re-empowerment” (142). Though this change is said to have occurred from the counter action of the subject people, the coloniser still managed to manipulate the situation for imperial profit. Young sees “creolization” as a classic case of this occurrence because it implies “displacement, transformation of dominant culture [the empire’s] into new identities that take on material elements from the culture of their location [the subject’s]” (142). It may be observed that the transformation or positive change that both the coloniser and indigene hope to make from the process of translation eventually do not amount to much gain since Young too acknowledges that some aspects of the indigenous culture remain “untranslatable” (140), which means that they literally remain impenetrable to foreign access and manipulation, even to interpretation and comprehension. Closely linked with this condition is what Young calls, “false translation” or “diplomacy” (141). This involves either individual or group behaviour which Homi Bhabha describes as “Sly civility” (Young 141). The colonised resort to diplomacy so as to, distort the coloniser’s understanding of the colonial space. It is carried out through misrepresentations, lies, betrayals and all manner of pretentiousness, undermining, if not sabotaging, the colonial project.

A good example of false translation is Shakespeare’s portrayal of Caliban in *The Tempest*. Caliban is bent on using his knowledge of his Master’s language, English, to “curse” both

Prospero and his daughter Miranda, instead of employing it for a more beneficial purpose for himself and his society. Caliban tells his master Prospero that, “you taught me language and my profit on’t/Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you/For learning me your language!”. Critics have over the years argued that Caliban’s comment cited here is a symbol of indigene reaction to “centuries of linguistic and cultural control” (Ashcroft, *On Post-colonial Futures*, 96). The portrayal of Caliban’s relationship with Prospero/Miranda has, evolved as a metaphor for the subject-coloniser relationship though Shakespeare’s creative imagination did not actually set out to capture the future impact of imperialism on colonised people.

Different opinions exist on Shakespeare’s presentation of the character, Caliban. Vaughan Allen and Vaughan Virginia opine that up to the mid-1900s, some critics were of the opinion that Caliban was blameworthy for failing to appropriate the coloniser’s language (166). However, in 1960, George Lamming opined that Caliban is not to blame since language is the symbolic key to the perennial underdevelopment of the subject—“the very prison in which Caliban’s achievements will be realised and restricted.” (110). He maintains that Caliban was taught English mainly for domestic purposes and that “Caliban can never be regarded as an heir to that language since his use of language is no more than his way of serving Prospero; and Prospero’s instruction in this language is only his way of measuring the distance which separates him from Caliban” (110).

Translation as a postcolonial discourse is very crucial to the natives who write in the language of the coloniser. Maria Tymoczko postulates that translation is always involved in one way or another when a colonised person writes in English. She further explains that, “the act of writing in English is not ‘merely’ one of

translation of an Indian text into English language, but a quest for a space which is created by translation and assimilation, and hence transforms all three [the Indian, the English and the context]" (qtd. in Fraser, *Post-colonial Fiction*, 40). This means that the postcolonial writer who writes in English or any other imperial language is involved in translation as he/she writes to transform his own nation by countering the Eurocentric notions of the coloniser that had existed in colonial discourse. Such writer also appropriates English so as to use it in such a manner that it bears the native culture and language.

Andrew Aba in his analysis of translation as a postcolonial discourse identifies Achebe as one postcolonial writer who makes use of translation by "acculturating English with his Igbo linguistic and tonal inflexions, and with idiomatic and folkloric masterstrokes, he does, in fact, bridge the gap between the two languages." (42). Aba opines that the use of appropriation enables Achebe as a writer to avoid or reduce the cultural alienation that may have emerged between the colonised and the overlord. Based on this, he concludes that, "translation involves the process of appropriation by which English is manipulated in ways that evade the dominance of western canons. Indeed, post-colonial discourse is entirely centered on autonomous, "national" literatures in all forms and pedigrees of the colonial linguistic canon which in effect, substantiate the periphery's claim that its literatures are not branches of the imperial vine"(42).

Transformation

Transformation as a postcolonial discourse is closely related to translation as it shows the ability of the colonised to seize the coloniser's language, discourse, and technologies and convert it as an avenue or means of self-empowerment. The colonised transforms or restores the image of his/her nation by using the

language of the coloniser to debunk some if not all Eurocentric notions put in place by the coloniser in colonial discourse by writing in that imperial language making use of appropriation. In addition to this, the technology of the coloniser gets into the hands of the colonised who can as well hold onto it and use it to transform or restore the image of his own nation which had been tarnished by the coloniser. Transformation as a postcolonial discourse is put in place to accommodate new insights into the postcolonial cultural evolution of the colonised people. Edward Said explains that,

The central strategy in transformations of colonial culture is the seizing of self-representation (ie taking charge of how one is projected). This is why post-colonial theory regards the phenomenon of culture as so important... the struggle over representation underlies all economic, political, and social resistance and occurs in language, writing and other forms of cultural production. Colonial representation is so powerful in its effect that it can [determine the self-concept of the colonised]. This can affect all social and political exchange. (qtd. in Ashcroft, *On Postcolonial Futures*, 7).

Transformation in postcolonial discourse can be done through self-representation and to illustrate this, Andrew Aba identifies Chinua Achebe as a postcolonial writer who achieved much in the area of appropriation and transformation in his writing. Aba further explains that “in Achebe’s transformation (via self-representation) he tries to strike a balance, for example, in character or situational portrayal, objectively exposing the complex underbelly of a problem. It matters little to him whether this approach shows his people in a bad light, or makes him seemingly self-contradictory.”

(44). The point is that the postcolonial writer sets out in pursuance of self-representation and restoration of the lost image of his nation in the wake of colonialism but should not fail to acknowledge the fact that his/her society also had its imperfections before the arrival of the colonial masters. Achebe himself explains that this is very important because “we cannot pretend that our past was one long technicolour idyll. We have to admit that like other people’s past, ours had its good as well as its bad sides.” (qtd. in Innes and Lindfors, 70). The postcolonial writer should not just glorify the past and fail to identify those aspects of the past that need to put right. Kofi Awoonor a popular African poet also holds onto this point as he criticises negritude for instance because the movement known as negritude had glorified the African past without seeking ways in which that past could be made better. Awoonor presents his argument as follows:

While they [negritude writers] are interested in the past for the sake of glorifying the past, I think our concern is for an interest in the past which will illuminate the present, so we are not going to be locked in the past. The writers of negritude talk about the Golden Age of Africa. Every people who create a Golden Age are going to suffer from a sense of narcissism and self-hypnotism. Well, we have had empires, princes and queens, and so on; that’s fine, but what’s going on now? There was a lot of confusion in those days also. I will not take the same position as Yambo Ouologem in his *Le Devoir du Violence*, which tends to exaggerate the corruption of Africa... but we have to be critical of ourselves at the same time. (qtd. in Morell 148).

Representation

Representation is a term that denotes a range of meanings or interpretations. Noel Salazar explains that “etymologically, representation can be understood as a presentation drawn up not by depicting the object as it is but by re-presenting it or constructing it in a new form and/or environment.” (172). He then explains how in ancient times, the concept of representation played an important role in studying and understanding literature, semiotics as well as aesthetics. Salazar further explains how representation is used in socio-cultural and postcolonial discourse,

In socio-cultural representations it is often difference that signifies by creating binary oppositions. Within this dichotomised relationship, one pole always tends to dominate (e.g male over female, us over them, high over low), bringing issues of dissimilarity and power to the fore within a representation.... Representation [which] enacted and reproduced the asymmetries of power in the colonial world has enhanced the significance of cultural politics in the academic field of postcolonial studies. The focus on culture and representation is not necessarily a diversion from the political realities of postcolonial struggle; culture and representation can even be used to inform the understanding of those colonial processes. (171-173).

The fact is that in colonial discourse, the coloniser had presented the colonised peoples as barbarians, and unenlightened savages. Postcolonial discourse therefore seeks to represent the colonised in a different light completely. There exists much postcolonial scholarship which is informed by theories that dwell on the politics of representations. Edward Said is one of the influential

postcolonial scholars who demystifies the process of constructing “the Other”. Said noted that native people or populations were represented in colonial texts as primitive so as to create the impression that the British had a modern or well developed culture and justify the notion that the colonial adventure of Europe was valid and necessary. He further observes that,

Everyone who writes about the Orient must locate himself vis-avis the Orient; translated into his text; this location includes the kind of narrative he adopts, the type of structure he builds, the kind of images, themes, motifs that circulate in his text—all of which add up to the deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the Orient and finally representing it or speaking on its behalf. (20).

It is important to consider Said’s analysis of how the Orient is represented in Western texts and it must be noted that Edward Said had employed “a Foucaultian conception of the power/knowledge nexus and the politics of representation, Saida seminal book *Orientalism* established how the “West” (especially Britain, France, and the United States) through an academic, literary and philosophical endeavor executed by Western intellectuals, was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-enlightenment period” (Salazar 173). This means that Said presented the linear pattern that led to the presentation of the Orient as the other by the West and it also became the basis for colonial oppression as well build and strengthen the culture and identity of the West. Since the West had presented the Orient as the inferior Other, Said had seen the need

to represent the Orient in a more positive manner. This is the reason why Salazar further explains that,

Said eloquently demonstrated how the representations of Orientalism pervade the writings of European and North American literature icons such as Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, Henry James, and Thomas Hardy as well as modern-day media reports about the developing world, particularly the Islamic world. Although Said's arguments have been challenged and extended, his work is still the governing voice that leads scholars in anthropology, literature, mass communication, and postcolonial studies to critically analyse representations that demarcate "us" versus "them." (173).

Aside from Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak is another postcolonial scholar who also contributed to the concept of representation as a postcolonial discourse. She is known for her article "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In this article, she dwells extensively on how representations, of groups of people from developing countries who are marginalised. According to Salazar, the crux of Spivak's argument is that the representations of the developing world conflate two related but discontinuous meanings of representation. One meaning is "speaking for" in the sense of political representation, and the second is "speaking about" or "re-presenting" ... while Spivak recognises that representations cannot escape "Othering", Spivak argues for us to be scrupulous in so doing, especially in the case of unequal power relationships, when representing

the West's Other (the developing world) and the developing world's Other (the Subaltern). (173).

A conclusion can be drawn, reflecting the fact that representation as postcolonial discourse is out to present the colonised in a new light as opposed to how they were represented in colonial discourse by the colonial masters. The colonised is therefore, re-presented to the imperial masters so that they too may now see the colonised differently. The discourse of representation is out to make the coloniser see that which he had deliberately refused to notice about the people they colonised. Thus Lalitha Velautham concludes that, the “Knowledge of the represented creates the represented in the minds of all who come in contact with the discourse and images of the represented.” (44). Representation is therefore, an important concept in postcolonial discourse.

Conclusion

It has been established here that colonial discourse came into existence before the emergence of postcolonial discourse. While the former was put in place by the colonialists or imperial nations, the latter has come into existence based on the effort of the colonised people to counter the wrong and Eurocentric ideas or issues put forward by the imperial nations. Based on this, we may conclude that postcolonialism itself is a counter discourse. It is out to counter colonial discourse. If colonial discourse had seen the colonised peoples as barbaric, unrefined savages, postcolonialism represents these people as an enlightened people with a culture and a glorious past as well as a promising future.

The issues of language and culture dominate postcolonialism and are represented in concepts like abrogation and appropriation. It is obvious that abrogation—complete rejection of the colonizer's language in favour of an indigenous one—is the best option as far as postcolonial discourse is concerned but it is

not possible in multilingual nations. It is recommended that appropriation—the use of the colonizer’s language but with variations or slight changes to make it more suitable in a postcolonial nation—is the right option and many postcolonial scholars attest to this. Postcolonial discourse will surely do away with colonial discourse or render it outdated, and of no consequence.

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