



Domination and Exploitation: The Primary Aims or the By-Products of Colonization?

Mohammed Farman Ullah Bhuiyan

Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Asia Pacific, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Received: 13 Feb 2021; Received in revised form: 11 Mar 2021; Accepted: 19 Apr 2021; Available online: 28 Apr 2021

©2021 The Author(s). Published by Infogain Publication. This is an open access article under the CC BY license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Abstract— *Domination and colonization are the terms closely related to each other as they are inseparable in the sense that when colonization comes into being, it either aims at domination or domination becomes the by-product of colonization itself. Hence, my paper will focus on the purpose of colonization and its inevitable outcome that is, domination that may or may not be the primary aim of colonization but without which colonization ceases to survive. Colonization, in general, comprised of people whose primary aim was to settle elsewhere, earn their livelihood and pass a better life there. To maintain these, again the colonizers become despotic and dominant over the colonized. Though the critics, historians and post-colonial theorists often characterize colonization as the means of subjugation of one race by the other, colonization was in fact a solution to a social problem which is to save large number of population in Europe in general and in United Kingdom in particular from an anticipated civil war. Colonization thus expands the empire for the settlement of the surplus population and for economic and political stability of the settler country. I will cite the canonical literary texts, theories and publications on colonialism and postcolonialism to show that colonization was not just a means of exploitation of the black natives by the white, but also a means of survival of a vast number of populations of Europe. The purpose of my research is to show that colonization comes into being not only to dominate and exploit others, but also to help survive and expand the empires for their own necessity and existence. Domination and exploitation are thus evolved as the by-products of colonization as they are the means and tools for the large empire to survive.*

Keywords— *colonization, domination, exploitation, by-product, postcolonialism, black natives.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Previous studies and researches consider colonialism as solely a matter of subjugation, domination and exploitation of one race by the other which is a more theoretical notion than a practical one. This paper will examine that colonialism has its different facets in its different times and in different places. From sixteenth century to eighteenth century onwards colonialism was considered as a matter of adventurous journey to a new land to find a new fortune and there was a heavy exchange of hard labor to accomplish it. It was a social and historical inevitability to occupy more new lands for the survival of a surplus population. It was rather an economic and social advancement that people are trying to live by means of struggle and hard labor amidst unfavorable condition. But

colonization becomes an evil agent soon in their hands when the colonizers become the rulers of the new land. After eighteenth century, exploitation colonialism took its rapid progress and prolonged until the mid-twentieth century. It created a mass hatred and criticism against the colonizers. In the mid twentieth century anti-colonialism was on the rise and drove away the colonial system that was expanding speedily at the close of the nineteenth century. Before it was a matter of pride to expand and set up colonies but now it has taken different forms of colonization rather than physical presence. This paper will focus on the historical purpose of colonizing others from a very deep and core understanding of the facts and realities of the time when colonization began and the period when it continued to expand rapidly.

II. METHOD

I analyzed some canonical or prototypical literary texts, essays, journal articles, and discourses on colonialism and postcolonialism to investigate the facts whether 'domination' and 'exploitation' were the primary aims of colonization or they came as the by-products of colonization. While investigating the texts, I found some interesting findings which will help me reach to a reliable conclusion that though colonization did not aim at domination in the most cases but it was the ultimate outcome of this process. I took the following resources into consideration to investigate and analyze because they are the most appropriate texts or essays or materials for my research.

The most influential theory book I have ever read on postcolonialism was Robert J.C. Young's *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* which gave a vivid history and background of colonialism and postcolonialism. *COLONIAL DISCOURSE AND POST-COLONIAL THEORY: A Reader*, edited and introduced by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, is a collection of some important and significant essays on colonial and postcolonial studies. Another book which provides a vital introduction to the historical dimensions and theoretical concepts associated with colonial and postcolonial discourses is *COLONIALISM/POSTCOLONIALISM* by AniaLoomba. *The Empire Writes Back* by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin is 'an absolute must' book for the postcolonial studies and my research. Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks* are the texts which will be analyzed to get the psychology of the colonized and their path to liberation. Edward Said's ground-breaking texts *Orientalism*, and *Culture and Imperialism* were also analyzed to show the western investment made to create knowledge of 'the Orient' to rule them. Some canonical texts like 1) *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe 2) *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare 3) *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad 4) *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe and 5) *A Passage to India* by E.M.Forster will be interpreted to show the exploitation of the colonial rule portrayed in different works of different writers.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Whether or not domination and exploitation of other race are the primary objectives of colonization, they are caused out of the by-product of it. If not all, most of the theorists only discuss about the evil consequences of colonization and cease to regard 'colonization as the necessary phase of human social development' (AniaLoomba, 21, situating postcolonial studies). My position here is to scrutinize the

historical aim of colonization and consequences of it and to place them together comprehensively. Hence, I will discuss both the background of the necessity of the expansion of empire as well as the exploitation of the colonized by the colonizer. To do this I need to ask some questions and search for the answers of them. The first of the few questions is "Did colonization begin with the aim to exploit others or to settle elsewhere to earn the bread and butter for the colonizers themselves?". The second question is "What are the common outcomes / by-products of the (earlier or modern / settler or exploitation) colonization?". The third and very important question is 'Was it a historical inevitability to colonize others, to expand the empires, to settle elsewhere or a dialectical processing of binaries like 'civilization' versus 'exploitation', 'center' versus 'marginal', 'self' versus 'other' and so on?'. If we search for a very innocent answer that colonization aims at a noble cause of civilizing others or enforcing a direct rule over the colonized people and territories, it will be misleading to study colonialism in its proper form. So considering 'the civilizing mission' as a thesis, and 'exploitation of the natives' as antithesis, and 'the resistance from the colonies and achievement of liberation' as its synthesis, which is a dialectical study of colonialism, will be the proper way to evaluate it. Thus I will show the historical and the dialectical evaluation of colonialism in the course of my research.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To indulge myself into the topic I need to define colonialism first. If we define the terms 'colonialism', 'imperialism', and 'postcolonialism' side by side, it will be easier to get the idea of colonialism. Both colonialism and imperialism involve forms of subjugation of one people by another. Imperialism governs its empire from the center bureaucratically for ideological and financial reasons but colonialism deals with the settlement by individual communities. Imperialism is a concept whereas colonialism is a practice. The postcolonial critique is the product of resistance to both colonialism and imperialism. In order to search the definition of colonialism or postcolonialism and the reasons and consequences of these terms, I studied and went through several books which gave me one important idea that there is no direct and complete definition of colonialism. One cause is that colonialism is not restricted to a specific time or place. The ancient Greek set up colonies as did the Romans, the Moors, and the Ottomans. Discovery of new sea-routes and technological developments in navigation made it possible to reach distant ports and to sustain close ties between the center and colonies. The modern European

colonial project emerged when it became possible to move large numbers of people across the ocean and to maintain political sovereignty in spite of geographical dispersion. Thus colonialism can be considered as the process of European settlement and political domination over the rest of the world. Some Scholars distinguish between colonies for settlement and colonies for economic exploitation. In his book *Postcolonialism-An Historical Introduction* Robert J. C. Young defined colonization as :

"Colonization, as Europeans originally used the term, signified not the rule over indigenous peoples, or the extraction of their wealth, but primarily the transfer of communities who sought to maintain their allegiance to their own original culture, while seeking a better life in economic, religious, or political terms – very similar to the situation of migrants today. Colonization in this sense comprised of people whose primary aim was to settle elsewhere rather than to rule others. Though in most cases it also involved the latter, this was a by – product of the former, the result of the land being already populated, though usually not 'settled' in the European sense." (Young, 2001)

This statement clarifies the position that ruling others was not the primary aim of colonization but the by-product of it. Robert J. C. Young took a citation from Lenin who cites Rhodes' comments to his friend Stead in 1895:

" My cherished idea is a solution for the social problem, i.e., in order to save the 40,000,000 inhabitants of the United Kingdom from a bloody civil war, we colonial statesmen must acquire new lands to settle the surplus population, to provide new markets for the goods produced in the factories and mines. The empire, as I have always said, is a bread and butter issue. If you want to avoid civil war, you must become imperialists." (Young, 2001)

Thus the idea of the colony as an outlet for surplus population motivated economics and politics and hence, social balance. Seeley in his famous comment in the book *The Expansion of England* stated as: ' we seem to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind'. So colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people's lands and goods. Colonialism is not only an expansion of various European powers into Asia, Africa or the Americas from the sixteenth century onwards but also a recurrent and widespread feature of human history. Ania Loomba in her book *Colonialism/ Postcolonialism* stated different phases of colonialism as:

"Modern European colonialism cannot be sealed off from these earlier histories of contact – the Crusades, or the Moorish invasion of Spain, the legendary exploits of Mongol rulers or the fabled wealth of Incas or the Mughals were real or imagined fuel for the European journeys to

different parts of the world. And yet, these newer European travels ushered in new and different kinds of colonial practices which altered the whole globe in a way that these other colonialisms did not." (Loomba, 1998)

Aime' Cesaire provided a critical view of colonization in the essay *Discourse on Colonialism*. It can be seen as an antithesis of colonial propaganda. He places 'Africa' as the binary opposite of 'Europe', a Europe that is 'decadent', 'stricken' and 'morally, spiritually indefensible'. Cesaire along with Frantz Fanon emphasized on the dehumanizing aspect of colonialism. Cesaire wrote:

"The colonialists may kill in Indochina, torture in Madagascar, imprison in Black Africa, crackdown in the West Indies. Henceforth the colonized know that they have an advantage over them. They know that their temporary masters are lying. And therefore their masters are weak." (Cesaire, 1972)

From the above literature we can assume that colonial discourse and the postcolonial theories are antagonistic. If colonial discourse is about the 'civilizing mission' , postcolonial theories are about the resistance to the exploitation caused by the colonizer. This dichotomy can be well addressed through the dialectical study of colonialism. The violent history of colonialism, starting in 1492, includes history of slavery, of untold, unnumbered deaths from oppression and neglect, of enforced migration and diaspora of millions of people, of appropriation of land and territories, of institutionalization of racism, of destruction of one culture and imposition of another and so on. Postcolonial critique reconsiders history and intermingles the past with the present. If colonial history is the history of imperial appropriation of the world, the postcolonial history is the history of the people taking power and control back for themselves.

V. CONCLUSION

My research proposes the historical fact about colonialism and its aftermaths. My study focuses on the historical facts and then analyzes them to show that colonialism begins as a solution for one social problem but while solving this problem it created another disease. To state my position clearly I can say that my paper is not meant to legitimize the colonial propaganda, but to show how it evolved as a social phenomenon and exploited the colonized. Any general theory tends to be inappropriate to define colonialism and its aftermath because of its diversity and difference. Modern historians distinguish between settlement and exploitation colonies. The purpose and outcome of the settlement of British North America, Australia and New Zealand, French Algeria, or Portuguese Brazil is different from the purpose and outcome of the exploitation colonies such as British India,

American Philippines and Puerto Rico, Dutch East Indies, German Togo or Japanese Taiwan etc. As the field varies depending on time and place, the aim and outcome also changes accordingly. My study focuses on the various aims of different forms of colonization from their historical background and on the various forms of domination or exploitation which are the ultimate by-products or outcomes of colonization.

REFERENCES

- [1] Achebe, C. (1958). *Things Fall Apart*. Oxford : Heinemann Educational Publishers.
- [2] Ashcroft, B. et al (1989). *The Empire Writes Back*. London and New York :Routledge.
- [3] Cesaire, A. (1972).From Discourse on Colonialism.In PatrickWilliams and Laura
- [4] Chrisman (Eds.) , *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (pp. 172-180) London : Prentice Hall.
- [5] Conrad, J. (1899). *Heart of Darkness*.Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- [6] Defoe, D. (1719).*Robinson Crusoe*.London : W. Taylor.
- [7] Fanon, F. (1967) *The Wretched of the Earth*. trans. C. Farrington, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- [8] Fanon, F. (1986) *Black Skin, White Masks*.London : Pluto Press.
- [9] Forster, E. M. (1924). *A Passage to India*.London : Penguin Books.
- [10] Loomba, A. (1998).*Colonialism/Postcolonialism*.London :Routledge.
- [11] Said, E. (1978).*Orientalism*.London :Routledge&Kegan Paul.
- [12] Said, E. (1993). *Culture and Imperialism*.London :Chatto&Windus.
- [13] Shakespeare, W. (1623).*The Tempest*.London : York Press (u.a.).
- [14] Williams, P. & Chrisman, L.(1993) *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory*. London: Prentice Hall.
- [15] Young, R.J.C. (2001) *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*.Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.