



Decolonizing Postcolonialism

Contexts & Contestations

14 & 15 February, 2025

A Two-Day National Conference

Organized by



Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira

Bose House Campus

Rishra, Hooghly- 712248

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Concept Note

The term 'postcolonial' has been a locus of complex debates and contradictions - from being dismissed as "a most pernicious fiction" (Aidoo 152) obliterating the political, economic and discursive inequalities in the 'decolonised' world to being depicted as an epistemic methodology which critiques the western structures of knowledge and power. Informed by fractured subjectivities of poststructuralist theory, postcolonial discourses are often conceived as contingent counter-hegemonic strategies predicated upon specific histories of agential cultural displacements. The consequent politics of postcoloniality, therefore, privileges the migrant intellectual, a ahistoric hybrid subject "remarkably free of gender, class, [and] identifiable political location" (Ahmad 13) who is often accused of being "a comprador intelligentsia... who mediate trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery" (Appiah 348). Moreover, the creation of a generalized margin as the other of Europe in postcolonial studies in the western academy seems "complicitous in the perpetuation of a "new orientalism"" (Spivak 56). Rushdie's dismissal of the appellation 'Commonwealth Literature' as a literary ghetto in resisting the construction of the marginal as a new object of investigation closely echoes Spivak's reservation about the new orientalist discourse. Intimately associated with the question of the continued production of the periphery by the metropolitan centre, is the issue of non-accessibility of the vernacular literary/critical texts which culminates in a number of overwhelming questions - did the end of the empire allow the fictional territories to be repossessed by those who actually inhabit those spaces? And, perhaps even more importantly, do postcolonial literatures in being tokens of their culture as the agentic/speaking other continue to reinstate the eurocentric structures of nomos? Is postcoloniality, then an invention predicated upon the embedded colonial structures of cultural/epistemic awareness in the erstwhile colonies? And finally, is it possible to decolonize postcolonialism?

The decolonial as an ethical epistemic dissent against the universalist knowledge claims of colonial modernity argues for a spatial shift in knowledge formation where the site of studying non-european cultures is no longer limited to the western academy. The consequent epistemic reterritorialization posits non-european cultures not simply as an object but as a method, a system of reference no longer symptomatic of the nomic structures of colonial discourses. In attempting to think without the hierarchized other, the decolonial employs a diatopical hermeneutic strategy in favour of pluriversality. Can the postcolonial render itself to such decolonial reading strategies?



When Queen Elizabeth II visited Golden Temple,
Jallianwala Bagh in 1997.

The seminar invites proposals for papers on the following themes (though, of course not restricted to these)

1. The Decolonial Turn in Postcolonial Studies.
2. Postcolonialism and the Question of Resistance
3. Postcolonialism and the Validity of Indigenous Knowledge Structures
4. Postcolonialism and the Politics of Location
5. Postcolonialism and the Question of Language
6. Postcolonialism in the Era of the Anthropocene
7. Postcoloniality and the Idea of the Nation-State
8. Postcolonialism and the Gender Question
9. Postcolonialism and the Visual Arts
10. Memory and the Postcolonial Condition

Works Cited

- Ahmad, Aijaz. "The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality." *Race & Class*, vol. 36, no. 3, 1995, pp. 1-20. Sage Journals, <https://doi.org/10.1177/030639689503600301>.
- Aidoo, Ama Ata. "The Capacious Topic: Gender Politics." *Critical Fictions: The Politics of Imaginative Writing*, edited by Philomena Mariani, Bay Press, 1991, pp. 151-54.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?" *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 17, 1991, pp. 336-57.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Marginality in the Teaching Machine." *Outside in the Teaching Machine* by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Routledge, 1993, pp. 53-76.

Abstract Submission Guidelines

Abstracts, not exceeding 300 words, (4/5 keywords) only in English should be sent to depoco.bosehouse@gmail.com positively by February 2, 2025. Please include a brief bio-note (100 words) with your submission. MLA (9th edition) should be followed for citation.

Mode of Conference : Hybrid

Important Dates

- Last date for Abstract Submission: February 2, 2025.
- Acceptance mails will be sent by February 5, 2025.
- Complete papers should be submitted to **depoco.bosehouse@gmail.com** by February 10, 2025.
- Conference Dates: February 14-15, 2025.
- Venue: Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira Bose House Campus, Rishra, Hooghly.

Registration Details

- Registration Fees for Paper Presentation: Rs.1000/- (for students & scholars) and Rs.1500/- (for faculty members)
- Registration Fees for participation: Rs. 600/-
- The registration fees will cover the seminar kit and lunch (on both days) for all the participants.

Note: Selected papers will be published in an edited volume.

Organizing Committee

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