Explore three ways in which postcolonialism and decoloniality shape the way one understands international relations.

Post-colonialist Frantz Fanon (1963) states, "the history the settler writes is not the history of the country he plunders but one of his own nation". Similarly, the theoretical framework of postcolonialism and decoloniality accuses mainstream interpretations of global politics of glorifying the 'settler's' narrative, Eurocentric, and incomplete. It hence attempts to reshape and restore accounts that were lost to colonisation. The following essay discusses three ways in which postcolonialism and decoloniality develop a racial analysis of international relations: (i) recovering history, (ii) decolonising knowledge, (iii) redefining power. These in effect challenge Western norms and develop a comprehensive understanding of the international system. The analysis of postcolonial India exemplifies this. First, the essay argues that postcolonialism and decoloniality recover histories in global politics by highlighting historical narratives that were altered. Second, it exhibits how the theory decolonises knowledge by invalidating Eurocentric values in non-Western accounts. Finally, it discusses the altered definition of power by emphasising a hierarchical international system that arises from persisting colonial practices.

The 'post' in postcolonialism signifies the effect of the colonial period and not its end. It is the rejection of mainstream theories to explain the imperial production of global order (Jones 2006, 7). Chakrabarty acknowledges a colonial presentation of Indian history in his article title itself, "Who speaks for India's past?". Imperial Britain colonised India for nearly two hundred years. Consequently, altering, destabilising, and distorting Indian norms, culture, economy, and society – the effects of which are prevalent today. Nonetheless, Indian experiences lost in European narratives – like all colonial histories – became variations of a master narrative called "the history of Europe" (Chakrabarty 1992, 1). Hence, it becomes

important to permit postcolonialism and decoloniality to transform the traditional understanding of global politics.

Recovering History

Mainstream IR theory has overlooked the historical context of anticolonial struggles which constitute key past struggles for emancipation and social transformation in international relations (Jones 2006, 12). Traditional theorists such as Waltz, Hobbes, Kant, and Hegel not only ignore these imperial roots but also "self-consciously" locate IR's cannon in classical European thought (Quijano 2000). This has altered the way contemporary issues of colonised states are viewed. Postcolonialism and decoloniality emphasise the relevance of history to 'real' pasts. These narratives are not limited to society and politics, but culture, economics, other symbolic and discursive practices (Quayson 2012, 364). Postcolonialism therefore demands the inclusion of pre-colonial and colonial histories for an honest analysis of the international system. "We have to work around the dazzling blindness of white IR and its abstractions, accepting and reiterating the conjoined" (Krishna 2001, 421). Such Western blindness towards the past devalues the experiences and cultures of non-Western states. Consequentially, political scenarios are generalised from a Eurocentric lens and misinterpreted. A key example of this is the Indo-Pakistani war of 1971 that led to the formation of Bangladesh.

The 1971 war was a military confrontation between India and Pakistan that arose from the Bangladesh Liberation War in East Pakistan. India's sense of secularism and democratic character was threatened by a perpetual influx of Bangladeshi-Hindu refugees that were evicted by Pakistani forces (Palit 1998, 38). This triggered India's intervention. However, Palit fails to acknowledge that Britain maintained its power based on 'divide-and-rule' between Muslim and Hindu communities in colonial India (Mohsin 2004, 467). The war

has often been solely viewed from a security perspective despite having colonial roots that fuel the Hindu-Muslim religious conflict. Postcolonialism shapes global politics in a manner where this conflict must be traced back to its colonial roots and analysed as an aftermath of Imperialism. A Hindu-Islam rivalry was insignificant in pre-colonial India. Their rapprochement can be traced back to Akbar's Mughal Empire in the 1600s. His state policies not only reflected the liberal traditions of his predecessors but was a clear recognition of conciliating with Hindus (Chandra 2005, 167). India was partitioned along religious lines and the following emergence of two nation-states was ominous for religious minorities (Mohsin 2004, 478). Since then, the Indo-Pak conflicts (translated to Hindu-Islam conflicts) have only amplified.

Therefore, while the Indo-Pak war can be reasoned as 'a deliberate act of demographic aggression and threat to Indian security' (Palit 1998, 274), the key motivation arises from the walls built during colonisation (Mohsin 2004). Imperial Britain conquered and represented the diversity of "Indian" pasts through homogenising narrative of transition from a "medieval" period to "modernity" (Chakrabarty 1992, 5). A mainstream evaluation of the Indo-Pakistan conflict of 1971 prevents one from recognising the true origins of the event. It aids a superficial explanation that is limited to recent context. Postcolonialism, by recovering history, facilitates a complete narrative of contemporary interactions amongst states. Overall, it displaces global politics away from Eurocentrism and acknowledges experiences, cultures, histories that were altered due to colonisation.

Decolonising Knowledge

Decoloniality argues that West-centric discourse ignores the aspect of race. Mainstream theoretical frameworks state the supremacy of White value with such violence, the victorious confrontation of these values with those of the colonised is impregnated with

extreme aggressiveness (Fanon 1961, 105). Imperial rule makes itself known as imperial rule through the power of universalising its own narrative and self-validating it (Saurin 2006, 34). In global politics, this means, Eurocentrism has silenced and permanently subordinated "subaltern" knowledge. Western ideas seldom discuss the experiences of non-White communities. They deprive the subordinated of the ability to determine an alternative legitimation and narrate their own experiences. The singularity of this colonial context dwells in the fact that disparities in individual truths cannot mask human reality. Therefore, its immediacies show that race is the foremost divider of the world (Fanon 1961, 16). Hence, Saurin coins International Relations as 'Imperial Relations'. Such enforced European influence is evident in reformed subaltern knowledge. This arises from Bhabha's (1984) concept of 'mimicry' which is the normalising of the colonial state. Here, postcolonial 'civility' alienates its own language of liberty and produces another knowledge of norms. In its narcissistic monologue the colonialist bourgeoise, by way of its academics, implants in the minds of the colonised that the essential (Western) values remain eternal despite errors attributable to man (Fanon 1961, 110). An example of this is India's transition to a queerphobic society.

Homosexuality did not face prosecution in pre-British India (Bhaskaran 2002, 19). British reforms of Indian Law introduced Section 377 which criminalised queer practices. The consequences of this are present in modern India. Section 377 was only annulled in 2018. Heteropatriarchal ideologies of shame and duty, tied with cultural and structural violence, continue to be powerfully articulated by post and neo-colonial forms of homophobia (Kugle 2002, 30). However, despite historical evidence of a queer India, traditional theorists accredit the West for sexual freedom. Foucault's (1976) famous contention suggests that sexuality as one knows it today did not exist prior to the bureaucratization of society that accompanied modern capitalism. Ancient India scriptures

such as the *Kamasutra*, *Ayurveda*, and *Manusmriti* make categorical distinctions regarding gender normativity and sexual freedom. Nonetheless, premodern Indians were hedged around with sexual taboos and gender constrains (Sweet 2002, 79). The British erasure of homoerotic elements in literature worked in tandem with the need of colonial historians to present a racialised history of India to justify their own political domination (Kugle 2002, 41). Homophobia continues to be 'mimicked' by Indians. Ironically, it is easier to be queer in Britain today.

Orthodox theoretical approaches to global politics exclude aboriginal knowledge and regimes in deference to familiar Hobbesian frameworks, they are inextricable from the process of invalidation by which colonial subjugation of Indigenous people is sustained (Chowdhry & Nair 2002, 109). The ambivalence of colonial authority repeatedly turns from mimicry to menace. And in that other scene of colonial power, where history turns to farce and presence to "a part," can be seen the twin figures of narcissism and paranoia that repeat furiously, uncontrollably (Bhabha 1984, 132). From such overarching imperial presentations of world history, the most effective yet unreflective technique in the attitude of colonial IR has been to duplicate paths already forged in Western History (Saurin 2006, 35). Overall, postcolonialism and decoloniality annul the supremacy of White values in international relations and stresses the inclusion of race.

Redefining Power

The definition of power is central to global politics and lies in the intersectionality of the international system. However, mainstream theoretical frameworks are premised on an understanding that privileges hierarchy and a predominantly Eurocentric worldview (Chowdhry & Nair 2002, 3). They are limited by notions of sovereignty, anarchy, order, and state. Therefore, theories such as realism forsake to systematically address several erasures of

race, class, and gender in the production of power. The production and constitution of power are ignored. There is limited emphasis on ideology, culture, and history. "Structures are defined by not all actors that flourish but by major ones" (Waltz 1979, 93), and power is explained "in terms of distribution of state capabilities" (192). Contrastingly, postcolonialism asserts hierarchy instead of anarchy. This transpires from the racialisation of social relations throughout historical processes that witnessed the interrelation of the establishment of colonial empires, capitalist expansion (Arias 2015, 67). Subsequently, the emergence of new transnational social, religious, cultural movements suggest that the conventional definition of power is limiting (Chowdhry & Nair 2002, 6). Globalisation is one of such movements that began with the constitution of Eurocentric capitalism as a new global power' (Quijano 2000, 533). Europe had power over the world market and was able to impose colonial dominance by controlling labour around the world. Here, the process of racial structuring moulded the distribution of monetary resources (Khan 2021, 96).

The Western media portrayal of child labour in India illustrates this. The most pernicious aspect of constructing Indian labour as 'free' was the fiction that it conjured from relations between Indian subject (Khan 2021, 88). Individuals were forced into free wage labouring arose from colonial powers and structures of global capitalism. After the 1870 abolishing of slavery in Britain, Western European control of wage labour in all sectors of the world population was 'perfectly feasible and more profitable for Western Europe' (Quijano 2000, 538). The integration of India's carpet industry into the global economy, along with an increase in demand for carpets, consumer demand for cheaper and finer hand-woven carpets, desire to increase profit margins greatly contributed to child labour statistics (Chowdhry 2002, 236). Imperial, hegemonic states used media to further this. Spatial representations by Western media and policymakers around child labour reinscribe colonial identity, hierarchy, and labour (Ibid.). A strategy of White power is to select who expands its own borders, select

who crosses them or make upward mobility in the social pyramid possible for limited groups (Arias 2015, 68). Therefore, Western portrayal of child labour in India is formed in a colonial mould. It described the issue as "signalling inhumane traditions and lack of modernity in the dark continent" (Chowdhry 2002, 240). While Western countries began getting implicated in the practice of child labour, they were exhibited as the 'recipients of goods' despite being the source of an exploitative labour system. Indians were a racialised category of labour because of the constellation of demands called into by being British 'abolition'.

Western media discourses on child labour are widely disseminated and can hence naturalise an understanding of the issue that is most beneficial to them. This revitalises North-South identities and unequal relations of power (Chowdhry 2002). Furthermore, it demonstrates the imbrication of race with power and generates an alternative critique of global order. Postcolonialism and decoloniality explain the hegemonic system through colonial histories. It materialises from imperialism and can be observed in trans-national processes today.

Conclusion

Through the spectrum of disordered narratives regarding postcolonial India, it is evident that mainstream IR excludes racial aspects of global politics and consequently presents altered truths. Postcolonialism and decoloniality shape such frameworks in a manner that permits a shift away from Eurocentric analyses. Reviewing pre-colonial histories help understand the 'real' past and cultures of colonised states, retrieving them underlines the complete impact of colonisation. Decolonising knowledge incorporates oppressed perspectives in the already existing privileged ones. Finally, redefining power recognizes the present hierarchical global order that stems from colonial pasts. Each of these methods are central to examining the international system. The exclusion of race, truths about oppression

creates what Bhabha (1994, 89) calls "the threat of partial gaze". To conclude, this approach develops a holistic narrative of world politics by incorporating coloniality. Global politics without race is incomplete and an incomplete understanding of politics today dangerously defeats the purpose of IR.

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