

POST COLONIAL CRITIQUE

ON

“French woman sings, faces racist rant on
Melbourne bus”

SAHIL MITTAL (2011C6PS520G)

UDIT GURU (2011B3A8431G)

ANKUR AGRAWAL (2011B4A4PS400G)

ABHISHEK PATRIA (2011A1PS434G)

GAURAV KUMAR (2011A7PS052G)

KUMAR AVINISH (2011A3PS050G)

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French woman sings, faces racist rant on Melbourne bus

Australian police were Thursday investigating after bus passengers were caught on camera hurling a torrent of threatening and racist abuse at a French woman in an incident that went viral on YouTube. The woman and a group of friends were returning from a day at the beach when one of them began singing in her native tongue, prompting an angry reaction from some of the passengers on the packed bus.

One aggressively demanded she "speak English or die" and then threatened to cut her breasts off. Another man pushing a pram joined in, shouting: "I'll fucking boxcutter (knife) you right now, dog."

The woman was then told "everybody on the bus wants to kill you" before the incident ended with a bus window being smashed.

The woman targeted, Fanny Desaintjores, told The Age newspaper she and her friends were terrified they would be physically assaulted. "I realise that maybe we shouldn't sing on public transport, but I think that's insane that they reacted like that. We're all adults," she said. "We could have a conversation and talk gently, instead of all these insults and threats."

Victoria state Premier Ted Baillieu condemned the incident as "absolutely disgraceful" and urged the public to help identify those responsible so authorities could "throw the book" at them.

In an opinion piece, Fairfax Media said the most disturbing thing was that so few people spoke up in defence of the woman.

"The majority of passengers were silent and impassive, probably wishing they were elsewhere," it said.

"A racist, abusive bigot is like sitting next to the smelliest person on the bus -- you hold your breath and count the stops until you can get off."

Parts of the incident were caught on camera by stand-up comedian Mike Nayna and the footage has been viewed more than a million times on YouTube, with the story picked up by French newspapers.

Melbourne police said they were investigating "verbal threats and racist taunts towards a group of women travelling on a bus".

"The incident was reported to police and detectives are appealing for anyone with information to come forward as there were a number of people on the bus at the time," police said.

Nayna, who describes himself as "brown", says that when he asked the passengers to calm down another man started ranting at him about hating black people.

"He said darkies should be kept at the back of the bus where they belong, before repeatedly yelling 'I hate blacks'," Nayna told reporters.

Abstract

We have taken a news article for analysis in partial fulfillment of the assignment component of the course ‘Literary Criticism’. This article was published in the newspaper “The Times of India” on November 22, 2012.

In this report, we have tried to analyze various components of Post Colonialism in Australia.

It is all the more important to incorporate an Australian’s ideology and thereby analyze it accordingly.

Analysis

This news story is about the racist incident which took place as publically as it could be i.e. on a bus in Melbourne.

Australia was colonized during the period 1787-1901 by the British, both physically and mentally, thus leaving their traits behind.

This incident clearly shows the racism concept that was primarily the idea originated by the British as they considered themselves superior to any other native. British took it as their responsibility to civilize the colored people.

'Speak English or die'

The French woman was yelled at to ***'speak English or die'*** on bus by an Australian. We can easily draw parallel with what **Macaulay's** views about the supremacy of English as a language in the world were and what the Australian thoughts were. The abuser thinks that English is a better language than French, hence the action. The

abuser threatens the lady to such an extent that he want the lady to die if she doesn't speak English, thereby stamping the authority of English as a language.

Also here the “**White man's burden**” comes into picture. The abuser (White man) wishes to do his part of civilizing the lady by correcting her language.

*Another man pushing a pram joined in, shouting: "I'll f**king box cutter (knife) you right now, dog."*

The people who don't speak English are so uncivilized that they are no more than dogs.

Ngugi Wa Thiong thought that

“Language is a carrier of a people's culture, culture is a carrier of a people's values; values are the basis of a people's self-definition – the basis of their consciousness.”

The man wants her to speak English so as to paralyze her consciousness and destroy her identity.

‘Fucking ding’

She was also called **‘fucking ding’** which is a derogatory word for tourists. The man is trying to subjugate her as he inherently considers himself more powerful being white.

Foucault’s concept of the linkage of power and knowledge is applicable here.

The man is white who tries to dominate over the lady as he considers himself more knowledgeable and powerful even in the 21st century.

The European value has so dominated over the colonized that they are insulting and abusing a women and they have lost their indigenous values.

As claimed by Fairfax Media

"The majority of passengers were silent and impassive, probably wishing they were elsewhere,"

In **Frantz Fanon** terms a paralysis of consciousness has occurred amongst the Australians as an effect of colonization. Anger is replaced by surrender and voice is replaced by silence or muteness.

Even the guy who recorded the video was a brown person who merely was spectating the situation rather than opposing it. Thus **Fanon's thoughts** are applicable here.

The concept of double consciousness can be applied here as we can see that the spectator (brown) was in a state of double consciousness as he was not clear of his identity.

A shocking reality here is that the lady who was racially abused and made threats against did not formally complain. This suggests that she did not consider this event to be big enough to register a complaint. Bigger events on the basis of racism might be happening in the society and this event has become a part and parcel of their lives.

Conclusion

The incident is very inappropriate given the level of globalization in present scenario. People are not willing to take a stand against wrongdoings such as racism on a public scale. We think that there should not be any discrimination on linguistic and ethnic grounds.

Australians are under the spell of post colonialism and the above case testifies it.

Bibliography and References

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/Australia/French-woman-sings-faces-racist-rant-on-Melbourne-bus/Article1-962751.aspx>