



Decolonizing The Canon: Reinterpreting British Literary Traditions Through Postcolonial Perspectives

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19119242>

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Abstract

The current research paper discusses the decolonizing of the British literary canon in the context of postcolonial approach, with specific interest in Indian English literature and its transformative nature to the international literature discussion. It examines the ways in which industrialized colonies writers confront colonial pasts, hybrid cultures, and identity as well as historical accounts to disrupt the Eurocentric literary authority. The paper illustrates how literature can be seen as a place of resistance, reclaiming as well as a place of cultural negotiation by analyzing the works of some of the greatest writers like Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy and Kamala Das. Themes like the hybridization of language, the subversion of colonial power structure, the reclamation of marginalized voices, and so forth, are contributing themes to a less exclusionary, plural, and more internationally relevant vision of literature. The present analysis emphasizes the significance of postcolonial literature in the development of canon and an increase in the field of literary analysis by commenting on the intersections of identity, memory, and resistance.

Keywords: Decolonization, Postcolonialism, Cultural hybridity, Identity, Resistance, Marginalized voices, Historical narratives

1. Introduction

The literary canon has always been a dominant part of the study of literature, especially in the Western academic society. The term canon is used to refer to a set of literary works which are considered to be representative, influential, and in control of cultural and literary quality. The canon of English literature has been dominated by British writers since time immemorial whose works were viewed as the universal paradigms of literary excellence. Nevertheless, the creation of this canon was not only a literary practice but one that was closely linked to historical, political, and cultural power frameworks that arose around the time when European colonialism was taking place. When the British Empire expanded its power on Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean, the English literature became a valuable instrument in the creation of cultural power and intellectual leadership.

British literature was also popularized during the colonial times through the learning institutions in the colonized areas. The colonial education policy was meant to produce a human generation endowed with intellectual awareness in line with the British values and cultural orientations.

Consequently, British literature canonical works were widely taught in colonial schools at the cost of native literature. This procedure helped in forming a Eurocentric literary canon that favoured western views by overshadowing the voices, history, and cultural manifestation of the colonized society. Literature was therefore not only a means of producing artistic work but also a cultural tool that strengthened the ideology of colonialism and justified the legitimacy of imperial power. During the second part of the twentieth century, critics started doubting the premises of the conventional literary canon. The rise of postcolonial studies was a new breakthrough in the literary criticism that undermined the prevailing role of the Western narratives and emphasized the cultural and political dynamics of portrayal of colonization in literature. Edward Said is one of the most influential theorists of this movement whose masterpiece work *Orientalism* proved how western literature and scholarship created stereotypical images of the East. Such representations, according to Said, explained non-western societies as exotic, irrational and inferior, thus justifying the colonial control and supporting the superiority of the West.

His work also showed that literature is very important in the formation of cultural perceptions and the maintenance of power systems.

After the era of Said, other authors extended the reach of the postcolonial theory when they started investigating the multifaceted relationships that existed between the colonialists and the colonized. Homi K. Bhabha introduced some of the most powerful ideas that include hybridity, mimicry, and the so-called third space that refer to the cultural negotiations that take place in the context of colonial and postcolonial circumstances. Bhabha believes that colonial relations do not always revolve around domination and resistance but include movement of cultures and change which occurs to give rise to hybrid identities. On the same note, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak focused on the need to identify the voices of the marginalized in the postcolonial discourse. Spivak in her famous essay *Can the Subaltern Speak* focuses on how the voice of the subaltern, especially women and socially marginalized groups, is mostly silenced by colonial power structures and Western intellectual frameworks.

Such theoretical lenses have motivated the scholars to re-examine canonical literature to rethink them in new critical perspectives. Instead of taking the canon as an apolitical or strictly aesthetic set of works, the current literary critics study the ideological presumptions of the canonical literature. This strategy aims to reveal how colonial authority relations, cultural superiorities and racial stereotypes are evident in literature plots. Examining how the colonized people and cultures are portrayed in canonic writings, researchers are trying to reveal the cultural politics that influenced the creation of the literary canon.

Decolonizing the canon is not just about criticism of colonial representations. It is also a necessity to broaden the field of literature studies and involve a variety of voices and positions, which were traditionally not a part of the canon. The literary works of writers in former colonized areas have been very instrumental in this process by creating literary works that dismantle colonial histories, offer different versions of history, identity and culture. Postcolonial writers challenge the mainstream histories and bring to the fore the experiences of people and communities who were out of place in the colonial discourse through their writings.

More so, the postcolonial response has been the reinterpretation of British literary traditions with subsequent new literary dialogue between the canonical and the postcolonial. Postcolonial writers tend to deal directly with canonical texts, rewriting or reworking their texts to undermine colonial attitudes. These anti-narratives do not only criticize the ideological basics of the canon but also show the vibrant and changing nature of literary traditions. Developing new meanings of the canonical, postcolonial authors are engaged in changing the discourse of literature and making it more comprehensive to understand the world literature.

In modern literary research, the project of decolonizing the canon relates both to more general controversies concerning the representation of other cultures, the diversity of world literature, and the politics of knowledge production. Colleges and other learning institutions are becoming aware of the need to reform their existing programs to include curricula that are more inclusive of literature transmitted by

people of other regions of the world. The decolonization of literary studies is thus not only about the critical reinterpretation of the texts that are already available but also the inclusion of previously marginalized voices in scholarly writing.

This research paper discusses the ways in which the British literary traditions may be re-evaluated using the postcolonial approaches to redefine the limits of the literary canon, as well as to criticize the colonial ideologies. The research will examine how literature is a reflection of cultural power relations through the presentation and examination of postcolonial theoretical approaches and writing using canonical works. Finally, the paper will argue that the canon decolonization process is a key to building a more inclusive, pluralistic, and global representing view of literature.

2. Colonial Ideology and The British Literary Canon

The evolution of British literary canon is inseparable with the historical context on the colonial expansion and imperial power. Literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was directly connected with the culture and ideology of imperialism since the British Empire was at its highest political and territorial level. The British literary works were not only appreciated as art pieces but also served as a tool where colonial attitudes, the hierarchy of cultures and the imperial ideologies were propagated and established. As a result, the development of the literary canon was a reflection of the general patterns of colonial power that established global political and cultural relations.

In colonies, literature was used to develop and strengthen the representations of non-European cultures. British writers portrayed the colonized territories as exotic, mysterious, and culturally inferior to Europe through the novels, travel stories, and adventure tales. Such depictions helped in building what would later be known by scholars as a colonial discourse, a knowledge system that legitimized the imperial expansion since it showed the colonized as uncivilized or incapable of governing themselves. These stories placed the Western culture in a superior position as the center of civilization and development thus justifying colonial subjugation.

Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad is one of the most powerful representatives of the British literary tradition of colonial discourse. Despite the fact the novel has received a lot of rave reviews due to its style and psychological insight, postcolonial critics have held the view that the way the novel portrays the African continent reflects colonialism attitudes that dehumanize the people and makes the continent appear as a very primitive and chaotic territory. African novelist Chinua Achebe even notoriously criticized the novel as a perpetration of racist stereotypes and the Africans as voiceless figures in their own story. The critique of Achebe shows that the canonical texts might be full of ideological assumptions maturing colonial ideologies.

Likewise, the motifs of the imperial expansion and the superiority of the culture can be traced in the works of Daniel Defoe, i.e. *Robinson Crusoe*. The very account of Crusoe surviving on an abandoned island and his ultimate conquest of the native personality Friday can also be viewed as symbolic depiction of the colonial rule. The fact that Crusoe is a civilizing figure who imposes European values and religious beliefs on Friday is the reflection of the

colonial mission of transforming and controlling societies that are colonized. In the setting of the eighteenth century, these stories strengthened the sense that the European culture was inherently superior to other cultures.

Colonial educational institutions also influenced the formation of the British literary canon. English literature became a part of the education in the colonized territories. Colonial rulers thought that imparting British literary works would inculcate the Western morals and culture in the colonial subjects. In this way, literature served as a cultural assimilation tool, making the colonized people adopt the British cultural standards and forget their native cultures. Consequently, English literary culture acquired international impact and prominence, even in the communities that had strong literary cultures of their own.

Another factor that led to the marginalization of non-European voices in literary studies was the cultural force of the canon. Colonized societies tended to avoid acknowledging writers, as well as their literary works were not widely accepted in the mainstream canon. This marginalization was indicative of the hierarchical world concept of the colonial ideology that overemphasized the intellectual accomplishments of the Western world at the expense of underestimating the cultural contributions of other areas. Thus, canon became the icon of cultural superiority that strengthened the intellectual dominance of the West.

The attempt to establish the connection between colonial ideology and the literary canon has been argued by postcolonial scholars to be critical in reconsidering the roots of literary studies. Edward Said cites literature as a major contributor towards the Western views on colonized societies which created discourses that framed the east as a completely different and inferior civilization than that of the west. In his ground breaking work *Orientalism*, Said shows how Western literature created a system of representation which presented the Orient as exotic, irrational and backward. Such representations were not only literary conventions but a wider cultural system that favored imperial authority.

Besides strengthening the colonial stereotypes, canonical literature also echoed the imperial project anxieties and contradictions. There were ambivalent attitudes of some British writers towards the expansion of colonies that demonstrated the tensions of the ideals of civilization and the realities of exploitation and violence that followed the imperial rule. These contradictions underscore the multifaceted nature of the colonial discourse in literature in which the telegraphs of progress and moral authority are juxtaposed by the latent messages of guilt, disorientation, and rebellion.

The postcolonial criticism of reinterpreting of the canonical texts thus entails the identification of these concealed ideological frameworks, and exploring the role of literature in creating the colonial identities. The theme of representation of race, culture, and power in the canonical works allows the scholars to uncover how literature both manifested and defined the colonial view of the world. This level of critical activity does not always lead to a reduction in the aesthetic value of canonical texts but helps them to comprehend the historical and cultural nuances of the canonical texts.

Finally, the analysis of the colonial ideology in the British literary canon gives a platform to the larger endeavor of decolonizing literary studies. By being aware of the historical space within which the creation of the canonical texts took place, the scholars can challenge the canon authority on the one hand, and to find alternative ways of looking at the matter, to which the canon imposes no traditional limits. In the process, literary criticism will be able to gravitate into a more inclusive and globally representative literature that recognizes the many voices and experiences that are made by the history of colonialism.

3. Postcolonial Theory and The Reinterpretation of Canonical Texts

The advent of the postcolonial theory in the late twentieth century has drastically changed the nature of literary criticism since it challenged the conventional beliefs that had been underpinned in Western literary studies. Canonical literary works have long been read, over centuries, and not necessarily critically examined in the politics and ideological contexts of the periods of their composition. However, with the emergence of postcolonial criticism, there is a new paradigm of analyzing literature with respect to the colonial past, cultural hegemonies, and the marginalized groups. Using the postcolonial theory, scholars have been in a position to re-anticipate the texts found in the canons and unveil the colonial ideologies that permeate the texts.

Edward Said is one of the most prominent figures in the postcolonial theory development. To explain his revolutionary book *Orientalism* in detail, Said argues that the western knowledge of the East was influenced by a system of representation that saw the eastern societies as exotic, irrational, and inferior cultures. Said argues that this mass of knowledge was created by literature, learning and political discourse and it was used to perpetrate and maintain colonial rule. *Orientalism* is thus a cultural process through which the East is constructed as the Other and the superiority of the Western civilization is strengthened. Applied to literary studies, the theory proposed by Said makes readers look at how canonical texts represent colonized peoples and cultures, which is usually done in a stereotypical and hierarchical way.

Saidian postcolonial criticism has motivated scholars to re-read many canonical British texts in order to determine how colonial power relations are manifested in the texts. As an example, often works that take place in colonial lands depict colonized characters as passive, primitive, or voiceless and European characters as rational and authoritative. Through such representations, it is possible to see the role of literature within the ideological operation of creating colonial identities and strengthening the ideological control of the empire. Through examining these narrative patterns, postcolonial critics end the erroneous belief that canonical texts can be defined as political neutral or representatives of the universal.

Homi K. Bhabha is another theorist who has been instrumental in advancing the postcolonial theory and whose work revolves around the intricate cultural exchanges which take place as a result of colonization and colonized relationships. Bhabha presents the ideas of hybridity, mimicry, and the so-called third space in his bestseller *The*

Location of Culture. These thoughts help to underline that colonial relations are not only characterized by domination and resistance but also cultural compromise and exchange. Hybridity, specifically, is a term that talks about the development of new cultures when cultures of the colonizer and colonized blend. Such a hybrid cultural space, according to Bhabha, defies the strict divisions the colonial ideology is trying to create between the West and the non-West.

The image of mimicry also exemplifies the resistance, which can be very subtle, but may still take place in the colonial setting. Mimicry can be defined as the process through which those who are being colonized learn some of the aspects of language, culture and behavior of the colonizer. But this imitation is never fully active and absolutely true; it usually has some elements of difference which weaken the authority of the colonialist. By the use of mimicry, colonized people can indirectly oppose colonial authority by revealing the instability of colonial identity as such. Applying Bhabha concept to the literary analysis, the theories of this scholar demonstrate how characters and stories in canonical texts can reflect these multilateral processes of cultural negotiation.

The criticism of the colonial representation is further elaborated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak whose work pays attention to the topic of the marginalized voices in the dominant discourses. Spivak considers the oppressive ways in which colonial and Western intellectual discourses tend to make the voices of the subaltern, or those who are outside the apparatus of political and cultural authority, hard to hear, in her powerful treatise *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak contends that even the best efforts of representation of marginalised communities are likely to recreate the same hierarchies that they are meant to challenge. Her writing emphasizes the need of acknowledging the constraints of Western scholarly discourse and asks researchers to find additional pathways of relating to marginalized voices.

The use of Spivak concepts to study literature has made critics doubt how the canonic literature is able to signify other marginalized peoples like the colonized, women, and the lower classes. In most classic literary devices, such groups are only represented as background characters whose views are hardly discussed intimately. Postcolonial reinterpretation thus concerns the issue of who is allowed to speak in the narrative and who is denied the right to talk or who is silenced or gagged. Through the work in discussing these silences, researchers are able to expose the power dynamics that form the literary representation.

The interpretation of the canonical texts in the postcolonial theory is also promoted which makes them place them in the context of their historical and political backgrounds. Instead of considering literature as a product of art by itself, postcolonial critics consider the ways literary works are produced as a manifestation of larger social and cultural forces. This method enables theorists to analyze how themes like empire, race, identity, cultural conflict are internalized in the canons. This contextual analysis redefines the canon as a fixed set of cultural masterpieces into an ever-changing arena of cultural discussion and redefinition.

Along with reinterpretation on the theoretical level, postcolonial criticism has also given rise to creative literary responses, the literary responses that challenge canonical

narratives. Authors of colonized nations often use their canonical works to rewrite or rework their narratives in different viewpoints. These literary replies reveal the constraints of colonial representations and allow other voices that had never been allowed in the canon. It is with these reinterpretations that the postcolonial writers illustrate the fact that literature is not a fixed tradition, it is a dialogue that is changing as cultures, histories and worldviews interact.

Moreover, the re-reading of canon works, which is offered by postcolonial theory, has wider implications in the context of scholarship and education of literature. Through a critical analysis of the ideological implications of the canonical texts, the scholars are able to challenge the readers to challenge the cultural authority that the canon has traditionally had. This does not always mean denying the existence of canonical texts; just that this is accomplished in a more critical and reflective way. This kind of involvement enables literature to be viewed not necessarily as an artistic success but as a cultural object in a state of power relations of the past.

Finally, the postcolonial theory has essentially transformed how scholars view the study of literature. Postcolonial criticism provides possibilities to learn more about the cultural relations that shape the process of literary creation and reading by revealing the links between literature and colonial power. By the reinterpretation of the canonical texts, both scholars and writers are part of the process of decolonization of the literary canon and the broadening of the literary discourse all over the world. This critical practice promotes a more inclusive and pluralistic vision of literature one that acknowledges a variety of voices and experiences that make up the literature heritage of the world.

4. Postcolonial Counter-Narratives and The Challenge to The Canon

The development of counter-narratives challenging the dominations of the traditional Western literary canon is one of the most important factors that made postcolonial criticism an important contributor to the study of literature. Counter-narratives refer to literary texts which react to, re-read, or challenge canonical works through the expression of alternative readings especially those of the marginalized or colonized. These works attempt to reveal the constraints of colonial images and give room to voices that the prevailing literary canon disregarded or suppressed in the past. In this process, the postcolonial writers take part in the larger endeavor of decolonizing literature through the way the canonical texts are understood and interpreted.

The British canon of traditional literature was heavily influenced by historical apparatus of power that enabled European cultural outlook to the exclusion of the life of colonized nations. Therefore, the imperial ideology is used to depict the colonial lands and people as provided by several canonical works. Postcolonial counter-narratives counter such representations by returning to the narratives of canonical texts and recreating them through the perspectives of characters or communities that they previously disregarded. By so doing, the works challenge the authority of the colonial discourses, and bring out the multi-faceted realities of colonial and postcolonial societies.

An example of such counter-narrative is the well-known novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys. The novel is a prequel and a re-telling of *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë. The character of Bertha Mason, the first wife of Rochester, in the original Victorian novel is represented as a madwoman locked up in the attic, whose background and vision are not given much attention. The novel by Rhys reinvents this character by making her an Antoinette Cosway, a Creole woman residing in the Caribbean in the aftermath of slavery. Revealing the personal encounters, cultural identity, and mental torments that Antoinette has to go through, Rhys reveals the sense of colonial and racial conflicts that predetermine her tragic destiny. By reinterpreting it in this manner, *Wide Sargasso Sea* subverts the Eurocentric account of the original text and puts the voice of a hitherto marginalized character into canon.

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe is another example of postcolonial counter-narrative. One of the reasons why Achebe wrote his novel was the response to the colonization of Africa in novels like *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad. Whereas Conrad novel portrays Africa as an exotic and anarchic terrain with dumb or primitive people, the novel by Achebe portrays the Igbo society in a detailed and multi-layered way, prior to and during the arrival of the European colonialists. By using the character of the main character Okonkwo and his people, Achebe portrays that the African communities had their own rich cultural backgrounds, political organization and social values way before the establishment of colonial rule. *Things Fall Apart* in this manner, serves as an effective corrective to colonial histories, which described Africa as a historically and civilizationally barren continent.

Postcolonial counter-narratives are also not limited to direct replies to texts in the canon. Numerous authors living in the formerly colonized world produce their works which delve into the cultural, psychological and social implications of colonialism. Such stories are usually centred on issues of identity, displacement, hybridity and resistance. Through such themes, postcolonial literature reveals how the history of colonization still affects individual and collective identity.

As an example, the plights of characters that inhabit two or more worlds are often shown by postcolonial writers. Colonial education, migration and globalization tend to bring about hybrid identities that oppose strict boundaries between the colonizer and the colonized cultures. Postcolonial account of these experiences has underscored the issue of cultural identity in a globalized world that is a creation of colonial history.

Besides widening the pool of voices in literature, counter-narratives also reshape the experience of reading canonical texts among the readers. Whenever readers find reinterpretations of well-known stories in different angles, they will be motivated to rethink the assumptions and the values that are enshrined in the original works. Through this process, it becomes clear that literature is not the rigid or stable tradition but a dynamic discipline where meanings are negotiated and redefined.

The development of the postcolonial counter-narratives has also strongly influenced the academic work and school education. Over the past decades, the need to incorporate a range of voices in the literature curriculum of universities

and educational establishments has been gaining increased importance there. Because of this, works of postcolonial authors are now too often read in tandem with the stalwart canonical pieces. This orientation represents a larger movement towards producing a more inclusive and globally representative concept of literature.

Moreover, the existence of counter-narratives questions the idea of literary canon as being an objective or neutral set of the greatest works of literature. Rather, the canon is turning out to be increasingly seen as a cultural production which is determined by historical power relations and institutional practices. Postcolonial writers and critics are putting new voices and perspectives in the literature discourse; this is why the canon is changing.

The other important feature of postcolonial counter-narratives is that they expose the psychological consequences of the colonial oppression. Several histories are found about how colonial structures of power affected the self-image and cultural identity of colonized people. Impression of values of colonialism, the disappearance of the native culture, and the fight against, trying to retain cultural legacy, are common motifs of postcolonial literature. By attempting to solve these problems, authors point out to the significant and far-reaching, both individual and national, impact of colonialism.

Finally, postcolonial counter-narratives are very important in the decolonization of the literary canon. These works broaden the scope of the literary discourse by questioning colonial depictions, reclaiming the voices of the marginalized, and reinterpreting the narrative of the canonical works through a different lens. They show that literature is not only a reflection of cultural traditions, but also a strong tool with the help of which historical narratives can be challenged, amended and changed.

The canon is becoming more accommodating and aware of the different experiences affecting the world literary environment through the ever-increasing postcolonial literature and criticism. The rise of counter-narratives is thus not only an opposition to the ideology of colonialism, but also a constructive and intellectual attempt to develop new patterns of perception of literature and cultural identity in the contemporary world.

5. Themes of Identity, Hybridity, And Resistance

A significant role of the post-colonial literary criticism is the theme of identity, cultural hybridity and resistance. The themes are a result of the historical experiences of colonized communities whereby colonialism interfered with conventional social organization, cultural trends, and knowledge systems. Consequently, people and societies in colonized areas tended to have severe identity clashes. The attempts to reinterpret the canonical literature according to the postcolonial view focus on the ways these antagonisms are discussed and mediated in the literary writings.

Colonialism was not about a simple political domination; it also entailed the fact that cultures and ideologies were imposed on the colonized societies. The colonial education systems, language policies and cultural institutions promoted the colonized individuals to embrace the European values and cultural practices at the expense of the native cultures. This process usually resulted in an identity crisis, according to postcolonial theorists, where colonized

people were torn between their own cultural background and the cultural demands of the colonial state. This conflict is often traced in the literature of postcolonial situations where the characters experience a loss of control over their identities as the world changes fast due to the collision of several cultures.

One of the ideas that assist in understanding these complicated cultural relations is the hybridity which was coined by Homi K. Bhabha. Colonial encounters according to Bhabha do not necessarily lead to the domination of one culture by another instead they give rise to hybrid forms of the culture that incorporates aspects of both colonizer and colonized cultures. The identities in this hybrid cultural space are not fixed or stable and instead they are dynamic and fluid. Colonized people are able to acquire some of the language, education or social practices of the colonizer but they tend to redefine such influences to better suit their own cultures.

It is thus the hybridity that contests the binary distinction of colonizer and colonized that colonial ideology was trying to preserve. Rather than strengthening the strict cultural hierarchies, hybrid identities demonstrate the complicated cultural negotiation processes that do occur in colonial, as well as postcolonial societies. By means of literature, authors discuss the ways people negotiate such hybrid cultural spaces and build new identities that are not confined to the constraints of the colonial discourse.

Resistance is another significant issue of postcolonial reinterpretation. The resistance, which is expressed in postcolonial literature, can be either open and political or hidden and cultural. Literary works can serve as a strong tool by writers of the formerly colonized countries to invert colonial discourse and reattach the agency of history. These writers reveal the prejudices and distortions of colonial representations by re-writing history through the eyes of colonized people.

The other manifestation of resistance can be in the form of linguistic and cultural resurgence. A number of writers in the postcolonial period were able to include the indigenous languages, folklore and cultural traditions in their literature as a method of asserting cultural identity and opposition to cultural erasure. Through this artistic practice writers have been able to reclaim parts of their heritage that had been marginalized or suppressed under the colonial rule.

In addition, resistance in postcolonial literature is commonly a reinterpretation of canonical texts which initially contained colonial views. Rereading these texts and offering different perspectives, postcolonial authors undermine the privileges of the literary canon and show the ideological presuppositions of the previous narratives. It is with these reinterpretations that literature is made a place where power relations of the past may be challenged and changed.

Finally, the issues of identity, hybridity and resistance bring out to focus the intricate cultural realities which arose as a result of the colonial interactions. In postcolonial literature, it is shown that cultural identity is dynamic and it is perpetually constructed through historical events, socialized relations, and political conflicts. Discussing such themes, postcolonial authors have their part in the larger intellectual effort of decolonizing literature and redefining cultural narratives in the contemporary world.

6. Decolonizing the Curriculum and Literary Studies

Reconstruction of the literary canon has far-reaching consequences to the academic institutions and education systems. Throughout decades, English literature courses in universities were centered mainly on the British and European traditions of literature. Although these texts were frequently viewed to be embodiments of universal human values, the prevalence of these texts in the academic world was an indication of historical power dynamics that favored Western cultural orientations. This meant that African, Asian, Caribbean and other parts of the world literary works were not usually studied or they were often marginalized to the canon itself.

The decolonization of the curriculum movement is aimed at disrupting this unequal state of affairs by questioning the criteria by which a particular literature is deemed important or worth studying. Decolonizing the curriculum does not mean necessarily rejecting of canonical literature, but expanding the range of literature taught to include all kinds of voices and opinions traditionally marginalized. This has been done in order to acknowledge that literature is very much dependent upon the cultural context and that no single tradition can perhaps speak to the totality of human experience.

A crucial issue of decolonizing literary studies is the critical analysis of those institutional frameworks that influenced the shaping of the literary canon. English literature was commonly employed as a cultural educative mechanism in the colonized nations during the colonial era. Colonial rulers felt that by teaching colonial subjects by Western literature texts they would impart the Western moral and cultural values to them. Due to this, the analysis of the English literature was tied to the close connection to the colonial systems of knowledge and power.

These historical legacies are becoming problematized among scholars in the modern academic community, and people are trying to develop more inclusive methods of teaching literature. Colleges across the globe have started to teach works of postcolonial authors in their curriculum enabling students to learn about literary traditions through the lenses of several cultures. This broadened method of studying literature assists the students to comprehend the intricate historical associations between literature, culture, and power.

Decolonizing the curriculum also promotes interdisciplinary thinking of scholars to relate literature to other disciplines like history, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. Through the analysis of the literary texts in the context of the social and historical life, researchers will be able to comprehend the reflection and construction of cultures identities, political conflicts, and world power relations that literature portrays and constructs more effectively.

Furthermore, postcolonial visions in the study of literature facilitate intellectualism and critical thinking. Literary value is challenged and students are also urged to think about how historical circumstances affect the creation and perception of literary works. This would lead to a better appreciation of how literature can support as well as oppose power structures.

The other significant consequence of decolonizing the curriculum is the acknowledgment of literary diversity

across the globe. Literature is created in the most diverse cultural backgrounds that are influenced by different historical events and social conditions. Reading the literature of other parts of the world allows the reader to understand various cultural orientations and have a better appreciation of how human beings in various parts of the world express themselves and their creativity.

Finally, the decolonization of literary studies is an endeavor that is a promise of intellectual inclusiveness and cultural conversation. Through the canon expansion coupled with the incorporation of the postcolonial approach in the field of academics, the universities will be able to establish a more balanced and representative approach to literature study. This metamorphosis adds not only to the literary knowledge but also to the growing statistical interdependence and multiculturalism of the contemporary world.

7. Conclusion

Decolonizing the literary canon is a major change in the modern literary studies as it undermines the centuries-old Eurocentric views on the study of the literature and promotes the more inclusive and critical attitude towards the texts of the canons. The British canonical literature was traditionally viewed as a universal model of literary excellence, but the postcolonial critics have shown that the British canonical literature was shaped by the historical circumstances of the colonial expansion and imperial dominance. Literary criticism has now started to look at the influence of colonial ideology on representations of race, culture and identity in canonical literature thanks to the work of theorists like Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Postcolonial rereading demonstrates that lots of classical texts include some latent beliefs regarding Western superiority and colonization of the other people, which makes one see the ideological constructs that underpinned the imperial power. Meanwhile, those writers in former colonized territories have come up with strong counter-narratives that oppose these representations by offering alternative viewpoints based on the histories and cultures of their indigenous territories. These literary reactions do not merely challenge the authority of the traditional canon but also add to the world of literature through the inclusion of different voices and stories that were not historically represented in the mainstream literary studies. Moreover, the integration of postcolonial approaches in the academic curricula and literature has prompted universities and academics to expand the horizons of literature in that it is seen to have been influenced by more than one cultural tradition and historical background. By so doing, the redefinition of British literary traditions by the postcolonial theory helps in the shaping of a more open and dynamic world literature. Finally, the decolonization of the canon is not merely the change in the list of canonical literature but the change in the critical paradigms of reading, interpreting, and valuing literature. Through contesting colonial beliefs, reclaiming suppressed voices, and fostering a cultural dialogue, postcolonial scholarship will see literary studies remain dynamic in reaction to the dynamic realities of a globalized world.

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