



VOICES FROM THE MARGINS: REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL OTHERNESS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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Abstract:

*This research paper will look at how social and cultural otherness is portrayed in some of the works of English literature. The research is devoted to the use of literary texts to give voice to people and the community who are pushed to the margins due to race, class, gender, colonial identity, religion, migration, and cultural difference. Literature has never been merely a sphere of entertainment; it is a mirror of society, which questions injustice and unveils the hidden struggles of those who are usually overlooked by the ruling classes. The paper is an analysis of selected works, which include: *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys, and *My Son the Fanatic* by Hanif Kureishi. These readings introduce various manifestations of otherness, such as exclusion based on class, marginalisation of both colonialism and gender, oppression, and difference of race, cultural displacement, and identity crisis of immigrants. The research approach adopted in the paper is the qualitative research approach, which involves the analysis of text and critical literature. Postcolonial theory, cultural studies, feminist theory, and Marxist criticism are the major theoretical frameworks that support the theoretical framework. The paper will argue that English literature does not simply describe the marginalised people; it will also argue that English literature challenges the social and cultural order that creates the marginalised people. The results indicate that the socially and culturally marginalised characters can and will often be silenced, misrepresented, or viewed as outsiders, yet literature also gives them the opportunity to resist oppression and reclaim identity. Thus, English literature is a significant field where the voices of the deprived can be heard, and human dignity can be restored.*

Keywords:

Otherness, Marginalization, English Literature, Identity, Representation, Postcolonialism, Social Exclusion, Cultural Difference.

1. Introduction:

The English literature has never been an unimportant part of the reflection of the human life, society, culture and identity. Literary works are not just tales about people; they are also narratives that reflect the social and cultural realities in the lives of people. Women, through novels, short stories, plays, and poems, explore the themes of human suffering, power relations, social inequality, cultural conflict, and the pursuit of belonging. The depiction of those individuals who are overlooked, marginalised, or believed to be inferior by society is one of the most significant issues in literature.



Such individuals can be commonly referred to as marginalised individuals or groups. They can be marginalised due to their race, class, gender, religion, language, colonial background, poverty, migration or cultural identity (Kastrup, M. (2023).

The title of the paper, *Voices from the Margins: Representation of Social and Cultural Otherness in English Literature*, is dedicated to these voices that are ignored and excluded. Voice of the margins is a phrase that is used to refer to the experiences of individuals who do not live in the centre of social power. They are individuals who are not quite accepted by mainstream society. There is a tendency to overlook, misinterpret or suppress their stories. Such individuals are given a voice by literature, which reflects their pain, resistance, dreams, and struggle with identity. The notion that there is otherness is the major issue in the study. Otherness refers to the act whereby certain individuals are perceived as distinct, bizarre, inferior or even out of the norms of accepted social order. Dominating groups in most societies and cultures define themselves as normal, civilised, powerful or superior, and describe others as abnormal, backward, weak or inferior. This division establishes a connection between “self-other. The self is generally associated with power, authority and acceptance, whereas the other is associated with exclusion, silence and difference (Goffman, I. W. (1959).

Otherness has two significant types, which will be discussed in this paper and include social otherness and cultural otherness. Otherness in society is constructed with the help of class, gender, poverty, profession, education, or social position. A poor person, a working-class person, a woman in a patriarchal society and a person of low social status may be treated as being socially inferior. The creation of cultural otherness is based on race, religion, language, ethnicity, migration, colonial history or cultural difference. A person who is colonised, an immigrant, a racial minority, or a person who belongs to another religion or culture may be treated as culturally different or unacceptable (Staszak, J. F. (2008).

Both social and cultural otherness have numerous examples in English literature. The issue of class difference in *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens significantly influenced the identity and social worth. The fact that Pip wants to be a gentleman reveals the influence of the power of the classes on self-respect and individual ambition. In *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, cultural otherness is created by colonial power, which introduces African culture as an inferior one compared to European civilisation. By providing dignity and complexity to Igbo society, Achebe opposes such a colonial perspective. In *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys, Antoinette is sidelined due to racial and gender factors as well as the history of colonisation and cultural displacement. Neither is she accepted by European society, nor is she safe in the Caribbean society. In " *My Son the Fanatic* by Hanif Kureishi, the immigrant life in Britain reveals the way in which the cultural identity is split between assimilation and religious opposition (Mirza, S., & Neelam, A. (2023).

The research problem of this paper is that, in certain cases, literary studies do not consider the voices of marginalised people, but they should be viewed as secondary. Nonetheless, numerous valuable literary works in fact do not follow this trend as they introduce marginalised characters



to the forefront. In this study, the author explores the ways in which English literature depicts those individuals who are socially and culturally stigmatised as the other. It also discusses the question of whether literature is merely a reflection of marginalisation or whether it questions and challenges it (Nawale, A. M., & Rakesh, S. (Eds.). (2012)

The primary aims of the research are to look into how marginalised characters are represented in selected English literary texts, to examine how social and cultural otherness is formed, and to look at how literature gives voice to marginalised people. The purpose of the paper is also to examine the reaction of the marginalised characters to the oppression. The silence of some characters, the silent sufferers, and the non-conformist characters to social and cultural control are all evident (Trittin-Ulbrich, H., & Schoeneborn, D. (2017).

This research paper is important since the problem of otherness does not exist only in the literature. It can also be found in real life. Categorisation and marginalisation of people are still based on class, race, gender, religion, culture and nationality. Literature assists the readers in comprehending these experiences on a deeper level. It teaches that, pushed to the periphery, those who are pushed are not by nature voiceless, but rather are often silenced through systems of power. Through reading literature under the otherness perspective, readers will be more aware of injustice and better aware of human differences (Lindhé, A. (2021).

2. Literature Review:

Otherness is a notion that has been greatly debated in literary and cultural studies. It particularly features in postcolonial theory, feminist criticism, Marxist criticism and cultural studies. Otherness is not a mere natural difference. It is created through the social, political, and cultural power. When the dominant society determines that a person is inferior, strange, dangerous, or less valuable than he/she is, then that person becomes other. Otherness in postcolonial studies is directly related to colonialism. Colonialists tended to portray colonised individuals as uncivilised, irrational, backward or childlike. This depiction served to justify colonialists. The concept of Orientalism by Edward Said expounds how the West developed a picture of the East as exotic, weak, mysterious, and inferior. This opinion holds that colonial discourse did not just describe the East; it created a manipulated image of the East for Western power. This concept can be applied to explain the cultural otherness manifestations in literature (Bhabha, H. K. (2013).

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe could be interpreted as a counter to the colonial images of Africa. Previous colonial literature tended to portray African societies as primitive and having no history. Achebe rebels against this by revealing the multidimensionality, laws, traditions, beliefs and the conflicts of the Igbo society. The African characters in his novel are enhanced with humanity. It demonstrates that the African culture had its own organisation prior to the coming of European missionaries and colonial rulers. By so doing, Achebe gives a voice to a culture which was often moved to the periphery by colonial literature. (Gikandi, S. (2001). The concepts of hybridity and cultural ambivalence by Homi K. Bhabha can also be applied to otherness. Bhabha claims that the colonial identity is not determined. People who have been colonised usually lead a life between two cultures. This results in a hybrid identity, and the



person will be wholly of neither. The concept is significant in the works that address the issue of migration and postcolonial identity, e.g., *My Son the Fanatic* by Hanif Kureishi. In the given story, Pervez is willing to fit into British society, whereas his son Ali is unwilling to accept Western values and turns to religious rigidity. The tension between them is an indicator of the stress of belonging to a particular culture in an immigrant setting (Ali, M. (2018)). The idea of subaltern as proposed by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is also applicable. The subalterns are the individuals who are so marginalised that they have not been sufficiently heard when it comes to dominant systems of knowledge and power. Spivak poses the question of whether the subaltern is ever capable of speaking, when his or her voice is always construed or manipulated by others. This concept can be used to analyse female, colonised, and socially oppressed characters that can be found in literature, but whose voices are not so prominent or are incorrectly interpreted (Amatya, N. (2025)).

The feminist literary theory is concerned with otherness based on gender. In patriarchal societies, women are, in most cases, regarded as secondary to men. They are supposed to be quiet, compliant and submissive. In literature, we can find numerous instances of women who end up suffering due to the fact that society controls their bodies, choices, desires and voices. *The Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys is a valuable feminist and postcolonial work, as it provides a voice to Antoinette, the so-called madwoman of *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë. In this novel by Brontë, it is Bertha Mason who is portrayed mostly through the eyes of others. Rhys recreates her tale and demonstrates how the history of colonisation, patriarchy and racial tension are the causes of her misery. This act of rewriting itself becomes a means of speaking out for a muted woman. The Marxist criticism holds significance in comprehending otherness based on classes. The valuation of people in capitalist societies is often based on wealth, property and social rank. The poor are looked down upon as inferior, and the rich are accorded respect and authority. Charles Dickens is a common depiction of Victorian England in terms of class disparity. In *Great Expectations*, the shame that Pip feels over his low background is an indication of how the ideology of class impacts the mind. He starts to view himself and others as viewed through the lens of a society where its members are class-conscious. Dickens demonstrates that otherness of classes is not only economic, but emotional and psychological as well. (Dupovac, I. (2022)). Identity and representation are related through the help of cultural studies, and the work of Stuart Hall, in particular. Hall believes that representation is never the mere mirror image of reality. It creates meaning. The representation of a group in literature, media or culture influences the ways that society learns about that group. When marginalised people are constantly communicated to society as weak, dangerous, backward or silent, it is possible that society may start perceiving this as the truth. The literature may either uphold these stereotypes or refute them (Annet, K. A. (2025)).

The literature available on otherness tends to address the issues of race, class, gender, or colonial identity separately. Nevertheless, this paper unites all these forms under the broader concept of social and cultural otherness. This is where the research gap that the current study fills in. Marginalisation does not occur in just a single form. An individual can be marginalised due to class and gender simultaneously or due to race, culture, and colonial origins combined. As an example, Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is marginalised as a woman, as a Creole, as a colonial



subject and as someone who is culturally displaced. On the same note, Ali in *My Son the Fanatic* is an individual who encounters a cultural clash, as a son of an immigrant family living in Britain. Thus, this paper explores otherness in relation to being a complex, as well as an overlapping experience (Zumara, Z. (2020).

3. Theoretical Framework:

A mix of postcolonial theory, cultural studies, feminist theory, and Marxist criticism is used in this research. These theories can be used to explain how social and cultural otherness is constructed and manifested in literature.

The primary framework of this paper is the postcolonial theory. It explores how colonialism has impacted identity, culture, language, race, and power. Colonialism was not just the domination of land and economy, but also represented the domination of knowledge and representation. Colonised individuals were frequently characterised as being inferior in order to make the colonial domination seem natural or even essential. Postcolonial theory challenges such misconceived images and puts emphasis on the voices of colonised individuals. The imagination of Orientalism, by Edward Said, aids in understanding how the West constructed the East into its own cultural other. *Things Fall Apart* can be analysed in terms of this theory since Achebe is trying to break the image of Africa that is portrayed by the colonisers. The concept of hybridity introduced by Homi K. Bhabha can be applied to the analysis of the identity of immigrants and postcolonial people. Hybridity refers to the fact that identity is constructed between cultures as opposed to within a single pure culture. In *My Son the Fanatic*, both Pervez and Ali are faced with the issue of identity in Britain. According to Pervez, she believes in adaptation and assimilation. He desires to live the Western life, and the definition of success is to become a part of British society. Ali, on the other hand, regards Western culture as morally vacuous and denounces it. This struggle demonstrates how hard it is to exist between two worlds, two different cultures.

Otherness of gender is studied using the feminist theory. This assists in understanding how women are sidelined in the male-dominated societies. Feminist criticism challenges how literature depicts women as passive, emotional, mad, weak or dependent. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette is oppressed by patriarchal power. Her husband not only renames her, but also controls her property, questions her identity and even mutes her. Based on the feminist theory, it is possible to demonstrate that her madness is not merely a personal disease but a consequence of the social, marital, and colonial violence. (Felman, S. (1975).

The Marxist criticism assists in the examination of otherness due to class. It dwells on economic inequality, the power of the classes, and social order. In *Great Expectations*, the life of Pip is influenced by the desire for class. He starts out as a poor orphan yet aspires to become a gentleman. His embarrassment of Joe and his bad background show how the society of classes makes people value wealth more than loyalty, kindness and moral value. The Marxist criticism assists in demonstrating that the social and economic systems create class otherness. Another reason why cultural studies is relevant is that it dwells upon identity, representation, and power. According to Sturds Hall, the theory of representation states that the meaning is made



through the use of language and cultural signs. Literature is a way for people to be pictured, described, symbolised, and told in a narrative voice. These images are either capable of reinforcing stereotypes or deconstructing them. This framework is used to examine how marginalised characters are portrayed, who is speaking on their behalf and whether they are given the opportunity to speak on their own behalf. (Ahmed, A. (2024). Collectively, these theories bring a good basis for the study. The postcolonial theory is used to explicate colonial and racial otherness. Gender otherness can be explained by the feminist theory. Class otherness is explained by the Marxist theory. The cultural studies explicates how the meaning of representation is made. Through the combination of these theories, the paper will be able to look at otherness as a complex literary and social matter.

4. Research Methodology:

The study is a qualitative one. Textual analysis and critical literary analysis are the key methods used in it. The qualitative research is appropriate to literary research as it concentrates on meaning, interpretation, language, symbols, themes, characters and social context. This research is not aimed at gathering numerical data but at gaining an insight into how the chosen literary works reflect social and cultural otherness.

The major books that have been used in this research are *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys and *My Son the Fanatic* by Hanif Kureishi. These readings have been chosen since each of them includes a certain type of marginalisation. Dickens pays great attention to the issue of classes and social stratification. Achebe addresses the issue of colonialism and the misrepresentation of cultures. Rhys addresses the issues of gender, race, colonial displacement, and female silence. In contemporary Britain, Kureishi introduces the immigrant identity, assimilation, religion and cultural conflict. The analysis technique will be the close reading of the chosen texts. Close reading refers to the attentive reading of characters, themes, setting, narrative voice, conflict, symbolism and language. The analysis will focus on the description of marginalised characters, their treatment by the societal members, and how marginalised characters react to the exclusion. It also looks at the contribution of the hegemonic power structures like colonial power, patriarchy, hierarchy of classes and cultural superiority (Saqlain, M. (2024).

Critical books, research articles, and theoretical works on otherness, postcolonial theory, feminism, cultural studies and Marxist criticism are considered to be secondary sources. To substantiate the analysis, the study employs theoretical concepts of Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Stuart Hall, Karl Marx, and feminist scholars. The study is confined to a few works of English literature and literature in the English language. It does not purport to tell the entire history of English literature. It, instead, employs chosen texts in order to demonstrate how various manifestations of otherness can be observed in different literary and historical contexts. The authors have focused primarily on representation, identity, exclusion, and resistance.

The weakness of the research is that it cannot encompass all the marginalised groups or all literary works dealing with otherness. Nonetheless, the chosen texts have good examples of how



English literature reflects people who are displaced to the periphery of power. Such instances contribute to shaping a broader concept of social and cultural otherness in literature.

5. Analysis and Discussion:

5.1 Representation of Social Otherness:

Otherness in society is closely related to class, poverty, gender, education, profession, and social status. Characters in most pieces of literature are evaluated not in terms of their morality but in terms of their social status. English literature tends to bring out this injustice by revealing how society divides the respectable people from those who are not. *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens can be considered one of the most obvious manifestations of social otherness. The novel shows Victorian society as being highly class-conscious. The main character Pip, starts out as a poor orphan who is raised by his sister and Joe Gargery, a blacksmith. Joe is good, sincere and affectionate, yet due to his belonging to the working classes, he is not respected by the higher classes in society. Pip gradually comes to be ashamed of his background. The encounter with Estella and Miss Havisham alters his perception towards himself. Estella calls him a common person, and Pip starts to think that he is poor, thus he is inferior. (Reed, J. (1959).

It is a significant exemplar of the functioning of social otherness. Pip is not inherently inferior but made to feel inferior through the ideology of classes. He is socialised to believe that gentility, wealth and manners are worth more than kindness and loyalty. Consequently, Pip ends up being ashamed of Joe, despite the fact that he is a morally superior person to most of the upper-class characters. In the life of Pip, Dickens demonstrates the harmfulness of the class society on human relations and how it forms false notions of value.

The second character in *Great Expectations* who is socially marginalised is Magwitch. He is a prisoner, and society perceives him as a criminal and dangerous person. Dickens gradually, however, displays his humanness. Magwitch turns out to be the anonymous benefactor of Pip and loses his life on behalf of Pip's future. His character comes as a surprise to the reader. The decently upper classes are not necessarily moral, and the socially outcast convict is capable of love, generosity and loyalty. Dickens provides a voice to a character, Magwitch, already condemned by society. (Crowe, J. (1998).

Gender is also related to social otherness. Women are considered secondary or dependent in patriarchal societies. Their decisions are constrained by male authority and social norms. *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys manifests such an otherness in the character Antoinette. Not only is she marginalised due to her race and position as a colony, but she is also marginalised because she is a woman. Through her marriage, she is controlled in a way. Her name, money, movement and identity are under the control of her husband. He changes her name to Bertha, which symbolically kills her original person. Changing her name, he attempts to manage the way she will be perceived and remembered.

This social otherness that Antoinette experiences is aggravated by the fact that no one shows full listening to Antoinette. The voice is not believed, there are interruptions and eventually the voice



is silenced. She is perceived to be mad, and the novel reveals that her madness is related to isolation, betrayal and oppression. Rhys challenges the readers not to see Antoinette as a monster but as a woman who has been ruined by social and patriarchal forces.

5.2 Representation of Cultural Otherness:

Social otherness is closely related to classes, poverty, gender, education, profession and social status. In a number of literary works, the characters are not judged by their moral qualities but by their social status. English literature tends to reveal this injustice by displaying how society draws lines between the respectable and the non-respectable. The Great Expectations by Charles Dickens is one of the most apparent instances of social otherness. The novel introduces the society of the Victorian era, which was highly class-conscious. Pip, the main character, starts life as a poor orphan who is raised by his sister and Joe Gargery, who is a blacksmith. Joe is good, truthful and loving and yet, since he is a member of the working classes, he is not regarded as a person of respect by the upper classes. Gradually, Pip learns how to be ashamed of his background. His encounter with Estella and Miss Havisham makes him reevaluate himself. Estella takes it a step further by calling him a common man, and Pip starts feeling that being poor is worse than being a commoner. It is a key instance of the functioning of social otherness. Pip is not an inherently inferior person; he is constructed to perceive himself as inferior by the class ideology. The society educates him that gentility, wealth and manners are better than kindness and loyalty. Consequently, Pip is embarrassed by Joe, although Joe is more ethical than most characters in the upper classes. In his story about Pip, Dickens demonstrates that the class society destroys human relations and forms false concepts of value (Habsari, R. I. (2008).

Another character that is socially marginalised in Great Expectations is Magwitch. He is a convict, and society considers him a criminal and a dangerous person. But gradually Dickens brings out his humanity. Magwitch turns out to be the secret benefactor of Pip and sacrifices his life to ensure the future of Pip. His personality goes against the expectations of the reader. With the respectable upper classes, not always moral, the socially rejected convict can love, be generous and faithful. Dickens uses Magwitch to voice a character whom society has already judged.

Gender is also related to social otherness. Women are treated as secondary or dependent mostly in patriarchal societies. They are restricted in their choices by the power of men and the social demands. In Wide Sargasso Sea, Jean Rhys portrays such otherness through Antoinette. Not only is she marginalised due to her race and her colonial status, but she is a woman as well. Her marriage turns out to be some sort of control. Her husband has authority over her name, money, movement and identity. He changes her name to Bertha, which is symbolically a killer of her original self. Naming her differently, he attempts to regulate the perception and memory of her. The social otherness of Antoinette is even more agonising as no one truly listens to Antoinette. Her voice is questioned, interrupted and ultimately silenced. She is regarded as mad; however, the novel demonstrates that her being mad is intertwined with isolation, betrayal, and oppression. Rhys invites readers to see Antoinette as a woman and not a monster as a result of the social and patriarchal power (Brown, J. (2016).



5.3 Voice, Silence, and Resistance:

A very significant question that has been posed in the study of otherness is whether marginalised individuals are given the opportunity to speak. The conflict between silence and voice is often an issue presented in literature. The marginalised characters can be stifled by society, but literary texts can also make space where their voices are heard. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys makes the voice of a character mostly muted in *Jane Eyre*. In the novel by Brontë, we see Bertha Mason at least through the eyes of Rochester and Jane. She is brought out as insane, brutal and like an animal. Rhys retells her story from a different point of view. Rhys breaks the previous depiction by providing Antoinette with the voice of her own. This is a literary protest.

The voice of Antoinette is a revelation of the suffering in the name of insanity. She talks of fear, loneliness, race, family history and emotional loss. It is depicted in her story that the so-called madwoman has her history and human identity. Nevertheless, the voice of Antoinette is weak, even in the novel by Rhys. The story of her husband comes in to interrupt and rival her story. This indicates that the voices of the marginalised are usually fragile since power always endeavours to suppress them.

In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe expresses Igbo culture through a narrative style that reflects an African approach. The novel opposes colonial silence by making the colonised people historical subjects, not objects of European scrutiny. Of particular significance is the last part of the novel. The District Commissioner will make the life of Okonkwo a few lines in his book. It is a scene of colonial writing, which obliterates the richness of colonised lives. The whole novel of Achebe is in opposition to such erasure. Although the Commissioner would prefer that Okonkwo become a footnote to the story, Achebe makes him the main character in a complete, tragic story. In *Great Expectations*, Dickens imbues his characters, such as socially rejected ones like Magwitch and Joe, with emotional depth. In certain cases, especially that of Magwitch, silent people become speakers. Initially, he comes out as a scary convict. His story is later unveiled, and the reader gets to see the pain, faithfulness and humanity of this individual. Dickens employs the development of the narrative in order to confront social prejudice. The character that appeared as an ill-fated outsider turns out to be one of the most emotionally charged figures in the novel.

In *My Son the Fanatic*, voice and silence are more complex. Ali is vehemently opposed to Western values, but he is also strict and judgmental. However, Pervez, in his turn, has trouble comprehending his son. The book does not have a straightforward solution to the story. It demonstrates the unsuccessful communication between the generations, cultures, and identities. The last father-son violence reveals what can occur in the failure of dialogue. When individuals cease to listen to each other, otherness will become risky (Zoja, L. (2018).

5.4 Gender and Otherness:

Gender is both one of the most ancient and the most potent otherness in literature. The women have been portrayed as emotional, weak, passive, irrational or dependent. Feminist criticism questions such representations and enquires how the voice of women has been



subjugated.

Wide Sargasso Sea is a prominent work that explores gender otherness. Antoinette finds herself in a world where the men possess the power socially, economically and narratively. She is deprived of her property by marriage, which is controlled by her husband. He also dominates her name by changing it to Bertha. This renaming does not come as a little thing. It demonstrates the ability to determine another individual. By not addressing her as Antoinette, he does not want to acknowledge her selfhood.

Otherness between the genders of Antoinette is related to colonial otherness. She is a Creole woman in the Caribbean, who is torn between the white European identity and the Caribbean cultural reality. She is not a whole anywhere. Her husband sees her as being weird, overboard and racially questionable. His distrust makes her an object of fear and lust. This demonstrates the involvement of gender and race in creating otherness.

Gendered suffering is also evident in Miss Havisham and Estella of Great Expectations, although in a different manner. When Miss Havisham is betrayed by a man, her heart is ruined. She preserves her life on the day of betrayal and puts Estella on the path of becoming a woman who breaks men's hearts. Estella ends up being a victim of emotional manipulation. Though she seems to be strong, she is also a victim of the revenge of Miss Havisham and the expectations of the patriarchal society. Dickens demonstrates that women can be destroyed by those social structures that appear to provide them with stature.

Otherness of gender is not only concerned with weakness. It is likewise concerning resistance. Antoinette fights back in the form of memory, emotion and last resort. Estella is later able to realise how much damage has been inflicted on her emotionally. These characters can indicate that women in literature are not just mere victims. Their lives are a reflection of the subtext of violence that characterises patriarchal culture.

5.5 Race, Empire, and Colonial Identity:

The pivotal issue of cultural otherness is race and empire. Colonialism relied on racial stratification. Europeans tended to put them on the pinnacle of civilisation and portray people being colonised as inferior. The other role the literature has played is that sometimes it perpetuated the colonial stereotypes, whereas other times, it challenged them. Things Fall Apart by Achebe is a direct challenge to the colonial representation. The novel demonstrates that Igbo people have language, law, religion, art, family set-up, and morality. This is something that the colonisers cannot comprehend since they regard the difference as inferiority. The missionaries may think that they are rescuing the Igbo people, but they also tear apart social ties and cultural pride.

In the novel, it is depicted that colonial otherness is constructed by means of misunderstanding. Igbo people do not completely know the intentions of the Europeans initially, and the Europeans do not understand Igbo customs. The balance of power is, however, not at par. The Europeans



are military, religious and administrative powerhouses. Their misconception turns out to be domination.

In Wide Sargasso Sea, the issue of racial and colonial identity is more complicated. After slavery was abolished, Antoinette was a member of the white Creole community. Black Jamaicans reject her due to her family ties to slavery, and yet the Europeans reject her on account of her excessive Englishness. This intermediate status brings about severe insecurity. Her identity culturally is unstable. She is not only a privileged and marginalised person, but also a white and colonial person, an insider and an outsider.

It is this complexity that makes Rhys ' novel significant. It demonstrates that colonial societies produce a lot of layers of otherness. The power of all white characters is not equal, and not all the characters who do not have the same power are innocent. The pain that Antoinette is going through is a reality, but it is part of the history of slavery and racial violence. Rhys is not providing a basic moral world. Rather, she introduces the identity of the colonies as fractured and haunted.

In My Son the Fanatic, the immigrant experience is influenced by race and migration. Pervez desires to be a part of Britain, but he does not forget that he is different. His friendship with Bettina, a sex worker, demonstrates his attachment to people who happen to be socially marginalised as well. Both Pervez and Bettina are within the decent social circles. The religious conversion of Ali can be interpreted as a reaction to racial and cultural marginalisation. He is disillusioned with the society which has not provided him with a safe identity.

5.6 Class and Economic marginalization:

The other significant type of otherness in English literature is class. The socially unimportant people, who have no money, property or social status, are usually considered less valuable. In Great Expectations, Dickens objects to such a mode of thought based on class. Pip wants to be a gentleman not only as an individual goal. It is influenced by shame. He starts to think that his home in a working-class area is embarrassing. This demonstrates how the power of classes gets into the mind. Pip desires wealth, but not only that, he desires to get out of the label of being common. His ethical development starts with the realisation of the bogus ideals of the class society.

Joe is the embodiment of moral good, which lacks any social graces. He is meek, faithful, forgiving and kind. But, after being given his expectations by him, Pip looks down on him. It is a part of the emotional tragedies of the novel. Dickens demonstrates that ambition in terms of their class can cause people to be nasty to people who love them so much. Economic injustice is another theme that can be seen in the story of Magwitch. He is seen as an outsider who is a criminal, yet his life has been moulded by poverty and social neglect. Crime, however, is not justified by Dickens, although he is asking his readers to look beyond the tag convict to see the human being beneath. Here is one of the great forces of literature: it destroys the outward name and brings out the inner life.



There is also otherness in terms of class, as evident in the story by Kureishi. Pervez is a taxi driver, which puts him into an immigrant status of the working class. He labours hard, yet his efforts do not earn him the maximum respect. His economic plight is one of his yearnings to assimilate. He wishes to see his son achieve success as he is of the opinion that education and success in a profession will shield Ali against being marginalised. But Ali does not accept this dream, which comes into contradiction with economic hope and cultural resistance.

5.7 Literature as a Place of Marginal Voices:

The chosen readings demonstrate that literature may turn into a potent arena for the oppressed voices. It helps readers to view the world through the eyes of the people who are normally overlooked. Literature is not just a manifestation of suffering, but it also challenges the systems which bring about suffering.

Dickens provides respect to poverty and rejected socially, characters. Achebe reinstates the African culture back to its original glory with the colonial representation. Rhys voices a silenced woman who was a part of a previous canonical work. Kureishi introduces the anguish and confusion of immigrant identity in contemporary Britain. Both authors draw the borderline nearer to the centre (Islam, S., English, B. A., & English, M. A. (2022)).

Otherness in literature is significant since it alters the thinking process of the readers. A character that might appear weird or inferior in the beginning can be made sensible and human. This change of distance to comprehension is the main focus of literary experience. Literature educates that the other is not an inferior human being. The other possesses a story, a voice, a history and a claim to dignity.

1. Findings:

In this study, English literature is discovered to depict the social and cultural otherness in complex and meaningful ways. The chosen texts demonstrate that otherness is produced by the power systems, and not by natural difference per se. The society stigmatises some individuals as inferior due to their classes, races, genders, religions, cultures or colonial identities.

The initial conclusion is that the marginalised characters can be frequently suppressed or distorted by the dominant groups. Antoinette is renamed and is under the control of her husband. Colonial missionaries interpret Igbo society in a false manner. Magwitch is degraded to a convict. Pervez and Ali are unable to comprehend each other due to the clash of cultures.

The second observation is that these types of silence are challenged in literature. Rhys provides Antoinette with a mouth. Achebe introduces the Igbo culture from an African point of view. Dickens depicts the humaneness in poor and criminalised characters. Kureishi demonstrates an emotional price of migration and unsuccessful assimilation. The third result is that in many cases, social and cultural otherness intersect. Suffering



experienced by Antoinette is gendered, racial and colonial simultaneously. The identity crisis of Ali is related to religion, migration, generation and culture. Pip is ashamed, but it is not only a personal experience but also influenced by the class society. Hence, otherness cannot be considered as one problem; it is often more than one and interrelated. The fourth conclusion is that the marginalised characters are not passive all the time. The resistance is open in some and resistance by memory, survival, speech or refusal in others. Okonkwo opposes the change of the colonial government, but unfortunately. Antoinette fights against erasure through her presence of narration. Love and sacrifice are some of the ways in which Magwitch is opposed to social rejection. Ali opposes Western culture, but his opposition turns out to be so extreme, so destructive. The last conclusion is that literature has an ethical part. It challenges the readers to challenge their own presumptions about individuals who appear different. It demonstrates that the margin is not desolate and quiet. It is reeking with voices to be heard.

1. **Conclusion:**

One of the most significant issues of English literature is the depiction of social and cultural otherness. Over the course of history and through diverse literary genres, authors have examined how societies define who is an outsider, and how marginalised individuals fight to have an identity, dignity and voice. The selected texts have been discussed in this paper through the works of Charles Dickens, Chinua Achebe, Jean Rhys, and Hanif Kureishi to demonstrate how literature is represented as a class exclusion, marginalisation of colonialism, and gender oppression, racial difference, immigrant conflict, and cultural displacement.

The research indicates that otherness is not merely the issue of difference. It is concerned with being different through power. The cultures that are dominant develop superiority and inferiority categories. They determine who is a member and who is not. This process is revealed through literature, which demonstrates the emotional and social impacts of exclusion. The sense of marginalisation is manifested in various ways, as shown in the case of Pip and Magwitch, Okonkwo and Antoinette, as well as Pervez and Ali. Meanwhile, literature does not render the marginalised individuals voiceless. It provides them with stories, emotions, memories and resistance. It gives the reader the opportunity to observe that the people who have been moved to the edges are all humans. Their experiences matter. There is a purpose to their pain. The centre is challenged by their voices (Honkasalo, M. L. (1998).

Thus, the English literature turns out to be a strong location to comprehend social and cultural otherness. It is not only unjust, but also challenges it. It shows how individuals are oppressed and even assists them in doing so. By hearing the voices of people on the fringes, the readers are able to create a more enlightened identity, power, culture and humanity.



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