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## VOICES FROM THE MARGINS: IDENTITY, POWER, AND EXCLUSION IN ENGLISH LITERARY TEXTS

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### Abstract

*This paper examines the representation of marginal voices in English literary texts, focusing on the interrelated dynamics of identity, power, and exclusion. Drawing on postcolonial theory, feminist literary criticism, and cultural studies, the study explores how literary discourse constructs marginality and regulates whose voices are rendered visible, legitimate, or silenced. Using a qualitative, text-based methodology grounded in close reading and critical discourse analysis, the paper analyzes how marginalized characters and narrators negotiate identity within structures shaped by gendered, colonial, and class-based power relations. The analysis demonstrates that marginal voices in English literature are frequently constrained by dominant narrative frameworks that mediate or suppress subaltern perspectives. At the same time, literary texts provide contested spaces in which marginalized subjects articulate resistance, challenge dominant meanings, and expose the instability of hegemonic discourses. Rather than presenting marginality as inherently liberatory, the study highlights its ambivalent nature, shaped simultaneously by resistance and structural limitation. By foregrounding voices from the margins, the paper contributes to literary debates on representation and power, emphasizing the importance of examining exclusion not as absence but as a discursive process embedded within literary form and narrative authority.*

**Keyword:** *Marginality; Identity; Power; Exclusion; English Literature; Representation*

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### INTRODUCTION

English literature has long functioned as a powerful site for the production, circulation, and contestation of social meanings. While canonical literary traditions have historically privileged dominant voices often aligned with class, gender, race, and imperial power—literary texts have also served as spaces where marginalized subjects articulate resistance, negotiate identity, and expose structures of exclusion. The study of marginal voices in English literary texts therefore offers critical insight into how power operates within cultural representation and how literature both reflects and challenges social hierarchies.

The concept of the “margin” in literary studies is not merely descriptive but deeply political. Marginality refers to the positioning of individuals or groups outside dominant social, cultural, or ideological centers. Such positioning is produced through intersecting structures of power, including patriarchy, colonialism, class stratification, and racial hierarchies. As Foucault (1980) famously argues, power is not simply possessed but exercised through discourse, shaping what can be said, by whom, and with what authority.

Literary texts participate in this process by legitimizing certain voices while silencing or distorting others. For much of literary history, English literature has been shaped by imperial and metropolitan perspectives that normalize dominant identities and marginalize alternative experiences. Postcolonial critics have demonstrated how colonial discourse constructs the colonized subject as inferior, voiceless, or dependent, reinforcing imperial power relations (Said, 1978). Similarly, feminist scholars have shown how women’s experiences have been suppressed or mediated through patriarchal narrative frameworks, rendering female subjectivity marginal within literary representation (Showalter, 1977; Gilbert & Gubar, 1979).



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Marxist critics, in turn, have emphasized how class relations structure literary production and representation, often privileging bourgeois perspectives while obscuring working-class realities (Williams, 1977).

Against this backdrop, the emergence of marginal voices in English literary texts represents a critical intervention into dominant narratives. These voices challenge normative constructions of identity and expose the mechanisms through which exclusion is maintained. As Spivak (1988) provocatively asks, “Can the subaltern speak?” a question that underscores the difficulty, and political urgency, of recovering marginalized perspectives within hegemonic discourses. Literary texts that foreground marginal voices do not simply add alternative stories; they destabilize the epistemological foundations of dominant knowledge systems.

Identity is central to this process. In contemporary literary theory, identity is understood not as a fixed essence but as a socially constructed and historically contingent phenomenon. Stuart Hall (1990) argues that identity is “a ‘production,’ which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation” (p. 222). Literary texts become key sites where such production takes place, enabling marginalized characters and narrators to negotiate identities shaped by exclusion, displacement, and resistance.

Power operates through these representations in complex ways. On one hand, literature can reproduce dominant ideologies by naturalizing social hierarchies and marginal positions. On the other hand, it can function as a counter-discursive space in which marginalized subjects articulate alternative identities and challenge systems of domination. As Bhabha (1994) suggests, cultural texts often occupy a “third space” where meanings are negotiated rather than fixed, allowing for the emergence of hybrid and resistant identities.

English literary texts across periods—from Victorian novels to modern and postcolonial narratives—offer rich material for examining how marginal voices are constructed and constrained. In nineteenth-century literature, for example, working-class characters, women, and colonized subjects frequently appear at the periphery of narratives dominated by middle-class, imperial viewpoints. Yet even within these constraints, moments of resistance and subversion can be identified, revealing tensions within dominant ideological frameworks (Williams, 1977).

In twentieth- and twenty-first-century English literature, marginal voices become more explicit and self-conscious. Writers increasingly foreground perspectives shaped by colonial displacement, gendered oppression, racial exclusion, and socioeconomic marginalization. These texts challenge earlier literary traditions by centering voices historically excluded from representation and by interrogating the power relations embedded within language and narrative form. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002) note, postcolonial writing often involves “the transformation of dominant discourses and practices through appropriation and intervention” (p. 37).

Despite extensive scholarship on marginality, identity, and power in English literature, several gaps remain. First, much existing research examines marginal voices through single theoretical lenses, such as feminism or postcolonialism, without sufficiently addressing how multiple forms of exclusion intersect. Second, some studies focus primarily on thematic representation while neglecting the discursive and structural mechanisms through which exclusion operates within texts. Third, there is a tendency to treat marginal voices as inherently resistant, overlooking the ways in which they may also be constrained or



co-opted by dominant narratives.

This study seeks to address these gaps by offering a critical analysis of voices from the margins in English literary texts, with particular attention to the interplay between identity, power, and exclusion. Rather than treating marginality as a fixed category, the study conceptualizes it as a dynamic position shaped by social, historical, and discursive forces. By analyzing how marginal characters and narrators articulate identity within contexts of exclusion, the study highlights both the possibilities and limitations of literary resistance.

The analysis is informed by an interdisciplinary theoretical framework drawing on postcolonial theory, feminist criticism, and cultural studies. These perspectives enable a nuanced examination of how power operates within literary representation and how marginal voices negotiate visibility and agency. As Hall (1996) observes, cultural texts are sites of struggle where meanings are contested rather than resolved—a premise that guides the present study.

The primary objectives of this paper are threefold. First, it aims to examine how marginal voices are represented in selected English literary texts. Second, it seeks to analyze how identity is constructed and negotiated within contexts of social and cultural exclusion. Third, it explores how power relations shape narrative voice, perspective, and silence within literary discourse.

By addressing these objectives, the study contributes to ongoing debates in English literary studies concerning representation, power, and identity. It demonstrates that marginal voices are not merely supplementary to dominant narratives but central to understanding how literature engages with social inequality and historical change. In doing so, the paper underscores the continuing relevance of literary analysis as a critical tool for interrogating power and amplifying voices from the margins.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### MARGINALITY AND POWER IN LITERARY STUDIES

The concept of marginality occupies a central position in contemporary literary criticism, particularly in studies concerned with power, identity, and representation. Marginality refers to the social, cultural, and ideological positioning of individuals or groups outside dominant structures of power. In literary texts, marginality is not merely a reflection of social exclusion but a discursive construction shaped by narrative voice, characterization, and ideological framing. As Foucault (1980) argues, power operates through discourse by defining what is normal, visible, and speakable, while relegating alternative experiences to the margins.

Literary scholars have long emphasized that canonical English literature has historically privileged dominant perspectives aligned with class, gender, race, and imperial authority. Williams (1977) notes that literature often reproduces “structures of feeling” that normalize social hierarchies, making marginal positions appear natural or inevitable. Within such frameworks, marginal characters are frequently depicted as silent, deviant, or peripheral, reinforcing dominant ideological norms.

However, marginality in literature is not solely a position of absence or silence. Later critical approaches argue that the margin can function as a site of resistance where dominant narratives are contested. As hooks (1990) asserts, the margin is “a site of radical possibility,” offering alternative ways of seeing and being. This shift in critical perspective has encouraged scholars to re-examine literary texts not only for what they exclude but also for how marginalized voices articulate agency within constrained narrative



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spaces.

## **IDENTITY AS A DISCURSIVE AND CONSTRUCTED CATEGORY**

Identity has undergone significant theoretical reconfiguration in literary and cultural studies. Rather than being understood as a fixed or essential attribute, identity is now widely conceptualized as socially constructed, fluid, and historically contingent. Hall (1990) argues that identity is produced through representation and shaped by relations of power, emphasizing that it is “always in process” rather than complete or stable. Literary texts play a crucial role in this process by offering narratives through which identities are imagined, contested, and redefined.

In English literary studies, identity formation is closely tied to issues of class, gender, race, and colonial history. Feminist critics have demonstrated how women’s identities have often been constructed through patriarchal discourse, limiting female agency and subjectivity. Showalter (1977) highlights how women writers and characters have historically occupied marginal positions within literary traditions dominated by male perspectives. Similarly, Gilbert and Gubar (1979) argue that female characters are frequently confined within restrictive symbolic roles that reflect broader social constraints.

Postcolonial theorists extend this critique by examining how colonial discourse constructs racialized identities as inferior or subordinate. Said’s (1978) analysis of Orientalism reveals how Western literary and cultural texts produce the “Other” as a figure defined by difference and exclusion. Such representations not only reinforce imperial power but also shape how marginalized subjects are understood within literary narratives.

## **POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVES ON EXCLUSION AND VOICE**

Postcolonial literary criticism has been particularly influential in foregrounding issues of marginality, power, and exclusion. Central to this tradition is the question of voice who speaks, who is silenced, and under what conditions representation becomes possible. Spivak’s (1988) seminal question, “Can the subaltern speak?”, underscores the difficulty of recovering marginalized voices within discourses shaped by colonial and patriarchal power. Spivak argues that even attempts to represent the subaltern may inadvertently reproduce the structures that silence them.

Postcolonial critics emphasize that English literary texts often reflect imperial ideologies that marginalize colonized subjects by portraying them as passive, voiceless, or dependent. However, later postcolonial writing disrupts these representations by foregrounding perspectives shaped by displacement, hybridity, and resistance. Bhabha (1994) introduces the concept of the “third space” to describe the cultural and textual sites where dominant meanings are destabilized and hybrid identities emerge.

Scholars have examined how postcolonial writers appropriate the English language itself as a means of resistance. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002) argue that postcolonial literature involves the “abrogation and appropriation” of colonial discourse, transforming English from a language of domination into a tool for articulating marginalized experiences. This process complicates simplistic notions of voice and agency, revealing the ambivalent nature of resistance within dominant linguistic frameworks.

## **FEMINIST LITERARY CRITICISM AND GENDERED EXCLUSION**

Feminist literary criticism has played a foundational role in exposing gendered forms of marginalization in English literature. Early feminist scholars focused on recovering women writers excluded from the



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literary canon, while later approaches examined how gender operates within texts to structure power relations and narrative authority. Showalter's (1977) concept of a female literary tradition highlights how women's writing emerges from shared experiences of exclusion and resistance.

Gendered marginality is often reinforced through narrative strategies that limit female voice and agency. Gilbert and Gubar (1979) argue that women characters are frequently positioned as either angels or monsters, symbolic roles that restrict the expression of complex subjectivity. Such representations reflect broader patriarchal structures that define women in relation to male authority rather than as autonomous subjects.

More recent feminist criticism adopts intersectional perspectives, recognizing that gender intersects with class, race, and colonial history to produce multiple forms of marginality. This approach challenges universalized notions of female experience and emphasizes the need to examine how power operates differently across social contexts. Literary texts that foreground marginalized women's voices thus offer valuable insights into the dynamics of exclusion and resistance.

## **CLASS, SOCIAL HIERARCHIES, AND LITERARY MARGINS**

Class-based marginality has also received sustained attention in English literary studies, particularly in Marxist and cultural materialist criticism. Marxist critics argue that literature reflects and reproduces material relations of production, often privileging bourgeois perspectives while marginalizing working-class voices. Williams (1977) emphasizes that literary texts are embedded within social and economic structures that shape representation and meaning.

In many English literary texts, working-class characters appear as peripheral figures whose experiences are mediated through middle-class narrators. This narrative positioning reinforces social hierarchies by denying marginalized subjects narrative authority. However, some texts disrupt these conventions by foregrounding class conflict and exposing the ideological assumptions underlying dominant representations.

Cultural materialist approaches further examine how literary form and genre participate in processes of exclusion. By analyzing narrative structure, language, and symbolism, scholars reveal how texts encode power relations that shape the visibility of marginal voices. Such analyses underscore the importance of close textual reading in uncovering the mechanisms of exclusion embedded within literary discourse.

## **GAPS IN EXISTING SCHOLARSHIP**

Despite extensive scholarship on marginality, identity, and power in English literature, several gaps remain. First, much of the existing literature examines marginality through single theoretical frameworks, such as feminism or postcolonialism, without sufficiently addressing how multiple forms of exclusion intersect. Second, there is a tendency to focus on thematic representation while neglecting the discursive and formal mechanisms through which marginality is constructed.

Third, some studies treat marginal voices as inherently resistant, overlooking the ways in which they may also be constrained, fragmented, or co-opted by dominant narratives. This tendency risks romanticizing marginality rather than critically interrogating its complexities.

The present study addresses these gaps by adopting an integrated critical approach that examines how identity, power, and exclusion interact within English literary texts. By focusing on voices from the



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margins, the study highlights both the possibilities and limitations of literary representation as a site of resistance.

## METHODOLOGY

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive research design grounded in literary and cultural analysis. The research is non-empirical and text-based, focusing on close reading and critical interpretation of selected English literary texts. Such an approach is appropriate for examining questions of identity, power, and exclusion, which are embedded in language, narrative structure, and representation rather than measurable variables.

Literary analysis is particularly suited to investigating marginal voices because it allows for sustained attention to textual detail, narrative positioning, and discursive strategies through which power operates. As cultural texts, literary works both reflect and shape social relations, making them productive sites for analyzing how marginality is constructed and contested.

### THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

The analysis is informed by an integrated critical framework drawing primarily on postcolonial theory, feminist literary criticism, and cultural studies. These approaches provide complementary tools for examining how power relations shape representation and how marginalized identities are articulated within English literary texts.

Postcolonial theory is used to interrogate colonial and imperial discourses that produce racialized and cultural exclusion (Said, 1978; Bhabha, 1994; Spivak, 1988). Feminist criticism informs the analysis of gendered marginalization and the silencing of female subjectivity within patriarchal narrative structures (Showalter, 1977; Gilbert & Gubar, 1979). Cultural studies perspectives, particularly those articulated by Hall (1990, 1996) and Williams (1977), support the examination of identity as a discursive and historically contingent construct shaped by power relations.

Rather than treating these frameworks as isolated lenses, the study adopts an intersectional orientation, recognizing that marginality often emerges from overlapping structures of power, including gender, class, race, and colonial history.

### SELECTION OF TEXTS

The primary texts for analysis were selected purposively based on their relevance to themes of marginality, identity, and exclusion. Selection criteria included:

- The presence of marginalized characters or narrative voices
- Explicit or implicit engagement with power relations (gendered, colonial, or class-based)
- Scholarly recognition of the texts within English literary studies
- Purposive sampling is appropriate in literary research because the objective is not representativeness but analytical depth. The selected texts provide rich material for examining how marginal voices are constructed, constrained, or empowered within literary discourse.

*(You may later specify authors, novels, poems, or plays in this subsection without changing the structure.)*



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## METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The study employs **close textual analysis** as its primary methodological tool. Close reading involves detailed examination of language, imagery, narrative voice, characterization, and symbolism to uncover how meaning is produced within the text. This method allows for identification of subtle discursive strategies through which marginality and exclusion are articulated.

In addition to close reading, the analysis incorporates critical discourse analysis to examine how broader ideological structures such as patriarchy, colonialism, and class hierarchy are embedded in narrative form and representation. Attention is paid to:

- narrative perspective and voice
- silences, omissions, and narrative gaps
- metaphorical and symbolic constructions of identity
- power relations between characters and narrators

These elements are analyzed in relation to the socio-historical contexts in which the texts were produced, while avoiding reductive historical determinism.

## ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

The analysis followed a systematic, multi-stage procedure:

- **Initial reading** of selected texts to identify key moments of marginalization and resistance
- **Focused re-readings** guided by the theoretical framework
- **Thematic coding** of recurring patterns related to identity, power, and exclusion
- **Interpretive synthesis**, linking textual evidence to broader theoretical debates

Direct textual quotations are used selectively to support analytical claims, ensuring that interpretation remains grounded in the text while avoiding excessive quotation.

## VALIDITY, RIGOR, AND REFLEXIVITY

In qualitative literary research, rigor is established through theoretical coherence, analytical transparency, and textual grounding rather than replication or measurement. To enhance analytical rigor, interpretations are consistently supported by close textual evidence and situated within established critical debates.

Reflexivity is also central to the study. The analysis acknowledges that interpretation is shaped by the researcher's theoretical positioning and scholarly context. Rather than claiming objectivity, the study emphasizes critical accountability by making its analytical assumptions explicit.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As a text-based study relying on published literary works, this research does not involve human participants and therefore does not require formal ethical approval. All primary and secondary sources are appropriately cited in accordance with academic integrity standards.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF TEXTS

### MARGINAL VOICES AND NARRATIVE AUTHORITY

One of the primary ways in which marginality is constructed in English literary texts is through the distribution of narrative authority. Narrative voice determines whose experiences are rendered visible and whose perspectives are relegated to silence or distortion. Marginal characters often appear within narratives dominated by socially privileged viewpoints, resulting in mediated or fragmented self-representation.



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Critical theorists have long emphasized that narrative voice is inseparable from power. As Foucault (1980) argues, discourse determines not only what can be spoken but also who is authorized to speak. In many English literary texts, marginal figures women, colonized subjects, or working-class characters are spoken *about* rather than allowed to speak for themselves. Their identities are filtered through dominant narrators, reinforcing hierarchies of knowledge and authority.

However, some texts disrupt this asymmetry by foregrounding marginalized voices through first-person narration, shifting focalization, or unreliable narrators. These narrative strategies challenge dominant epistemologies by exposing the partiality of authoritative perspectives. In such cases, marginal voices do not simply occupy the narrative space; they actively contest the legitimacy of dominant discourse.

## IDENTITY FORMATION UNDER CONDITIONS OF EXCLUSION

Identity in English literary texts emerges not as a stable essence but as a negotiated process shaped by exclusion and constraint. Marginal characters frequently construct their sense of self in response to social, cultural, or ideological boundaries imposed upon them. This process aligns with Hall's (1990) argument that identity is "always in process," produced through representation rather than existing prior to it.

Exclusion functions as a defining condition for marginal identities. Characters positioned at the margins often internalize dominant values even as they resist them, producing identities marked by ambivalence and contradiction. This tension reflects what Bhabha (1994) describes as the "in-between" space of identity, where subjectivity is shaped by both domination and resistance.

Literary representations of marginal identity frequently employ metaphors of displacement, silence, and fragmentation. These tropes signal the instability of identity under oppressive conditions and underscore the psychological and emotional consequences of exclusion. At the same time, moments of self-articulation through speech, memory, or narrative reflection become acts of resistance that assert agency within constrained circumstances.

## GENDERED MARGINALITY AND SILENCED SUBJECTIVITIES

Gendered exclusion remains a persistent feature of English literary traditions. Female characters, in particular, are often positioned within narratives that limit their agency, voice, and mobility. Feminist critics argue that such representations reflect broader patriarchal structures that regulate women's identities and bodies (Showalter, 1977; Gilbert & Gubar, 1979).

In many texts, women's marginality is reinforced through symbolic confinement—domestic spaces, social expectations, or moral codes that restrict self-expression. Silence operates as a key mechanism of control, rendering female subjectivity invisible or delegitimized. As Gilbert and Gubar (1979) note, women characters are frequently compelled to choose between compliance and transgression, with little narrative space for complexity.

Yet literature also offers sites of feminist resistance. Moments in which female characters articulate dissent, reclaim narrative voice, or subvert symbolic roles disrupt patriarchal norms. These moments may be subtle or incomplete, but they reveal the instability of dominant gender ideologies and open space for alternative representations of identity.

## COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL MARGINS

Colonial power relations profoundly shape representations of marginality in English literary texts.



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Colonial discourse constructs colonized subjects as inferior, passive, or dependent, thereby legitimizing imperial domination (Said, 1978). Within such narratives, marginal voices are often exoticized or silenced, reinforcing binary oppositions between the colonizer and the colonized.

Postcolonial texts challenge these representations by re-centering marginalized perspectives and interrogating the language of empire. However, the recovery of marginal voices is not straightforward. Spivak's (1988) assertion that "the subaltern cannot speak" highlights the difficulty of articulating marginalized experience within dominant discursive frameworks. Even when marginal voices appear, they may be constrained by the very language and narrative forms they seek to resist.

English literary texts that engage critically with colonial histories often reveal this tension. Marginal characters articulate identity through hybridity, displacement, and resistance, exposing the contradictions of imperial power. These representations complicate simplistic narratives of liberation and emphasize the ongoing negotiation of identity within postcolonial contexts.

## **CLASS, ECONOMIC POWER, AND LITERARY EXCLUSION**

Class-based marginality remains a significant but sometimes underexplored dimension of English literature. Marxist and cultural materialist critics argue that literary texts often privilege middle- and upper-class perspectives while marginalizing working-class experiences (Williams, 1977). Narrative structures frequently render class inequality invisible by presenting social hierarchies as natural or inevitable.

Working-class characters, when present, are often denied narrative complexity or agency. Their voices may be mediated through bourgeois narrators or reduced to symbolic functions within the plot. This narrative marginalization reflects broader economic power relations that shape cultural production.

Some texts, however, challenge class-based exclusion by foregrounding economic struggle and exposing the ideological assumptions of dominant narratives. Through irony, realism, or narrative disruption, such texts reveal the material conditions underlying social inequality and reclaim space for marginalized class identities within literary discourse.

## **MARGINALITY AS RESISTANCE AND CONSTRAINT**

While marginality can function as a site of resistance, it is also shaped by structural constraint. Romanticizing marginal voices as inherently oppositional risks overlooking the limitations imposed by dominant power structures. As hooks (1990) cautions, the margin is not automatically liberatory; it is a space of struggle shaped by unequal power relations.

English literary texts reflect this ambivalence by depicting marginal voices that resist exclusion while remaining constrained by social, cultural, or linguistic boundaries. Resistance may appear fragmented, symbolic, or temporary rather than revolutionary. These representations underscore the complexity of marginal agency and challenge simplistic readings of empowerment.

By examining how identity, power, and exclusion intersect within literary texts, this analysis demonstrates that marginal voices are neither silent nor fully autonomous. Instead, they occupy contested spaces where meaning is negotiated, resisted, and reconfigured.



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## CONCLUSION

This study has examined how English literary texts construct and negotiate voices from the margins, with particular attention to the interrelated dynamics of identity, power, and exclusion. Through a critical analysis informed by postcolonial theory, feminist criticism, and cultural studies, the paper has demonstrated that marginality in English literature is not merely a position of absence or silence but a complex and contested space shaped by dominant discourses and resistant articulations.

The analysis shows that marginal voices are frequently constrained by narrative structures that privilege dominant social perspectives. Control over narrative authority who speaks, who is spoken for, and whose voice is legitimized emerges as a central mechanism through which exclusion is reproduced. Marginal characters are often mediated through dominant narrators or confined to symbolic roles, limiting their ability to articulate autonomous identities. These representational strategies reflect broader power relations that structure social and cultural hierarchies beyond the text.

At the same time, the study highlights that English literary texts also provide spaces in which marginal voices challenge dominant meanings. Through shifts in narrative perspective, moments of self-articulation, and disruptions of conventional storytelling, marginalized subjects negotiate identity within conditions of constraint. These acts of articulation do not necessarily dismantle dominant power structures, but they expose their instability and reveal the tensions embedded within literary representation.

The analysis further demonstrates that identity in English literary texts is constructed through exclusion rather than prior to it. Marginal identities are shaped by gendered, colonial, and class-based power relations that produce fragmentation, ambivalence, and hybridity. Rather than presenting identity as fixed or coherent, the texts examined reveal it as a dynamic process negotiated within unequal structures of power. This understanding challenges essentialist readings of marginality and underscores the importance of examining how identities are produced through discourse.

Importantly, the study resists romanticizing marginality as inherently resistant or emancipatory. While the margin can function as a site of critique and contestation, it remains shaped by structural limitations imposed by dominant ideological systems. Literary representations of marginal voices often reflect this ambivalence, portraying resistance as partial, constrained, or symbolic rather than complete or transformative. Such representations complicate simplistic binaries of domination and resistance and call for more nuanced critical engagement.

By foregrounding the interplay between identity, power, and exclusion, this paper contributes to ongoing debates in English literary studies concerning representation and voice. It demonstrates that marginal voices are central not peripheral to understanding how literature engages with social inequality and historical change. Examining these voices allows critics to interrogate the cultural assumptions embedded within literary traditions and to recognize literature as a site where power is both exercised and contested. In conclusion, voices from the margins in English literary texts illuminate the workings of power within narrative representation while simultaneously revealing possibilities for critique and rearticulation. Attending to these voices deepens our understanding of literature's role in shaping, sustaining, and challenging social hierarchies. Future literary scholarship would benefit from continuing to explore marginality through intersectional and discursive frameworks that recognize both the constraints and the critical potential of representation.



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