Chapter II
GAURI VISWANATHAN:
UNMASKING THE COLONIZER
Gauri Viswanathan’s influential book *Mask of Conquest (1989)* is a serious investigation into the problematic relationship between literary studies and British rule in India. She makes a strong claim that British administration in India systematically used English language and Literature to contain the anticipated threat of native insubordination. English studies and programs were offered as a proof of enlightenment, it was a kind of a mask or disguise for their material investments and colonial designs. It was through the introduction of English literary program that the native populations in the colonized world were strategically let to internalize the ideological procedures of the colonial “Civilizing Mission”. Writers like Gauri Viswanathan, Leela Gandhi and Tejeswani Neranjan have talked elaborately about the process of collation and interpellation of colonial textuality and cultural inversions marked by excessive use of ‘Caliban paradigm’ by a host of postcolonial critics has led to a re-reading and re-interpretation of colonial Textuality.

*Mask of Conquest* follow modern English studies to their colonial origins. The book shows that English literary study was in place before its institutionalization in England and had its beginnings as a strategy for managing the colony. The author shows that English literature is tied up in the politics of the British Empire while also challenging modern assumptions about canon creation and the modern study of literature. This book is about the institution, practice, and ideology of English studies introduced in India under British colonial rule. It does not seek to be a comprehensive record of the history of English, nor does it even attempt to catalogue, in minute historical fashion, the various
educational decisions, acts, and resolutions that led to the institutionalization of English. The work draws upon the illuminating insight of Antonio Gramsci, writing on the relations of culture and power, that cultural domination works by consent and can (and often does) precede conquest by force. Power, operating concurrently at two clearly distinguishable levels, produces a situation where, Gramsci writes, “the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as ‘domination’ and as ‘intellectual and moral leadership’. . . It seems clear . . . that there can and indeed must be hegemonic activity even before the rise to power, and that one should not count only on the material force which power gives in order to exercise an effective leadership.”

The importance of moral and intellectual suasion in matters of governance is readily conceded on theoretical grounds as an implicit tactical manoeuvre in the consolidation of power. There is an almost bland consensus in post-Arnoldian cultural criticism that the age of ideology begins when force gives way to ideas. But the precise mode and process by which cultural domination is ensured is less open to scrutiny. The general approach is to treat "ideology" as a form of masking, and the license given to speculative analyses as a result is sometimes great enough to suspend, at least temporarily, the search for actual intentions.

Admittedly, detailed records of self-incrimination are not routinely preserved in state archives. But where such records do exist the evidence is often compelling enough to suggest that the Gramscian notion is not merely a theoretical construct, but an uncannily accurate
description of historical process, subject to the vagaries of particular
circumstances. A case in point is British India, whose checkered history
of cultural confrontation conferred a sense of urgency to voluntary
cultural assimilation as the most effective form of political action.
Thomas Babington Macaulay, Government of India, (1833), stated that:
Empire is itself the strangest of all political anomalies. That a handful of
adventures from an island in the Atlantic should have subjugated a vast
country divided from place of their birth by half the globe; a country
which at no very distant period was merely the subject of fable to the
nations of Europe...these are prodigies to which the world have seen
nothing similar. Reason is confounded. We interrogate the past in vain.
The study of literature was advocated throughout the British Empire as a
means of inculcating a sense of imperial loyalty in the colonised. Or as
the Government of India under Lord Bentinck decided in response to
Macaulay’s highly influential Minute of 1835: ‘the great objects of
British (rule in India) ought to be the promotion of European literature
and science among the natives of India’.  

The rise of literary studies as a ‘discipline’ of study in British
universities was a fact linked to the perceived needs of colonial
administrators: English literature was instituted as a formal discipline in
London and Oxford only after the Indian Civil Service examination
began to include a 1000 mark paper in it, on the assumption that
knowledge of English literature was necessary for those who would be
administrating British interests. Soon after, it was also deemed important
that the natives themselves be instructed in Western literatures. Thomas
Babington Macaulay, the architect of English education in India put the case succinctly in his famous ‘Minute on Indian Education’ written in 1835: English education, he suggested, would train natives who were ‘Indian in blood and colour’ to become ‘English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect’. These people would constitute a class who would in fact protect British interests and help them rule a vast and potentially unruly land.³

Literary studies were to play a key role in attempting to impart Western values to the natives, constructing European culture as superior and as a measure of human values, and thereby in maintaining colonial rule. Gauri Viswanathan’s book, *Masks of Conquest*, argues this by examining British parliamentary papers and debates on English education in India. The book suggests that English literary studies become a mask for economical and material exploitation, and were an effective form of political control. Not only was the colonial classroom one of the testing grounds or developing attitudes and strategies which became a fundamental part of discipline itself, but certain humanistic functions traditionally associated with the literature – for example, the shaping of character or the development of aesthetic sense or the discipline of aesthetic thinking – were consider essential to the process of socio-political control by the guardian of same tradition.⁴

Far from being antithetical to the political sphere, then, literature and culture are central to it. Like Said, Viswanathan has been criticised on the ground that she does not take into the role of Indian in either resisting or facilitating such literary studies. In fact many Indian
themselves demanded English education, including reformers and nationalists who were opposed to British rule in India. The making of British colonial policy thus played upon and was moulded by indigenous politics, and was not simply exported from England.

One of the ideologies underpinning literary education was the assumption that there was an insurmountable cultural gap between those who had natural access to literary culture, and those other who needed to be taught it. Far from bridging this gap, literary education would reinforce inferiority; such cultural control necessarily meant a suppression of the creativity and intellectual traditions of those who were to be schooled in English literature. Macaulay’s remark that a single shelf of European literature was worth all the books of India and Arabia is notorious but not unique. It is true that Orientalists defended some indigenous works, such as the ancient cultural artefacts and literary texts of India, but they did so at the explicit expenses of contemporary works of art—thus indigenous intellectual production was either completely disparaged (as in Africa) or seen as an attribute of hoary past (as in India). Whether or not they were granted a cultural heritage of their own, colonised societies were seen as unworthy of developing on independent lines.

*Masks of Conquest* by Gauri Viswanathan is divided into seven chapters which systematically deal with the Beginning of English in India, Rewriting English, Lessons of History, The Failure of English, Empire and the Western canon and other. She begins her argument with the implication of charter act which lay in the commitment enjoyed upon
England to undertake the education of native subjects, a responsibility with a goal of “civilizing the natives” and promote the ‘interests and happiness’ of the natives and the measures ought to be adopted “as may tend to introduction among them of useful knowledge and religion and moral improvement”\(^5\). And other social political resource as well as rewriting English, lessons of history, the failure of English Empire.

According to Elleke Boehmer in the far corners of the Empire, the new Brighton’s and new London’s, the British introduce their language, methods of town planning upholstery, cuisine, ways of dress, which were behind, as a matter of course, to be superior to other, cultural forms. Under the British Empire hybrids such as fools, architectural styles, railway buildings and colleges were presented as peculiarly a part of British colonial culture, safely adapted for use by the English, or more specially, in the case of the architecture, set up as an expression of British imperial magnitude and expertise. Colonialist narratives participated in and reflected this imperial self-observation, perhaps more prominently so than did other colonial writings, such as travellers tale. In this way, therefore, as well as stimulating imperial fantasy, British colonialist helped sanction and supervise- if anxiously, the demarcation of imperial power. Narrative presented a world in which British rule was accepted as a part of the order of things: the native were governed as they should be; the Queen Empress was on her throne; there was no question that her people occupied a central place in history, British meanings and values are paramount. Everything of worth in the Empire, necessarily, was said to be British made.
British involvement in India began as early as the 16th century, most notably through the East India Company. The initial trading for spices and textiles can be seen as a part of Britain’s first major phase of imperial expansion. Clive of India’s victory at Plassey in 1757, is generally taken as the moment from which British rule in India can be measured, previously, Calcutta had been taken by the Nawab Siraj-ud-daula. Clive retook the city and defeated him at Plassey, gaining immense property, revenue and asserting British domination in the area. But at this point British cultural interference was minimal: so long as revenue was paid to the British, Muslim nawabs and Hindu Princes retained the trapping of their accustomed lifestyle. Very few Indian learnt English and there was no formal education for this. Effective British rule was, however, only possible because of the large number of Orientalists, who joined and were trained by the Company. With the help of local scribes, linguists and priests, they were able to master the indigenous languages. Their interests were wide, covering law, literature, religion, indeed the whole spectrum of Indian culture. It is possible to see the British acquisition of India as paralleled by the acquisition of a range of Indian art and culture and gathering and collating of ‘knowledge’ about indigenous customs.

After the suppression of the Indian Mutiny of 1857, British rule became more lightly controlled. In 1858 the East India Company was abolished and India placed directly under the authority of the Crown. In 1876 Queen Victoria was declared “Empress of India”, colleges were established where instruction in English was compulsory and the
curriculum European. The reason for this decision can be traced back to Thomas B. Macaulay’s 1835 ‘Minute on Education’:

All parties seems to be agreed on one point, that the dialects commonly spoken among the natives of this past of Indian contain neither literary nor scientific information, and are more over, so rude that, until they are enriched with some quarter, it will not be possible to translate any valuable work into them... I am quite ready to take Oriental learning at the valuation of the Orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who would deny that a single self of a good European library was worth a whole native literature of India and Arabia... We must at present do our best to form a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.6

Crucially, the establishment of these colleges led to the creation of an English educated and predominantly Hindu, elite, who would critical of both their own religious orthodoxies, such as caste system and child brides, and of a British rule. Most importantly, a British style education linked Indian writers to literary traditions of the West, as well as their native culture.

Colonialism is now defined by the OED as ‘an alleged policy of exploitation of backward or weak peoples by a large power. In postcolonial studies it has a clear pejorative meaning, being synonymous with oppression, inequality, racism, and exploitation. Colonialism is not merely the political control of Asian, African or South American (the three continents which became 'colonies' of European powers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) regions. It is the context in and
through which non-European cultures and knowledge were destroyed, modified, or 'disciplined' by colonial rulers. Colonialism cannot be seen merely as a political or economic 'condition': it was a powerful cultural and epistemological conquest of the native populations. The Europeans acquired knowledge over native cultures through translations, commentaries, and academic study before either destroying it or modifying native systems of thinking.

A good example of the cultural dimension of colonialism would be the role of the English in India. Colonial administrators such as Warren Hastings and T.B. Macaulay; academic scholars like William Jones and commentators such as James Mill first studied Indian languages (especially Sanskrit and Persian) by translating texts from these languages into English or undertaking studies of Indian law, religion, or arts. In the second stage they announced that these Indian texts and cultures were primitive, irrelevant, and completely out of date. With such knowledge systems, they argued, India could never progress. From this second moment emerged the third. In the third moment they substituted English as the medium of instruction, as the language of knowledge itself. Arguing that English and European culture alone could ensure equality, liberty, development, and 'modernization', colonial administrators installed English. The colonial encounter hinged upon a racial encounter, where the European and non-European races met. The nineteenth century, the heyday of European empires, was also the period of formulation of race theories. Science, medicine, anthropology, and other disciplines formalized theories of race that justified imperial
presence "in Asian and African lands. Such theories postulated and 'proved' that the non-European races occupied the lower end of the scale of human development ('development' being measured through parameters created by and in Europe). The native races were primitive, child-like, effeminate, irrational, irreligious (since 'pagan' religion was deemed to be no religion at all), criminal, and unreliable. Since the native race could not take care of itself, it must be taken care of by the European. This process of racializing enabled and justified European colonial presence in Asia and Africa.

Colonialism thus has three central features:

1. The governance of these non-European places by European administrators and rulers (through economic, political, and military modes),

2. The study of non-European cultures by European academics, scholars, and scientists (in anthropology, literature, 'area studies'),

3. The slow transformation of native societies (through missionary work, English/European education systems, European modes of bureaucracy).

‘Imperialism’ is a term that is often used in conjunction with or, less accurately, as a synonym for 'colonialism'. Imperialism is also the rule by a European nation of a non-European one. However, imperialism often refers to the practice of governance through 'remote control', often without actual settlement in the non-European spaces. It means that a metropolitan European or American power controls activities (financial, military, political, and cultural) in Asian, African, or South American
nations. It is driven by the ideology of expansion of state power. To adapt a favourite phrasing from postcolonial writers, the European/ American 'capital' at the centre control Asian/African/South American nations at the periphery. Imperialism continues the colonial practice of domination but without the actual 'settlement' by the dominating masters/races.

This key difference of random settlement and governance (colonialism) versus deliberate, ideology-driven control (imperialism)-means that imperialism can be analyzed as a concept and colonialism as the practice of this concept. If colonialism was driven by the need to create another living space (hence 'settlement', as in the case of the United States of America and Australia), imperialism was driven by the need to acquire greater wealth. It is important to note that colonization, even as late as the nineteenth century, was rarely organized. It was random, driven by commercial, evangelical, or emotional needs (freedom to practice religious beliefs, to acquire wealth). Imperialism, on the other hand, was a more deliberate, mercenary expansion of European power into non-European spaces. What needs to be kept in mind is that not all imperial powers worked in the same way. There are considerable differences between French and British imperialisms in the nineteenth century, and in the American imperialism of the twentieth. Political independence-a process often described as 'decolonization' for non-European nations made them 'postcolonial' in the temporal sense. This is an important clue as to the nature of imperialism itself. Political control may have moved from the Europeans to the natives.
Economically, however, the native population is still controlled by the European power.

The postcolonial writer has displaced, questioned, and often rejected the European's approach to native spaces and people. The retelling underscores the discriminatory and exploitative relationship that existed between the European and the native. Further, by subtle shifts of power relations in their rewritings, postcolonial authors demonstrate the need and hope for a more just world. Decanonization seeks to reveal the biases-racial, colonial, class, patriarchal-of ‘great’ European texts. It locates the 'great tradition' firmly within the context of slavery, colonialism, and exploitative geopolitics. Finally, it reverses the master-slave relationships in a symbolic move towards a more equalized relation between Europe and the ‘Third World’.

The idea is not to merely encourage cultural relativism ('we are all different, but we are all the same'). A reform-oriented multicultural decanonization involves a more detailed knowledge of minority history and culture that translates directly into modes of reducing their alienation in literature classrooms and the academic system. That is, the canon must not only reflect cultural diversity but ensure that the larger system enables minority students to have better opportunities. This links decanonization with the economy.

Knowledge is socially produced, and socially disseminated, and therefore there is a politics of knowledge: who produces, controls, disseminates it, and about whom? Since studying literature is about studying issues about women, minorities, others—all political issues too—
cannot be studied apolitically, or without an awareness of the process of canonization, inclusion, and representation. Simple inclusion of more and more texts is not the solution to the problems of curricula, and it is impossible to make any course truly, representative and comprehensively multicultural anyway. It must, in Gerald Graff's phrase, teach the conflicts. Curricula that seek to provide a picture of India or identify 'Indianness', for instance, must embody an anxiety about what is being excluded from the picture: Dalits, women, queers, minorities. It must emphasize the fact that these categories are constructed and represented in essentialist terms for particular purposes. Contextual criticism that emphasizes historical conditions and a radically theorized methodology will highlight the 'conflicts'. Reading canonical and marginalized texts—or traditional and 'counter traditional' texts—together would highlight the conflicts and the processes of exclusion that mark knowledge-systems and canons. Race and ethnicity, tribalism and primitivism, are constructs, not 'natural' states of being. Curricula, like critical multiculturalism, must generate debates about: the historical relations of these groups with each other; the power relations among cultures; and their shifting locations within 'India'.

Language and empires have always gone together. Colonization, requiring legal, social, and political control, is also an archivization project, to document, disseminate, and formulate rules, information, and policies. Elio Antonio de Nebrija says: “Language has always been the consort of empire, and forever shall remain its mate. Together they came into being, together they grow and flower”.7
Colonialism's drive to generate its own vocabulary and command and evacuate non-European languages of signification in official transactions means that the natives were forced to speak the language of the colonizer. England itself has seen the domination of Latin since the Romans, and Latin continued to be the language of prestige, power, and scholarship. Thus English suffered colonization by Latin during the early phase. It must also be kept in mind that there were languages and literatures in England well before English: Old English, Norse, Welsh, Latin, and Irish-Gaelic among others. English suppressed Celtic, Welsh, Cornish (of which there are about 300 speakers today), and Gaelic on its route to domination of the islands.

The English Education Act of William Bentinck in 1835 followed Macaulay’s minute which required the native of India to submit the study of English literature, irrevocably altering the direction of Indian education. The English course of studies was kept separate from the course of Oriental study and was attended by a different set of students. From an administrative point of view educational policy follows secularism strictly. Native literature was translated into secular terms, classical humanism assured protection of the integrity of native learning but the entry of Missionaries into India brought a new role for English literary study to bring a purpose of a high degree of mental and moral cultivation. According to Missionary argument to a man in a state of ignorance of moral law literature was patently indifferent to virtue. The Sunday school movement, which grows out of Evangelical involvement with the uplift of the lower classes, attempted to inspire
devotional feelings in young through tracts written in a language that emulated the simplicity and directness of the Bible. Missionary supported a pedagogical emphasis on the moral and intellectual improvement of mankind.

One of the most relentless critics of British secular pedagogy was the Scottish Missionary Alexander Duff, who also ran his own school in Calcutta. His educational theory and practice focuses on urgency of moral and religious instruction. On arriving in Calcutta, he was appalled to find that the other denominations spent most of their energies teaching and preaching in the native languages to the masses, a practice that appeared to him to have minimal impact on religious and caste sentiment and seemed utterly to vitiate the efficacy of Missionary labour. The practice seemed even more ludicrous in light of the fact that among the more respectable classes of the community there was a growing desire for acquiring knowledge of the English language, even if it was solely purposes of securing Government positions. He opened a school, distributed free books and made it one of the most successful institutions in the city. For that he struggles with Church of Scotland, administrations as well as religious leaders of India. Though Duff conceded that students at institutions like these scorned forms of Hindu worship, lived like European, and conducted themselves well as public officers, he remained convinced that while their immersion in Western ideas caused them to turn their back on their own religion, they had grown increasingly hostile to all religions, as well as including
Christianity, “as soon as [the Indians] become first-rate Europeans scholars they, “must cease to be Hindoos.”

Duff expressed serious reservations about the secular education given at government colleges and went ahead with plans to set up alternative Christian schools, he divided his classes to cover a wide range of literary instructions, beginning with the alphabet and extending to the most advanced courses of literature. Works of authors such as Bacon Locke, Reid Dugald Stewart were included and the Bible remained the single most important source and text. The reading of the Bible was followed by comment, illustrative example, and amplification.

The course of studies in English public schools was designed to foster leadership qualities required of governing elite: independent thinking, strong sense of personal identity, and ability to make decision on one’s own authority. Making men leaders also meant that they had to be marked off from the rest of society and in British education this was achieved through social discrimination and markedly stratified schooling system. As the educational historian T.W. Bamford observes, “it is not generally realized how effective social or hierarchical gulfs can be in promoting leadership and acceptance of decision”. 

Though the curriculum design by Arnold was meant for ruling elite but until the second half of the nineteenth century Indian could not occupy government posts higher than clerks and lower subordinates, they had neither the independence nor the opportunity to lead. This situation followed by frustration, rebel and raises so many question about Arnoldian curriculum. As a result literary curriculum in British
educational establishments remained polarized around classical studies for the upper classes and religious studies for the lower. Charles Grant who was one of the first Englishmen to urge the promotion of both Western literature and Christianity in Indian also criticizes the caste system, idol worship, polytheism, and propitiatory rites are all condemned in the most conventional term, grants revulsion from the polytheistic caste society of Hinduism grew a conviction that there must be one single moral code - “one power, one mind”- governing society. He argues,

> On the moral level the existence of many Gods implies choice in whom to worship, the consequence bring that “he who makes a God for himself will certainly contrive to receive from him an indulgence for his corrupt propensities.”

His ideas of “one power, one mind” encapsulated related ideas of cultural hegemony, ethical absolutism, centralized authoring, and submission to an overarching law governing all individuals without which Western knowledge was deprived of all transformative effects. British presence in India as well as introduction of English was considered, as the reason of moral good and happiness. The new ideas obtained by the study of English literature will undoubtedly weaken, if not destroy, superstitious prejudices; but, on the other hand, the knowledge thus attained tends to produce a supercilious pride and skepticism unless leavened with a large amount of Christian teaching, and this, in the present state of things, it is impossible to give. As long as Indian remained unaware of the connection between the diffusion of
knowledge and instruction in Christian principles, the government was content to form a blind eye to religious instruction. But if they were ever to become suspicious, as one cautious observer remarked,

[A]ll efforts on their ignorance would be as vigorously resisted as if they were on their own religion. The only effect of introducing Christianity into the schools would be to sound the alarm and to warn the Brahmins of the approaching danger.¹²

The safest solutions was to keep Indians at the level of children, innocent and unsuspecting of the meaning of their instruction, for once enlightened, there was no predicting how hostile they would turn toward those who were educating them. The stereotypical representation of Indians as children is implicit in this characterization, which attributes missionary success in arousing Indian curiosity in Christianity to the literary mode of parables and storytelling in the Bible. Narrative, plot, event, and character were pinpointed as literary techniques that immediately arrested the student’s attention, conveying theological messages more effectively than strictly doctrinal approach. The style of preaching also tended to follow a literary structure and took on literary characteristics both of the Western tradition (with “lightning flash of metaphor,” “convictive parallelism of analogy,” and “instructive imagery of parabolic illustration.”) and the native modes of storytelling recitation, and singing. Furthermore, the successful adaptation of preaching style to literary modes encouraged similar explorations in a lighter and free style of tract literature.
At its height the British Empire was a vast communications network, a global sprawl of hubris, the world map flushed pink. It was pictured as a machine and yet also as a muddle; it was the Royal Navy and Queen Victoria, and the One Race and One Flag. But it was also represented by texts. Present-day readers, anyway, experience Empire textually, through the medium of nineteenth and twentieth-century novels and periodicals, travel writings, scraps of doggerel. Yet empire was itself, at least in part, a textual exercise. The colonial officer filing a report on affairs in his district, British readers of newspapers and advertisements of the day, administrators who consulted Islamic and Hindu sacred texts to establish a legal system for British India: they too understood colonization by way of text. The Empire in its heyday was conceived and maintained in an array of writing – political treatises, diaries, acts and edicts, administrative records and gazetteers, missionaries’ reports, notebooks, memoirs, popular verse, government briefs, letters ‘home’ and letters back to settlers. Colonial settlement too was expressed textually. Writing in the form of treaties was used to claim territory. The text, a vehicle of imperial authority and in diary descriptions of new lands, or by carving their initials on tees and stone tablets, colonists declared their intention to make a home, to begin a new history. Often the effect of their descriptions was to erase, either wholly or in part, the signs of other lives which had unfolded in that particular space. As we see, for simple, in late eighteenth-century British India, in the transcription of the Islamic Sharia and the Hindu Shastra’s, writing served also as an instrument of rule, as a means of collecting information
and exercising power. The blending of ancient religious laws and what was seen as modern, scientific knowledge was taken to be the most effective way of administering India.

An assumption that stands at the head of the present study is this with the onset of European migration and colonization; people experienced an intense need to create new worlds out of old stories. On few other occasions in human history did so many encounters such diversity of geography and culture in so short a time span. It was necessary to give that diversity conceptual shape: to use known rhetorical figures to translate the inarticulate. To decipher unfamiliar spaces - what were to all intents and purposes airy nothings -travellers and colonizers relied on and scattered about them the stock descriptions and authoritative symbols that lay to hand. They transferred familiar metaphors, which they themselves already bridging devices, which carry meaning across, to unfamiliar and unlikely contexts. Strangeness was made comprehensible by using everyday names, dependable textual conventions, both rhetorical and syntactic.

From the early days of colonization, therefore, not only texts in general, but literature, broadly defined, underpinned efforts to interpret other lands-offering home audiences a way of thinking about exploration, Western conquest, national valour, new colonial acquisitions. Travellers, traders, administrators, settlers, 'read' the strange and new by drawing on familiar books such as the Bible or Pilgrim's Progress. Empires were of course as powerfully shaped by
military conflict, the unprecedented displacement of peoples, and the quest for profits.

The study of English has always been a densely political and cultural phenomenon, a practice in which language and literature have both been called into the service of profound and embracing nationalism. The development of English as a privileged academic subject in nineteenth-century Britain - finally confirmed by its inclusion in the syllabuses of Oxford and Cambridge, and re-affirmed in the 1921 Newbolt Report - came about as part of an attempt to replace the Classics at the heart of the intellectual enterprise of nineteenth-century, humanistic studies. From the beginning; proponents of English as a discipline linked its methodology to that of the Classics, with its emphasis on scholarship, philology, and historical study—the fixing of texts in historical time and the perpetual search for the determinants of a single, unified, and agreed meaning.

The historical moment which saw the emergence of 'English' as an academic discipline also produced the nineteenth-century colonial form of imperialism. Gauri Viswanathan has presented strong arguments for relating the 'institutionalization and subsequent valorisation of English literary study [to] a shape and an ideological content developed in the colonial context', and specifically as it developed in India, where British colonial administrators, provoked by missionaries on the one hand and fears of native insubordination on the other, discovered an ally in English literature to support them in maintaining control of the natives under the guise of a liberal education. ¹³
Bill Ashcroft et al argued that the study of English and ‘the growth of Empire proceeded from a single ideological climate and that the development of the one is intrinsically bound up with the development of the other, both at the level of simple utility (as propaganda for instance) and at the unconscious level, where it leads to the naturalizing of constructed values (e.g. civilization, humanity, etc.) which, conversely, established ‘savagery’, ‘native’, ‘primitive’, as their antitheses and as the object of a reforming zeal. A ‘privileging norm’ was enthroned at the heart of the formation of English Studies as a template for the denial of the value of the ‘peripheral’, the ‘marginal’, the ‘uncanonized’. Literature was made as central to the cultural enterprise of Empire as the monarchy was to its political formation. So when elements of the periphery and margin threatened the exclusive claims of the centre they were rapidly incorporated. This was a process, in Edward Said's terms, of conscious affiliation proceeding under the guise of filiations, that is, a mimicry of the centre proceeding from a desire not only to be accepted but to be adopted and absorbed. It caused those from the periphery to immerse themselves in the imported culture, denying their origins in an attempt to become more English than the English.

One of the main features of imperial oppression is control over language. The imperial education system installs a ‘standard’ version of the metropolitan language as the norm, and marginalizes all ‘variants’ as impurities. Language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which
conceptions of ‘truth’, ‘order’, and ‘reality’ becomes established. Such power is rejected, in the emergence of an effective post-colonial voice. For this reason, the discussion of post-colonial writing which follows is largely a discussion of the process by which the language, with its power, and the writing, with its signification of authority, has been wrested from the dominant European culture.

In order to focus on the complex ways in which the English language has been used in these societies, and to indicate their own sense of difference, we distinguish in this account between the 'standard' British English inherited from the empire and the English which the language has become is post-colonial countries. Though British imperialism resulted in the spread of a language, English, across the globe, the English of Jamaicans is not the English of Canadians, Maoris, or Kenyans. We need to distinguish between what is proposed as a standard code, English (the language of the erstwhile imperial centre), and the linguistic code, English, which has been transformed and subverted into several distinctive varieties throughout the world. For this reason the distinction between English and English will be used throughout our text as an indication of the various ways in which the language has been employed by different linguistic communities in the post-colonial world.

The use of these terms asserts the fact that a continuum exists between the various linguistic practices which constitute English usage in the modern world. Although linguistically the links between English and the various post-colonial Englishes in use today can be seen as
unbroken, the political reality is that English sets itself apart from all other 'lesser' variants and so demands to be interrogated about its claim to this special status. In practice the history of this distinction between English and English has been between the claims of a powerful 'centre' and a multitude of intersecting usages designated as 'peripheries'. The language of these 'peripheries' was shaped by an oppressive discourse of power. Yet they have been the site of some of the most exciting and innovative literatures of the modern period and this has, at least in part, been the result of the energies uncovered by the political tension between the idea of a normative code and a variety of regional usages.

In teaching natives to place social duty above self interest, religious and moral values were established as prerequisites for admitting Indians to public office. “Can he be trusted with money?” was inevitably the first question asked before appointing a native Indian to a responsible office, and countless examples were drawn from Indian literature to show that the native culture was deficient in fostering the qualities necessary for public service. Two complementing arguments directly linked public employment with and religious education. On the one hand, if Indians of integrity and honesty were to occupy public office, the moral base of Indian education first had to be suitably developed to provide the appropriate training. But at the same time, the only real way of improving the colonial subjects was not simply by providing education, but employing them in duties of trust and responsibility. In short, public employment offered reinforcement of the theoretical instruction in morality given in school. If a theory of
education was to be a theory of government in the making, the application of abstract principles acquired in schooling was indispensable in order that they not merely remained a “mixed mass of ideas” floating in the mind, but were selectively acted upon by the learner in his response to the demands of state.

Not only then did British educational ideology set maximum advantages from the employment of morally trained men for those who ran the country, but such employment was impressed upon the general public as beneficial so its own moral character. The importance of English literature for this process could not be exaggerated; as the source of moral values for correct behaviour and action, it represented a convenient replacement for the direct religious instruction that was forbidden by law. In as much as the missionaries were gratified by the government’s recognition of the need for moral instruction, they must surely have been dismayed to see that the government interest lay less in Christianizing the “natives” then in preparing them for participation in the work of empire. After all, the missionaries’ chief native in pointing to the shared features of Christianity and English literature was to draw attention to the fact that a subject already included in the Indian curriculum was a vest repository of Christian values, so where was the harm in teaching the Bible as well? The government listened keenly to the first half of the argument and promptly ignored the second. A discipline that was originally introduced in India primarily to convey the mechanics of languages was thus transformed in to an instrument for
ensuring industriousness, efficiency, trustworthiness, and compliance in native subjects.

Grants formulaic “one power, one mind” appealed to two interchangeable levels of meaning, the case for monotheism applying equally to that of centralized rule. Offensive to British religious sensibility on one level, Hindu polytheism threatened British political interests on another in its dispersal of authority in multiple figures and in its opposition to centralization in any form. The culturally unambiguous text, the transparent text that draws attention to itself as the voice of authority, expresses its truths by displacing others, which are then designated as falsehoods. The culturally ambiguous or unassertive text, on the other hand, makes no claims for authority or truth. Its contents are not presented as assertions of truth but as ideas developed in the crucible of history, which alone has the power to test the relative applicability of ideas to contexts other than those from which they derived. Christianity and Hinduism are opposed, they are part of a single continuum of development, and their apparent differences the effect of historical change and movement. Concepts like absolute truth have no place in the relativized domain of history, where there is only formation process, and flux.

The disassociation performed by Charles Cameron is less a denial of Christian influence in European literature than a rewriting of Christianity as empirical knowledge. The dual tension in the content of Christian instruction did not go unnoticed by colonial subjects. Though educated young Indians had few objections to studying the life of Christ,
they were violently hostile to particular doctrines of Christianity, especially revelation and grace on the evidence of college debates, essays, and literary contests at Hindu college for instance, it is apparent that students were quite adopt in querying the conflicting purposes of the instruction given them. If Christianity were truly a religion based on, evidence and history as projected, many asked, why did confirmation in that religion depend entirely on accepting two central doctrines that demanded faith rather then the exercise of reason? Many of the debates held at Hindu college revolved around the paradox of Christianity being structured on the markedly from other religions that were informed by either one or the principle.

In any event, the view that discrimination is possible only when absolute standards are available assumes an individual mind emptied of all personal identity, culture, and history, a mind reduced to passivity and acquiescence. British colonial administrators were more astute in recognizing the absurdity of such assumptions at least for the purposes of achieving success, in their educational goals of political control and assimilation. The British perception of the relativisation of moral value as a powerful means of ensuring intellectual control over the native population was also a major concern of Gauri Viswanathan in *Masks of Conquest*.

During 1920s translations of Indian Mythological text was took place. Horace Wilson’s translations of Kalidas, the *Rig-Vedas* and his editions of Sanskrit grammar and Hindu Law earned him a wide reputation. Henry Prinsep and Nathaniel Halhed also gain the respect
from public service combined with scholarship in Sanskrit grammar. William Carney compare Hindu epic the *Mahabharata* to Homer, he also criticizes orient conceptions of truth, sacred knowledge and blindness toward the immense cultural position of the learned classes specially Maulvis and Pandits, as interpreters and simply teachers of the sacred texts, the positions of Maulvis and Pandits adversely affected the traditional respect for learning in India and in turn prevented young Indians from deriving tangible benefits from Western education. Horace Wilson continued to insist that the learned classes hostility had been aroused less by the introduction of English than by the termination of funds supporting Arabic and Sanskrit. Indian holds the cultural value and importance of Indian classical language and never influenced by the superiority of Western culture and its advances. In 1860s the English classical curriculum remained the centre of a raging controversy on whether “training of the mind” was compatible with “useful knowledge” when it was a cry for reform of orient learning.

The British objection to the Hindu epics the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* rested on the claim that they pretend to do history, whereas Western literature had no such pretension and made a clear distinction between works of imagination and records of history. The supposed blurring of historical and mythical consciousness in Indian literature, contributing to its falsehoods and inaccuracies, was the chief point of attack by two of the most celebrated critics oriental art, James Mill and Hegel Mill who refused to accept these sacred text as history and allegory as some oriental scholars did, the argued that these texts
forestalled such advance by replacing precision of observation with sense of mythic wonder and by celebrating events solely for the pleasure of the emotions, thus encouraging exaggeration above accuracy. The social values that *Shankutala* celebrates are associated with superstition, extravagant belief, and arbitrary will appeared to prove James Mill’s point. He interpreted exaggeration in art as a reflection of inconsistencies in the laws and institutions of the society from which it springs and for which it is intended. But *Ramanayana* and the *Mahabharata* were regarded as problematic works and not readily assimilable as texts for instruction in Indian school and colleges in British India were as Bible is used as important text in schools and colleges. On the other hand William Jones had proclaimed Kalidas the Shakespeare of India and took the translation of *Shakuntala*.

The Orientalists continued to insist that European learning should make its own way instead of being forced on the people through the single channel of English instructions. The relative success of missionaries in providing modern instruction through the vernaculars encouraged Orientalists to believe that the truths of European or English literature and science would be better received “by the effect of conviction alone” that by withdrawing all support to the oriental systems of learning in order to make way for the European caught in a hopelessly untenable position, the Orientalists were pressured in to the realization that the only justifiable grounds for the teaching of oriental literature were the political. Sensing the possibilities of maneuvering around their opponents by appealing to their strategic interests, a group of
Orientalists responding to James Mills 1824 dispatch, refocused the issue by questioning the political wisdom of an educational policy that directed the learner to truth by blocking out error. Anglicism was especially vulnerable to the charge of depriving Indians of familiarity with their own system of learning. Not a few Anglicists were actually aware of the liability of a policy that dulled colonial subjects into passive acceptance of their rulers’ culture without adequately fortifying them against “errors” in their own tradition.

The imprecision of Indian literature was not only represented as aesthetically repugnant to human sensibility, but also deemed to be politically treacherous. A history of perfidy and calumny was painted as the legacy of oriental historical accounts and their exaggerations seen as a devious strategy of early writers to falsify obscure, and mystify events in order to conceal their own violence, injustice, and usurpation of power. Indian historical literature was depicted as entirely constituted by narratives of royal personages and royal pastimes that deliberately avoided showing the operations of power or the bearing of political and other events on the conditions of the people. Elliott and Dowson’s *History of India as Told by its Own Historians* (1867) employed as unique method to expose Indian “pretension” to literary or historical truth. As the title suggests, the authors deliberately present historical narratives written by Indians in order to show that in Indian histories “there is little enabling us to observe the practical operation of a despotic government and rigorous and sanguinary laws and the effect upon the great body of the nation of these injurious influences and
The act of reading and writing true history and true literature was, in effect, identified with an act of demystification to dislodge those who, under the cover of misty romances and allegories, had installed and perpetuated their rule over the people, though India provided an ideal selling for English culture. The structure of Indian society, its multiple languages and multiple religious, eliminated some of the chief difficulties for British people. Even vernaculars for the lower castes and the classical languages of Arabic, Sanskrit and Persian minimized the possibilities of one language ever achieving the status of a common language for all the population. Linguistic stratification of classes permitted English high culture to maintain purity, respect, standard and control over formal education. Secular conceptions of literature only relocate the cultural value and history. English literature serve for intellectual and linguistic production but it also helped in survival of English culture, secularization reintroduced a classical emphasis in English studies, strengthening and endorsing the legitimacy ad authority of British institutions, laws, and government. The large number of histories written by Englishmen that were part of the literature curriculum in Indian schools and colleges no doubt performed the same function, which was essentially analytic in nature. Among the histories of India prescribed for study were Marshman’s *History of Bengal and History of India*, Murray’s *History of India*, with readings from *Mill and Other Authors*, and Henry Morris *History of India*.
Gandhi claimed that Europeans tended to look for deeper significances in Hindu custom and practices, which were then invariably equated with the obscene:

> It has remained for our Western visitors to acquaint us with the obscenity of many practices which we have hitherto innocently indulged in. It was in a missionary book that I first learnt that Shivalingam (a Hindu phallic symbol) had any obscene significance at all and even now when I see a Shivalingam neither the shape nor the association in which I see it suggests any obscenity. It was again in a missionary book that I learnt that the temples in Orissa were disfigured with obscenities. When I went to Puri, it was not without an effort that I was able to see those things. But I do know that the thousands who flock to temple know nothing about the obscenity surrounding this figures.15

An important aspect of Gandhi’s observation is the name of separating fact from legend; British readings had introduced a literalism that was paradoxically allegorical in effect, for it assumed that sign had to have a meaning, whereas for Hindus this was not necessarily true. In the presumed absence of comparable objects of admiration in their own history and literature, Indian youth were seen as pitifully doomed to a perpetual state degradation. But it was a degradation that was portrayed as decidedly not intrinsic to their character but the result of despotic rule. If the Indian was made aware of the cause of his debasement, there was every likely hood that he would seek release from the bonds of a tyrannical system. British education was not seeking to assimilate Indians to the European model by urging them to cast aside their Indian identity and removing them from their native “base” state, as Christian
instruction attempted. Rather, the suggestion is that English education
was designed, in a Platonist sense, to awaken the colonial subjects to a
memory of their innate character, corrupted as it had become, again in a
Platonist sense, through the feudalistic character of oriental society.
Indians must naturally aspire as a spontaneous expression of self, a state
in which the British rulers won a figurative place as Platonic Guardians.
The educated Indians were taken back to a transcendental ideal such as
implied in the missionary scheme of instruction for Indian youth. But
John Murdoch realized that, with profound implications for curricular
selection Indian students required an active intellectual disposition
capable of comparative distinctions.

English education, fighting to stave off the appearance of imposing
an Indian culture on native society, gained subtle redefinition as an
instrument of authenticity. As historical consciousness was intended to
bring the Indian in touch with himself, recovering his true essence and
identity from the degradation to which it had become subject through
native despotism. Far from alienating the Indian from his own culture,
background, and traditions, English education gained the image of being
an agency for restoring Indian youth, to an essential self and, in turn,
reinserting him in to the course of Western civilization. From the 1820s
to the mid 1850s English literary studies had a predominately religious
and moral function in the Indian curriculum. But by 1857, when the
Indian university system was formally instituted on the pattern of
London University, the moral motive had begun to wear thin and
cultured and moral value no longer claimed a common identity or goal.
Ironically, this development occurred during a period when the moral motive was slowly gaining ground in English studies in England. English studies in England continued to be permeated by rhetoric of national identity and moral purpose despite experience of frustration associated with the Indian educational experiment for the moral elevation of Indians. The problems was not that the experiment was unsuccessful but that indeed it was too successful, for in combating priestly authority and popular superstition the transmission of Western learning and culture inevitably signified the transmission of ideas of moral autonomy, self sufficiency, and unencumbered will that cursed more problems for British rule than anticipated. The Sanskritist Monier Monier-Williams, for example, complained, that English literary study unduly filled the minds of Indians with thoughts of rising above what he called their assigned position in life. He warned that in training Indians in the art of self expression and self scrutiny, English education had taken on a subversive role: “those who are unsuccessful in gaining appointments will not turn to manual labour, but remain discontented members of society and enemies of our government, converting the little real education they have received in to an instrument to injure us by taking treason and writing seditious articles in native journals”.

The moral motive, which brought English literature in to the Indian curriculum in the first pace reinforce nations of social duty, obligation, and service to the state, is designed from English studies as a result of British apprehensions that their Indian subjects were being encouraged to rise above their stations in the name of self improvement.
and so challenge the authority of the ruling power. The humanistic ideal of education as moral and intellectual elevation is drastically revised to fit conception of education that goes as far back as Plato, which sought to confirm individuals in the social class in to which they were born. English education was so closely associated with Christian instruction in the institution receiving government patronage that of least one native covert was known to have said that the best missionary institutions are the government schools. The blending of political with moral consideration was Macaulay’s justification for reforms. He supported parliamentary reform less for its own sake than because of the dangers inherent in withholding it. Macaulay’s minute paved the way for the transition from religious to secular motives of English education. By mid-century pedagogy of English Christian morality changed to pedagogy of worldly knowledge to the various occupations of life, secularization and law commission in 1862 made law a civil institution and separated its professional study from religion in order to break priestly monopoly in legal studies. The liability of English education that William Adam, author of the comprehensive report on education in Bengal, had warned of as early as 1835 when he wrote, “[The Indians] have been raised out of one class of society without having a recognized place in any other class”. 

The highest position that educated young men could aspire to was the meager paying one of copying clerk, a position that required the mechanical copying of English without understanding. Without honor or reward, these meager employment prospects were adversely affecting
the traditional India reverence for education and the self esteem that usually accompanied it. The elevation of circumstances that English instruction had promised was slowly being eroded, as the 1882 Education Commission reported, by

\[\text{[T]he narrow circle of (the Indians) life; the absence of facile ties for travel, where by his sympathies and experience might be enlarged; the strong temptation to lay aside his studies...all help to dwarf the moral and intellectual growth, and to foster those faults.}\]^{18}

Ironically Orientalism, which ostensibly aimed to protect the native culture from total oblivion, sharpened the lines of stratification wherever there flourished institution of oriental learning these happened also to be the highest illiteracy and the finniest number of vernacular school, as recorded by British officials. The effects of Orientalist policy are visible in the history of Sanskrit college, which was established in 1823 after the founding of Hindu College. Intended to teach primarily the English language and literature, Hindu College was open to boys of all classes and castes on the payment of five rupees per month, whereas Sanskrit College, which was established for the exclusive of Sanskrit literature, was open to Brahmins, who got a monthly stipend to study grammar general literature, rhetoric and prosody, law, arithmetic, and theology.

The earliest evolvement of British in Indian education was the abolition of caste feeling, but actual practice was opposite, it aimed at conciliating the Brahmins. Government institutions had admission of upper ranks of Indian society and missionary schools mixture of lower castes. The presence of two separate institutions, the government and the
missionary schools, tended to reinforce caste distinctions and gave the impression that there were two castes in education, with the Brahmins attending the regular orthodox colleges of the government and the lower castes the missionary institutions.

The divisions between Hindus and Muslims grew even wider with state education in 1854, which put the finishing stroke to the influence of the Muslims as the former ruling group in India. British accounts observed that Hindus to seize opportunities offered by state education more than Muslims did. By 1871 only 92 Muslims to 681 Hindus held gazetted appointments in lower Bengal, a province that a hundred years earlier had been officered by few Englishmen, a sprinkling of Hindus, and a multitude of Muslims. The interpolation of imperial culture, and the appropriation and transformation of dominant forms of representation for the purposes of self determination, focus with greatest intensity in the function of language. Those writers who do write in English have used it as a cultural vehicle, a medium through which a world audience could be introduced to features of culturally diverse post-colonial societies. But, as we have seen, the use of colonial languages has opened up a long-running and unresolved argument. According to the Indian linguist Braj Kachru, English has been widely accepted as a lingua franca in India because of its relatively ‘neutral’ nature, since its effects in everyday use are far less inflammatory than those stemming from the contention between one and another minority language.¹⁹
Underlying the dispute over the most effective form of discursive resistance is the question: Can one use the language or imperialism without being inescapably contaminated by an imperial world view? It is a question which continues to provoke argument, because it is ineluctably rooted in real political conflict. Martinican Edouard Glissant, for instance, says:

There are . . . no languages or language spoken in Martinique, neither Creole nor French, that have been ‘naturally’ developed by and for us. Martinicans because of our experience of collective, proclaimed, denied, or seized responsibility at all levels. The official language, French, is not the people's language. This is why we, the elite, speak it so correctly. The language of the people, Creole, is not the language of the nation.20

Although framed in terms of class, Glissant’s observation alerts us to the frequency with which a particular use of language can be conflated with the language itself. What makes a language a ‘people’s language’? It lies in the facts of its origin, its ‘invention’, or in the particular conditions of its use? The extent to which either French or Creole will be the language of the people depends largely on how it is used as much as upon how widely it is used and by whom. An alien language, by Glissant’s definition, appears to be one that has not been ‘naturally’ developed as a function of the experience of the colonized. But when we look at the ways in which colonial languages are often developed and used as a vehicle of local experience, it is often hard to imagine any language more ‘naturalized’.
A similar confusion is suggested in Fanon’s assertion in *Black Skin, White Masks* that,

To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture. The Antilles Negro who wants to be white will be the whiter as he gains greater mastery of the cultural tool that language is.\(^{21}\)

The key to this astute perception is the term ‘take on’. For there can be no doubt that a colonial language gives access to authority and a perception or a certain form of social being. But this access is not gained as a feature of the language itself, through a process by which the speaker absorbs, unavoidably, the culture from which the language emerges. This new, comprador identity comes about through the act of speaking itself, the act of self-assertion involved in using the language of the colonizer. This seems a small point but it is crucial because the speaking *need not necessarily* make the speaker ‘more white’. The language is a tool which has meaning according to the way in which it is used. This is, of course, a key to the importance of language as cultural capital. Proficiency in the language does not exclude the capacity to use in a way that ‘localizes’ it.

The implication of view of resistance is that colonial discourse is so all-powerful in its effect on the colonial subject that it must be avoided at all costs. Such a view might find support in postmodern definitions of subjectivity which see the subject 'interpellated' by ideology, constructed by discourse or language, a site for the operation of power, in other words, a subject for whom acts of 'free' will are already determined to some degree by the context of the action. But the discovery of
what colonized people actually do in their encounter with colonial discourse leads us to a very different theory of subjectivity than we find in post-structuralism. The question of subjectivity lies at the heart of any exploration of political and cultural resistance, and the postmodern rejection of Enlightenment notions of selfhood is a particularly significant issue for colonial subjects. The development of influential theories of subject construction by ideology, discourse and language in the work of Althusser, Foucault and Lacan seems to provide very effective models for the construction of colonial subjects by a dominant imperial culture. But their practical weaknesses, which stem from a difficulty in accounting for the subject's ability to act as an agent, to contravene the subject-forming power, become exposed by the experience of colonized people. This remains the continuing tension surrounding all discussion of human subjectivity, for while theories of the ways in which human subjectivity is 'constructed' are formidable and persuasive; they have difficulty accounting for the apparent recalcitrance of such subjects in taking action which seems to confirm their liberatory power, their capacity to act as agents.

When we examine the major theories of subject formation we see why they appear to offer such attractive models for the operation of colonial power. For Althusser, ideology is not just a case of the powerful imposing their ideas on the weak, as Marxian ideas of 'false consciousness' would suggest; subjects are 'born into' ideology, they find subjectivity within the expectations of their parents and their society, and they endorse it because it provides a sense of identity and social
meaning through structures such as language, social codes and conventions. Imperialism has been supremely effective in disseminating cultural technologies which 'call forth' subjects in a particular way. The range of cultural allusions and references, the assumptions and knowledge invoked in the putatively 'universal' study of literature interpellates students, very deeply and subtly, into a colonial subjectivity. In Gauri Viswanathan's explanation of the invention of English literature for the civilizing mission in India, she points out:

The strategy of locating authority in these texts all but effaced the sordid history of colonialist expropriation, material exploitation, and class and race oppression behind European world dominance ...the English literary text functioned as a surrogate Englishman in his highest and most perfect state.22

The Englishman was at the same time the embodiment of universal human values. This strategy proved a particularly effective one because the discourse of English literature was disseminated with its attendant spiritual values, cultural assumptions, social discriminations, racial prejudices and humanistic values more or less intact. Although Viswanathan also talks in Masks of Conquest about how individual Indians resisted such cultural dominance, her exploration of the hegemonic power of English literature has seemed, to many, to reveal a fundamental problem in all studies of colonial discourse. The analysis of its capacity to form imperial subjects generally leaves little room for discussion of the ways in which such discourse was engaged. Because of its influential nature Viswanathan’s thesis has become a pivotal point of contention over the implied passivity of colonial subjects. Since its
publication, a greater stress on the material practices of colonial communities has led to a closer questioning of colonial discourse theory. As Leela Gandhi puts it, while ‘accounts of colonial pedagogy are consistently sensitive to the intentions of colonial administrators, they remain oblivious to the complex and complicating reception of the English text in the colonial world’. 23 Much more attention needs to be paid to the consumption of colonial discourse, consumption which very often contradicted the intentions of administrators. ‘Rather than being the passive objects of an authoritarian and alien pedagogy,’ says Gandhi, 'Indian readers remained obdurately selective in their response to the English syllabus’. 24 Cultural consumption reveals itself to be much more than the ingestion of a programme of indoctrination: it invariably emerged as a particular kind of use. Acts of consumption and redirection have represented some of the most subtle forms of ‘resistance’ in colonial life.

Perhaps the best example of the use of colonial discourse theory is Said's theory of Orientalism. According to Said, the knowledge and reality created by the various Orientalist disciplines produce a discourse, ‘whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it’. 25 By means of this discourse, Said argues, Western cultural institutions are responsible for the creation of those 'others', the Orientals, whose very difference from the Occident helps establish that binary opposition by which Europe's own identity and cultural dominance can be shaped. The underpinning of such a demarcation is a line between the Orient and the Occident which
is ‘less a fact of nature than it is a fact of human production’. Although Said's use of Foucault was determinedly partial and opportunistic, the criticisms levelled at his formulation are similar to those that might be directed at an Althusserian theory of the interpellation: the analysis all seems to be directed in one way. There is no analysis of the self perception of the ‘Oriental’, neither analysis of the fragmentary and contradictory nature nor of the 'resistibility' of imperial ideology, and little perception of how the subject might engage its dominance.

When we consider the Lacanian theory of the subject formed within language, we discover a powerful model for the operation of an imperial language. Lacan's view that the unconscious is structured like a language, and that the subject itself is produced through language in the same way that language produces meaning, has proved extremely attractive to those pondering the formation of the colonial subject. Though the subject may speak, he or she does so only in terms which the laws of language allow. In particular, the final phase through which the subject is developed, the Symbolic phase, in which the subject enters the Symbolic order, learns language, discovers that the locus of power is now located in the 'phallus', discovers the Law of the Father and obtains an understanding of gender, is most useful as a metaphor of the subject's 'entry' into imperial language.

If we were to follow Lacan's model strictly we might say that on entering the symbolic order of imperial language the colonial subject is both produced in language and subjected to the laws of the symbolic which pre-exist it. The laws of language are themselves metonymic the
cultural complex of laws and rules and conventions into which the subject moves and obtains identity. Of course, this model is only metaphoric, because the colonized subject has usually already learned a language when he or she enters the 'symbolic order' of imperial language. But when we consider the pedagogic formation of the colonized child in attending colonial schools and learning the colonial language, we see a process in which hegemony, ideology, interpellation and language all come together in a powerful instance of subject formation. Indisputably, language is grounded in a particular cultural reality. It provides the terms by which reality may be constituted, it provides the names by which the world may be ‘known’. Its system of values, representations and discriminations becomes the system upon which social, economic and political discourse is grounded. But whether these are incontestable acquisitions made by, or forced on, the colonial language learner, whether the language learner can make cultural distinctions between languages, is the real question at the heart of the considerable dispute over the efficacy of writing in English. To claim that language can hold the minds of the colonized captive, as Ngugi does when he exhorts the decolonisation of the mind, is to deny the very capacity for resistance that his own writing invokes. Yet, when we see the considerable cultural ethnography that a writer in English can produce, we see that the writing subject can be used as an ideal model for the subject's engagement with a dominant discourse.

The importance of language in identity construction occurs at both the personal and cultural levels, and its prominence in post-colonial,
writing gives us a particular insight into the dialectical nature of subjectivity. For if the subject is produced by ideology, discourse or language, is it trapped in this subjectivity beyond the power of choice, recognition or resistance? Fanon refers to the interpellating power of colonialism in its fight ‘to maintain the identity of the image it has of the Algerian and the depreciated image that the Algerian has of himself’. 27 But in the conclusion to Black Skin, White Masks he rhetorically proclaims an almost Cartesian agency for the colonized subject: ‘I am my own foundation. And it is by going beyond the historical, instrumental hypothesis that I will initiate the cycle of my freedom’. 28 Yet how this declaration of independence is to be effected forms the basis of the most intransigent argument in post-colonial politics. The ‘historical, instrumental hypothesis’ is the representation of the dominated by the dominant. How does the colonized subject ‘go beyond’ that representation? Is it by rejecting the dominant discourse or by appropriating it that the ‘cycle of freedom’ may be initiated?

The alternative to a passive subject unable to escape the formative pressures of imperial ideology is a subject who consumes the dominant culture in a strategy of self-fashioning and self-representation. The active engagement of the subject with a powerful ideology such as imperialism, which ‘calls forth’ imperial subjects, can be seen in the subject’s use of the imperial language, which, in different situations all over the world, provides the means for the organization of resistance. Far from operating as the agent of oppression as it does for Ngugi, the colonial language has invariably made collective action possible. But
such activity occurs also in the colonial subject's consumption of colonial discourse. The very ground of the transformative work of cultural representation is the appropriation (or 'consumption') of the colonial discourse of literature, historical narrative, a global system of book publishing and distribution and, in a sense, a global readership.

The term ‘cultural capital’ may prove useful in understanding the subtleties and the resistance function of such consumption. In their analysis of pedagogic communication, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (1977), Bourdieu and Passeron made the discovery that students' achievement was a simple result neither of pedagogic communication nor of academic ability but depended very much upon the possession of linguistic and cultural capital that they obtained, principally, from their families and their social class.

An educational system based on a traditional type of pedagogy can fulfil its function of inculcation only so long as it addresses itself to students equipped with the linguistic and cultural capital- and the capacity to invest it profitably - which the system presupposes and consecrates without ever expressly demanding it and without methodologically transmitting it. This capital is conceived by Bourdieu and Passeron as a product of the 'habitus' of the student: the manner in which each lives out his or her life through a series of repetitive actions and choices which operate according to certain inherent or recursive rules. This idea of the 'habitus' becomes useful in defining the ways in which notions of place are constructed, In terms of educational achievement, which may be conceived as a process of socialization and the acquisition of
professional status, the cultural capital associated with one's habitus is crucial, and is something that the teaching process 'presupposes'. But more importantly, perhaps, cultural capital is a negotiable commodity which may be acquired, just as linguistic capital - the increasing emulation of the teacher's language - is acquired through education. Significantly, the acquisition of cultural capital is not necessarily a formal component of the education process, but rather a social by-product. Its function in the socialization process (that is, the ability of the student to play a game with unwritten rules, and consequently to use the game to his or her advantage) is crucial.

From this it becomes clear why the concept of cultural capital is so useful for theorizing individual agency in a 'hegemonic' situation such as colonial occupation. For whereas many theories of (or at least assumptions about) imperial power tend to see the position of the 'powerless' colonial subject as one of almost passive victimage, it is clear that individuals are almost always able to operate within the framework of the dominant discourse to their own advantage. They do this by acquiring the cultural capital the colonizing power presents to them as dominant. We see numerous examples of this acquisition of imperial culture by colonial elites - study in Oxbridge, academic distinction, a knowledge of and familiarity with high culture, often including a propensity to quote Shakespeare - a capital which is then transmuted into anti-colonial struggles (most of the founding fathers of independent post-colonial states were educated at metropolitan centres). Significantly, this is an operation of sometimes quite selective
consumption, in which the cultural product (such as various prominent authors in the canon of English literature) may become transformed in the process. For instance, not only do Indian readers respond selectively to the English syllabus, as Leela Gandhi suggests, but canonical authors may also be appropriated to Indian cultural mores, whether for enjoyment or training, in the selective ways in which Indian readers responded to the English syllabus.\textsuperscript{30} Crucially, the cultural capital is not acquired formally, but is acquired during the socialization associated with, but not limited to, formal education. Students acquire a habitus by internalizing the cultural principles learned during teaching so that they may be perpetuated and reproduced. Although the acquisition, by colonial elites, of the capital invested in high culture are the most obvious and also the most politically ambivalent example of this process - since it may suggest that cultural capital has no other function than creating elites who follow in the footsteps of the masters - the acquisition of cultural capital occurs, at all social levels.

While the availability of a dominant imperial or global culture as 'capital' appears to marginalize traditional culture, it may enable that traditional culture to take sometimes radical and exploratory forms. We see this particularly in the application of various technologies to cultural ceremony and ritual. Just as cultural capital operates powerfully in terms of class, according to Bourdieu and Passeron's investigation, allowing mobility between classes despite its function to articulate class distinction.
Elleke Boehmer argues as is well known, the Victorians had a genius for fashioning moral ideals which matched their economic needs: they stapled duty on to interest, Christianity on to profit. Enterprise, it was believed, would secure the happiness, prosperity, and salvation of dark tribes sunk in barbarism. In 1835 Macaulay strongly supported giving a European education to Indians because of the attendant benefits of encouraging 'civilized' behaviour and hence profitable trade among former 'savages'. The missionary David Livingstone justified his work in Africa by appeal to the 'two pioneers of civilization', Commerce and Christianity.

In G. A. Henty's *With Clive in India* (1884), Charlie Marryat, one day to be captain in the East India Company, observes that everyone who went to India made fortunes. While allowing for the layering of imperial ideologies, the centrality of the wealth-making drive is hard to miss in most arguments for empire. Prosperity, material improvement, treasure: as the Romans and Spaniards well knew, these were the most desirable prizes of expansion. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, it was to the profit motive that Britain might attribute its position at the centre of a world economy. The Empire had become a great complicated web of economic exchange and flow of goods and money. As Kipling suggestively described it in his poem 'The Song of the English' (1893), Britain had built for itself an industrial loom spanning the globe, in which the shuttles flying to and fro were the ships of the British merchant marine.
Theories regarding the determinative primacy and consistency of capital's drive for colonies have been vigorously debated. Financial interest, the British Liberal J. A. Hobson wrote at the start of the twentieth century, tended to govern the forces of colonial expansion, even where these were generated by groups with mixed motives, such as politicians or philanthropists. The 'motor-power' of imperialism may have been provided by sectional interests, but its 'governor' was the struggle for profitable markets. Indeed, touched in some way by the benefits and luxuries of the Empire, many Victorians believed that possessing colonies promoted British industry and improved the value of life.

The greed of empire may have assumed a particularly virulent form in the later nineteenth century, yet as far back as early settlement in North America, colonization had been marked by rationalizations imbuing wealth-making with virtue. The industry of colonizers was said to grant legitimate ownership of the land they worked. This thinking would later find its way into racist justifications of white rule. In the late seventeenth century, in his Second Treatise of Government (1690), John Locke argued that 'subduing or cultivating the earth, and having dominion... are joined together'. For Livingstone a century and a half later, the ideology of work remained persuasive. Versions of such thought, both sophisticated and crude, combining motive (wealth) and justification (civilization), were used to give colonial masters virtually unbounded rights over the lands and subjects they claimed. In his South African travelogue, Anthony Trollope showed himself to be a convinced
proponent of the creed that 'labour only can civilize'. Where religion, philanthropy, and liberal ideas had failed, work on European lines was the only salvation for African people living in 'idleness and dependence on the work of women [sic]'. Especially during the period of formal imperialism, the goal of 'civilizing the natives' through profitable work and/or Christian rule became ubiquitous as an argument in favour of colonization. Edwin Arnold, who differed from many in regarding Indians as 'civilized', none the less saw imperial rule as a task of improvement committed 'by Providence to the English race'. Economic and moral arguments in favour of setting people to work in the colonies operated with mutually justifying force. Even conscripted labour and indenture could be defended as benefiting both lands and pagan souls. In the post-slave trade essay 'The Nigger Question' (1849), Thomas Carlyle, too, took for granted that labour was improving, and if invested in land created rights of proprietorship. For this reason, he stated, it was within the rights of the white man in possession to compel the black man to work 'his' land.

Given the great size of the Empire, motives as widespread as those of prosperity and civilization were mediated in different ways depending on context, time, and circumstance. Commercial interests, for example, who had prepared the way for scientific and geographic exploration, were in their turn supported by the technological developments which exploration encouraged. By the time of Captain James Cook's voyages in the second half of the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment interest in classifying the world had itself developed
into a strong incitement for exploration. The Empire and the development of colonies also provided means of ensuring social stability at home. It was not only that an imperial patriotism projected class hostilities beyond the borders of the nation. Colonies also encouraged emigration and so provided an answer to Malthusian anxieties about population increase. In the past, Trollope observed baldly in Australia, Britain 'took distant spots on the globe from foreign nations' to gain in power, or because 'wealth was to be obtained for ourselves at home, and' wealth deducted from our enemies abroad'. Now it was rather the case that 'new hives [were] wanted for new swarms'. Imagery such as this had remained compelling across the century.

And with the passing of time, the Empire developed its own forms of self-validation. Being in charge had created a momentum, encouraged by a widely pervasive sense of imperial rightness. The Empire had come to seem inevitable, a benign force of fate. By definition, any extension of British influence would widen the skirts of light, would increase the total quantity of good in the world. Whether resist colonial authority were always vulnerable to containment. Writers sought the freedom to name the world for themselves. Yet how were they to legitimate this search? Any effort by colonials to alter dominant terms, to claim independent nationhood, to Trans value negative identities, to forge a sense of self, would either be forbidden, as subversion, or adapted to the dominant idiom, and so neutralized.

Britons critical of colonialism, it was said earlier, seemed doomed to repeating the colonialist attitudes of the past. Yet for native or
colonized opponents of empire, too, an ironic reiteration was the order of the day. The main difference, clearly, was that in their case the repetition of Europe's political and cultural vocabularies was a response even more closely hedged around with contradiction. Paradoxically, most decolonizing movements were predicated upon cultural narratives they simultaneously sought to deconstruct the narratives, that is, of European humanism, secularization, internationalism, and also modernization or 'improvement'. Seeking self representation, colonial nationalists incorporated Europe's ideals of subjectivity, progress, and independence, and its rhetoric of rights. It was an incorporation that could appear, on the surface anyway, to undermine the validity of their own fledgling struggles for autonomy.

Not only ideologically, but in many other respects, the world of the middle-class colonized was dominated by empire. The rituals of public life, the languages of instruction and commerce, the legal procedures to which people had access, their means of self-advancement, all these were colonial, which meant that the superiority of the European was taken for granted throughout. More, resistance and identity movements gave expression to the largely imaginary identities that Europe in the process of colonization had attributed to others- the images, say, of Africans as impassioned singers and craftsmen, or of Indians as ascetic seers. The Indian National Congress at first petitioned for no more than greater Indian participation in the civil and military services of the Raj, and in the lower ranks of European business, changes which, where accepted, simply preserved colonial hierarchies.
Though, as Benedict Anderson has argued, nationalism may have found its real efflorescence on the colonial periphery, even the nationalist ideals which colonized peoples used to claim independence were often first received in forms communicated by Europe. Ashis Nandy has rightly commented that: “the West’ was ‘everywhere, within the West and outside: in structures and in minds’.

As is the case for postcolonial critics like Frantz Fanon, and Ngugi wa Thiong’o, the colonialist consciousness or ‘mental colonization’ of nationalist elites is usually attributed to the colonial education they received. In the colonies as at home, English-language and literature instruction played a key role in naturalizing British values, the groundwork for an English-based education in the colonies had been laid in nineteenth century India, in response to Thomas Babington Macaulay's influential 'Minute on Education' of 1835. By the early twentieth century, students across the Empire were being instructed as to the world excellence of English literature and western systems of rationality, and the deficiencies of their own. Thus the knowledge which made possible the colonized's advance within the colonial system, and which furnished the terms of their protest, acted also to waylay or entrap them.

The emergence of the discipline of English in colonial India, its rootedness in strategies of socio-political control, opens up fresh inquiry into possible implications of empire for current debates on curriculum in general. Now when students and faculty clamour for as broadening of curriculum to include submerged texts of minority and third world
cultures, the knowledge that the discipline of English developed in colonial times would appear likely to strengthen their claims and force their opponents to reconsider the premises of the traditional Eurocentric curriculum. The Eurocentric literary curriculum of the nineteenth century was less a statement of the superiority of the Western tradition than a vital, active instrument of Western hegemony in concert with commercial expansionism and military action.

It goes without saying that the degree to which knowledge of imperialism’s shaping hand in the formation of English studies affects the concept of canon formation depends on willingness to historicize any given curriculum. Of the many possible positions on the curriculum, two modern positions correspond roughly, in their extremity, to the ideological standpoints of the Anglicists and Orientalists of nineteenth century British India. Celebrating the dominant culture as the arbiter of standards, morals, and religious values, the first position insists on the universality of a single set of works, primarily those of its own culture, in an effort to assimilate individuals to a single identity. The other position, which is more relativistic in intent, claims to broaden the curriculum to include the literature of other cultures. But the relative tolerance of the latter position does not negate the possibility that even the most inclusionary curriculum can itself be part of the processes of control. As the history of Orientalist education demonstrates, a curriculum may incorporate the systems of learning of a subordinate population and still be an instrument of hegemonic activity. Indeed the point of departure of this book is its argument that both the Anglicist and
the Orienralist factions were equally complicit with the project of domination, British Indian education having been conceived in India as part and parcel of the act of securing and consolidating power. The acceptance or rejection of other cultures becomes a moot point in the face of the more encompassing motives of discipline and management.

The role of empire in the history of English studies demonstrates conclusively that the main issues in curriculum will remain unaddressed as long as the debate continues to be engaged by appeals to Universalist or relativist value, religious identity or secular pluralism. Until curriculum is studied less as a receptacle of texts than as activity, that is to say, as a vehicle of acquiring and exercising power, descriptions of curricular content in terms of their expression of universal values on the one hand or pluralistic, secular identities on the other are insufficient signifiers of their historical realities. The nineteenth-century Anglicist curriculum of British India is not reducible simply to an expression of cultural power; rather, it served to confer power as well as to fortify British rule against real or imagined threats from a potentially rebellious subject population.

With few exceptions, wherever the Eurocentric curriculum is described in the scholarly literature in terms of Western cultural superiority, there is an underlying assumption that superiority is a measure of dominance. But it is incorrect to assume that the canon is necessarily expressive of the unquestioned political supremacy of a group, for if we refer to the history of conflict between various groups in India-the East India Company and the missionaries, the Parliament and
the East India Company, the Anglicists and the Orientalists. We perceive
that the Western literary canon evolved out of a position of vulnerability,
not of strength. Only through historicization is it position to determine
the degree to which a culturally homogeneous curriculum is the result of
the relative strength or weakness of a governing class; to assess the
extent to which educational measures are either an assertion of
uncontested authority or a mediated response to situational imperatives,
camouflaging acute vulnerability to assaults upon the intention to rule.

The stratified conferring of cultural power on a dominated society
designed to transmute even the faintest traces of mobilized, unified
sentiment against British rule, into internal schisms. The attendant
limitations of such manoeuvres are visible in the incessant pressure on
the British to unsettle the objectives of English instruction at regular
intervals and modulate the tone of Indian education to achieve an ideal
balance between secular and religious policy which, being unattainable
in the long run or at least promising only very limited duration, opened
the way for native interrogation of British ideology. The checkered
history of English studies in India points to the inherent contradictions of
the British socio cultural project that allowed it to fail in its own
(heterogeneous) terms.
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