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## Demonstrating How English Is Used Globally

Brad Kachru identified countries making up what is now known as 'the Inner, Outer and Expanding circles', demonstrating how English is used globally. Kachru also categorised five main countries that show where English is primarily the means of communication. Inner circle English is characterised by the various functions and use when spoken or as a written format. English would be normally used within social and formal practices and across media platforms, but most importantly within education. It is also used primarily as a language within cultural and civic purposes. The outer circle contains countries which may still use numerous other languages, e.g. Nigeria, that were originally colonised by English-speaking countries.

The Outer circle can now be seen to contain countries in which the use of English was not the language of origin, but became vitally accepted as a means of communication. This is evident within social groups and more recently, with the rapid growth of internet access increasingly used in 'popular culture'. English used in a cultural context that has been studied within these post-colonial countries is taken from a vast body of written work or literature grouped together and form what commonly is identified as a canon. A canon is used to denote a 'group of books, and, more widely, music and art, that has been influential in shaping Western culture' therefore, a canon implies authority to works it includes.

Popular or respected literary work usually deals with what people are most interested in, this interest gives credibility as to whether work is canonised. While the text of a literary work does not change over time, greater understanding can be interpreted from it by its readers and attention paid to a literary work may change. As people's thoughts and experiences alter, usually due to political or religious motivation, written material can often be excluded which can bring changes to 'discourse analysis'. Over time, literary canons will reflect these changes, works may be added or removed from the canon. Resulting in changes that allow other literary canons to also develop as a direct result and challenging cultural viewpoints of what is usually western-led literature.

English literature is conveyed to readers obviously using the English language some of the writers that have contributed to the canon may not be essentially from England; as an example, Joseph Conrad was originally Polish and John Steinbeck was American. English literature can also provide numerous differences and may use dialects which are now commonly spoken globally. Despite the variety of writers that have provided additions to the canon of English literature, work by the English playwright, William Shakespeare constantly remain authoritative to scholars throughout the English-speaking world. Seen as an 'exemplary canonical figure of English Literature'.

The canon of Shakespeare is considered some of the most expertly written and beautifully poetic throughout the history of literature. In addition to its quality of work freely available, Shakespeare is revered for an ability portraying themes of human experience in a timeless way that has continued relevancy long after his death. An overwhelming influence on literature and the English language has been so significant it is important to have an understanding of Shakespeare to be able to fully comprehend the modern world. Shakespeare's unique style of analysing the infinite gamut of human emotions in a profound but accessible verse is probably

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the greatest reason for its still enduring popularity.

Shakespeare's plays were an exemplary part of English literature that typically characterised British culture. This seemingly innocent aspiration promoting a more westernised sensibility led to British colonialism taking the vast array of work and using it to provide a sense of superiority when promoting against a natural culture embedded within the country of origin being 'Universalised'. Across the subcontinent, Indian literature during the nineteenth century was led by its religious and cultural identity that was part of everyday life and in turn, owed much to its Hindu heritage. While its religious legacy was characterised by its various languages this was seen by the British as a weakness due to the misunderstood complexity in its literary and linguistic diversity.

Cultural advancement when promoting the English language using its literary canon was seen as a passive way of development within its empirical colonies. Arising from the domineering process of the 'Hegemony of English' upon its imperialist subjects it also brought a direct threat to linguistic diversity that had a negative effect on countries that it came into contact with. This lack of diversity created a dividing class system that was in total contrast to the unifying desirability of using the English canon to provide education and a stronger cultural identity. English became a process in which an educated minority could attack the systems that sought to domicile their cultural practices.

Within Anglophile Africa, education of the upper classes brought stagnation within their own cultural languages that in turn led to a cultural movement that attacked the colonial ideas which sought to subdue their own native ideologies. As the colonial drift across India and much of Africa stopped after the mid-twentieth century, this led a reawakening by the oppressed peoples of their own literary ideas allowing them to re-examine themselves by utilising English to achieve two objectives. Firstly, casting off the shroud of imperialism it allowed writers to gain a sense of origin and provided a crucial step toward the 'cultural emancipation of Africa'. These creative processes also allowed a greater body of work to flourish while exposing the subtle tensions created by the use of the English canon while promoting the start of their own literary canons that have become recognised worldwide.

Nigerian author Chinua Achebe showed in his first novel distortion of Africa present in English canonical literature. His novel *Things Fall Apart* Achebe shows a character trait regarding the native African people that previous texts did not cover. For that reason, Achebe's text made a transformation in representing Africa and Africans with its publication. In addition, it was crucially important while uncovering and showing the world that there was already a rich, textured literary heritage within Africa. Achebe was introduced to English canonical literature at University as part of his English Literature course. After reading canonical writers such as Shakespeare, Achebe realised and identified the distortion of African figures within these stories. From this understanding, the reader may see from these texts that Africans should have the freedom to write their own literature using their own 'distinctive African English'.

*Season of Migration to the North* by the Sudanese writer Tayeb Salih also shows another aspect of the realism of British colonialism seen through the experiences of its two central characters, and of his own educational experiences. They both represent two generations of the new European-educated Sudanese class through the period of pre-war domination by the British and into the early years of self-rule. The experiences of Salih himself who was an educated Sudanese from a humble rural background who went to England to study and then

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returned to Sudan as part of the new ruling class that Britain believed was the cultural way forward and a positive example of colonialism. He appeared to be the model Sudanese citizen, perhaps an embodiment of the 'new Sudan' the independent republic which was declared in 1956 in which he served as an official. However, his own unnamed narrator indirectly alludes to his education as wasted as he 'spent three years delving into the life of an obscure English poet'. As a result, his education indicates that using English can actually develop inequalities that it was originally used to alleviate.

One of the most exciting features in English literature is an explosion of postcolonial literature written in English based in formerly colonised societies. This has given rise to a range of theoretical ideas, concepts, problems, and debates, such as the anti-colonial stance of author Ngugi Wa Thiong'o 'that gradually eroded pride and confidence in my language' and these have been addressed in a range of literary works in much the same way that was gathering pace across the African continent. Also, postcolonial studies in Indian literature now show a period that witnessed many changes in Indian society. The impact of Western education and industrial developments led to radical changes in society with a greater emphasis put on the processes behind colonisation with attempts made to record a strong resistance to the masters of the colonised societies while insisting on the contemporary realities of racial life.

In much the same way that Africa has a multitude of languages used over the huge area that the English canon was used to subdue, the Indian sub-continent also has a range of different languages that are made complex to the outsider by its religious and social aspects. One common denominator that bonds all of the countries contained in the outer circle together are the lack of a single unifying language. This is what colonial Britain saw as the greatest weakness that confronted any progress towards a higher level of civilisation that stood to be corrected through the use of the British literary canon. However what would be most beguiling to the British then is now being carried out by the Indian Bengali author Jhumpa Lahiri. She found 'The more she mastered English, the further it took her from her ethnic origins'.

The growing and popular genre of literature can often be critical when reviewing the details behind the idea of colonialism that is being formed over recent times. Colonialism, seen from a historical context, refers to foreign occupational control 'made by English speakers'. As stated in the report, by Lahiri completely disregarding using English in which to write her novel learning Italian as a beginner it is possible she is unconsciously providing a statement regarding the final collapse of colonialism of any form on a worldwide basis. Throughout one of her short story collections *Unaccustomed Earth* she actively considers the lives of Bengali American characters and how they deal with their mixed cultural environment while estranged from their Indian homeland. She shows through her characters a sense of migration not just from their cultural roots but how easy people can absently forget their language of heritage.

Using this style of writing, could Lahiri be subconsciously suggesting the failure of colonisation showing readers the negative usage of the canon that was solely utilised to promote a sense of civilisation amongst 'other' lesser countries? This seems to indicate a growing genre of globalisation that is now actively taking place from within a multitude of Englishes that have now filled the world of literature. The newer genres of African and Indian literature that are now widely available are a particularly fashionable addition to the growing canon in English literature by probing themes that affect everyone, the clash between past and present, tradition and modernity. But ultimately the similarities that exist between various foreign cultural heritages and humanity itself.

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What is clearly evident from using the English literary canon on countries that it influenced is the growing positive cultural identities from the Celtic cultures that have been in contact with the English language during the last two hundred years. Welsh poet RS Thomas wrote about the effect that English had on the already established native Welsh language. He strongly believed along with Scottish and Irish Gaelic, the Welsh language influenced and helped to enrich what he called 'the aging body of English literature' with the involvement of its regional writers. Think of James Joyce and Robert Burns who are now firmly in the canon of English writers along with Thomas himself were not English and had to write and publish their work using English just to receive acclaim and are still actively studied.

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