



JAAFR
INTERNATIONAL
RESEARCH JOURNAL

JOURNAL OF ADVANCE AND FUTURE RESEARCH
JAAFR.ORG | ISSN : 2984-889X

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Certificate of Publication

JAAFR | ISSN : 2984-889X

The Board of
JOURNAL OF ADVANCE AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Is hereby awarding this certificate to

DR. SURENDER SINGH

In recognition of the publication of the paper entitled

**Colonial and Postcolonial Writings as Forced Openings: Power and the
Politics of Voice**

Published in Volume 4 Issue 2, February-2026, | Impact Factor: 9.87 by Google Scholar

Co-Authors -

Paper ID - JAAFR2602021



Registration ID - 503228

Editor-In Chief

An International Scholarly Open Access Journals, Peer-Reviewed, & Refereed Journals, AI-Powered Research Tool, Multidisciplinary, Monthly, Online, Print Journal, Indexed Journal

An International Scholarly, Open Access, Multi-disciplinary, Monthly, Indexing in all Major Database & Metadata, Citation Generator

JAAFR - Journal of Advance and Future Research

An International Scholarly, Open Access, Multi-disciplinary, Indexed Journal

Website: www.jaafr.org | Email: editor@jaafr.org | ESTD: 2023



JAAFR
INTERNATIONAL
RESEARCH JOURNAL

JOURNAL OF ADVANCE AND FUTURE RESEARCH

JAAFR.ORG | ISSN : 2984-889X

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Ref No : JAAFR / Vol 4 / Issue 2 / 021

**To,
DR. SURENDER SINGH**

Subject: Publication of paper at JOURNAL OF ADVANCE AND FUTURE RESEARCH.

Dear Author,

With Greetings we are informing you that your paper has been successfully published in the JOURNAL OF ADVANCE AND FUTURE RESEARCH (ISSN: 2984-889X). Following are the details regarding the published paper.

About JAAFR : ISSN Approved - International Scholarly open access, Peer-reviewed, and Refereed Journal, Impact Factor: 9.87, (Calculate by google scholar and Semantic Scholar | AI-Powered Research Tool), Multidisciplinary, Monthly, Online, Print Journal, Indexing in all major database & Metadata, Citation Generator, Digital Object Identifier(DOI)

Registration ID : JAAFR_503228

Paper ID : JAAFR2602021

Title of Paper : Colonial and Postcolonial Writings as Forced Openings: Power and the Politics of Voice

Impact Factor : 9.87 (Calculate by Google Scholar) | License by Creative Common 3.0

DOI :

Published in : Volume 4 | Issue 2 | February-2026

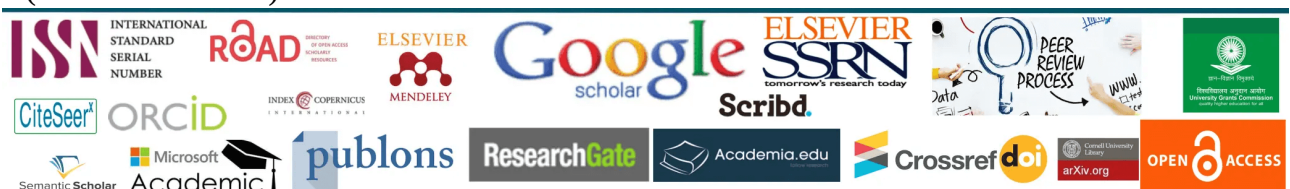
Page No : 197-203

Published URL : <https://rjwave.org/jaafr/viewpaperforall.php?paper=JAAFR2602021>

Authors : DR. SURENDER SINGH

Thank you very much for publishing your article in JAAFR.

Editor In Chief
JOURNAL OF ADVANCE AND FUTURE RESEARCH
(ISSN: 2984-889X)



An International Scholarly, Open Access, Multi-disciplinary, Monthly, Indexing in all Major Database

Manage By: IJPUBLICATION Website: www.jaafr.org | Email ID: editor@jaafr.org



JAAFR
INTERNATIONAL
RESEARCH JOURNAL

JOURNAL OF ADVANCE AND FUTURE RESEARCH

JAAFR.ORG | ISSN : 2984-889X

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL WRITINGS AS FORCED OPENINGS: POWER AND THE POLITICS OF VOICE

DR. SURENDER SINGH

Associate Professor of English

Government College Birohar (Jhajjar) Haryana

Abstract

The Colonialism functioned not merely as a system of political domination or economic exploitation but as a powerful discursive regime that relied heavily on writing to legitimize, normalize, and sustain imperial authority. The Colonial texts—ranging from travel narratives and administrative documents to literary works—operated as mechanisms of what may be described as **forced openings**, whereby colonized lands, cultures, bodies, and epistemologies were compelled into visibility under imperial terms. These openings were neither neutral nor reciprocal; they were violent acts of representation that rendered the colonized as objects of knowledge and governance.

The Postcolonial writing arises from within these ruptures, responding to, resisting, and reconfiguring colonial textual openings. Rather than simply closing the wounds inflicted by colonial discourse, postcolonial texts often reopen them strategically, transforming sites of domination into spaces of critique, hybridity, and reclaimed voice. This paper examines colonial and postcolonial writings as forced openings through a postcolonial theoretical lens, engaging concepts such as Orientalism, hybridity, mimicry, subalternity, and gendered representation. It argues that while colonial writing enforced epistemic and cultural openings in the service of empire, postcolonial writing reclaims and renegotiates these openings as acts of resistance, recovery, and re-imagination.

Keywords: Colonial discourse, Forced openings, Postcolonial writing, Hybridity, Mimicry, Gender, Representation.

Introduction

The Colonialism reshaped the modern world not only through conquest, trade, and administration but through the written word. The Writing became one of the most enduring tools of empire, enabling colonial powers to name, classify, and control colonized territories and peoples. Edward Said famously argues that “the Orient was almost a European invention”,¹ foregrounding how colonial discourse produced knowledge that simultaneously justified domination. Such acts of representation functioned as **forced openings**—processes by which colonized societies were compelled to reveal themselves under the gaze of imperial authority.

These openings were imposed through maps, surveys, censuses, missionary tracts, travelogues, and literary texts, all of which transformed lived cultures into textual artifacts. As Michel Foucault observes, “power produces knowledge”,² and colonial knowledge production was inseparable from imperial power. Colonial writings did not merely describe colonized worlds; they actively constituted them.

The Postcolonial writing emerges as a response to these epistemic violences. Writers from formerly colonized societies confront the legacy of forced openings by rewriting history, reclaiming voice, and destabilizing colonial narratives. Salman Rushdie asserts that “the empire writes back to the centre”,³ signaling a dialogic engagement rather than a simple reversal. This paper explores how colonial and postcolonial writings operate as forced openings, examining their political, cultural, and gendered implications.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive methodology rooted in postcolonial literary criticism and discourse analysis. It undertakes close readings of representative colonial and postcolonial texts while situating them within major theoretical frameworks developed by Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Frantz Fanon, and feminist postcolonial critics.

The research relies on primary literary texts and foundational theoretical works, supported by peer-reviewed secondary criticism. MLA style is used consistently for in-text citations and references. The methodological emphasis lies in tracing patterns of representation, power, and resistance across texts rather than offering historical generalization.

¹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 1.

² Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, trans. Colin Gordon, (Pantheon Books, 1980), 27.

³ Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, (Granta, 1991), 14.

Literature Review

The Postcolonial criticism has consistently highlighted the centrality of discourse in colonial domination. Edward Said's *Orientalism* demonstrates how the West constructed the East as a site of difference, noting that "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction".⁴ Said further argues that colonial knowledge gained authority through repetition and institutional backing.⁵

Frantz Fanon explores the psychological consequences of such discourse, asserting that "the colonized subject is positioned as the absolute other".⁶ He emphasizes that colonial language internalizes inferiority, creating what he calls a "zone of nonbeing".⁷ Homi K. Bhabha complicates the binary logic of colonizer and colonized through hybridity and mimicry. He notes that "colonial authority is never complete"⁸ and that mimicry produces a subject who is "almost the same, but not quite".⁹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's provocative question, "Can the subaltern speak?",¹⁰ exposes the persistent silencing of marginalized voices even within postcolonial discourse.

Feminist scholars such as Anne McClintock argue that "colonialism was a gendered process from the start",¹¹ while Chandra Talpade Mohanty critiques Western feminist texts that represent Third World women as a monolithic oppressed group.¹²

This paper examines colonial and postcolonial writings as dialectical forces within the same historical rupture. Colonial texts initiate forced openings by defining the colonized as knowable, governable subjects. Postcolonial texts exploit those openings to contest, revise, and dismantle colonial authority.

Theoretical Framework: Forced Openings and Colonial Epistemology

The Colonial discourse operates through what Michel Foucault terms "regimes of truth," wherein power produces knowledge that legitimizes itself.¹³ Edward Said extends this insight by arguing that Orientalism constructs the East as "a European invention".¹⁴ This invention is not neutral; it is a forced epistemic opening that subjects colonized societies to foreign interpretive grids. Said notes, "The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting

⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, 2.

⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 6.

⁶ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 82.

⁷ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 102.

⁸ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 112.

⁹ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86.

¹⁰ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, University of Illinois Press, 1988, p. 287.

¹¹ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 5.

¹² Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, edited by Wendy K. Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski, McGraw-Hill, 2012, p. 337.

¹³ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 131.

¹⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, 1.

memories and landscapes”.¹⁵ This imaginative geography transforms lived cultures into textualized objects. The colonized are opened up to scrutiny but denied self-representation.

Frantz Fanon identifies the psychological consequences of this forced opening, observing that “the colonized subject is always presumed guilty”.¹⁶ The Colonial texts encode this presumption, depicting native cultures as stagnant, irrational, or childlike. Such representations create what Fanon calls “epidermalization of inferiority”.¹⁷ Homi K. Bhabha complicates this binary by emphasizing ambivalence. He argues that colonial discourse is never fully stable because it depends on mimicry, which is “almost the same, but not quite”.¹⁸ This instability allows postcolonial writing to inhabit the forced opening and turn it against colonial authority.

Colonial Writings as Instruments of Forced Opening

The colonial literature often presents itself as exploratory, scientific, or civilizational. Texts such as travel narratives, missionary accounts, and colonial novels claim to “open” unknown worlds to European consciousness. Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* exemplifies this paradox. While critical of imperial brutality, Conrad nonetheless portrays Africa as “a place of darkness”.¹⁹

Achebe famously critiques this portrayal, arguing that Conrad “reduces Africa to the role of props for the breakup of one petty European mind”.²⁰ The forced opening here is representational: Africa exists only as a mirror for European anxieties.

Similarly, colonial ethnographies transform living cultures into catalogued data. Said notes that “knowledge of the Orient... created the Orient”.²¹ This creation is not collaborative; it is coercive, silencing indigenous voices while claiming objective authority.

The Colonial language policy further enacts forced openings. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o observes that colonial education “annihilated a people’s belief in their names, their languages, their environment”.²² Language becomes a site where colonial power opens native consciousness to imperial ideology while closing off indigenous expression.

¹⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 1.

¹⁶ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 83.

¹⁷ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 11.

¹⁸ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86.

¹⁹ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Norton, 1988), 28.

²⁰ Chinua Achebe, *An Image of Africa* (Penguin, 1988), 9.

²¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 40.

²² Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: Heinemann, 1986), 3.

Postcolonial Writing as Reclaimed Openings

The Postcolonial literature emerges from within the fissures created by colonial discourse. Rather than rejecting the forced opening, postcolonial writers re-enter it to destabilize its assumptions. Achebe asserts, “The English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience.”²³ This statement reframes the colonial language as a contested space.

Ngũgĩ, however, takes a more radical stance, arguing that “language carries culture, and culture carries... the entire body of values”.²⁴ Writing in indigenous languages becomes an act of closing the colonial opening while opening alternative epistemologies.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak raises the crucial question of representation: “Can the subaltern speak?”²⁵ Her answer is pessimistic, emphasizing how colonial and even postcolonial discourses often reinscribe silencing. Yet this critique itself functions as a forced opening—exposing the limits of postcolonial representation. Aimé Césaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism* violently reverses the colonial gaze. He declares, “Colonization = thingification”.²⁶ Here, postcolonial writing names the violence of forced openings and rehumanizes the colonized subject.

Hybridity, Mimicry, and the Politics of Openings

Bhabha’s concept of hybridity is central to understanding postcolonial texts as negotiated openings. He writes, “Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects”.²⁷ Postcolonial writing repeats colonial language but inflects it with difference.

Salman Rushdie famously describes postcolonial writers as “translated men”.²⁸ Translation here is both loss and gain, a forced opening that enables new literary forms. This hybridity resists purity, destabilizing colonial binaries of civilized/savage, modern/primitive.

Fanon anticipates this when he states, “The colonized intellectual throws himself into frenzied acquisition of the culture of the occupying power”.²⁹ Yet this acquisition eventually turns revolutionary, transforming mimicry into critique.

Gendered Forced Openings and Silenced Voices

The Colonial “forced openings” are profoundly gendered, operating through discursive regimes that simultaneously expose and efface colonized women. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak incisively argues, colonial discourse frequently presumes to speak *for* the subaltern woman, thereby producing a condition of double silencing: first through patriarchal structures within colonized societies, and second through imperial

²³ Chinua Achebe, *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (Heinemann, 1975), 62.

²⁴ Ngũgĩ, *Decolonising the Mind*, 16.

²⁵ Spivak, “*Can the Subaltern Speak?*”, 287.

²⁶ Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 42.

²⁷ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 112.

²⁸ Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* (London: Granta, 1991), 17.

²⁹ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Grove Press, 1963), 222.

modes of representation that overwrite indigenous agency.³⁰ The Colonial narratives surrounding practices such as *sati* are emblematic of this process. Under the guise of humanitarian intervention and moral rescue, imperial authority rearticulated violence as benevolence, displacing the voices of the women ostensibly being saved while consolidating colonial power.

The Postcolonial feminist writers intervene in this epistemic violence by seeking to reclaim narrative authority and re-center marginalized perspectives. Yet Spivak's caution that "the subaltern cannot speak" remains a critical ethical warning rather than a pessimistic closure.³¹ The danger lies not merely in silence, but in forms of speech that remain mediated through elite, metropolitan, or academic frameworks that reproduce the very hierarchies they seek to dismantle. Consequently, postcolonial feminist writing must sustain a rigorous self-reflexivity, interrogating the conditions of its own enunciation. Only by remaining critically attentive to the structural "openings" it inhabits can such writing resist reinscribing domination while striving toward more ethically responsible modes of representation.

Concluding Reflections

The Colonial and postcolonial writings demonstrate that openings are never neutral or innocent textual gestures but deeply politicized acts shaped by asymmetrical relations of power. The forced openings imposed by colonial discourse functioned as mechanisms of epistemic, cultural, and psychological domination, compelling colonized societies to become legible within imperial systems of knowledge. Yet these very openings, though violent in their inception, inadvertently generated fissures within colonial authority—spaces where meaning could slip, resist, and be rearticulated.

The Postcolonial writing inhabits these fissures with strategic intensity, transforming sites of coercive exposure into arenas of negotiation, reinterpretation, and dissent. Rather than seeking a complete closure of colonial wounds, postcolonial texts re-enter and rework the inherited discursive spaces, exposing the instability of colonial narratives while asserting alternative histories and subjectivities. Through hybridity, narrative plurality, and gendered re-voicing, postcolonial literature demonstrates that forced openings can be reclaimed as ethically charged acts of cultural survival. Ultimately, these writings reveal that the struggle over representation is not merely retrospective but ongoing, shaping how identities, memories, and futures are continually contested and reimaged.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the colonial and postcolonial writings must be understood as historically entangled discursive formations rather than sequential or oppositional categories. The Colonial discourse inaugurates a violent aperture through which territories, cultures, and subjectivities are rendered legible to imperial authority. The Postcolonial writing intervenes within this aperture, neither erasing its conditions nor submitting to its logic, but refunctioning its languages, genres, and epistemologies.

³⁰ Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", 297.

³¹ Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", 308.

As Said's formulation of "re-presence" makes clear, postcolonial texts do not recover an uncontaminated origin; instead, they articulate a critical consciousness forged in displacement and contestation.³² Their authority emerges precisely from inhabiting the fractures of colonial history, where memory and power remain in tension. Consequently, postcolonial literature resists closure: it reopens colonial narratives to interrogation, unsettles claims to universality, and exposes the persistence of imperial structures in the present.

The relationship between colonial imposition and postcolonial response is therefore not resolved but continuously renegotiated. Within this unfinished dialogue, literature becomes a site where historical violence is neither forgotten nor finalized, but persistently reimaged as a condition for ethical and political critique across global cultural contexts today. Homi K. Bhabha aptly concludes "**It is from these in-between spaces that the strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—emerge.**"³³

Works Cited

- Achebe, Chinua. *An Image of Africa*. Penguin, 1988.
- Achebe, Chinua. *Home and Exile*. Oxford UP, 2000.
- Achebe, Chinua. *Morning Yet on Creation Day*. Heinemann, 1975.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.
- Césaire, Aimé. *Discourse on Colonialism*. Monthly Review Press, 1972.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. Norton, 1988.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Grove Press, 1967.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove Press, 1963.
- Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge*. Pantheon, 1980.
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind*. Heinemann, 1986.
- Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands*. Granta, 1991.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. Vintage, 1978.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, U of Illinois P, 1988.
- McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. Routledge, 1995.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Feminist Review*, no. 30, 1988.

³² Said, *Orientalism*, 21.

³³ Homi K. Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994, p. 2.