Resistance and Voice: Colonial Silencing and Postcolonial Reclamation in "*Heart of Darkness*" and "*Things Fall Apart*"

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Abstract

This paper comparatively erodes Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* to interrogate the transformation from colonial subjugation to postcolonial restoration of experiences. Particularly the impressions of illustration, subalternity, and treatise, the work employs qualitative comparative textual analysis to delve into how narrative supremacy shape's African identity in accordance to postcolonial theory. The study revolves around the dehumanization of Africans subjectivity due to enslavement of expansionism. Conversely, *Things Fall Apart* retrieves cultural supremacy by centering African conceptions, incorporating oral traditions, and reconfiguring narrative structure. The occurrences contribute to postcolonial scholarship by integrating narratological analysis with ideological critique in a contrastive framework.

Keywords: Colonialism, Dehumanization, Imperialism, Silencing, European Consciousness, Africans, Social Stratification, Ethics, Cultural Identity, Representation, Exploitation, Supremacy

Introduction

For an extensive period of time, literature has accomplished as an asset for cultural resistance and imperial ideology. European literary masterpieces from the colonial ages often depicted colonized countries through a Eurocentric perspective that propounded imperial power. Contrary to this is postcolonial literature originated revolutionary phenomenon that sought to retrieve stigmatized identities and to challenge colonial distortion. With the objective to explore how narrative voice functioned as an aspect of stifling in colonial discourse and as a tool of resistance in postcolonial writing, this paper contrasts Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness with Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart. This study evaluates how literary visual representation moves from imperial containment to indigenous interpretation by putting these two texts in conversation.

Background of Study

European imperial diversification in Africa was marked in nineteenth century. Colonial narratives frequently delineated Africa as a primitive, inexplicable, and uncivilized period in need of Western intercede. The historical consequences and European consciousness in Africa had been pictured in *Heart of Darkness*, which is publicized in 1899. Inspite of the fact that it had been often seen as a critique of imperial victimization, the work has been criticized for disparaging African subjectivity and reinforcing ethnical hierarchies.

Almost six centuries passed, during decolonization age, the piece *Things Fall Apart* (1958) emerged in response to colonial misrepresentations of Africa. Achebe's work rejuvenated pre-colonial Igbo society with cultural intensity, social stratification, and linguistic richness. Distinctive to Conrad's narrative, Achebe centers African opinions and experiences. This historical difference between the contexts gives the basis for interpretation.

Scope of the Study

Heart of Darkness portrays colonial perspective and *Things Fall Apart* depicts postcolonial perspective to provide comparative interpretation in this paper. It focuses particularly on the narrative voice, illustration of African identities and supremacy, and on the literary utterance of resistance without any emphasis on political concerns or other genres.

Significance of Study

The study is pivotal for various objectives:

- **Theoretical Significance**
  It highlights *voice* as a pivotal analytical category in Postcolonial criticism.

- **Comparative Significance**
  It aims to bind colonial and postcolonial texts within an exclusive analytical framework.

- **Academic Significance**
  It fills research gaps by comprehensively contrasting silencing and restoration of voice.

- **Conceptual Significance**
  It embraces critical reading of expanial texts within contemporary classrooms.

Statement of Problem

Colonial colloquy often demonstrates the colonized individual as unuttered and contingent, mediating indigenous happenings through European narration. In *Heart of Darkness*, Africans are characterized as impressionistical conversely; in *Things Fall Apart* African's individuality had been reinstated via cultural narration and linguistic agency. Regardless of extensive erudition of both works, there is a lack of focused contrastive analysis where voice appears as the central site of ideological trudge and resistance. This gap is addressed by exploring how narrative authority either silences or empowers colonized individuals.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the research is to provide the comparison between both works that how resistance and narrative voice acts in colonial and postcolonial backgrounds.
- To interpret how African identities is formed and arbitrated in *Heart of Darkness*.
- To investigate the methods of silencing within colonial narrative structures.
- To discover how Achebe reorganizes endemic voice and cultural identity.
- To rectify linguistic and narrative procedures of resistance in *Things Fall Apart*.
- To comparatively inspect how narrative authority reflects ideological agency.

Research Questions
- How does Heart of Darkness present Africa and African views?

- What are the methods by which indigenous voices were subjugated or marginalized in colonial discourse?
- How narrative dominance and cultural identity retrieve in Things Fall Apart?
- How does resistance manifest through language, structure, and depiction?
- What doctrinal shifts originate when colonial and postcolonial chronicles are compared?

Limitations and Delimitation of the Study
Delimitation
- The analysis is constrained to these two selected novels.
- It lacks socio-political history rather focuses on literary delineation.
- Postcolonial theory is used as the foremost analytical lens.

Limitations
- Explicative subjectivity is not dominant in qualitative literary inquiry.
- Interdiction of gender roles or feminist postcolonial worldviews.
- Confined generalizability is not reflected in both texts.

Literature Review

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is involved in the deliberation of imperialism, race, and perspective reliability. Early critics applauded modernist technique and intellectual depth of the text. However, later intellectuals shifted the critical focus toward its racial demonstration. Then Chinua Achebe criticized Conrad for brutalizing Africans and denying their dominance. Contrary to this, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* has been largely commended as a foundational postcolonial text that regains African identity and authorial voice. Scholars have examined the ethical reconstruction of Igbo society and its resistance to colonial discourse. While both texts have generated substantial scholarship themselves, however comparative studies often emphasize thematic opposition like savagery versus civilization, light versus darkness.

Recent Studies

Recent studies have approached these texts through diverse lenses; a postcolonial worldview critiques Heart of Darkness by illustrating the constrained subjectivity and denouncing imperialism. Conrad's argumentative framework, presents Marlow as a facilitator, prioritizing European point of views while excluding cultural perspectives. Also, Achebe evokes pre-colonial Igbo life and uses proverbs and group narration to ensure authentic cultural integrity.

Research Gaps

Although extensive research had been made, but still several gaps were there:

Methodological Gaps

Many works are analyzed independently rather than making a comparison of those works. Whereas it is observed as comparative studies relies on thematic counterparts instead of narrative structural interpretation. Some studies thoroughly analyze quietude, mediation, and authorial supremacy as measurable textual procedures. Postcolonial theory demonstrates the confined absorption of narrative theory. This study tackles these methodological gaps by employing a comparative qualitative literal evaluation centered in postcolonial and narrative theory.

Conceptual Gaps

Power is seen as mere visualization rather than that very deficient emphasis is placed on it. Limited investigation of how silence itself operates as a colonial approach. Insuffiency of analytical

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Volume: 4, No:1   **January-March, 2026**

3006

lucidity that how Achebe's storytelling structurally reverses colonial discourse. Impoverished conceptualization in terms of resistance is reflected beyond apparent rebellion.

Theoretical Framework
This research is the part of Postcolonial Theory, especially the works of:
- Edward Said – Concept of Orientalism and digressive authority.
- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak – The query of whether the subaltern can speak or not.
- Homi K. Bhabha – Concepts of hybridity and ambivalence are accentuated.
- Frantz Fanon – Cognitive effects of colonization.

With this sketch, the *Heart of Darkness* is investigated as a colonial narrative to establish European awareness, while *Things Fall Apart* is examined as a postcolonial corrective that reinstates native agency.

Conceptual Framework
The four vital concepts are highlighted in conceptual framework:
- Colonial silencing which is termed as colonized subjects that were dismissed and diminished to objects of characterization.
- Narrative Voice illustrated as position that talks about narratives and forms identities.
- Representation which is the portrayal of identities and different ethnics within literary colloquy.
- The refurbishment of agency, identity, and ethical jurisdiction through counter-narrative is characterized as postcolonial reclamation.

Analytical Framework
The analytical framework provides textual analysis with the help of theoretical and conceptual groundwork. The study reflects:
- Narrative Structure which deals with "Who speaks?", "Who restrains outlook?"
- Character Voice is also analyzed as "Do African characters speak directly?" and "Are they individualized or generalized?"
- Language and Imagery is used to characterize Africa along with proximity of native idioms and proverbs.

By employing this framework contrastively to *Heart of Darkness* and *Things Fall Apart*, the work demonstrates how narrative form itself.

Research Methodology
This part sketches the research design, instrumentation, sampling techniques, and ways of data collection applied to investigate the colonial stifling and postcolonial restoration in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.

Research Design
This research works on a qualitative, comparative and interpretive research design.

Nature of the Study
The research is categorized to be qualitative because of its underpinning of meanings, illustrations, and storytelling methods rather than numerical data in quantitative. It is interpretivist in propensity, assuring that literary texts build reality through discourse. It is comparative that methodically analyzes both texts from colonial and postcolonial contexts.

Justification of Research Design
The topic focuses on abstract variables such as voice, silencing, resistance and narrative authority which are primarily required in interpretive analysis rather than verifiable quantification.

Research Instruments (Tools and Items)
In literary research, the central "instrument" is the researcher's inquisitive substructure, conducted by theory.

Primary Tool: Close Textual Analysis
Close reading is used to benchmark patterns of narration, evaluate dialogue distribution, analyze imagery and metaphor, and outline happenings of silence or narrative absence. Categories of Analysis were derived from narrative position, voice dissemination, silence and erasure, and language and representation. These categories are acquired from the theoretical framework of Said, Spivak, Bhabha, Fanon, enforcing speculative alignment.

Population
The comprehensive populations comprised of expansionism and identity had been tackled by colonial and postcolonial texts.

Sample
The selected sample includes Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart.*

Sampling Technique
The paper employs purposive sampling. These works were preferred considering:
1. Contrasting ideological viewpoint are mentioned:
   o Colonial narrative by Conrad
   o Postcolonial opposed-narrative by Achebe
2. Terrestrial concerns were highlighted by both narrators.
3. They were constantly placed in crucial conversation.
4. Achebe directly responded to Conrad's demonstration of Africa, making the differentiation substantially and rationally defensible.

Inclusion Criteria
Texts must inscribe colonial centeredness, allow analysis of narrative voice and illustration, delineate African society and acknowledge within postcolonial discourse.

Exclusion Criteria
Texts not directly involve colonial adumbration rather involves non-literary historical documents. Both works lacking narrative focus on Africa.

Data Collection Procedure
Textual Selection
Self-assured editions of both narratives were selected to assure textual dependability.

Theoretical Orientation
Key abstraction from postcolonial theory were pinpointed and effectuated such as Orientalism, Subaltern voice, Hybridity and Colonial cognitive.

Close Reading and Annotation

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Volume: 4, No:1   **January-March, 2026**

3008

Passages were mechanically identified under thematic headings of cases of silence, narrative mediation, direct native speech and ethical endorsement.

Thematic Categorization
With drawn passages were categorized under colonial muffling, narrative agency, cultural resistance and linguistic redemption.

Comparative Analysis
Both texts were examined along to classify structural differences, compare distribution of voice and evaluate ideological emplacement.

Data Analysis
This chapter provides a detailed textual analysis divided into:
- Colonial Analysis (*Heart of Darkness*)
- Postcolonial Analysis (*Things Fall Apart*)
- Comparative Analysis

The investigation is administrated by postcolonial theory, centering on voice distribution, silence, narrative authority and confrontation.

Colonial Analysis: Silencing in *Heart of Darkness*
Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* establishes Africa through European awareness, primarily through Marlow's mediated narration. The framework itself imposes colonial authority.

Africa as Voiceless Space
Frequently cited lines provide description of Africa as:
"The prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us—who could tell?"
Here, Africans are abating to vague sounds. The phrase *"who could tell?"* reveals epistemological ambiguous. Africans are termed as mere objects with incomprehensible noise. This line up with Spivak's concept of the subaltern being defied speech. Similarly, Marlow utters:
"They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces."
The verbs—*howled*, *leaped*, *spun*—animalize African individuals. No person's voice is directed. Instead, they are pictured collaboratively and primitively.

Dehumanization through Imagery
Enslaved Africans are painted by Conrad as:
"Black shadows of disease and starvation."
The usage of "shadow's metaphor" plunders individuality which sketches them as silhouettes. Another conspicuous illustration:
"Nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, were lying confusedly in the greenish gloom."
The reiteration of "shadows" reinforces truancy and therefore silence becomes structural.

Narrative Mediation and Authority
The whole story is filtered through Marlow's point of view. Even Kurtz's African lover is described but never speaks:
"She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent."
She is depersonalized visually but repudiates verbal expression. Conrad allows European characters extended philosophical reflection, but African individuals remain silent or demolished. Thus, colonial silencing operates through arbitrate storytelling, collaborative illustration, absence

of discourse and animalistic pictography. Even when Marlow criticizes imperialism, the narrative authority remains European.

Postcolonial Analysis: Reclamation in *Things Fall Apart*
Reversion of colonial narrative framework is demonstrated in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* by consolidating African vocalization, culture, and philosophical studies.

Preservation of Cultural Voice
Achebe unveils entirety not with continental intrusion but along with autochthonous history:
"Okonkwo was renowned in the nine villages and even beyond."
Colonization allows the occurrences to form identities and embodies African social stratification. Achebe assimilates proverbs:
"Proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are digested."
This search snippet ensures Igbo's philosophy where language becomes culturally rooted rather than externally imposed.

Individualized African Subjectivity
In spite of amalgamated demonstration by Conrad, Achebe tailored characters as:
"Okonkwo governed his ménage with a sturdy hand."
Okonkwo is neither sketch nor abstraction rather he is deliberated as deformed, multiplex, psychologically layered individual.
When colonial missionaries arrive, dialogue becomes central:
"Does the white man understand our custom about land?"
Here, Igbo characters question colonial power. They speak recklessly and reasonable.

Resistance through Narrative Structure
The District Commissioner's perspective appears only shortly at the end:
"The story of this man who had killed a messenger and hanged himself would make interesting reading."
Achebe reveals colonial reductionism. The Commissioner plans to title his book *"The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger."* This ironic closure demonstrates how colonial discourse clarifies intricate African lives into footnotes.

Comparative Analysis
The contrast between the two works unveils their constructional opposition.

Aspect	Heart of Darkness	Things Fall Apart
Narrative Authority	European (Marlow)	Indigenous-centered
African Voice	Fragmented / silent	Dialogic / active
Imagery	Animalistic / shadowy	Cultural / communal
Resistance	Minimal African articulation	Structural reclamation

Textual evidence (Voice as Power)
Both novels represent contrastively as Conrad states:
"Exterminate all the brutes!"
Inspite spoken by Kurtz, Africans are still silent objects of violence.
As Achebe:
"He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart."

Obierika articulates colonial distortion from within African consciousness. Voice becomes resistance. Thus, colonial narrative silences; postcolonial narrative restores.

Discussion and Findings
Striking Findings
It is perceived that Colonial subjugation operates mechanically, not merely ideologically. Conrad critiques interventionism but retains social stratification whereas Achebe reclaims voice through:
- Native proverbs
- Undeviating dialogue
- Cultural explicitness
- Constructional repositioning

Implications and Conclusion
Implications
- Re-assesses the pioneer texts.
- Comprehending narrative authority as political supremacy.
- Appreciating the differentiating postcolonial didactics.
- Expanding methodological amalgamation of narrative theory along with postcolonial criticism.

Conclusion
This paper demonstrates that *Heart of Darkness* establishes Africa through colonial mediation, resulting in structured silencing. Africans emerged as shadows, sounds, and identities without narrative agency. Distinctively, *Things Fall Apart* revives African voice by:
- Concentrating indigenous point of views
- Embodying oral convention
- Individualizing African individuals
- Unveiling colonial misrepresentation

Thus, the relocation from Conrad to Achebe presents a change from silencing to speaking, objectification to subjectivity and sovereign discourse to servile discourse. The contrastive analysis exposes that opposition is not merely insurrection—it is narrative restoration.

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