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Abstract

Rudyard Kipling has been judged as an advocate of imperialism in his novels, particularly in Kim, where he implies the message that the Britishers are the finest race to rule the land they have colonized. He has set his novel in India from the colonial and oriental perspectives. This research article, in general, is a study and analysis on what oriental perspectives Kipling has represented in his description of the land and characterization of the Indian people and how he has shown English superiority on them in the novel. The research is based on primary and secondary data. Discussion and analysis of the data are carried out through inducting reasoning, applying the post-colonial perspective of Orientalism propounded by Edward Said in his book Orientalism. This paper particularly attempts to interpret the way Kipling has characterized the protagonist, and the way he has depicted socio-cultural and geopolitical contexts through which the colonial message of English superiority upon colonized land and peoples is conveyed. The finding shows that Kipling has shaped the protagonist, an Irish boy under fifteen, as an able English personality to influence, control, dominate and lead Indian natives in many occasions. He has been presented as decisive role player upon the natives he is associated with. The protagonist's presence in the novel gives the colonial message that India and Indians are still unable to rule themselves well and save their land from their enemies. Therefore, they need English people to rule the country for their prosperity and protection.

Keywords: Culture, imperialism, orientalism, post-colonialism, representation, superiority

Introduction

Depiction of colonized land and its people from European perspectives is a common characteristic of literature written by European writers after colonization. When European imperialism into a distant territory after the Renaissance and colonial settlements increased in different parts of the world, Colonizers' as well as native responses to the imperial rules through writings significantly increased. Writings about post-colonialism subsequently

signified the political, linguistic and cultural experience of the societies that were former European colonies (Ashcroft and et al 186). The colonizers expected native people to be supporters of their rules because the former advocated that they came to the latter are land only to educate, civilize and enrich them. Most of the colonial literature implies the message that the larger the land the English govern, the better the world becomes for human beings. That's why any native protest or resistance against European rule is enmity. "If you are not with me, you are against me" (Hawthorn 29) is the colonial message given through the way they ruled the people. Colonial authors mostly stereotyped the native people and culture as not only lagging behind but also less civilized. The European authors therefore tried to highlight the necessity that the natives are in need of guidance and education to better civilization. This research article therefore focuses its attention on what colonial message Rudyard Kipling has expressed in his famous novel *Kim*, which was written in Indian geopolitical and cultural background. The land and its peoples were controlled and ruled by English people.

Statement of the Problem

India became a land of attention for economic exploitation and pride of British colonization upon a larger population soon after they arrived in India. British colonizers enjoyed playing games of domination, humiliation and disposition upon the Indians. They made India a platform of cultural imposition. As Edward Said pointed out in *Orientalism* (1978), the Western world claimed that Indian subcontinent stood for and represented the orient people's voice; and the orient or people of the Indian continent listened to colonial voice, accepted it and remained silent. The Indians let them speak, act and rule upon. In Said's view the Western literature written about the orient is the voice of disillusionment. He opines that most of the colonized never spoke to themselves and expressed no emotional reactions to the colonizers' domination upon them. The rulers thought that they realized and acted according to the needs and feelings of the colonized (6). Thus, colonial texts become powerful weapons to achieve the loyalty of the colonized, and to authorize rules over them. The Europeans in the oriental world never thought that the Orientals were a genuine force. Rather, they depicted the colonized land and its civilization as mysterious and lethargic. Said opines, "Orientals were rarely seen or looked at, they were seen through and analyzed not as citizens, or even people but as problems to be solved or confined" (Said, *Orientalism* 207). Most of the colonial texts represented this view and Rudyard Kipling is also tactfully supporting and nurturing the above message in *Kim*. Researches on this text have been ample in the research fields of hybridity, ambivalence, cultural conflicts, and assimilation but not in details about the ways of colonial representation on the basis of oriental stereotypical perspective. Therefore, to identify how Kipling has presented and represented colonial message in the novel has been the statement of the problem of this article.

Research Questions and Objectives

How Rudyard Kipling has shaped the colonial view of English rulers about India and Indians? How oriental perspectives are presented and what messages are stated and reflected in the novel? Based on these research questions, this article has two objectives. The first objective is to identify particular colonial messages the novel has given to the native people and the second is to know the ways the messages are stated and depicted through post-colonial oriental perspectives.

Methodology

This research is based on primary and secondary data. Discussions and analysis of the data are presented through inducting reasoning from the post-colonial theoretical perspective of Orientalism propounded by Edward Said, one of the most powerful advocates of post-colonial theory about imperialism and colonialism. The analysis and inferences are drawn through inducting reasoning on both primary data with the grounded claims of Said on his post-colonial theory books *Orientalism*, *Culture* and *Imperialism*. Retrospective and introspective approaches are also adopted during the analysis.

Literature Review

Edward Said comments that *Kim* betrays its Orientalist outlook in its stereotypical ideas regarding the East, the Orient and the Orientals. The Orient and the Oriental exist as types without any variation or differentiation, in the representation of the Indians, individuality is something mostly done away with. Said cites statements like “*Kim* would lie like an Oriental”, “all hours of the twenty-four are alike to the Orientals,” or “the Oriental’s indifference to mere noise” as instances of stereotypical images and ideas upheld by *Kim*. He comments that any power to influence public discussion or policy demurred as to the basic superiority of the white European male who should always retain the upper hand. Statements like “The Hindu is inherently untruthful and lack moral courage” were expressions of wisdom from which very few, least of all the Governors of Bengal dissented . . . (Kipling 182). These are some of the comments of Edward Said about the writing of Kipling in the novel and it reflects and represents that Said’s oriental theoretical perspectives are well reflected in the novel. This research gets inspired to move ahead with the use of oriental theory to analyze the novel.

Binita Parry speaks of Kipling as the novelist who more directly engages with the representation of the empire than his predecessors and contemporaries: “Kipling’s writings moved the empire from the margins of English fiction to its centre” (121). Parry attempts to mediate between the traditional celebration of Kipling and his works during anti-colonial times. Interestingly, those who argued for the canonization of Kipling focused on issues like morality and universality. Parry sees that Kipling’s social and political ideas are no much relevant to evaluating his complex techniques and explorations of ‘permanent human and moral themes’ (119). Though recognized as a “classic” writer, Kipling has never been quite taken into the “canon. “Yet, Parry finds Kipling ambivalent. Kipling who cannot be seen as

an unproblematic ally of imperialism, gives imperatives of representing other people and culture of the native situations, yet highlights English culture and racial superiority upon them.

Sara Suleri's "Adolescence of Kim" judges Kim's adolescence and immaturity with the adolescence of colonialism in India and does an implication of imperial time and further argues Kipling's orientalist representation of India is influenced by issues beyond his control. Yet she asserts that colonial history is itself evasive, and a postcolonial readership cannot confine such a strategy of storytelling to the narrator's political and moral relations to his times. (Suleri 114) Suleri's reading *Kim* looks at Kim more as a record of the problems of the empire's lack of maturity in controlling its affairs than as an embodiment of an aggressive colonial desire.

Abu Baker's study about Kim in "Identity Crisis: Rudyard Kipling's Kim – A Postcolonial perspective" highlights the problems with interest and actions of identity formation in a colonial in supports of the British Raj in British India. The article views the protagonist a figure in Kim's constant process of redefining and rethinking of identity between a British, and an Irish; an Indian native, or a colonizer. It highlights Kim's outer appearance and impression. Though it shows that the protagonist is in dilemma of sidelining about his actual identity, it focuses its research on how a genetic identity is stronger than identity learnt form context and culture.

Aljohani, in his research 'Race and Colonization as seen in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*', argues that the concept of Orientalism has a significant influence on postcolonial readings in literary studies, and proposes that the analytical and theoretical formulations of Edward Said and his approach in interpreting text with the theoretical assumption is wrong. He further asserts that *Kim* displays ambiguity while establishing the relationship between colonizers and the colonized. Problematizing Said's analysis of Kim, this paper argues that the character of the main protagonist Kim is not like that of what Edward Said says in his book *Orientalism*. Along with this research there are many more studies about *Kim* and they have stated oriental characteristics of the novel, yet no research has focused on the implied colonial message of Kipling in the novel through the presentation of oriental perspective by stereotyping the Indian characters. This article has pivoted on this objective and analyzes how the author has been consciously or unconsciously representing oriental views in the novel. It focuses on the ways negative images of Indians are created in the novel and how the Indian characters are presented in the position and mentality of supporting the colonial rulers. Even though the English rulers disrespect the natives, the latter are less conscious in realizing the impact of their failure to keep their power to rule themselves. And this is the research gap between many previous studies and the study this paper has been filled up with. In short, it highlights the stereotypical presentation of native characters and superior status of the colonizers in the novel.

Analysis and Discussion

Orientalism is an extended view from Michael Foucault's theory of discourse based on power. It is a post-colonial discourse, formed by the Western people about Eastern people and culture. Moreover, it is a discourse for rule and control over the Orientals. *Orientalism* has also been one of the major components of post-colonial theory. In Said's opinion, Orientalism is a "style of thought based on ontological and epistemological distinction made between the orient and the occident" (Said 2). The distinction is not purely based on simply giving identities, but on showing remarkable differences that place the Orientals inferior and therefore, subjected to be ruled. It is, according to Said, a power generation; a network of discourse that represents western knowledge about the Orientals and the power to define them. Said claims that Orient was "Orientalized" by Westerners not only because the colonizers and travelers in the Orient found the land and its people Oriental, but also because they understood the nature of people and thought the people could be made Oriental.

European writers of colonial times could tell their readers how the Oriental because of certain characteristics they have and some endowed to them and make the oriental to speak for himself (Said 4). Edward in this reference acknowledges Foucauldian concept of power and affirms that western discourses always form image and stereotype about the East. The aim is to rule and dominate Orientals. He asserts, "Orientalism is the generic term that I have been employing to describe the western approach to the orient. Orientalism is a discipline by which the orient was (and is) approached systematically as a topic of learning, discovery and practice" (Said 73). The practice here is to rule the East and control the territory and dominate the people. The discourse about Orientalism differentiates the west and the east, the western and the eastern and creates a hierarchy between them- the distinction between the whites and non-whites, the relation of the ruler and the ruled. So, anything a person learns about, writes about and talks about the oriental land and people is Orientalism.

Kipling's India in *Kim* dominantly seems to be a boy's India, enthusiastically and spontaneously formulated in the boy's experience. Kim is brought up and educated in India and accompanies mostly the Indians in the street. Kipling's early childhood, the first six years of his childhood must have shaped the beauty of it. The second visit to India in his youth must have enabled him to look through some cultural and political perspectives. This corresponds to Kim's education at St. Xavier's school which triggers his Irish blood and racial superiority. As Martin Seymour-Smith in Rudyard Kipling (1989), a biographical book on Kipling, observes, "Kipling's attitude to India was torn in two: reverence for the ancient, mysterious and wise, which appealed to the religious, sensual, romantic and imaginative side of his personality; and contempt for its political childishness, or child likeness and total lack of capacity for self-government" (76). Kipling's sense of cultural superiority is also clearly stated in his statement "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet" (Kipling 238). Kipling believed that the Indians could not look at their

destiny because they had never attempted to do so and the English colonization upon them is reasonable.

Kipling's characterization of Kim as an able boy in his early teenage to accompany with an aged Buddhist practitioner in India from Tibet implies the message that English people are intelligent and superior and able to guide and help experienced natives. However, it is a superficially drawn conclusion of the author. The Indian life and cultural phenomena that are depicted in the novel are not all representative and complete; the depiction is superficial; rather superficial and they seem to be the kind of life one would see from a train window while on pilgrimage. Nevertheless, Kipling seems to have been charmed by the beauty and simplicity of Indian pastoral life. Not only that, his observation of the life of India in country villages has been one-sided: he does not try to explore the life that is affected by the colonizers. Suppression and miseries from the exploitation of power by the colonizers are completely ignored and left out. He has deliberately avoided turmoil and clashes between the colonizers and the colonized that had emerged from the beginning of colonization. Kipling's intention seems to justify the colonizers' presence in India. He tries to be what Orwell calls "the prophet of imperialism". He does not care or know "enough about the Indians to imagine themselves in their shoes (Hemingway 30). Kipling does not see Indians from the native perspective that is why readers cannot find any sense of resistance to colonial rules and any possibility of violence against the rulers.

Kim's socialization in India until he gets captured by the English rulers is like that of an Indian but as he grows up and gets educated at St. Xavier's school, he is rather more devoted to the direction of the secret service agents than to disinterested accompaniment to the Lama. He becomes somehow puppet-like actor, who makes an "ape-like imitation of his masters and their habits and interests and his moves (Alam 11). There are well-skilled and experienced Indian figures to train Kim in the secret service job yet Kipling's presentation of the characters like Mehubub Ali and Huruee Chunder Mookerjee are just supporting persons to the development of Kim's personality. Kipling thus makes Kim stand at the view that only English people can develop the leadership capacity to rule the native people. It is depicted in Kim's cleverness in performing the Great Games- the spying job under the Secret Service - in the Lama's association. The lama is innocent about Kim's secret job but Kim is aware of what comfort he would have in being an assistant or guide to the aged pilgrim. Here Kipling's attitude of European superiority in leadership and exploitation of the atmosphere to accomplish the desired result is subtly highlighted.

The Lama's mystic quest for salvation and Kim's materialistic quest for strengthening the British Raj in India go simultaneously. This kind of presentation is a kind of disrespect to the spiritual dignity and pious pilgrimage from the Buddhist point of view. So, Kipling has given no importance to the faith belief of either the native people or any regard to the contribution of other characters to develop Kim's personality. Bohemer analyzes that Kipling presented Kim as an innovative and inventive English boy who represents the intelligence, cleverness, decision-making ability and leadership to the characters who are

in relationship with Kim to perform the Great Game (71). He seems to imply that any contribution to Kim's personality is due to Kim's own capability of drawing attention to contribute. No opposition or resistance to rulers from the colonized is presented and anticipated in *Kim* because it is the colonizers' skill and ability to keep the natives in accepting and participating in colonizers' ways of governance. That's why Mashood is right to say that the English novelist, during the colonial period set up a context in their novels to advocate the view that "the British have the right to rule" (79). Rudyard Kipling is also a devoted advocate to appreciate, glorify and celebrate British colonial victory in any place in the world. His judgement on Anglo-Indian role in Indian subcontinent is rather shaped and biased with this kind of concept and it is reflected in this novel also.

Kipling's biasness is so in *Kim* because he has presented the Indians as submissive and obedient to British Raj and less reluctant and active in any formal complaint against what they didn't like of the colonizers. Instead, they seem to have got the feeling that they are blessed in serving the colonizers, happy in playing the Great Games with even a young and less experienced Kim. Lurgan Shahib, Hurree Babu and Mahbub Ali all become active participants in the Great Games just to contribute to the British Raj, to train and enable Kim to rule them. As Bullock and Stephen (1999) observe the Indians are not in conflicts with rulers but "in a conflict of loyalties or aspirations (413). Kipling does not show any interest in showing the native people's awareness and critical evaluation of the cultural and political domination of the British Raj upon them. Kipling's colonial message is that the Indians are happy in being governed, mimicry for colonial ways of living and thinking. They are in the process of assimilation to the English ways of living; no need of showing cultural differences and, therefore, no need for resistance to colonization. This kind of approach in depiction of India is Kipling's ability to "get into the skin of others with same sympathy" (Said 144). However, the will behind such an approach is to strengthen the British rule- the sense of whiteness and power of the English race. In other words, Kipling utilizes British colonial discourse that anticipates less resistance and complexity in a colonial nation like India.

Furthermore, he presents strategic plans of lengthening British rule by strengthening it through hired hands among the native. When the Russian and French agents get defeated by strategic efforts of Kim and Hurree Mukherjee, then the assistants to Kim assures Kim that "these are not Angregi (English) Sahib... They are foreigners- they can't speak Angrezi as do Sahibs (Kipling 294). This indicates the native psychology that the English are right and has the right to rule the country and they are not 'foreigners' like the French and Russian agents. The native people are presented as supporters and followers of the British Raj and have no grudge against British Imperialism. Rather, Kipling attempts to show that the Indians deserved the subjugation of English people. Kipling represents the narrative to advocate that "it was India's best destiny to be ruled by England" (Said 176). All activities and characters that are associated to the 'Great Game' persuade readers to accept the implication that the British Raj in India is the need. And at the centre of the narration, even a young boy like

Kim is shown as clever and responsible enough to take care of Indians and 'their territory'. The Aged Lama also comments, "But no white man known the land and customs of the land as thou (Kim) knowest" (Kipling 124). So, Kim is presented as an emerging Sahib, who would be able to rule the native well. In this reference Said comments that Kipling has established for the reader with considerable dramatic effect in the novel that the contrast between the East with its mysticism and sensuality, and the English, with their superior organization with their confidence, along with their instinct to brush away like Cobwebs the native myths and beliefs (175-78). This kind of view is reflected in relationship of the Lama and Kim. Though Kim's association with the Lama is strong and he behaves ethically to the later and even to the native people after his accompaniment to the Lama, Kipling is very conscious of showing Kim's responsible care and protection of the Lama, which implies that the native people are more dependent on the reliable leadership and patronage of the colonizers in India.

The Lama has trust on Kim. He is confident that Kim can lead and take him where he wishes to go. He does even have a higher wish that Kim would be able to keep himself in higher level. When he knows that Benett and Father Victor want to make Kim a Sahib, he suggests Kim not to become a Sahib because he explains, "Those men follow desire and come to emptiness. Thou must not be of their sort" (Kipling 127). Kipling's presentation of Kim in such a trust and appreciation of confidence in the words of the Lama is to highlight the English superiority in leadership, comprehension and humanization. On a deeper level of intention, he wants to prove India 'a wild' land for God-fearing man (Kipling 131). It is the place where English are appropriate people to rule over. The imperial and colonial intention is not only to rule the country themselves but to orient its people to the English language, culture and manners. Macauley (1835) pointed out the English strategy to rule the country thus, "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions who we govern, a class of persons, Indian in blood and color but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect"(qtd in Kinsey 394). Following the footsteps of such opinion, Kipling contextualizes Kim's accompaniment with Huree Chunder Mukherjee, Mahbub Ali and others in the sports of the Great Game through which Kim becomes a 'major contribution to the Orientalized India of imagination (Said 181). The Great Game is carefully planned one to indicate that foreign invasion in India is potential and highly probable from the unintended power like Russia and defense to such power that devours India identity is essential and it is British Crown that can play the act successfully. That's why Anglo-Indian presence in India is a need of the time for the protection and prosperity of India. This is the message Kipling established in *Kim*.

Rudyard Kipling has created the dichotomy between colonizers and colonized in *Kim*. Edward Said opines, "The division between white and non-white, in India and elsewhere, was absolute. The division is alluded to throughout *Kim* as well as the rest of Kipling's work, "...a Sahib is a Sahib, and no amount of friendship or camaraderie can change the rudiments of racial difference" (162). The relation is not with the concept of

equal status of human beings. Unequal type of hierarchical state is generated, the white Sahib is superior and respected and they have deserved dignity. That dignity must be respected and maintained by the native by accepting the rulers' positions and decisions, and obeying their orders. Once an English man becomes a Sahib, then he is to the native people always a sahib, "once a Sahib, always a Sahib" (Kipling 83). When Kim does not readily accept such a concept to his land, he says, "I do not want to be a Sahib" (84). But it is his childish response. Therefore, he is advised to know once a sahib he is sahib and "one must never forget that one is a Sahib" (96). Kipling here teaches both the Anglo Indian and the Indian natives to accept that an English man is a sahib because he is able to rule himself another and he has a responsibility to civilize those who are supposed to have been backward as measured by the English people themselves. That is why the narrator of the story emphatically says that Kim is a white, what physical changes he has got is because of his living in India streets. He says, "Kim was English. Though he was burned black as any native; though he spoke the vernacular by preference, and his mother tongue in a clipped uncertain sing-song. Though, he consorted on terms of perfect equality with the small boys of the bazar; Kim was white—a poor white of the very poorest" (2). An indicator of the distinction between colonizer and colonized is not only the skin and appearance, but the knowledge an English man possesses about the native people, culture and geopolitical situation as one of the characteristics. Said emphasizes "Kim knows how a white Sahib can enjoy life in this lush complexity; and, I would argue. The absence of resistance to European intervention in it was symbolized by Kim's abilities to move relatively unscarred through India – is due to its imperialist vision" (Said 192). This vision and ability are endowed in Kim and Kipling is intentionally doing so to implant the colonial message of English superiority on other people and culture. This is what *Kim* has been structurally organized and verbally oriented and conditionally depicted.

Conclusion

Kipling's *Kim* is a novel of English oriental concept, not through a radical approach in reading and dealing with the natives but through an amicable atmosphere where the native themselves contend to be in a hybridized position and to become less potential to resistance of colonial rule. Kipling refutes the indigenous culture of the colonized, the Indians are shown not attempting to look at their own destiny and show no enthusiasm and adventure spirit. Kipling sees a calm India, no threat from native people to the Anglo-Indians but somehow from border politics. Mohamud Ali, an Afgan, Lurgan Shahib, from a blended race, Hurree Chunder Mukherjee, a Bangali and Colonel Creghton, an English officer are together for the common interest of building and securing India from the Northern border, i.e from Russia and get victory on the Great Game, the political conflict between Russia and Britain.

Kipling sees India without any racial clashes and political issues, no racial bias and prejudice among natives, not great distinction and clashes between Hindus and Muslims, depicts no picture of resistance from the native and shows them indifference to political

hegemony and colonialism. In other words, Kipling has depicted the deprivation of Indian liberty in politics but has not depicted how the sense of derivation forms resistance from the part of the deprived. So, this novel shows the hegemonic domination of the colonizer and expresses many orientalist attitudes and behavior of the colonizers to the colonized, and does not indicate much potentiality of counter- hegemony of the native to the colonizers in near future. In a sentence, Kipling leaves the message that India is still in need of English people to rule the people and enable them to have their security and prosperity. But up to when? No time is bound.

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