

## *Theme of Colonization in the English Novel<sup>(\*)</sup>*

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During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, England became a super power economically and militarily. As a result of this England dominated over many colonies in both Asia and Africa. In these two continents England established many companies like The East Company in India and The Royal African Company in Africa. These companies and other commercial settlements in the colonies and the growing and expanding in size, it is necessary needed a military force to protect their existence. Therefore, from the middle of the eighteenth century the British colonial policy became both merchantile and military in nature. With time, these trading companies became industrial settlements guarded by a military force to secure their production.

Thinking of maintaining its hegemony on the various colonies of the world, the British State felt the necessity for a disguise to cover the real purposes behind its domination of other nations. In

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consequence, it tended sometimes, to use moral and religious justifications, as attempting to convince people, the Europeans as well as the natives of the colonies, that its main aim is only to civilize and lead these nations, the colonized, to the light of civilization. It pictured itself as a supreme leader to these countries towards welfare, liberty and education.

While on the religious level, various religious circles emphasized that the main purpose behind the British colonization was to save the souls of the primitive people in these colonies and to teach them the Bible. The best example is the description of the Archbishop of Canterbury (1848-1882) of the British colonization as a mission to teach his people the gospel. Whereas James Anthony Froude (1818-1892) justified this issue in a different way. He mentioned that the British colonization was only a response to the natural law of the supremacy for the best, and that the English people were superior over other nations with their physical qualities and their courage that enabled them to dominate other nations.

With these bright claims of the British Empire as a superior power and a savior to the whole world, the English colonizer covered his merciless exploitation of the various colonies he conquered and dominated. However, before tackling the subject, it seems appropriate to give definitions of some terms like Colonialism, Colonial Fiction and Colonialist Fiction .

**Colonialism:** is a political-economic phenomenon starting about 1500 whereby various European countries discovered, conquered, settled and exploited various areas of the world.<sup>(1)</sup>

**Colonialist Fiction:** is a kind of fiction that is written by a member of a colonizing community in a colony, as an Englishman who is born and raised in a colony writes fiction about his society in that colony . This kind of fiction supports colonization and camouflages its merciless exploitation of other nations. Rudyard Kipling's novel! Kim (1901) might be a good example on this kind of fiction.<sup>(2)</sup>

**Colonial Fiction:** Is a type of fiction that is written about the activities of colonization from the point of view of the colonizer, usually for consumption by the citizens of a colonizing nation in their original country. The best example is Forster's A Passage to India (1924).<sup>(3)</sup>

Literature was extensively exploited as a means of propaganda to convince the Europeans and the natives of the colonies that the aim of colonization is humanitarian and for the benefit of the colonized. Novel was used besides other literary genres for this purpose.

**Daniel Defoe (1660-1731)** is a very important adviser in the English government. During his service as a secret agent, he

presents various projects, suggestions and political ideals which are constantly adopted by the government to secure the welfare and prosperity of the English Empire. Defoe's faithfulness and devotion to his work reflect the great admiration he maintains toward the British Empire. Moreover, he has strong faith in the capacities of the English man. Defoe believes that an honest English man is not easily defeated, hardened by difficulties, but never overwhelmed by them. The English men enjoy, as Defoe explains, a unique sense of achievement and an extraordinary ability for endurance. These opinions are reflected in many of Defoe's pamphlets, essays and articles. But they are more prominently seen in Defoe's novel Robinson Crusoe (1719).<sup>(4)</sup>

Robinson Crusoe describes a journey of an English merchant, Robison Crusoe, towards Africa. Unfortunately, the ship is destroyed by a storm and all the crew dies except Crusoe who finds himself all alone on an isolated island. Crusoe makes many great achievements in this island as the building of houses and boats, the plantation of rice and barley, the domestication of his goats and various other activities. The sudden appearance of one of the savages, Friday, is a turning point in the novel for Cruso is no longer alone and Friday becomes of a good help to him. They remain together for many years till an English ship comes and takes them both to England.

Robinson Crusoe is considered a propaganda' for 'the British colonization in the eighteenth century glorifying its creeds and embodying all the significant features of this movement as the discovery of the isolated lands, the cultivation of these places, the meeting with the primitives and canibals which are supposed to be the inhabitants of these colonies, the promise of liberty and respect to those people and the superiority of the English nation over other nations . This is clearly seen in the Spaniard's conversation with Crusoe:

*"Seignor" says the Spaniards, "had we poor Spaniards been in your case, we should never gotton half these things out of the ship,*

*as you did. Nay, says he "we should never have found means to have gotton a raft to carry them, or to have gotton the raft on shore without boat or sail ".<sup>(5)</sup>*

Defoe portrays, through Crusoe, an ideal self - relied man who is hardened by difficulties but never overcome by them. James Sutherland mentions, in his criticism of the novel, that Defoe "believes an honest Englishman is hard to beat."<sup>(6)</sup> Thus, Crusoe is made to behave truly as a brave Englishman, full of energy and enjoys both the practical side which enables him to dominate nature and the religious side which insures him a direct relation with

God.<sup>(7)</sup> Crusoe, in the island, achieves what the other Englishmen usually achieve in these colonies as the plantation of the lands, the taming of the goats, the investment of the resources of these areas, the challenge of the hostility of the natural force and establishing a good relation with the inhabitants of these colonies as Crusoe's relation with Friday.

Defoe includes in his novel the trade wars between Spain and England which are real events in the eighteenth century. He also embodies, in this novel, Raleigh's dream of the British domination of the area near the mouth of Orinoco, which is Crusoe's island. Defoe regards all the lands where Crusoe wanders as possible areas for colonization and ripe for exploitation. Furthermore, the novel speaks about piracy, mutiny and slavery which are dominant phenomenon in that age. Thus, the myth of this courageous man and his experience in the island becomes a representation of the British colonization in the eighteenth century.

*Joseph Conrad (1857-1924)* is one of the 'major figures who writes about colonization. He demonstrates, through his fiction, the false pretension of this movement and reveals the inhuman acts of persecuting and exploiting the natives in various colonies.<sup>(8)</sup>

It is important to mention here certain events in Conrad's life so as to understand his political ideas and literary works accurately.

First, Conrad was a citizen of an occupied land, Poland, which submitted to a severe Russian colonization. His family suffered from this oppression for years and his father, Apollo Korzeniowski, was exiled for his role in an insurrection against this occupation. Furthermore, Conrad's work as a merchant seaman in the French then the British Commercial Service enabled him to move among different colonies in the East and in Africa.<sup>(9)</sup> Therefore, Conrad's childhood experiences and his work in the British Navy play a significant role in forming his Ideas towards colonization and imperialism.

Conrad emphasizes that since (1870) the growing doctrine in Europe becomes "nationalism" which definitely leads to imperialism since each country competes the other for a sense of enduring identity and authority. Thus, the European countries rely heavily on colonization to attain these purposes. Conrad goes further in his argument stressing that the political actions carried by these countries to maintain their domination are all of aggressive nature working as consolatory actions since they enhance the illusion of domination. Conrad mentions in his article 'Autocracy and War' that "the only form of action open to a state can be of no other than aggressive nature."<sup>(10)</sup>

Conrad, through his political opinions, seems to have no faith in any reforming act which might correct imperialism. He points out

that Europe is hopeless in a matter of humanitarian since it is involved in materialism and in the race for commercial superiority. The solution, Conrad gives to stop this race for expansion and to establish peace between different nations and classes of interests, is vague and to a certain extent imaginative. He indicates the need for a common conservative principle practical enough to form "a rallying point of international action tending towards the restraint of any particular ambition."<sup>(11)</sup> Conrad himself admits that there is little hope that such a principle can exist and he realizes that the situation of Europe is hopeless in any humanitarian matters.

Conrad handles, through his fiction, the colonialist themes and motives not to praise them but to examine and contradict them with their reality. The argument, Conrad presents, is against the whole colonialist situation attacking its fake civilizing mission and its bright claims. The Europeans in these colonies are depicted by Conrad, as cruel oppressors, hollow, lost and self-deceived people. Once these colonizers step on any colony, they abandon all their morals and human values and release their infinite impulses for wealth and violence.

Conrad's presentation of the natives is quite unique in the sense that it has two dimensions: on one side, they are presented as victims of the destructive power of colonization,



exploiting their efforts and despising their humanity. On the other side, they represent the real heirs of the land and the right owners of its wealth and resources.

Conrad writes many novels and tales concerning the European colonization and the white man in the colonies. His fictional career shows a progress of a thematic majurity which can be divided into three distinctive phases. The first deals with the subjects of private honour and heroism as in Almavvers Folly (1895) and Lord Jim (1900). Then these subjects extend to include the individual fidelity towards the follies of the doctrinaire political action as in Heart of Darkness (1902) and Nostormo (1904). The second phase offers a consideration of what is involved in a commitment of the themes handled in the first phase, their psychological, social and philosophical implication as in The Secret Agent (1907) and Chance (1913). The third phase reflects the problem of human faith in the moral impulses and the total commitment and the total withdrawal of these impulses as in Victory. (1915).<sup>(12)</sup>

Heart of Darkness belongs to the first phase of Conrad's thematic progress. It is the outcome of Conrad's journey through Africa and it is remarkably faithful to the facts of the Belgian occupation of the Congo in 1890 . The story speaks about the failure of the white man's myth of superiority through the protagonist, Kurtz. He is a preacher and his mission in the Congo is supposed to

Kurtz stands for the Belgian colonization of the Congo and his moral failure represents the moral failure of the colonial enterprise itself .

***Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)***- is considered by the earliest generations of critics the writer of the Anglo - Indian society. He writes various numbers of poems and stories which embody his opinions about the Anglo-Indians and the British Empire in general.

The most prominent feature in Kipling is his emphasis on the importance of work. Heroism for him means the disciplinary and efficiency of work not necessary military but the work of every shape. He makes his example the British Empire and writes about the Anglo - Indian people who are serving, building bridges and roads, making railways and enlarging and defending the Empire. These ideas are clearly reflected in a number of stories as Captain Courage (1887), The Centraure (1888), The Sergeant (1888) and other stories.

Kipling believes that the everlasting business of civilizing the world, could not be achieved without a tough policy. He thinks men

who are highly civilized as the Anglo - Indians should protect and feed those who are less civilized as the natives and that the message of civilizing the world is a worth while task in which all might join if they would accept the law. In this form of identifying the British Empire as a saviour of the world, Kipling deliberately ignores the fact that the Empire is primarily a money making enterprise and the flag of England, which he pictures as a symbol for service and sacrifice, stands in fact for the forcible policy of this Empire. Therefore, the relation between the Anglo - Indians and the natives is not based "on protection, as Kipling claims, but rather on persecution and exploitation." <sup>(13)</sup>

This is the real picture Kipling tries to disguise through several pieces of prose and verse. They are mostly devoted to the servants of the State. Above all these servants comes the government's spy because , as Kipling thinks, he helps the government to get a better understanding of the natives and to establish a good relation with them. The best example we can give here is Kipling's long novel Kim (1901).

Kim speaks about the life of an English spy. We can divide this novel into three parts. The first five chapters are devoted to the Irish - born, Indian - bred person who is Kim and his severe life at the slums of Lahore. The middle five chapters present Kim's training to be a spy, this training includes various tests as Largon's

test of hypnotizing him or Shamlegh testing his intelligence. After Kim has passed through all these tests successfully, he graduates as a reliable spy in the Government Survey. The third part describes Kim's hard choice between two ways, either to search for the river of Arrows that washes the sins or to continue in his work. Finally, he chooses his work.

Kim is portrayed as an ideal Anglo Indian spy. On one hand, he embodies Kipling's notion of the importance of work, which is clearly seen in his enthusiasm and loyalty in his work as a spy. On the other hand, he enjoys a romantic side that appears in his novel to all the elements of nature around him. He is familiar with India and its people and this makes him better qualified for his job. This ideal picture of a spy is meant only to convince the reader that Kim's qualifications and service are directed to the welfare of India and the British Empire as well. <sup>(14)</sup>

But the novel reflects an obvious contradiction in the sense that Kipling stresses the importance of a spy as the government's means to understand the native and to establish a good relation with them, while the novel proves the opposite. This is seen in two images. The first in Kim's description of the natives he meets. They are either savages, dreamers, visionaries or idle people, Kim says: "All India is full of holly men stammering gospels in strang tongs, shakes and consumed in the fires of their own zeal, dreamers,

babblers and visionaries." <sup>(15)</sup>

This shows that Kim fails to understand the Indians though he lives among them. The second image depicts Kim in front of a hard choice, either to go to the village to search for the river of Arrow or to return to the city to continue in his job. Here the village stands for the East with all its spiritual and religious values. It is also, for Kipling, a world of illusions and dreams, while the city represents the West, a world of action and civilization which wins at last.

*Things that rode meaningless on the eyeball an instant before slid into proper proportion. Roads were meant to be walked upon, houses to be lived in ... and men and women to be talked to. They were all real and true,(15,3,7)*

Therefore, Kipling's real aim behind this novel is not to reveal the significance of the spy as a bridge between the two races but in fact to present a symbolic story of the British Empire in its colonies through Kim's life. Kim, who is Irish in origin but raised in India, stands for the pioneers who leave their home, England and come to these colonies. They endure hardship and suffering while initiating the message of civilizing the countries they dominate, making wealth out of poverty and establishing a good relation with the natives just as what Kim has done. At the end of the novel, when he prefers the city, the center of civilization, on the village, the center of religious and spiritual values; it means that the wheel of the

Empire continues its domination on the East.

*Edgar Morgan. Forster (1 879- 1 970)* is one of the important figures who writes about colonization but from a different angle of those of Kipling's or Conrad's. In handling the theme of the English colonization of India, Forster avoids the political issues between the colonizer and the colonized focussing more on the human and personal sides and on the possibility of establishing love and friendship between the two. Such relations, for Forster, are the first step towards solving the political problems between the Anglo - Indians and the natives.<sup>(16)</sup>

It is necessary first before presenting the literary works of this writer to go through some of his political opinions. Warner Perkins in his book E. M. Forster: Intention and Method mentions that Forster's patriotism is not the kind that leads him to glorify the English Empire nor the great statesmen. He strongly disdains and rejects the dominance of the political "causes" because they contradict his belief in love, affection and tolerance among human beings"<sup>(17)</sup> In "Hill of Devil" Forster declares "I hate the idea of causes and if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend I hope I shall have the guts to betray my country."<sup>(18)</sup>

Moreover, Forster is a strong advocate of the beliefs of Liberal Humanism, as Perkins emphasizes. These beliefs are love, tolerance and reliability which are regarded as the essence of all good will that leads to a spiritual change in one's life and in his attitudes towards all human beings. These beliefs appear, Perkins thinks, in almost all Forster's novels with various degrees of complexity and success. *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *The Longest Journey* (1907) and *A Room with a View* (1908) all celebrate a conflict between two kinds of people, those who believe in personal relationship and those who do not. While *Howards End* (1910) reflects a developed stage in Forster's ability to study the individual and the sanctity of personal relationship. The last and the most mature novel Forster writes is *A Passage to India* (1924).

This novel is based on the author's two visits to India. The first is in 1912 and the second is in 1921. In this novel, Forster involves different races and different values. On one hand, there is Mrs. Moore and Ronny, Mr. Fielding and Adela who stand for the English colonizer. Whereas, on the other hand, there is Aziz, Godebole and the other Indians who represent the colonized Indians. Respect and friendship grow between the two sides as Mrs. Moore's friendship with Aziz. Yet, this contact between the two proves to be a failure one because of Adela's accusation of Aziz of

attempting to rape her. The novel emphasizes that affection and love can hardly be established between the two because of the English hypocrisy and arrogance.

The purpose behind *A Passage of India*, Forster declares, is to attract the attention of both sides, the English and the Indians, that love and tolerance can be the first step towards solving the political clashes.

The point of significance here is that there is a sharp contrast between Forster's announced political opinions and what he himself really believes in. P. E. Firchow presents a speech by Forster which might be the key to our understanding of this writer's real opinions, his novels particularly *A Passage to India* and his true purpose behind this literary work. Forster says: "Like Beethoven, like Blake; Forster was essentially English and in commemorating him we can celebrate what is best and most permanent in ourselves,"<sup>(19)</sup>

For a writer to speak about himself in such a way joining himself with great figures as Beethoven or Blake, this reflects his high sense of pride and his great ambition. These features defeat the claims of some critics that Forster is a modest person who hates greatness and fame. Moreover, the same, speech reflects Forster's appreciation of his nationality. The words "Forster was essentially .English" uncover the writer's feeling of pride of his being English.



It is clear that this point opposes what Perkins mentions previously that the writer's patriotism is not the kind that drives him to celebrate the glorious colonial Empire nor the great statesman. These two discoveries drive us to examine carefully some biographical facts concerning Forster, particularly his life in India, in order to gain a better understanding of this novel and its true purpose.

Forster worked as a private secretary of the Rajah of Dew at a time when the critical attitudes towards the British imperialism increase with the growing of the independence movement in India. Consequently, the British Empire in India began to lose its glory and greatness and the English there and in England as well felt an urgent need for a consolation for the loss of their position there. Being English, Forster felt that it is his duty to restore the confidence inside the English people and to cool the situation between them and the Indians. For this purpose, the writer manipulated the facts claiming, through his novel, that the essence of the conflict between them was personal and social misunderstanding.<sup>(20)</sup>

Furthermore, Forster's search for fame and glorious reputation, as his previous speech indicates, made him seize the critical situation of the English in India to achieve literary glory. For this purpose, he twisted the truth about the relation between the Anglo -

Indians and the Indians in order to satisfy the taste and the mood of the English society to which the novel was presented. These are the real purposes behind A Passage to India to which Forster exploited all his artistic devices to the extent that he even devoted the beliefs of Liberal Humanism to work as a disguise covering these aims.

*George Orwell* is regarded by most critics as a pamphleteer who writes very much from a certain position mostly a political one.

Orwell's main interest is in the political affairs of his country, England, as well as in the foreign affairs of Spain, Russia and India. He lives and comprehends the hot events in these countries, then he attempts to argue his reader into seeing the truth behind these events through his fiction.

Orwell worked for five years as an officer in the Imperial Indian Police in Burma. These years were sufficient for him to change his whole attitudes towards the British colonization of India. It was here that Orwell witnessed too close the dirty acts done by this Empire and the inhuman treatment of the natives. He discovered that evil is something in the nature of Imperialism since it appointed itself as a ruling power in a country not its own.

Orwell's experience in Asia influences his response to the European civilization in general. He sees it as entirely a struggle between an oppressor, who is always wrong and an oppressed, who

is always right. Orwell analyses the situation from an economic point of view that when capitalism progresses, a struggle occurs for external markets and this produces a system of colonial oppression known as imperialism. Therefore, the European civilization, in fact, lives on robbing and persecuting the Asiatic coolies. Orwell confirms this point saying "We all live by robbing Asiatic coolies, and those of us who are "enlightened" all maintain that, those coolies ought to be set free, but our standard of living and hence our enlightenment demands that the robbery shall continue".<sup>(21)</sup>

Burmese Days (1934) is Orwell's important literary product that grows out of his experience in Burma. It speaks about an English merchant, Flory, and his tedious life in BURma. Flory feels alienated from his society and throughout the novel, he is seen either sinking in his books or drinking with a native mistress. The only friend Flory has is an Indian doctor called Veraswami with whom he shares his interests and memories. But Flory could not maintain this friendship because of the racialism of the Anglo - Indian society. Amid this gloomy atmosphere, Flory meets Elizabeth Lackersteen. The relation between the two develops uneasily against a background of troubles. Before Flory can get to this proposal of marriage, his Burmese mistress denounces him during his service. Hearing this news, Elizabeth decides to stop her relation with him. Finally, Flory puts an end to his misery and

shoots-himself.

Burmese Days is an attempt to draw a grim picture of the British Empire in India through the society of the club. There are various kinds of Anglo-Indians as the officer Macgregor, the engineer Mr. Westfield, the merchant, Flory and two ladies of the upper class Mrs. Lackersteen and Ellis. All of them except Flory carry deep hatred and disgust to the natives and their general attitude towards them are brute. Flory sees their inhuman treatment of the Burmese and feels inside himself a real disdain to imperialism and to all its representatives including himself "The time comes when you burn with hatred of your own countrymen, when you long for a native rising to down their Empire in blood"<sup>(22)</sup>

Flory is too coward to declare the hatred he feels towards his society. Therefore, he keeps himself aloof from the others, he is seen either among his books or driven to desperation. The only comfort he finds is in his friendship with a native doctor, Veraswami, but even this relation he could not maintain because he is so coward to oppose Ellis's statement of not allowing any native to join the club including Veraswami. On another occasion when Veraswami falls in trouble he asks Flory for help but the later could not offer a hand. He only stands silent cursing his disloyalty to his friend and in his ears render the English men's words "With Indians there must be no loyalty no real friendship. Affection, even love...yes

but alliance, partisanship, never... never!" (P.33)

This reveals the author's belief in the impossibility of establishing love and friendship between the two races since their relationship is a master-slave one.

The arrival of Elizabeth means a revival of hope inside Flory. Though he realizes that she is spiritually far from him, he persuades himself that she is his salvation. The competition of an officer for Elizabeth's favour and the quarrel of Flory's mistress show that Flory's hope in a new life is only an illusion and that there is no escape out of this poisoned environment. His last act of committing suicide indicates the state of hopelessness and helplessness he reaches. On the symbolic level, Flory stands to represent the collapse of the British Empire. His death predicts the Empire's withdrawal from India a thing which becomes true after some years when India gains its independence. <sup>(23)</sup>

There are other writers who write about the English colonization as Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) in his novel Westward Ho (1855). This novel is considered by some critics a tale of British Empire embodying its sense of superiority over other nations. Walter Scott (1771-1832) is another writer whose novel The Pride (1822) is seen as symbolic representation of the British colonization of the world.

## NOTES

\* البحث مستل من أطروحة الطالبة أمل عبد الجبار محمود: بعنوان

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## ملخص

## فكرة الاستعمار في الرواية الإنكليزية

عبدالجبار جاسم محمد (\*)

الاستعمار ظاهرة اقتصادية سياسية ظهرت حوالي ١٥٠٠ م حيث اكتشف الأوروبيون وإستعمروا العديد من دول العالم خاصة في أفريقيا واسيا. ولأجل تبرير غزوهم وإستعمارهم لهذه البلدان ، عملت السلطات البريطانية على تسخير الأدب من أجل إقناع الشعوب المستعمرة بأن هدفهم من الاحتلال هو لنشر الحضارة والتمدن في هذه الأقطار. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف استخدم الاستعمار الأدب وخاصة الروائيين.

ويعد دانيال ديفو (١٦٦٠-١٧٣١) أول الروائيين الإنكليز الذين سخروا رواياتهم لهذا الغرض . وتعد رواية **روبنسون كروسو** من أولى الروايات الإنكليزية التي ساندت الاستعمار وروجت لفكرة تفوق الرجل الأبيض. أما الكاتب جوزيف كونراد (١٩٢٤-١٨٥٧) فيختلف عن ديفو حيث عمل في روايته **قلب الظلام** على كشف الظلم والتعسف ولاستغلال الذي تعرض له سكان أفريقيا على يد المستعمر. في حين نرى الروائي ريديارد كبلنك (١٩٣٦ - ١٨٦٥) أشد المتعصبين للمستعمر والذي انعكس في رواية **كم** والذي يعبر فيها عن تأييده للاستعمار. ويختلف إم. فورستر عن سابقه من أنه يؤمن باستحالة إي تقارب بين الإنكليز والهنود بسبب اختلاف العادات والتقاليد بين الشعبين وهذا واضح في روايته **رحلة إلى الهند**. وهناك كتاب آخرون أمثال جورج اورول (١٩٥٠-

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