مجلة جامعة الملك عبدالعزيز: الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية، م ٣٢ ع ٦ ص ص : ٤٧٦ – ٤٨٩ (٢٠٢٥ م)
DOI: 10.4197/Art.32-6. 17

Unveiling the Other: A Postcolonial Analysis of Rudyard Kipling's "Lispeth"

Nejwa Knight Al-Ghoraibi

Department of Modern Languages and Literature, Faculty of Arts and Humanities,

King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

naalghoraibi@kau.edu.sa

Abstract. Kipling's Indian characters have been analyzed thoroughly, and his representations of colonized and colonizers have been studied. However, the originality of this paper lies not only in its focus on "Lispeth" but also in its examination of the significance of the eponymous character as an analogy of colonized India seen as the inferior Other by the colonizers. It also emphasizes Kipling's representation of "Lispeth" as capturing the complexities of socio-political marginalization. This article includes an examination of how Kipling's character, Lispeth, is a representation of colonized India, caught between her Indigenous roots and the colonial influences that surround her, through analyzing the cultural constructs (socio-historical dynamics, physical appearance, and secondary characters) as factors that enforce the marginalization of the Other, whether it refers to the colonized woman or the nation as a whole. Another factor examined in this study is Lispeth's nursing the Englishman, symbolizing India's rejuvenating an ailing Britain. Thus, this paper adds a layer of complexity to Kipling's colonial narrative, reflecting how the author's portrayal of Lispeth perpetuates the stereotypical representation of the colonized East, reflecting its marginalized status and complect relationship while reinforcing the binary distinction between the 'civilized' West and the exotic yet 'savage' Other.

Keywords: Kipling, Lispeth, Colonized India, Marginalization, Colonial Representation, Cultural Constructs, East-West Binary.

Introduction

Rudyard Kipling's short story "Lispeth" invites exploration into the symbolic representation of the eponymous character within the larger narrative of British imperialism in India as symbolic of the marginalization of the Other, whether the colonized woman or the nation. The narrative, taken from Plain Tales from the Hills, tells the story of Lispeth, a young Hill girl from Kotgarh Valley in Northern India. Faced with adversity, her parents surrendered her as a child to the English Chaplain and his wife. Brought up as an Anglo-Indian, Lispeth falls in love with an Englishman despite her guardians' disapproval. When she discovers the extent of their lies regarding her marriage to the Englishman, she rejects English society and returns to her people, living out her life in misery. In Kipling's narrative, the character of Lispeth draws parallels with the wider context of India, creating a medium through which colonial discourse is articulated and upheld.

Colonialism and gender intersect in Kipling's narratives, shaping the portrayal of his characters across the colonial divide and emphasizing the hierarchical differences

between the colonized and the colonizer as the centuries of British colonization of India left a lasting impression on Indian society, politics, and economy. Within colonial discourse, the colonized are typecast as degenerates due to their racial origin in an attempt to justify European conquest and to establish new systems of administration. Kipling's narrative contributes to the normalization of colonial ideologies, creating stereotypes that persist in the literary tradition, especially as such authors are 'writing not from the dominating viewpoint of a white man in a colonial possession but from the perspective of a massive colonial system whose economy, function, and history had acquired the status of a virtual fact of nature' (Said, Culture and Imperialism 162). Additionally, the association of colonized landscapes with the female illustrates their dual inferior position in the eyes of the occupiers, where the 'association of indigenous women with colonized land legitimated perceptions of both women and land as objects of colonization' (Blunt and Rose 10). Kipling's texts, such as "Lispeth," serve as rich sources for such analyses, offering insights into how colonial literature becomes a tool for ideological readership, highlighting the need to critically examine these literary depictions to deconstruct and challenge enduring stereotypes of power dynamics. In this study, the depiction of Lispeth will be examined from two angles: her ambiguous status within the Chaplain's household, representing India's liminal position in the British Empire through an examination of her appearance and background. The second element will be an analysis of her relationship with the Englishman as a reflection of the deceitful relationship between the Empire and the natives.

This article argues that the parallels between Lispeth, a character and a symbol of colonized India, give a deeper perception of the cultural aspects that shape the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. As such, the intricate portrayal of Lispeth within Kipling's narrative captures the colonial attitude that claimed cultural and moral supremacy over India as a nation. The analysis also explores the symbolic significance of Lispeth nursing the unnamed Englishman, embodying India's role in restoring an ailing Britain. In this regard, Kipling's portrayal of Lispeth reveals how the author immortalizes the stereotypical representation of the colonized East, reinforcing the binary division between the 'civilized' West and the exotic yet 'savage' Other. In "Lispeth," Kipling's characters, particularly the protagonist, present important points concerning how authors communicate and maintain colonial discourse using cultural constructs, such as socio-historical dynamics, physical appearance, and secondary characters.

Background Information

The British presence in India, a form of colonial exploitation, took place 'at the economic and political level … [and] also stretched to the psychic and the spiritual life of the people' (Bhattacharjee 1). The effects of this colonialization are deeply entrenched in the socio-historical setting of European colonialism and the competitive undercurrents of the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century. As European nations competed for power in foreign territories to acquire resources and trade routes, Britain slowly emerged as an economic capital due to its technological advancements, such as the modernization of its textile production and the expansion of steam power. Due to competition from America and Germany, Britain's coal- and steel-based economy began to erode in the 1870s, prompting it to take direct control of its overseas markets' (Paffard 1 - 2). Britain's employment of its colonial territories, particularly in India, played a significant role in its rise to economic power to the extent that the sub-continent had a 'massive influence on British life, in commerce and trade, industry and

politics, ideology and war, culture and life of imagination,' making India the greatest, most valuable and most profitable of all British colonial possessions (Said, Culture and Imperialism 160).

India was initially colonized in the seventeenth century by the East India Company, a for-profit business operated solely to benefit its stockholders. The company's influence over Indian territories increased through economic, diplomatic, and military means, exceeding that of the British government by the first half of the nineteenth century, creating 'a dangerously unregulated private company' (Dalrymple 35). The concept 'that the corporation should be running what had now become the country's most important colony began to be seen as more and more of an anomaly' (Dalrymple 457). Various factors, including cultural insensitivity and economic exploitation by the colonizers, led to substantial socio-political rebellion against British rule. The unchecked voracity of the East India Company was ended by the Indian Mutiny (1857-1858), leading to the passage of the nation's control to the Crown and the creation of the British Raj, which lasted until India gained independence in 1947.

Literature Review

There has been much critical study of Rudyard Kipling's view of Indian characters from the perspective of an Englishman who adopted India as his home, albeit through the eyes of the colonizer. The majority of the literary criticism has focused on his novels, such as The Jungle Book and Kim, including studies such as Westall's "What They Knew of Nation and Empire: Rudyard Kipling and C. L. R. James." (2010), Mishra's "Depiction of Key Features of Post Colonialism through selected works of Rudyard Kipling and R.K. Narayan" (2016), Albaqawi's "Orientalist and colonialist perspectives on the representation of the female in Kipling's Kim" (2023), Dao's. "A Postcolonial Reading of the Relationships Between the British Colonizer and the Colonized in Rudyard Kipling's Kim and E. M. Forester's A Passage to India" (2023), and Majty's "East-West relationship and the Anglo-Indian disorder: Locating (post)colonial disability in Rudyard Kipling's short stories" (2024). Kipling's short stories also clearly show his ambiguous relationship with his adopted nation. Among these short stories, "Lispeth" emerges as a fascinating subject for analysis, as the main character offers a multilayered exploration of her symbolic significance within the literature of British imperialism. One of these short stories, "Lispeth," emerges as a fascinating subject for analysis in academic research, as the main character offers a multilayered exploration of her symbolic significance within the literature of British imperialism. The short story has been the focus of many dissertations, rather than publications, such as Giordani's "Colonial and Postcolonial Aspects in the Short Stories in English: a Critical Journey from the Victorian Empire to Modern Times" (2015) and Nyikos's "Colonizing Cynicism in the Works of Rudyard Kipling" (2019).

The major foundation of examining postcolonial discourse is laid through examining works by Homi K. Bhabha and Edward Said to analyze the complex power dynamics of imperialism and to study how 'Otherness' is produced in Kipling's text when the colonizer rewrites the colonized nation through his own eyes. For the purpose of this study, an analysis of how the 'Other' is represented in postcolonial literature is essential, and, through it, an examination of how the colonizer defines and marginalizes the colonized through the concept of colonial mimicry, a "desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite (italics in original) (Bhabha 86). As such, an important aspect of examining the 'Other'

in colonial literature involves addressing the feminine and inferior attributes attributed to the colonized subject.

This element is present in Rudyard Kipling's works, where the 'Other' is often presented as female and inherently subordinate, especially considering that 'Indigenous women were viewed as the most passive creatures possible. Subservient, even to the point of lacking separate will' (Hogan 89). Within the structure of colonial discourse, the aim is to 'construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction' (Bhabha 70). A recurrent theme in Kipling is the intersection of gender and colonialism, affecting how his characters are portrayed across a colonial boundary in which the white European side 'controlled most of the earth's surface. On the other side of the divide was an immense variety of territories and races, all considered lesser, inferior, dependent, subject' (Said, Culture and Imperialism 162). This analysis explains how Kipling's narrative exposed imperialistic cultural domination to maintain control over the colonized nations by depicting the natives as "Other," i.e., female and inherently subordinate. Through a close reading of gendered representations in literature, how colonial fictions reiterate stereotypes of East and West can be traced to maintain the hierarchical oppositions between the colonized and the colonizer, described by Bhabha as 'the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite' (Bhabha 86). As such, Kipling's depictions of the 'Other' illustrate the power imbalances within imperial structures and emphasize the role of gender in shaping colonial identities and perceptions.

Another vital aspect of this study is the connection between gender and colonialism, including the way stereotypes are maintained through colonial narratives. Highlighting broader authority spaces in imperial structures, examining Kipling's gendered representations underscores the significant relationship between gender and colonial identities. As such, colonial and feminist scholarly views by Gayatri Spivak, Chandra Mohanty, and Ambreen Hai, among others, have offered a new perspective towards themes including the effect of colonialism on culture, gender issues, and the colonial subject, specifically women, as "Other" within this story. The critics explore various interpretations that can facilitate readers' understanding of Kipling's depiction of colonial ideologies in his narratives, focusing specifically on what Spivak terms' the effaced itinerary of the subaltern subject. … If in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow' (Spivak 83). In her article, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," Mohantry also focuses specifically on the concept of '" Woman" – a cultural and ideological composite Other constructed through diverse representational discourses - … and "women" – real material subjects of their collective histories' (Mohanty 334), exemplified in the character of Lispeth as analogous to India. Critical studies also examine colonial authors' use of language to subvert truth through the fiction created to represent an Empire founded 'upon words that created their own imaginative realities' (Hai 604). While none of these texts explicitly includes a discussion of Lispeth as the "Other" or a comparison between the characters of the text and colonized India, their themes are linked with more general analyses of feminism in colonial literature, particularly in the context of Kipling's works.

Generally speaking, scholarly examination of how the 'Other' is depicted in colonial literature, especially when viewing Kipling's treatment of natives as Said's Other, shows significant feminizing and inferior attributes ascribed to the colonized

subject. Despite the extensive research into Kipling's Indian characters and their relationship with British imperialism, the originality of this study lies in its analysis of the eponymous character in "Lispeth" as an analogy of colonized India through a comparison of history, appearance, and relationship with the British civil servants. Numerous studies have discussed Kipling's representation of India; however, no analysis has been found that presents a comprehensive analysis of Lispeth (or other female characters) as a metaphor for India as a nation. Through a postcolonial framework, this paper argues that Kipling's portrayal of Lispeth reflects the feminization and marginalization of the colonized 'Other'. It reveals the reinforcement of the imperialistic power dynamics through gendered representations. As such, the analysis includes a deeper examination of how Kipling's "Lispeth" serves as a metaphor for colonized India in light of critical theories such as postcolonial feminist theory and Orientalism to reveal the parallel between the image of the colonized woman and the marginalized nations.

Methodology

A close reading of Rudyard Kipling's "Lispeth" involves analyzing persistent themes such as the portrayal of feminine and inferior 'Other,' the declining British Empire, and the complexities of postcolonial identities. Postcolonial feminist theories are adopted in this research to show Lispeth as a representative of the colonized women/marginalized nations under imperialism, especially as "most postcolonial feminist critics are … engaged in the ongoing process of contesting a Eurocentric gaze that privileges Western notions of liberation and progress and portrays Third World women primarily as victims of ignorance and restrictive cultures and religions" (Weedon 289). This belief is supported by Spivak's belief that "The pattern of domination is … determined mainly by gender than class. The subordinated gender following the dominant within the challenge of nationalism while remaining caught within gender oppression" (Spivak 39), where "the subaltern is removed from or denied access even as … s/he is used for exploitation or domination" (211, note 43). With reference to Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, Spivak's subaltern, and Bhabha's colonial mimicry theories, this study also employs qualitative techniques to investigate symbolic representations of marginalized identities, power dynamics associated with colonial domination, and their socio-cultural impacts. Building on Said's belief that the Orient was "one of [Europe's] deepest and most recurring images of the Other" (Said, Orientalism 1), he posits that Imperial England had "to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating – the annihilation of the Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia" (154). Homi Bhabha also highlighted the damage of 'otherness' within both gender constraints and colonized nations as "[s]ubjects are always disproportionately placed in opposition or domination through the symbolic decentring of multiple power relations which play the role of support as well as target or adversary" (Bhabha 72). Once the power relations are set in place in the new colonized culture, 'only then does it become possible to understand the productive ambivalence of the object of colonial discourse – that 'otherness' which is at once an object of desire4 and derision, an articulation of difference contained within the fantasy of origin and identity" (67).

By examining the character through her relationship with India in the socio-historical context of the British Raj, the study analyzes the complexities of their identities from within the colonial setting. This comparison highlights 'the folly of trying to westernize India, with the resulting issues of identity and acculturation' (Sen 22). An analysis of Lispeth's background indicates how her racial identity reinforces

the hierarchical structures within the colonial environment, particularly focusing on concepts such as racial supremacy, cultural imperialism, and internal colonialism within the family structure.

Analysis

An analysis of the short story reveals the analogy that can be drawn between colonized India and Kipling's main character, revealing the cultural aspects of the relationship created between the colonizer and colonized. As such, a close reading of the narrative exposes the similarities between Lispeth as a character and India as a nation by examining their historical backgrounds and perceived value to the colonizer. As such, the layers of conflict are explored from three distinct perspectives. The first layer examines the binary opposition between Lispeth as representative of India and the British on a holistic scale as it sheds light on the interpersonal power dynamics of colonization. The second layer, the visual aspect, will focus on the perceived value attributed to the appearance of both the character and the nation. The final element is the interpersonal layer, examining the relationship between the Lispeth and the Englishman as a metaphor for India's role in sustaining and rejuvenating an ailing Britain struggling to rise from the consequences of the Industrial Revolution.

A. Lispeth/India vs British

The first point of examination is the parallel of the historical backgrounds of India and Lispeth within the colonial context of their respective backgrounds and relationships with colonizers. In the case of India, the internal religious conflicts of the local rulers created an impoverished empire that entered willingly into alliances with the East India Company (Dalrymple 269), initially as a mutual agreement in which '[c]otton and other cash crop exporters and producers in coastal India provided the new British imperial governments with a number of commercial and landlord supporters' (Bayly 130). Similarly, when faced with adversity, Lispeth's parents voluntarily entrusted her to the Chaplain when they 'turned Christian and brought their baby to be baptized' (Kipling 1). After an outbreak of cholera and the death of her parents, Lispeth became 'half-servant, half-companion to the wife of the then Chaplain of Kotgarth' (Kipling 1), occupying a liminal space as companion-servant to the Chaplain's wife, who outwardly portrays Christian generosity by adopting Lispeth but, in reality, finds the situation to the full benefit of the English family. Lispeth's familial and social positioning within the Chaplain's household also underscores the hierarchical nature of colonial relationships. This positioning reflects a paternalistic view of the colonized, where they are considered subjects to be managed and guided, reinforcing the British perception of superiority.

Kipling's narrative, portraying Lispeth and, symbolically, India, was supported by nineteenth-century European culture, which believed in 'the inferiority of non-white races, the necessity that they be ruled by a superior race, and their absolute, unchanging essence' (Said, Culture and Imperialism 182). The Indians, according to Said, are subordinate, not because of incompetence or shortcomings, as can be seen in Lispeth's goddess-like description, but simply because they will never be European (Said, Culture and Imperialism 185). In both instances, the relationship between India/Lispeth creates the 'elite-subaltern,' a term coined by Spivak to describe 'a deviation from an ideal – the people or the subaltern – which is itself defined as a difference from the elite' (italics in original) (Spivak 80). Kipling's narrative highlights the subtle negotiation between the Indigenous individuals and the British authorities, who

deceitfully give the appearance of free will within an imperial structure while obscuring the unilateral benefits.

An analysis of the value ascribed by the colonizers to India and Lispeth reveals fascinating similarities. India, the elite subaltern, was given special importance by the British Empire above its other colonies and, as such, experienced civil rule rather than direct authority as neither an independent nation nor a full British state. Instead, the British administrators 'reconstructed some princely regimes … [to] maintain the old order, if only in appearance…. At the same time, colonial governors worked with magnates to put down … peasant risings' (Bayly 142). Later, as consistent political and economic pressure grew stronger within India's ruling factors, the British allowed themselves to believe that 'British rule would do more for the people of India than the continued rule of the Indian princes who had been supple enough to ally themselves with the British during the great period of expansion' (Giordani, Colonial and Postcolonial Aspects in the Short Stories in English: a Critical Journey from the Victorian Empire to Modern Times 29).

Correspondingly, Lispeth also stands out in the social hierarchy by her distinctive appearance and behavior – she was neither fully assimilated into the colonizer's family nor consigned to a servant's role, as 'the Chaplain's wife did not know what to do with her' (Kipling 1). As such, she was treated as a part of the household, playing with the children and reading books as long as she followed the Victorian moral structure in which they lived. Her innocent attempt to assert her independence – taking the initiative in her decision to marry – was met with horror, then lectures. Ultimately, the Chaplain and his wife decided that they knew what was best for Lispeth, 'a savage by birth (Kipling 3) and 'beyond [their] management entirely' (Kipling 4). Taking charge of her life through deceit, they advised the young Englishman to promise Lispeth that he would return. This shared illusion of being valuable and distinct while staying within specific boundaries indicates the problematic power dynamics in the colonial relationship regarding India and Lispeth.

The final point of comparison highlights the shift in the relationship between the two when the colonized attempts to assert its independence. Initially, 'the expansion of company rule in India required a system of subject formation … that would provide the colonial with a "sense of personal identity"' (Bhabha 87). However, in India's historical narrative, there was a historical break from the British semi-peaceful acquisition caused by the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny in 1857. At this stage, the Mutiny created a clear boundary between the colonizer and the colonized. To the British, the actions were proof that the Indians were a savage people who 'deserved subjugation by the higher civilization of European Britain' (Said, Culture and Imperialism 177).

In contrast, to the indigenous people, it was a justified response to an invader who exerted his power over their rights, beliefs, and culture. The Mutiny was succeeded by the illusory promise of self-rule and the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885 and, ultimately, a rejection of colonial influence in the mid-twentieth century. The Indian National Congress was based on the abstract promise that the Indians would eventually rule themselves. However, 'in practice, the doctrine was a dead letter, and the British self-image drew much of its strength from a radically unflattering view of the natives' (Paffard 3). Although India would remain under British rule for another six decades, the country was already heading towards 'a dynamic of outright opposition to British rule' (Said, Culture and Imperialism 163), unconsciously prophesied, 'I am going back to my own people' (Kipling 5) in the conclusion of Kipling's narrative.

Similarly, although Lispeth initially lived peacefully with the family structure, she experiences a personal 'Mutiny' upon discovering the charade surrounding her relationship with the Englishman. Like her nation, she found herself in 'the more complex cultural situation where "previously unrecognized spiritual and intellectual needs" emerge from the imposition of "foreign" ideas, cultural representations, and structures of power' (Bhabha 12). Her rebellion began with asserting her will in her choice of marriage, dictated by her 'uncivilized Eastern instincts' (Kipling 3). The parallel progression of Indian and Lispeth's history, rejecting the imposed cultural constraints, points to the fragility of colonial relationships and sheds light on the literary portrayal of moments of compliance followed by critical awakenings and eventual rejection, whether at the societal or individual level. Lispeth's progression from passive acceptance to active rejection is a turning point in her personal narrative but also symbolizes India's eventual rejection of colonial rule. The next section will explore the value placed on physical beauty and how it casts an impression of perceived worth over both Lispeth and India, giving each the illusion that they are special to the colonizer.

B. Appearance & Value

Another point of comparison is the external appearance of India/Lispeth, as seen through the colonizer's eyes. Imperialistic authors portray both India and Lispeth through culturally significant vivid imagery. Generally described by male Victorian authors, India is personified as feminine, 'ripe and verdant, passively awaiting domination by a powerful, virile conqueror' (Huenemann 24), embodying the Orientalist tradition of the East as an exotic paradise. The authors anthropomorphized their vision of India into a mysterious oriental mythical being, 'blending the conflicting images of womanhood that appear in both Hindu tradition and Western literary representations of women" (Huenemann 24). Correspondingly, Lispeth, a native woman, becomes a canvas upon which colonial stereotypes are painted. This idealization supports the colonial gaze, which measures her indigenous beauty against European norms. The depiction of Lispeth's beauty reflects this condescending view by describing her using Eurocentric standards of ancient Western deities, giving importance to such as her 'Greek profile' evoking 'Diana of the Romans' and a 'stately goddess' (Kipling 2). In Kipling's depiction, she is beautiful, with repeated highlights of the distinctions in her features that separate her from her people: she is 'of a pale, ivory color and, for her race, extremely tall' (Kipling 1), portraying her as one of the 'Aryans, honorary whites, in a sense' (Bayly 304) – that is until she steps away from the subordinate role she has been relegated to. The analogous descriptions reflect the shared experience of being judged according to Western aesthetic ideals and show the impact of the colonial gaze on colonized cultural landscapes.

The portrayal of Lispeth in the short story exposes the condescending, paternalistic attitudes of the colonial mindset, symbolic of the broader British perception towards colonized India as a nation, valuable and beautiful but incapable of making her own decisions. Lispeth personifies General Macauley's vision of 'a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect' (Spivak 77). India, as well, in the eyes of Kipling and his contemporaries, 'would pass into chaos or insurrection unless roads were walked upon properly, houses lived in the right way, men and women talked to in the correct tones' (Said, Culture and Imperialism 174), accentuating the need for British guidance in the smallest of details. Both the country and the character were seen not only as subordinate but as innately savage and ungovernable. This patronizing view of India and its inhabitants was endorsed by the many British lawmakers and thinkers of the time, who 'broadly denied

the capacity of Indians … to rule themselves, on the grounds that their domestic life was defective, and that centuries of oriental despotisms had inured them to autocratic rule' (Bayly 304). Regardless of the sarcasm revealed in Kipling's anonymous narrator, the author's biases are unconsciously exposed throughout the text as he refers to the ignorance of the Chaplain's wife's criticism of Lispeth. Within the short story, the author upholds 'Imperialism's image as the establisher of the good society … marked by the espousal of the woman as the object of protection from her own kind' (italics in original) (Spivak 94). Kipling's scornful attitude is visible through the derogatory language the author uses in the short story, such as 'uncivilized Eastern instincts,' 'a savage by birth,' 'beyond her management entirely,' 'no conception of the sea, being a Hill girl,' the Englishman … of superior clay,' 'infamously dirty,' 'her own unclean people,' and concluding the narrative by describing her as a 'bleared, wrinkled creature' (Kipling). This appearance contrasts sharply with the beauty and grace he had initially expressed when she remained within the confines of the European social structure. The distortion in Kipling's depiction of Lispeth, when she makes a decision contrary to the colonizers' directives, highlights the fragility of her perceived worth in their eyes; her value is contingent on her loyalty to their standards. The following section will examine the third layer of Lispeth's struggle within the confines of the British subjugation, her relationship with the Englishman. The anonymous figure symbolizes Lispeth's disillusionment and the crushed hopes of the Indian nation's self-rule. The study will examine the role of the Englishman in reinforcing the colonial power dynamic; his indifference to her feelings reflects the imperial British disregard for transparency in their interactions with the colonized Other.

C. The Englishman

In Rudyard Kipling's "Lispeth," the character of the Englishman serves as a literary device that symbolizes a weakened British Empire during colonial rule in India. During the Empire's declining years, the Englishman embodies the Empire's fragility, moral bankruptcy, and struggle to maintain control over its colonies. His relationship with Lispeth highlights the colonial attitude of viewing Indigenous subjects as subordinate – to the point of being disposable. Moreover, the Englishman's unfulfilled promises to Lispeth metaphorically represent the deceit that underlays colonial rhetoric, rhetoric that had concealed the exploitative reality of colonialism. Through his narrative, Kipling explores colonial attitudes, revealing its hidden manipulative and dehumanizing nature under the mask of the Empire. In the character of the Englishman, Kipling creates a distorted binary opposition with Lispeth as the ideal and the Englishman as dishonorable, a reversal of the strict English commitment to honor.

The portrayal of the Englishman in Rudyard Kipling's "Lispeth" symbolizes more than a simple British Civil Servant; he becomes a symbol of the failing British Empire during the Industrial Revolution. His short-lived presence in Lispeth's life imitates the transitory dominance of the British Empire, which, despite its outward façade of strength, is plagued by internal decay and moral decadence. As the Empire faced internal conflict, economic pressures, and growing opposition from other colonized nations, Kipling's Englishman embodies the weaknesses and contradictions integral to imperial power. By the mid-nineteenth century, Europe's demand to feed the new, powerful looms created an urgent need for imported raw materials. As such, 'cash crop exporters and producers in coastal India provided the new British imperial governments with a number of commercial and landlord supporters' (Bayly 130). The British never fully trusted the colonized natives, regarding them instead as sources of wealth and labor to be exploited and manipulated. As such, Kipling's Englishman

assumes that his 'coolies must have stolen his baggage and fled' (Kipling 3). Despite his attitudes, he has no misgivings about pretending to court Lispeth while she nurses him back to health, knowing all the while that he 'was engaged to a girl at Home' (Kipling 3). The time he spends with Lispeth, conjuring visions of a shared future in her mind, represents the Empire's desperate attempts to maintain control over its colonies through empty rhetoric and false promises.

In the narrative, the character of the Englishman fulfills a critical function: that of the colonial presence in India, personifying the arrogance, privilege, and entitlement that characterized British imperialism within the Indian Civil Service, a class who believed that their 'natural dominance over each and every Indian … was absolute' (Said, Culture and Imperialism 183). The Englishman's relationship with Lispeth reflects the imperialistic attitude towards the natives in his treatment of a native woman living on the margins of British society. This outlook denotes the power dynamics of colonial relationships with natives, especially women. Filled with colonial paternalism, the Englishman's behavior towards Lispeth mimics the authoritarian view of the colonizer towards the colonized, seeing them as capable of strenuous physical labor, yet childlike in their mental capacity, with 'a fixed and static reality' categorized in 'terms which reduce [their] complexity both synchronically and diachronically' (Moore-Gilbert 2). Within the short story, the Englishman, who was carried home and nursed by Lispeth, also 'laughed a good deal' when he heard of Lispeth's love and 'found it very pleasant to … call her pet names' (Kipling 3), following the Chaplain's wife's advice that Lispeth 'is but a child … and, I fear, at heart a heathen' (Kipling 4). However, just as the Englishman eventually moves on to a new life, abandoning Lispeth and his promises, so too does the British Empire, unable to fulfill its ambitious drams of permanent dominance and leaving India to face its fate.

Beneath the façade of benevolence lies deeper exploitation, as the Englishman's promises of a shared future with Lispeth ultimately prove hollow, as he willingly joined the Chaplain's wife in the deception. His brief affection for Lispeth epitomizes the temporary colonial relationships, where the colonized are considered expendable, subjects to be exploited to serve the colonizer's needs, and then abandoned. The Englishman's actions echo a statement by Ghulam Khan in an 18th-century text, through which he observed that 'the British felt nothing for the country, not even for their closest allies and servants. This was why those Indians who initially welcomed the British quickly changed their minds' (Bayly 269). Through the character of the Englishman in "Lispeth," a metaphor emerges beyond the man – an ambitious tale highlighting the complications and inconsistencies of the colonial establishment.

In Rudyard Kipling's "Lispeth," the Englishman's promises to Lispeth embody a powerful metaphor of the colonial discourse of home rule in India. The Englishman's assurances to Lispeth of a shared future and his promises 'that he would come back and marry her' (Kipling 4) echo the optimistic speeches by English politicians regarding the future of India's self-rule. Although the Indian National Congress was formed in 1885, the Indian leaders were also aware of the British 'control of bureaucracy' (Bayly 217). Correspondingly, the British statements for self-government, glowing promises of freedom and independence provided to the trusting nation, are analogous to the Englishman's promises to Lispeth. Ultimately, both sets of promises prove to be empty and transient, not to be trusted. The comparison between the personal betrayal experienced by Lispeth and the general dishonesty suffered by the Indian public

highlights the deceptive nature of colonial promises, which were made to conceal the real motive of preserving imperial control.

Findings

A comparison of the socio-historical relationship between India and the East India Company with Lispeth's familial history in Kipling's narrative reveals the similarities of these identities within the colonial setting. Lispeth's background and relationship with the Chaplain's family reflect the hierarchical nature of the colonial relationship with the Indigenous people. In addition, in the eyes of the colonizer, India/Lispeth's appearance and behavior emphasize the shared experience of being subjected to Western aesthetic standards. The Lispeth's marginal identity, positioned between her Indigenous roots and the dominant British society, is a metaphor for the wider landscape of the nation. Her attempt to navigate through a world characterized by traditional British cultural background and values captures the difficulties faced by the colonized Indians caught in a cultural collision with the unbending policies of the British Raj.

As such, Lispeth's peripheral identity becomes a focus for critical emphasis; she is positioned between her Indigenous roots on the one hand and the overriding authority of colonialism on the other. Her uncertain position, theorized by Homi K. Bhabha as 'a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite' (Bhabha 86), becomes a metaphor for the indigenous people of colonized nations as Lispeth's struggles to move between her cultural background and the colonial values forced on her by the conquerors. As such, she signifies the international experience of individuals within the colonized society and, in a wider scope, the entirety of India. Through carefully examining Lispeth's interactions, choices, and the consequences of her actions, Imperialistic literature reveals how the colonial project penetrated and transformed the lives of individuals at every level. In addition, her story unveils a larger narrative of adaptation, resistance, and identity formation within the colonial context. It highlights the power structures and cultural shifts shaping the British colonial presence in India. In essence, Lispeth is a powerful metaphor that represents the various ways in which the personal and the political overlap in the colonial space and echoes the voices of the Indigenous people facing imperialism.

Through this exploration of Kipling's narrative, this study critiques not only the individual character of the Englishman but also the imperial system that maintained such false assurances as a whole, ultimately contributing to its own decline. The character of the Englishman comments ironically on the fragility of imperial power in the face of the social, economic, and political unrest created by the Industrial Revolution. Through such symbolism, Kipling's narrative unveils colonial rule's fundamental contradictions and moral ambiguities, revealing how the false rhetoric of independence and progress conceals oppression and exploitation.

Examining the parallels between Lispeth in Kipling's short story as a character and a representation of India under British imperial rule gives a deeper understanding of unspoken power dynamics between the pseudo-benign colonizer and the colonized. Through the allegory of Lispeth, the narrative focuses on the colonial assumption of cultural and moral superiority over the nations under their rule, bringing attention to their socio-historic background and the illusion of worth based on beauty and obedience. Additionally, the paper examines the seemingly-negligible role of the Englishman, nursed by Lispeth as a potential husband. His callous treatment of her reinforces the false promises of self-rule made to the Indian people as a way to keep

them ‘sedated’ for a while. The analysis of the three elements reveals Kipling’s contribution to sustaining the colonial discourse in his narratives.

Conclusion

Using “Lispeth” as a case study for colonial Indian experiences under British rule enriches understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics of the colonized Indian sub-continent. Within Kipling’s short story, the protagonist is an allegory for the Indian experience under British rule. Lispeth’s interactions, description, and consequences mirror the multilayered impact of colonization on the socio-cultural life of India, creating a discourse that uniformly reveals not only the Oriental female as the Western/Occidental “Other” but can be expanded to envelop the colonized nation itself. In addition, the character of the Englishman serves as a metaphor, reflecting a declining British Empire and emphasizing the manipulative and dehumanizing nature of imperialism. Through Lispeth’s story, readers identify the personal and political intersections in the colonial landscape that echo the struggles of countless individuals under imperial dominance.

This study of Rudyard Kipling’s “Lispeth” and its symbolic meaning within the wider context of postcolonial literature exposes the complex layers of colonial discourse concealed in the narrative. The analysis reveals Lispeth, through examining her appearance and relationship with the British, as a representation of India and the ‘Other.’ Both subjects unsuccessfully walk the marginalized space between their indigenous roots and colonial influences. This study also presents the character of the Englishman as a symbol of the ailing British Empire, whose empty promises echo the colonial goodwill’s deceptive nature.

From this perspective, the implications of the analysis challenge Kipling’s narrative and offer a further understanding of postcolonial literature as a whole. Examining the characters of Lispeth and the Englishman highlights the inevitable effects of colonial ideologies on individual lives as well as nations. Such analyses develop a deeper understanding of how literature functions as a reflection, reinforcement, and, at times, even a subversion of the power dynamics of the colonial encounter. The subtleties disclosed in this study invite researchers to explore colonial texts further and examine how representations of the ‘Other’ and the dynamics of power are preserved, disputed, or altered in different cultural and historical contexts.

In conclusion, the analysis of “Lispeth” functions as an interpretive guide toward understanding the intricacies of British colonialism in India and unraveling issues of power, identity, and resistance in postcolonial literature. This study also invites critics to look deeper into colonial texts and continue a critical engagement that exceeds literary analysis and opens further conversations about the legacy of imperialism in contemporary society.

Bibliography

Albaqawi, Nasser. "Orientalist and Colonialist Perspectives on the Representation of the Female in Kipling's Kim." Cogent Arts & Humanities (2023).

Bayly, C. A. The Birth of the Modern World (1780 - 1914): Global Connections and Comparisons. Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Bhabha, Homi K. The Location of Culture. Routledge, 1994.

Bhattacharjee, Sukalpa. "Understanding the 'Tribal': Post Colonial Identity and Creative Writing." Man and Society: A Journal of North-East Studies VIII (2011): 1 - 13.

Blunt, Alison and Gillian Rose. "Introduction: Women's Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies." Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies. Ed. Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose. The Guilford Press, 1994. 1 - 29.

Dalrymple, William. The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019.

Dao, Sidiki. "A Postcolonial Reading of the Relationships Between the British Colonizer and the Colonized in Rudyard Kipling's Kim and E. M. Forester's A Passage to India." Kurukan Fugg 2.8 (2023): 162 - 173.

Giordani, Anna. "Colonial and Postcolonial Aspects in the Short Stories in English: a Critical Journey from the Victorian Empire to Modern Times." Graz: University of Graz, 2015. Diss.

Giordani, Anna. "Colonial and Postcolonial Aspects in the Short Stories in English: a Critical Journey from the Victorian Empire to Modern Times." University of Graz, 18 May 2015. Thesis.

Hai, Ambreen. "On Truth and Lie in a Colonial Sense: Kipling's Tales of Tale-Telling." ELH 64.2 (1997): 599 - 625.

Hogan, Patrick Colm. "The Gender of Tradition: Ideologies of Character in Post-Colonization Anglophone Literature." Order and Partialities: Theory, Pedagogy, and the "Postcolonial." Ed. Kostas Myrsiades and Jerry McGuire. State University of New York, 1995.

Huenemann, Karyn. "From Lispeth to the Woman of Shamlegh: Rudyard Kipling, India, and Indian Women." The ICFAI University Journal of Commonwealth Literature (2009): 22 - 45.

Kipling, Rudyard. "Lispeth." Kipling, Rudyard. Plain Tales from the Hills. Global Grey ebooks, 2018. 1 - 6.

Majity, Abhijit. "East-West relationship and the Anglo-Indian disorder: Locating (post)colonial disability in Rudyard Kipling's short stories." AGATHOS 15.1 (2024): 359 - 375.

Mishra, Nishtha. "Depiction of Key Features of Post Colonialism through Selected Works of Rudyard Kipling and R.K. Narayan." Criterion 7.1 (2016): 119 - 126.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." Boundary 2 12/13 (1984): 333 - 58.

Moore-Gilbert, B. J. Kipling and Orientalism. Routledge, 2014.

Nyikos, Daniel. "Colonizing Cynicism in the Works of Rudyard Kipling." University of Szeged, 2019. Diss.

Paffard, Mark. Kipling's Indian Fiction. St. Martin's Press, 1989.

Said, Edward. Culture and Imperialism. Vintage Books, 2019.

Said, Edward. Orientalism. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Sen, Indrani. "Gendering (Anglo) India: Rudyard Kipling and the Construction of Women." Social Scientist 28.9/10 (2000): 12 - 32.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader. Ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. Columbia UP, 1994. 66 - 111.

Weedon, Chris. "Postcolonial Feminist Criticism." A History of Feminist Literary Criticism. Ed. Gil Plain and Susan Sellers. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 282 - 300.

Westall, Claire. "What They Knew of Nation and Empire: Rudyard Kipling and C. L. R. James." Kipling and Beyond. Ed. Caroline Rooney and Kaori Nagai. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 165 - 184.

كشف الآخر: تحليل ما بعد الاستعمار لقصة "ليسبث" لرديارد كيبلينغ"

نجوى نايت الغريبي

قسم اللغات الحديثة وآدابها، كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية، جامعة الملك عبدالعزيز، جدة، المملكة العربية السعودية

naalghoraibi@kau.edu.sa

المستخلص. نالت الشخصيات الهندية للروائي كيبلنج حظًّا وافرًا من الدراسة، بما في ذلك دراسة تمثيلاته للمستعمِرين ومن هم تحت طائل الاستعمار. ومع ذلك، فإن أصالة هذا البحث تكمن في تركيزها على قصته القصيرة "ليسبث" من ناحية، وفي سبر أغوار الشخصية الرئيسية في القصة بوصفها رمزًا للهند المستعمرة التي تُرى على أنها "الأخرى" الدونية من قبل المستعمِرين. كما يؤكد البحث على تمثيل كيبلينغ للقصة القصيرة "ليسبث" على أنه يعكس تعقيدات التهميش الاجتماعي والسياسي للمجتمع المستعمَر. يتضمن هذا البحث فحصًا لكيفية تمثيل شخصية كيبلينغ، ليسبث، كالهند المستعمرة، المحاصرة بين جذورها الأصلية والتأثيرات الاستعمارية التي تحيط بها، من خلال تحليل البُنى الثقافية (الديناميكيات الاجتماعية/التاريخية، والمظهر، والشخصيات الثانوية) كعوامل تعزز تهميش "الآخر"، سواء كان ذلك يشير إلى المرأة المستعمرة أو الأمة ككل. تلقي هذه الدراسة أيضاً الضوء على قيام ليسبث ل بتمريض الرجل الإنجليزي، مما يرمز إلى إنعاش الهند لبريطانيا المريضة. وبالتالي، يضيف هذا التحليل طبقة من التعقيد إلى الرواية الاستعمارية لكيبلينغ، مسلطًا الضوء على كيفية تعزيز تصوير المؤلف لـ ليسبث للتمثيل النمطي للشرق المستعمر، وتعزيز التمييز الثنائي بين الغرب "المتحضر" والآخر "البربري" الغريب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: كيبلنج، ليسبث، الهند المستعمرة، التهميش، التمثيل الاستعماري، البُنى الثقافية، التمييز الثنائي بين الشرق والغرب.