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M'HAMED BOUGARA UNIVERSITY, BOUMERDES
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DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DIVISION OF ENGLISH

# Prospero and Caliban in *Robinson Crusoe*, *Kim*, *Heart of Darkness*, and *A Passage to India*

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**Candidate**:
Saida BOULFEKHAR

**Supervisor**:
Professor Si Abderrahmane ARAB

**PANEL OF EXAMINERS**

**Chair**: Prof. M'hamed BENSEMANE, University of Algiers II

**Rapporteur**: Prof. S. A. ARAB, University of Boumerdes

**Examiners :**

Prof. Bouteldja RICHE, University of Tizi-Ouzou

Prof. Amina BEKKAT, University of Blida

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# ABSTRACT

Taking Shakespeare's Prospero and Caliban as a paradigmatic binary and basing its theoretical approach on cultural materialism and postcoloniality, the present study attempts to address the issue of the coloniser-colonised relationship in four canonical novels in English literature, namely Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and Edward Morgan Forster's *A Passage to India*. The study is conducted in the light of the British Empire's development starting from its incipiency up till its downfall in the twentieth century.

This study examines the way in which the changing historical context of British colonialism bears on each writer's vision of colonial relations as reflected in his narrative through his characterisation and his dramatisation of the colonial encounter and, at the same time, attempts to track signs of consistency in the four writers' conceptions of colonial relationships so as to verify the hypothesis that despite the varying writers' views and despite the unquestionable influence of the changing colonial context, the colonial encounter is consistently conceived as a strong to weak and superior to inferior relationship; a core that proves immune to the historical changes of British expansionism.



## Key-words

coloniser; colonised; Prospero; Caliban; colonisation; colonial relations; expansion; Empire; historical and colonial context; Postcoloniality; Cultural Materialism; Orientalism; novel

# RÉSUMÉ

Se basant principalement sur les écrits d'Edward Said dans son *Orientalism* et son *Culture and Imperialism* et prenant l'affrontement colonial-type de Prospero et Caliban comme référence, la présente étude essaie de traiter le sujet de la relation colonisateur-colonisé dans l'optique postcoloniale dans quatre romans canoniques anglais, a savoir *Robinson Crusoe* de Daniel Defoe, *Kim* de Rudyard Kipling, *Heart of Darkness* de Joseph Conrad, et *A Passage to India* d'Edward Morgan Forster. L'étude est conduite à la lumière du développement de l'empire Britannique à partir de son émergence jusqu'à son déclin au vingtième siècle.

Cette étude examine la manière dont le contexte historique changeant du colonialisme britannique affecte la vision de chacun des auteurs précités. Cette vision prend forme à travers ses personnages et sa théâtralisation de la rencontre coloniale. Cette étude essaie ainsi de 'pister' les signes de continuité dans la conception des relations coloniales afin de vérifier l'hypothèse que malgré les points de vue différents des écrivain et malgré l'incontestable influence du contexte colonial changeant, l'affrontement colonial est constamment conçus comme une relation de fort à faible et de supérieur à inférieur ; un noyau dur qui s'avère être pérenne malgré tous les changements historiques de l'expansionnisme britannique.

## Mots-clés

colonisateur; colonisé; Prospero; Caliban; colonisation; relation coloniale; expansion; Empire; contexte historique et colonial; Postcolonialité; Matérialisme Culturel; Orientalisme; roman.

# NON-PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is entirely the result of my own investigation, and that due reference and acknowledgements are made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

Name: Saida BOULFEKHAR

Date: October 2013

Signature:

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# Introduction

# INTRODUCTION

Taking Shakespeare's Prospero and Caliban as a paradigmatic binary and basing its theoretical approach on postcoloniality and cultural materialism, the present work investigates the manifestation of the unequal and antagonistic relation of coloniser and colonised in the English novel in parallel with the development of the British Empire, from the period of the first colonial expansion in the seventeenth century till its decline in the twentieth century. This investigation will be carried out through a comparative study of four canonical literary texts, namely Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901), Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), and Edward Morgan Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924). The study attempts to detect signs of similarity and difference in these four novels' rendition of the coloniser and the colonised, and in their conception of the colonial encounter, so as to evaluate the extent to which each novel echoes its predecessor or deviates from it.

Our aim is to verify the hypothesis that the colonial encounter in the English (colonial) novel is consistently conceived in terms of a binary opposition; essentially as a superior-inferior relationship. The remarkable immutability of this basic ground rule for colonial relations is, it will be argued, due to its permanent reinforcement through the reiteration of imperial assumptions –the inciting as well as the consolidating element of the imperial enterprise. This permanent reinforcement definitely solidifies the core of the colonial relationship and leaves the kernel and crust, as it were, to the shaping force of the changing historical circumstances and the shifting views of writers vis-à-vis the colonial project. To verify our hypothesis, our reference will be the archetypal Prospero-Caliban binary the choice of which will be accounted for in the following section.

**I.**

The Prospero-Caliban binary is, without any exaggeration, a pivotal element in postcolonial studies. It is not only taken as the unquestionable paradigm of coloniser and colonised relations but has become the emblem of all sorts of dominance relations. Prospero, *The Tempest*'s hero figure, is the archetypal coloniser and the embodiment of European dominance and 'civilisation', and Caliban, his slave, is the archetypal colonised and the exemplar of the non-Europeans' subservience and 'barbarism.'

There is no arbitrariness behind the choice, in post-colonial studies, of Prospero and Caliban as symbolic figures of coloniser and colonised respectively. The choice is quite purposeful. For Prospero's and Caliban's story is that of a European who dispossessed a non-European of his land and subjected him to servitude. Adding to this is the fact that *The Tempest* is one of the most famous literary texts in the English canon. Very importantly, too, the play –first staged in 1611– was contemporaneous with and reflective of Britain's early years of imperial expansion. The enterprise, extending to the beginning of the twentieth century and culminating in a most infamous colonialism, made of the British Isles the centre of the largest Empire in modern history.

More importantly, however, is the play's complicity with, and involvement in, the propagation as well as the consolidation of European imperialist assumptions. For *The Tempest*'s discourse unmistakably celebrates post-Renaissance European superiority and Europe's 'civilising mission'. Apart from few exceptions, both Western and non-Western critics agree that this is hardly deniable. Thomas Cartelli, for instance, convincingly argues in *Repositioning Shakespeare* that the play "has made seminal contributions to the development

of the colonialist ideology through which it is read," and concludes that it is consequently "a responsible party to its successive readings and rewritings"[1] by post-colonial writers. In the same vein, Leslie Fiedler, speaking about productions of *The Tempest*, contends that the play "is a parable of transatlantic imperialism, the colonization of the West."[2] Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, for his part, believes that "[i]n the story of Prospero and Caliban Shakespeare had dramatized the practice and psychology of colonization years before it became a global phenomenon,"[3] while Edward Said says *The Tempest* is a "fable […] one of several that stand guard over the imagination of the New World."[4] Like other critics, he says that the encounter between the inaugural figures of Prospero and Caliban incarnates the encounter between all colonisers and colonised. "Every subjugated community in Europe, Australia, Africa, Asia, and the Americas has played the sorely tried and oppressed Caliban to some outside master like Prospero,"[5] he says.

Remarkably, similar critical and cultural views were pronounced even before the postcolonial era by Western critics themselves. Speaking about "the political and cultural implications of the relation between Prospero and Caliban," Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin point to J. S. Phillpot who, in his introduction to the 1873 Rugby edition of Shakespeare, wrote: "The character may have had a special bearing on the great question of a time when we were discovering new countries, subjecting new savages, and founding fresh

[1] Cartelli, Thomas. *Repositioning Shakespeare*. London: Routledge, 1999. p. 89
[2] Quoted by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin in *The Empire Writes Back*, 2nd ed., London: Routledge, 2002, p. 188
[3] Quoted in *Repositioning Shakespeare*, op. cit., p.96
[4] Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage, 1994, p. 212
[5] Ibid., p. 214

colonies. If Prospero might dispossess Caliban, England might dispossess the aborigines of the colonies."[6]

These views explain the great interest *The Tempest* has known in post-colonial studies, and the remarkable number of appropriations it has witnessed from post-colonial writers to answer its discourse back. It has repeatedly been used, in Thomas Cartelli's words, "as a site around which the age-old conflicts between coloniser and colonised continue to be played out and rehearsed."[7] And this is why the present work takes this almost anonymously agreed-upon "foundational paradigm in the history of European colonialism"[8] as a reference in its examination of the conception and practice of the coloniser and colonised relationship in our corpus of study.

**II.**

As regards the theoretical basis, our study will depend primarily on the postcolonial theory, mainly on Edward Said's pronouncements in his seminal books *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, and secondarily on the cultural materialist approach. Our choice of the cultural materialist approach is motivated by the necessity of recovering the histories of our selected novels and studying them as cultural artifacts deeply implicated in history, shaping as well as shaped by the material forces of their contexts; the economic and political systems of their times. As will appear from our study of the different visions of colonial relations in our corpus of study, we will be compelled to examine synchronically much biographical, historical, social, cultural, and political material related to the authors and their

[6] *The Empire Writes Back*, op. cit., footnote 10, p. 243
[7] *Repositioning Shakespeare*, op. cit., p. 89
[8] Ibid.

literary products so as to account for the writers' opting for one vision or another of the colonial encounter.

The cultural materialist approach will also be tremendously rewarding in our endeavour to measure the degree to which the discourse of one novel replicates, reinforces, or revisits, and disrupts that of its preceding novel so as to evaluate the extent of convergence or divergence between the visions of the four works. Our hypothesis is that the core of the colonial relationship in the English novel is stable and 'hard' because it is consistently consolidated and reinforced. This hypothesis will be verified through our tracing of signs of reinforcement and consolidation of the colonial discourse in the narratives of the four texts. To this end, we will mainly resort to the employment of the three most prominent concepts in the cultural materialist theory, namely those of consolidation, subversion, and containment.

As clarified by Jonathan Dollimore, the first of these concepts

> refers, typically, to the ideological means whereby a dominant order seeks to perpetuate itself; the second to the subversion of that order, the third to the containment of ostensibly subversive pressures.[9]

Dollimore pinpoints two trends in materialist criticism: those who stress the consolidating aspects of texts and those who seek to trace signs of resistance to the dominant vision and thus cast light on the subversive aspects of texts. But Dollimore stresses the complexity of the process of consolidation and subversion in the study of texts' representations of authority. Subversiveness, he writes, "may for example be apparent only, the dominant order not only containing it but, paradoxical as it may seem, actually producing it for its own ends."[10] This

[9] Dollimore, Jonathan. "Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism and the New Historicism" in Dollimore, Jonathan and Sinfield, Alan, eds, *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*. Manchester: M.U.P., 1985, p. 10
[10] Ibid.

means that certain texts produce what at first sight seem to be signs of resistance to, and subversion of, the dominant order but then undercut and undermine that subversion in favor of the dominant order, proving in the end to consolidate and uphold that order not subvert it. These insights will tremendously be rewarding in our examination of the colonial encounter in the corpus of study and, as mentioned above, will help us verify the hypothesis that its core is constantly consolidated.

As to the postcolonial perspective, our choice is determined by the nature of our subject of study which is focused on colonial relations in the selected literary texts. Indeed, no other theoretical approach can better serve the purpose of our study than the postcolonial. As regards the implication of literary texts, as cultural artifacts, in the colonial project we will mainly rely on Edward Said's pronouncements in his *Culture and Imperialism*.

In this seminal book, Said criticises the tendency in some literary circles to "sanitize [culture] as a realm of unchanging intellectual monuments, free from worldly affiliations"[11] and judiciously argues that culture for centuries "nurtured the sentiment, rationale, and above all the imagination of empire."[12] According to Said, "[w]e are at a point in our work when we can no longer ignore empires and the imperial context in our studies" because "the crossings over between culture and imperialism are compelling."[13]

In his *Culture and Imperialism* Said also addresses the relation of literature –as part of culture– and empire, refuting all attempts to separate them and arguing that "the literature itself makes constant references to itself as somehow participating in Europe's overseas

[11] *Culture and Imperialism*, op. cit., p. 13
[12] Ibid., p. 12
[13] Ibid., p. 6

expansion, and therefore creates what [Raymond Williams] calls "structures of feeling" that support, elaborate, and consolidate the practice of empire."[14]

As cultural forms, novels, Said's argument runs, cannot be "chopped off from history and society"[15] and should be dealt with always in relation to their actuality. Said condemns the notion of literature's autonomy as "imprecise"[16] and criticises the habit of some scholars who, in their writing about literary works, deal exclusively with them and disregard their historical contexts. At this point postcolonial theory intersects with cultural materialism as the latter, too, refuses, in the words of its most prominent exponents, "to privilege 'literature' in the way that literary criticism has done hitherto"[17] and insists that

> culture does not (cannot) transcend the material forces and relations of production. Culture is not simply a reflection of the economic and political system, but nor can it be independent of it.[18]

Like the postcolonial theoreticians, the cultural materialists oppose the 'idealism' that, as Raymond Williams argues, "separate[s] literature and art from other kinds of social practice, in such a way as to make them subject to quite special and distinct laws."[19] Thus both theoretical perspectives take "the implication of literary texts in history"[20] as a given.

Novels, Said's argument goes on, "were immensely important in the formation of imperial attitudes, references, and experiences."[21] And they were also immensely important in

[14] *Culture and Imperialism*, op. cit., p 14
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] "Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism and the New Historicism" op. cit., p. 4
[18] Ibid., p. viii
[19] Quoted by Jonathan Dollimore in "Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism and the New Historicism" op. cit., p. 4
[20] Ibid., p. viii
[21] *Culture and Imperialism*, p. xii

the decolonization thrust as a means for colonised people "to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history,"[22] because, as Said argues,

> The main battle in imperialism [was] over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future –these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative.[23]

But in *Culture and Imperialism*, Said is not merely set on making the connection between the novel and empire. More importantly, and more particularly pertinent to our subject of study, he points to the parallel between the development of empire and that of the novel genre, arguing that the prototypical modern novel is *Robinson Crusoe* and "certainly not accidentally it is about a European who creates a fiefdom for himself on a distant non-European island."[24] Said then concludes that because "narrative plays such a remarkable part in the imperial quest, it is therefore not surprising that France and (especially) England have an unbroken tradition of novel-writing unparalleled elsewhere."[25] It is in the light of these valuable insights about the novel's "remarkable" role in the imperial quest that this work studies the manifestation of the interaction between coloniser and colonised in the English novel.

**III.**

For the study of the interaction per se, however, Said's *Orientalism* will be the reference. This book, seminal and most influential in postcolonial studies to say the least, is actually an encyclopedic study of the historical interaction between (European) coloniser and

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[22] *Culture and Imperialism*, p. xii
[23] Ibid., pp. xii-xiii
[24] Ibid., p. xii
[25] Ibid., p. xxii

(Oriental) colonised. The book is mainly focused on Orientalist discourse and Europe's relation with the Orient but its pronouncements on the subject do not apply exclusively to the Orient but to all colonised territories at large. Actually, the book has become a reference for the study of all kinds of hegemonic relations in cultural studies.

Orientalism, as defined by Said, is

> the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient –dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.[26]

The most 'tangible' side of Orientalism, Said explains, is a massive body of writings including "elaborate theories, epics, *novels*, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind,' and so on."[27] These are written by a very large mass of writers: poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators. Between all these different fields of interest the interchange, or traffic, is "constant…considerable, quite disciplined –perhaps even regulated,"[28] which ensures the durability and consistency of Orientalism, as Said expounds throughout his book.

But Orientalism, as a massive body of writings, is not meant to serve as a source of 'pure', objective knowledge about the Orient, its peoples, cultures, and religions, but meant instead to serve as a means for dominating and ruling over the Orient; that is colonising it. It does not describe the 'real' Orient but "expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship,

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[26] Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1994, p. 3
[27] Ibid., pp. 2-3. Emphasis mine
[28] Ibid., p. 3

imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles."[29] So, Orientalism does not have 'scientific' aims but political, more exactly colonial, ones.

In his underlining the fact that Orientalism arbitrarily "expresses and represents" the Orient, Said stresses a crucial point in his study of Orientalism: that the latter is a discourse. For this he relies on the Foucauldian sense of the term: that a discourse is "a strongly bounded area of social knowledge, a system of statements within which the world can be known."[30] Through discourse speakers and hearers, writers and readers, people in a society, for instance, come to an understanding about themselves, their relationship to each other and their place in the world; i.e. what is known as the "construction of subjectivity". This applies both to the ruling class in society –the coloniser, in the case of our study, and to the ruled –the colonised.

But the vision of the world offered though discourse is dependent on the way the ruling class in society (the colonisers in our case) wants the world to be known so as to preserve, maintain, and extend its power over the ruled (the colonised). Thus, certain unspoken inclusive and exclusive rules that concern the classification, the ordering and the distribution of that knowledge of the world are imposed. These rules define the nature of discourse by determining what is to be said in a discourse and what is not to be said, and strictly controlling any incursions that might pose a threat to the discourse authority and through it to the power of the ruling class. What comes out ultimately of this system is not objective knowledge but a subjective 'version' of it congruent with the economic and political interests of the ruling class.

[29] *Orientalism*, op. cit. p. 2
[30] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2001, p. 70

Foucault's concept of discourse casts light on the reasons behind Europe's –mainly Britain's and France's– interest in the institution of Orientalism. As a discourse, Orientalism was Europe's means of imposing its own vision of the world upon the Orient; a vision that "represented" the globe as divided into Occident and Orient and promoted the image of the former as powerful, superior, the centre of civilisation and enlightenment, and the latter as weak, inferior, and the heart of backwardness and primitivism.

These pronouncements are of great importance for our work. For it is in the light of these insights that we will conduct our study of the four selected novels. We will approach them as cultural artifacts that are part of a colonial discursive tradition and thus study them as discourses. We will examine their 'representations' of the coloniser and the colonised and of the relationship between them and it will indeed be demonstrated that it is always the vision of the more powerful, the coloniser, which is upheld: the coloniser is always portrayed as superior and 'civilised' and the colonised as inferior and 'uncivilised,' as Said expounds in his book.

But in order to study the novels as discursive artifacts and clarify how they construct the image of the coloniser and that of the colonised and determine the conditions of their interaction, we have first to examine the basic rules that govern the colonial discourse. The most important rule is the strict distinction between coloniser and colonised, or what Said calls the "absolute demarcation"[31] between East (colonised) and West (coloniser). The demarcation has become known as 'binary opposition' in postcolonial studies. Binary opposition is not simply a distinction between two different things, but represents the most extreme form of difference. More important, however, is the extent to which it entails "a violent hierarchy, in

[31] *Orientalism*, op. cit. p. 39

which one term of the opposition is always dominant," (for instance, West over Orient, coloniser over colonised) and the fact that "the binary opposition itself exists to confirm that dominance."[32]

In addition, as pointed out by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, a binary opposition, such as coloniser-colonised, may be rearticulated in any particular text in a number of ways, e.g. white-black, civilised-primitive, advanced-retarded, good-evil, beautiful-ugly, human-bestial. The primary binary and its variations are structured in a way that permits their reading collectively, so that coloniser, white, civilized, advanced, good, beautiful and human are collectively opposed to colonised, black, primitive, retarded, evil, ugly and bestial. This structuring of binaries explains how easily the violence of colonisation slips into the pseudo-ideal of civilisation. This will be evidenced from the study of the selected novels, which will show how this pseudo-ideal is employed by the coloniser to cloak his naked exploitation of the colonised in an attempt to justify and legitimise his colonial project.

Very related to the logic of binarism is the 'extreme' logic of essentialism. Generally speaking, essentialism is "the assumption that groups, categories or classes of objects have one or several defining features exclusive to all members of that category."[33] In colonial discourse, it designates the mode of representing the colonial subject as an 'Other' to the Self of the dominant colonial culture. Thus, to say that the colonised is essentialised is to say that he is represented as an "ontologically" distinct entity from the coloniser. And if this object of colonial representation, in Said's words, "develops, changes, or otherwise transforms itself in the way [the civilised] frequently [does], nevertheless is fundamentally, even ontologically,

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[32] *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*, p. 24
[33] Ibid., p. 77

stable."[34] He is "a Platonic essence" and his culture is stable, eternal, uniform. This explains why Said qualifies the distinction between East and West as "absolute." Essentialism, together with binarism, functions as an absolute negation of any sort of common ground between coloniser and colonised.

Through binarism and essentialism, and according to the rules that govern them, the coloniser, it will be demonstrated, defines himself and defines the colonised as opposites: as Self and Other, Subject and Object, and as dominant and dominated. In short, the coloniser is all that the colonised is not and vice versa. This logic can be detected in the speech of such a famous colonial figure as Lord Cromer who believes it is a "fact" that "somehow or other the Oriental generally acts, speaks, and thinks in a manner exactly opposite to the European." [35]

Given the West's continuous material investment in colonial discourse for the aforementioned reasons and the constant reinforcement of the rhetoric of opposition, a sort of collection of ideas about non-Europeans ("Orientals," Africans, Caribbeans…etc) is formed that becomes the reference to all those interested in those people. The reiteration and constant repetition of the same ideas about, for instance, "Oriental despotism, Oriental splendor, cruelty, sensuality," [36] hardens those ideas into clichés and stereotypes that are taken for granted and employed, Said says, to explain the behaviour of Orientals; supply Orientals with a mentality, a genealogy, and an atmosphere.

Because the same ideas, the same clichés and stereotypes are persistently repeated and reiterated, the colonial discourse acquires an amazing internal consistency. This "created

[34] *Orientalism*, op. cit., p. 32
[35] Ibid., p. 39
[36] Ibid., p. 4

consistency", Said says, and this "constellation of ideas" is the most important thing about discourse because it gives it strength and a "redoubtable durability."[37] This consistency and sheer knitted-together strength makes of the colonial discourse "an accepted grid," in Said's words, "for filtering through the [Orient, Africa, Caribbean…] into Western consciousness."[38]

The notion of consistency and of "constellation of ideas" in colonial discourse is of particular interest for the present study. For, it is through the tracking of signs of consistency in these novels' conception of the coloniser and the colonised, and of their relationship that the study proposes, as mentioned earlier, to verify the hypothesis that despite the unquestionable influence of the changing colonial context, the colonial encounter is basically and consistently conceived as a strong to weak and superior to inferior relationship; a core that is constantly consolidated and that proves immune to the historical changes of British expansionism.

**IV.**

Having so far clarified our methodological approach, it remains for us to account for the choice of our corpus of study. Primarily, our choice is prescribed by the canonicity of the four literary works and their being amongst the best representative texts in English culture. In postcolonial studies they are monumental study cases and can, without exaggeration, be said to have immensely benefited the theoretical as well as the critical trends of the postcolonial approach.

Besides, they are typically colonial novels. Although they do not particularly focus on the subject of colonial relations they remain, nonetheless, ideal study cases for the subject. The

[37] *Orientalism*, op. cit., p. 6
[38] Ibid.

four novels have, of course, attracted much attention in postcolonial studies but they tend usually to be studied separately or at best three of them at a time, as was the case in Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*. Yet, much of what has been written about them tends to be focused on the colonial rhetoric of the works without a worthy-of-notice consideration of the issue of colonial relations. This makes of the four novels all the more ideal study cases and incites us to hold them to investigation as part of a tradition that developed parallel to the Empire.

In addition to this, each one of these texts is deeply implicated in the historical and political context of its production and thus is inevitably a significant symptomatic sign of a historical stage in the development of the British Empire. *Robinson Crusoe*, for instance, is the product of the epoch of incipiency while *A Passage to India* is the product of the Empire's epoch of decline. *Kim* and *Heart of Darkness*, for their part, are 'representative' of the climactic epoch, with *Heart of Darkness* evidently much more contemplating the prospect of imperial downfall and decline. In sum, we have four literary works each of which is the product of a particular historical stage of the Empire's development. This makes it methodologically speaking very convenient for us to allot a separate chapter to each of the four novels.

The first chapter will be devoted to the study of *Robinson Crusoe* with its inaugural figures, Crusoe and his slave Friday. The least that can be said about these figures is that they are almost unanimously regarded as representative of the coloniser and the colonised respectively. Indeed, they are often used as alternate colonial prototypes to Prospero and Caliban in postcolonial studies. Peter Hulme, for instance, in his influential study of colonial

relations in *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean*, qualifies Crusoe's and Friday's first meeting as "the *paradigmatic colonial encounter*, that *key scene of colonial literature* where the recently rescued Caribbean Amerindian, soon to be named Friday, places his head beneath the foot of a bewildered European."[39]

Brett McInelly, too, argues that "[t]he mere mention of Defoe's novel, or his protagonist's relationship to Friday, seems to encapsulate the colonial myth and the dynamics of colonial relationships in general."[40] Roxan Wheeler, for her part, argues that *Robinson Crusoe* actively participates "in contemporary eighteenth-century articulations of race and colonial power relations"[41] while John Richetti writes that Crusoe is "a representative of capitalist ideology, driven to acquire, control and dominate."[42]

As will be argued in the first section of the first chapter, Crusoe's and Friday's encounter is typically of a coloniser and a colonised and is supported by a colonial discourse that definitely proves to reinforce and consolidate that of *The Tempest*. In the second section, the focus of our study will be on the divergence of the novel's vision of colonial relations from the antagonistic Prospero-Caliban type to that of Prospero-Ariel which is, it will be argued, only another paradigmatic alternative to Prospero-Caliban. But, it will be demonstrated that Defoe's option for the Prospero-Ariel type does not affect the core of the relationship between Crusoe and Friday. On the contrary, it actually consolidates that core which remains a typically coloniser and colonised, superior and inferior relationship.

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[39] Hulme, Peter. *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492*-1797, London and New York: Methuen, 1986, p.176

[40] McInelly, Brett C. "Expanding Empires, Expanding Selves: Colonialism, the Novel, and *Robinson Crusoe*" in *Studies in the Novel*, Vol. 35, N. 1, University of North Texas, 2003, pp. 1-2

[41] Wheeler, Roxann. "'My Savage,' 'My Man': Racial Multiplicity in *Robinson Crusoe*. *ELH*, Vol. 62, No. 4 1995, 821-861, p. 821. The Johns Hopkins University Press, at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/30030104

[42] Quoted by Sandro Jung in "The Language(s) of Hierarchy in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*," in *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 265-278, p. 271

In the last section of the first chapter, Defoe's opting for the Prospero-Ariel type will be accounted for, and it will be argued that it is only a strategic move on Defoe's part that suits his "hopes for colonialism." The aim of this move is, it will be expounded, to represent the colonial project as feasible and very profitable and thus consolidate the foundations of the British Empire in a period of extreme imperial rivalry and great challenges to the incipient British imperialism.

On the second literary text, *Kim*, which corresponds to the heyday of British expansionism, critics appear to be divided between those who praise its portrayal of colonial relations as ideal and those who condemn it as racist. John McClure, for instance, argues that the work is "a Utopian portrayal of future racial harmony"[43] and Abdul JanMohammed contends that *Kim* and *A Passage to India* "offer the most interesting attempts to overcome the barriers of racial difference."[44] Mark Kinkead-Weekes, for his part, argues that the novel is "the answer to nine-tenths of the charges levelled against Kipling and the refutation of most of the generalisations about him" and adds that in *Kim* "[t]he eye is caught by a whole kaleidoscope of race, caste, custom, and creed, all seen with a warm affection that is almost unique in Kipling," concluding that "[s]uch a vision involves … the deliberate exclusion of attitudes of superiority." [45]

Patrick Williams, however, in his renowned article "*Kim* and Orientalism," questions all these critics' views and judiciously argues that *Kim* is definitely implicated in the

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[43] Williams, Patrick. "*Kim* and Orientalism" in *Colonial Discourse and Post Colonial Theory*: *A Reader*, Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman eds., New York: Longman, 1994, p 480

[44] Abudul R., JanMohamed. "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature" in Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth, and Tiffin, Helen, eds., *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 22

[45] Kinkead-Weekes, Mark. "Vision in Kipling's Novels" in Andrew Rutherford's *Kipling's Mind and Art*: *Selected Critical Essays*, Stanford: S.U.P., 1964, 197-234, p. 216

"Orientalist and imperialist projects,"[46] adding that the novel is one of those colonial texts "which wished to appear to question racial norms without really doing so."[47] In the same vein, Phillip Wegner argues that *Kim*'s narrative is governed by a "rigid racial boundary" and an economy of "absolute difference" between "whites and Indians, colonizers and colonized."[48]

All of these views, and much of what has been argued elsewhere, will be brought to scrutiny in the second chapter which will, in its first section, investigate the basic rules that prescribe the terms of the coloniser's interaction with the colonised Indian. It will be demonstrated that they are the very same rules set for Prospero's and Caliban's encounter and that of Crusoe and Friday: a rigid discrimination between Whites and Indians and an absolute hierarchical organisation of the coloniser and the colonised, which definitely consolidates the foundations of the colonial encounter already set by Prospero.

But, like Defoe, Kipling is, in the second section, shown to have opted not for an antagonistic Prospero-Caliban type of relationship between the English and the Indians but for what some scholars qualify as an "idyllic" Prospero-Ariel type. This option, it will be expounded in the last section, does not in the least subvert Kipling's colonial order but instead consolidates it. It will also be argued that it is not a sign of Kipling's giving up his jingoist views but is, like Defoe's, a mere strategic move the aim of which is particularly the consolidation of the Raj in India.

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[46] "*Kim* and Orientalism," op. cit.' p. 483
[47] Ibid., p. 493
[48] Wegner, Phillip E. ""Life as He Would Have It": The Invention of India in Kipling's Kim" in *Cultural Critique*, No. 26 (Winter, 1993-1994), pp. 129-159, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, p. 154, at: www.jstor.org/stable/1354458

As to the third work, *Heart of Darkness*, it will be the focus of the third chapter. A very hazy narrative, to say the least, the novella has been a source of great controversy in postcolonial studies. While some critics, mainly Western, defend it as an anti-imperialist text launching a bold attack on late-nineteenth-century colonialism, unmasking colonisers and dwelling on the plight of the colonised, other critics condemn its imperialist and racist bias. Hunt Hawkins, for instance, defends the work arguing that its critique of imperialism is "extremely complex, and as yet inadequately understood."[49] Chinua Achebe, however, in his well-known "An Image of Africa" article, denounces its dehumanisation of Africans and condemns it as

> a book which parades in the most vulgar fashion prejudices and insults from which a section of mankind has suffered untold agonies and atrocities in the past and continues to do so in many ways and many places today.[50]

Some other critics, however, avoiding to side with either of the previously mentioned camps, argue that *Heart of Darkness* is a 'frontier novel.' Sarvan, for instance argues that Conrad "was not entirely immune to the infection of the beliefs and attitudes of his age, but he was ahead of most in trying to break free."[51] Most interesting and peculiar, however, are the views of critics such as Said and Armstrong. In his *Culture and Imperialism*, Said argues that *Heart of Darkness* offers two visions: imperialist and anti-imperialist,[52] while Armstrong

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[49] Hawkins, Hunt. "Conrad's Critique of Imperialism in *Heart of Darkness*," PMLA, vol. 94, 2 (March, 1979), 286-299, p. 294, at www.JSTOR.org/stable/461892. Accessed: 02/12/2008.

[50] Achebe, Chinua. "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*," *The Massachusetts Review*, 18, 1977, 782-794, p. 790.

[51]Quoted byPaul Armstrong in "*Heart of Darkness* and the Epistemology of Cultural Differences", in Gail Fincham and Myrtle Hooper (ed.), *Under Postcolonial Eyes: Joseph Conrad After Empire*. Cape: UCT Press, 1996, 21-41, p. 21, footnote N. 1

[52] *Culture and Imperialism*, op. cit., p. xviii

contends that the novella is “a calculated failure to depict achieved cross-cultural understanding.”[53]

Focusing mainly on characterisation and the novella’s dramatisation of the colonial encounter, the third chapter attempts to investigate the work’s most controversial aspects related to colonial relationships. Thus, in its first section, it will be argued that indeed the novella, in its attack on the Belgian colonial system, unveils the exploitative nature of the colonial encounter and condemns the coloniser’s aggression, voracity, and greed while it ponders on the colonised’ extreme misery at the heart of the colonial darkness.

But, at a deeper investigation, it will be demonstrated in the second section that Conrad is not against colonialism as a principle. For, he decidedly glorifies the British colonial project and promotes the Marlovian colonial figure. Worse, his portrayal of the colonised is definitely reductionist and racist. At root, Conrad’s conception of the colonial encounter does not differ from that of Shakespeare because for him it is unthinkable that Africans can rise above their level of ‘primitivism’ and take over the reins of their own destiny as they are unquestionably an inferior race which cannot but be colonised.

Worse for the colonised in *Heart of Darkness*, it will be demonstrated in the last section that in his writing about the colonised’ oppression at the hand of the colonisers, Conrad ponders more on the degeneration of the latter, epitomised by Kurtz, due to their exposure to the presumed primitivism that reigns in Africa. Conrad’s attitude, of course, renders the plight of the colonised all the more unbearable.

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[53] “*Heart of Darkness* and the Epistemology of Cultural Differences”, op. cit., p. 23

As a byproduct of the epoch of the Empire's downfall, Forster's *A Passage to India* is left for the fourth and last chapter. It is the only colonial novel in our corpus of study that deals explicitly with colonial relations and proves controversial in postcolonial studies. While some scholars, like Hunt Hawkins and Ahmad M.S. Abu Baker, praise it as a bold attack on imperialism which prevents good colonial relations, others, like Hiren Gohain contend that it does not rise to such a level. Hunt Hawkins, for instance, argues that,

> [t]he chief argument against imperialism in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* is that it prevents personal relationships. The central question of the novel is posed at the very beginning when Mahmoud Ali and Hamidullah ask each other "whether or no it is possible to be friends with an Englishman." The answer, given by Forster himself on the last page, is "No, not yet.... No, not there."[54]

Ahmad M.S. Abu Baker, for his part, contends that "Forster's novel, *A Passage to India*, depicts colonisation as frustrating any chance of friendship between the English and the Indians under the coloniser/colonised status quo."[55] Hiren Gohain, however, argues that, definitely, "Forster does not see imperialism itself as the culprit."[56] Remarkably, however, Edward Said, without neglecting to stress Forster's liberal imperialism, argues that "Forster intended the gulf between India and Britain to stand, but allowed intermittent crossings back and forth."[57]

A prominent theme in *A Passage* is indeed colonial relations. As will be discussed in the first section of the final chapter, Forster appears mostly to blame the Anglo-Indians for the tension in relations between the English and the Indians as he discloses their irrational racism,

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[54] Hawkins, Hunt. "Forster's Critique of Imperialism in *A Passage to India*." *South Atlantic Review*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (Jan., 1983), pp. 54-65, p. 54, at http://www.jstor.org/stable/3199513

[55] Abu Baker, Ahmad M.S. "Rethinking Identity: The Coloniser in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*." *Nebula,*3.2-3, September 2006, 68-85, p. 68-69

[56] Gohain, Hiren. "The Other Side of the Moon: E M Forster's India," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 17, No. 31, 1982, PE58-PE63, p. PE62, at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4371184Accessed: 10/06/2009

[57] *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 201

prejudice and bigotry. He also appears to sympathise with the colonised and even goes so far as to resist the stifling colonial atmosphere and interweaves a friendly relationship between Aziz and Fielding.

Yet, it will be argued in the second section that Forster proves too impregnated by the racist Orientalist ideas to make the relationship prosper and last for long. He 'sympathises' with the colonised, it is true, but is unable to regard the Indians as equals to the English. An insurmountable racial and cultural gulf appears to him to separate them from the English, which makes connection between them impossible and accounts for his ending of Aziz's and Fielding's friendship.

This paradoxical stance of Forster's instigates the questioning of his, so to speak, attack on the Raj rule as a whole and his defense of the Indians' anti-English views, as well as his initial interweaving of a supposedly exemplary colonial relationship and then its ending. The questioning task and an attempt to account for the most probable factors behind Forster's ambivalence will be reserved for the last section of the chapter.

Ultimately, the study of the four selected novels will lead us to the conclusion that the colonial encounter in the English colonial novel is repeatedly conceived in terms of binary opposition; that is basically as a superior-inferior relationship that never changes throughout the history of British expansionism despite the changing historical contexts and the shifting views of writers vis-à-vis the enterprise. The remarkable immutability of imperial assumptions along the history of the Empire, it will concluded, consolidates and solidifies the core of the relationship making it permanently hard and stable.

# CHAPTER ONE

# Prospero and Caliban in *Robinson Crusoe*

# I.

Although Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* was given shape more than a hundred years after Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Crusoe and his slave, Friday, do not at core differ from Prospero and his slave Caliban, the paradigmatic binary of coloniser and colonised. In fact, even the Crusoe-Friday binary has become symbolic of early colonial encounters, which makes of Defoe's text not only inaugural of the English novel but of the English colonial novel as well. This resemblance is certainly beyond coincidence. For, like Prospero and Caliban, Crusoe and Friday are, relatively speaking, the product of the early period of British imperial expansion. More important, however, is their involvement, as will be clarified in the first section of the present chapter, in the consolidation of colonial assumptions through their reiteration of *The Tempest*'s colonial discourse.

Drawing heavily on the same, and apparently already existing, tradition of ideas and images about non-Europeans that informed *The Tempest*'s discourse, Defoe's novel consolidates the foundations of Britain's incipient expansionism through the crystallisation of the colonial project into Crusoe and Friday's relationship. This latter, which begins with Crusoe's meeting with Friday, is the focus of this chapter's second section. As will be discussed, it is typically a relationship of coloniser and colonised and is basically a replica of Prospero and Caliban's.

The comparison between the two paradigmatic colonial relationships, however, reveals a difference in their conception. While Prospero and Caliban's relationship is openly antagonistic Crusoe and Friday's is represented as 'idyllic'. This divergence in conception and the probable reasons behind it is what will be discussed in the chapter's last section.

## I. Crusoe's Narrative: Consolidation of Prospero's Colonial Discourse.

When one reads Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* one very soon gets enveloped in an imperial aura. For hardly is one introduced to the novel's hero, Crusoe, than one is made to penetrate with him the British imperial world as it presented itself to Defoe in the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. A world of trade, piracy, imperial rivalry, colonial settling and colonisation. It is a world that Crusoe fervently chooses, and strong-mindedly decides to enter against all obstacles. His motive, Crusoe himself declares, is "the wild and indigested notion of raising [his] fortune," [58] and the world of empire, Crusoe believes, is his best chance to realise that. He is "satisfied with nothing but going to sea," he says.[59] It is not the aim of this study to address the issue of the primary motives of British imperialism, but it is worth noting that the economic motive is given prominence over all other motives by most studies in the field.[60]

Thus, to live a better life and to enjoy a higher status, Crusoe tries, and eventually ends up masterful of, everything in the post-Restoration imperial world of early-eighteenth-century Britain: he trades –in slaves in particular, fights pirates, purchases a plantation in Brazil, and ultimately appropriates an island, enslaves natives, and takes advantage of both land and human resources for his own interest. As appears from Crusoe's narrative, the whole story of his overseas 'adventures' is deeply informed by Britain's incipient expansionism and exploitation of overseas lands and peoples. Also, Crusoe's deliberate choosing of a colonial

[58] Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe*. London: Penguin Books, 1994, p. 21. All references are to this edition
[59] Ibid.
[60] See "From Commerce to Conquest: The Dynamics of British Mercantile Imperialism in Eighteenth-Century Bengal, and the Foundation of the British Indian Empire" by Mark T. Berger, in *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*. Volume: 22. Issue: 1, 1990, at www.questia.com. Accessed: 14- 01- 2009

career incited by the prospect of worldly success, along with his final colonial 'achievements', is very significant as a primal cause for the appreciation of Crusoe's colonial penchant. It is, in fact, crucial because it points out the true nature of Crusoe's undertaking: that it is a conscious participation in 'colonisation.' This is what primarily makes of Crusoe a coloniser figure; actually a typically early-eighteenth-century coloniser figure.

However, it is not particularly because of this that Crusoe is the archetypal coloniser. What is more important is the fact that Crusoe does not in the least question imperial laws or disapprove of imperial practices. On the contrary, he sticks to the rules, wholeheartedly adopts the imperial values, and takes maximum advantage of what the situation offers him to reach his goal. As will be demonstrated, Crusoe, like Prospero, is an advocate and a practitioner of Europeans' right to conquer, rule, exploit and 'civilise.' His views about the natives are similar to Prospero's and he will be shown to reiterate the same derogatory images and stereotypes about them.

Like Prospero, Crusoe has a Eurocentric attitude towards non-Europeans, apparent in the way he 'others' them, setting them as the opposite image of what Europeans are; that is a sort of second-rate humanity, essentially inferior, almost God-forsaken, and fit for nothing but servitude. Thus, as a general designation of them, Crusoe uses the terms "savages," "cannibals," "wretches". They are the inhabitants of the "truly barbarian" lands, and, be they Africans or Caribbean, they are all similar: brutal, inhuman, cannibal, savage, and of a degenerate nature. He makes no distinction between those he meets on the shores of Africa and those he encounters near the Americas. But, certainly, he distinguishes himself from all of

these homogenised transcontinental populations and decides to conceal himself from them till he meets "a *better* sort of creatures," he says.[61]

This representation of non-Europeans dehumanises them and attributes to them a different nature, in comparison to which Crusoe's –and, by extension, the Europeans nature in general– appears "a better sort." Such logic of representation is typical of colonial discourse. It combines binary opposition and essentialism, as clarified in the introduction, to establish a hierarchy and a relationship of dominance between Europeans and non-Europeans. Through essentialism non-Europeans are represented as if time had no effect on them: they are mentally, psychologically, and culturally static; a "Platonic essence"[62] in Said's words, with a culture (of savagery, barbarity, and cannibalism) which is stable, eternal, and uniform, as can be inferred from Crusoe's saying that "Heaven had thought fit [for natives to remain savage] *for so many ages*"[63] and his saying that natives

> had been suffered by Providence, in His wise disposition of the world, to have no other guide than that of their own abominable and vitiated passions; and *consequently were left, and perhaps had been so for some ages*, to act such horrid things and receive such dreadful customs, as nothing but nature abandoned of Heaven, and acted by some hellish degeneracy, could have run them into.[64]

Europeans, by opposition, are changeable; they are "distinguished," in Crusoe's words, 'enlightened', and in constant progress, discovery, and illumination of unknown and 'dark' corners of the world.

[61] *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 164. Emphasis mine.
[62] Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1994, p. 32
[63] Ibid., p. 167. Emphasis mine.
[64] Ibid,, p. 168. Emphasis mine.

This colonial logic of essentialism and apartness between Europeans and non-Europeans in *Robinson Crusoe* can also be evidenced from the scene when Crusoe witnesses the supposed cannibalism of the natives. While the so-called "savage wretches" rejoice in their "inhuman feastings", devouring their fellow creatures, Crusoe finds it impossible to express "the horror of [his] mind" at the sight of human body remains spread on the shore. He almost faints, but, having vomited, is relieved and runs as fast as he can away from the scene. Crusoe's mental and physical reaction is a sign of his refined 'nature' and thus his difference from the natives; a difference reinforced when, in his habitation, Crusoe thanks God "with the utmost affection of [his] soul, and with a flood of tears in [his] eyes" for having "cast [his] first lot in a part of the world [England] where [he] was *distinguished* from such dreadful creatures as these."[65]

Strikingly, the same essential and "absolute demarcation"[66] between coloniser and colonised was, a hundred years before *Robinson Crusoe*, set between Prospero and Caliban in *The Tempest*. For Caliban, too, is said to belong to a "vile race", not only different from, but inferior to that of Prospero and Miranda; a race having "that in't, which good natures/ could not abide to be with," [67] says Miranda. He is also called "savage", and is said to "gabble, like/ A thing most brutish."[68]

Essentialism and binarism, then, were the basis of Prospero's and Caliban's relationship and here they are again in *Robinson Crusoe* the foundational element of Crusoe's relationship with non-Europeans, which confirms Edward Said's contention that

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[65] *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 163. Emphasis mine.
[66] Said, W. Edward. *Orientalism.* New York: Vintage, 1994, p. 39
[67] Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. London: Penguin Books, 1994, I. ii., p. 39
[68] Ibid., p. 38

> Throughout the exchange between Europeans and their “others” that began systematically half a millennium ago, *the one idea that has scarcely varied* is that there is an “us” and a “them”, each quite settled, clear, unassailably self-evident. [69]

This “us”-and-“them” notion, or what Said calls the “fundamentally static notion of identity,” has been the core of cultural thought during the era of imperialism. As will be clarified in the following chapters, it is also the foundational element of *Kim*’s colonial encounter, that of *Heart of Darkness*, as well as that of *A Passage to India*.

It is worth mentioning here that ‘savage’ and ‘cannibal’ are very important motifs in colonial fiction. As Roxanne Wheeler observes

> Savage had a long history of signifying European Christian superiority. A religious, cultural, and political category, it came into use in regard to people in the sixteenth century, according to the OED. As several studies of the early modern era suggest, the savage was linked to ideologies of European empire and human difference at this time. In general, the diverse tribes lumped under the generic term Americans or cannibals constituted the most significant population of savages during the eighteenth century …Savagery embraces many attributes, particularly cannibalism, paganism, social disorder and nakedness; dark complexion is not ideologically necessary though it does bolster the negative image when it is present.[70]

Commenting on Defoe’s use of the term in *Robinson Crusoe*, Wheeler rightly observes that “the word litters the text and is the primary label of difference.”[71]

As to cannibalism, which is the ultimate alien cultural practice, most postcolonial scholars consider it “the West’s key representation of primitivism.”[72] It is a term of particular interest to postcolonial studies because it demonstrates “the process by which an imperial Europe distinguishes itself from the subjects of its colonial expansion, while providing a moral

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[69] Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage, 1994, p. xxv. Emphasis added.
[70] Quoted by Marisa Huerta in *Re-reading the New World Romance: British Colonisation and the Construction of “Race” in the Early Modern Period.* PhD dissertation, Rhode Island: Brown University, 2005, p.87
[71] Ibid.
[72] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2001, p. 29, at www.Englishtips.org. Accessed: 17/08/2010

justification for that expansion."[73] It was first used by Christopher Columbus and to this day its use has always been "evidence of a rhetorical strategy of imperialism rather than evidence of an objective 'fact'.[74]

The "us"-and-"them" notion of identity, or binary opposition, as known in postcolonial studies, launched from the start in *Robinson Crusoe*, is persistently maintained and reinforced, and, at times, even pushed to the extreme throughout the whole narrative. The reinforcement appears in the way the conception of the natives as a second-rate humanity very easily slips into their conception as animals, beasts. This 'beastialisation', as it were, is evident in Crusoe's calling natives "merciless creatures", "dreadful creatures", and his saying that to have fallen in their hands is "as bad as to have fallen into the hands of lions and tigers." Crusoe says he is "equally apprehensive" of their danger "as of wild beasts," and says they are even "more merciless." Strikingly again, this 'animalisation' of natives is another eighteenth-century echo of *The Tempest*. Doesn't Prospero call Caliban "the beast Caliban,"[75] "A freckl'd whelp,"[76] "hag-seed", a "tortoise", and a "poisonous slave"?

It is worthy to note that this shift in representation from non-European to 'savage' and then to 'beast' is a manifestation of a rule typical of colonial discourse: the rearticulation of binary oppositions. As clarified in our introduction, the primary binary coloniser-colonised is rearticulated into a variety of binaries that reinforce and consolidate the hierarchy and dominance it establishes. Thus, the binary European (Crusoe)-non-European (natives), which is a coloniser-colonised binary, is rearticulated into human-bestial, civilised-savage, and

[73] *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*, op. cit., p. 29
[74] Ibid.
[75] *The Tempest*, IV. i., p. 80
[76] Ibid, I. ii., p. 36

merciful-merciless. As the rule is in such rearticulations, the first term European(coloniser) becomes equivalent to human, civilised, and merciful while, by opposition, the second term non-European becomes implicitly inclusive of bestial, savage, and merciless. When employed in any text this logic of binarism and its rules function to strengthen the opposition and harden the division between the terms of its focus.

This casts light on the way Defoe strengthens Crusoe's –and by extension the Europeans'– position as superior, and firmly confirms that of natives as inferior, which hardens the binary opposition. The more articulated the primary binary, the more deepened the distinction between Crusoe and the natives. If Said says that the distinction between coloniser and colonised deepened and hardened with the development of colonial discourse, one remarks that in *Robinson Crusoe* the division deepens within the very same narrative.

One also remarks that the opposition between coloniser and colonised in *Robinson Crusoe* replicates the same extremist tones of *The Tempest*'s binarism. Prospero, for instance, calls Caliban "A thing *most* brutish,"[77] and regards him as evil personified. He 'daemonises' Caliban saying he is the son of a witch and the Devil himself. He even takes Caliban's looks as the 'standard' of ugliness, which makes Europeans, by opposition, look most "beauteous". Thus, while affecting to dissuade Miranda from loving Ferdinand, Prospero tells her "To th' most of men, this [Ferdinand] is a Caliban, / And they to him are angels,"[78] which Miranda, who has seen but Caliban besides her father, confirms when she marvels at the sight of Alonso, King of Naples, and his company:

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[77] *The Tempest*, I., ii., p. 38. Emphasis added
[78] Ibid., p. 43

Oh wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! Oh brave new world
That has such people in't."[79]

Caliban's mother, too, is depicted with extremism. With words put into the mouth of Caliban, her son, Miranda is compared to her and it is affirmed that Prospero's daughter "as far surpasseth Sycorax,/ As *great'st does least*."[80] With a similar extremist tone, Crusoe places natives at the lowest level of bestiality: they are "*more* merciless" than wild animals, he says. He also 'daemonises' them, saying that he is as "fearful of seeing them as of seeing the Devil himself."[81]

"Que peut-il rester [au colonisé]," in Albert Memmi's words, "au terme de cet effort obstiné de dénaturation? Il n'est sûrement plus un *alter ego* du colonisateur. C'est à peine encore un être humain. Il tend rapidement vers l'objet."[82] Indeed, dehumanisation, as can be inferred from Prospero's proud boast that before him the island was "not honour'd with a human shape,"[83] is exactly the fate of the colonised in *Robinson Crusoe* as it was Caliban's in *The Tempest*. As for the colonised's 'objectification' –or 'chosification' in Aimé Césaire's words– pointed out by Memmi, it most conspicuously strikes one when Crusoe, describing the lucrativeness of the slave- trade in Africa, tells the Portuguese traders that in return for trifles they can buy "not only gold dust, Guinea grains, elephants teeth, etc., but Negroes...in great numbers,"[84] as if 'Negroes' were goods. Also, after his escape from Sallee, Crusoe

[79] *The Tempest*, V., ii., p. 91
[80] Ibid., III., i., p. 69
[81] *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 164
[82] Memmi, Albert. *Portrait du colonisé précédé de Portrait du colonisateur*. Gallimard, 1985, p.105
[83] *The Tempest*, I., ii., p. 36
[84] *Robinson Crusoe*, p.42

unscrupulously sells Xury as merchandise so as to purchase a plantation in Brazil. This 'commodification', as it were, of natives reactivates and consolidates *The Tempest*'s discourse. For Caliban too, was commodified. While Alonso says he is "a strange thing" and Prospero calls him a "thing of darkness," Anthonio says he is "no doubt marketable."[85]

It is not, for sure, mere coincidence that the same logic of essentialism, of absolute demarcation and opposition between Europeans and non-Europeans which governed *The Tempest*'s stage governs, a hundred years later, *Robinson Crusoe*'s narrative. Neither is it mere coincidence that the same derogatory images, clichés, and stereotypes used in *The Tempest* are reiterated in *Robinson Crusoe*. Crusoe's natives, whether African or Caribbean, can in no way be individualised or distinguished from Caliban. It is as if Prospero encountered a specimen of non-Europeans and, more than a hundred years later, Crusoe encounters more of them, all similar, unchanged, unaffected by space and time. As clarified in the introduction, this logic, the derogatory images, clichés, and stereotypes are typical of colonial discourse, and as such cannot but testify to the 'discursive' nature of Defoe's narrative.

Also, the ideas of savagery, barbarity, primitivism, cannibalism...etc are taken for granted in *Robinson Crusoe* and are re-employed in the narrative as 'truths' about overseas populations, while in reality they are only 'representations,' part of a discourse that tallies with Britain's eighteenth-century colonialist 'vision' to support its incipient expansionism. This discourse justifies and legitimises in advance the domination of "savage" populations and the exploitation of their resources as well as it consolidates the rule of those already dominated for the sole benefit of Britain's political and socio-economic welfare.

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[85] *The Tempest*, V. i., p. 94

The representations, together with the discourse, are the outcome of those early travellers' and explorers' fantasies about the inhabitants of the unknown regions of Africa and the Americas; the outcome of a battery of colonisers' desires, repressions, and projections, as Said has it. The difference or, to Europeans, the 'strangeness' of the aliens was mixed up with their 'technical weakness' and was transmitted to European audiences in negative and derogatory terms which kept being repeated and reiterated in writings till hardening into clichés and stereotypes. These pervaded travel books, journals, and geographic reports, as Said expounds in *Orientalism*, and the whole of cultural institutions subsequently. Then a tradition of writings about non-Europeans formed to which every writer referred and on which he drew for his representation of them.

This applies to Defoe in *Robinson Crusoe*. For, Defoe never had any direct contact with Caribbeans or Africans and only reiterates the ideas of natives' 'savagery' and 'cannibalism' unconditionally and 'naturally' because they are ideas which, in Crusoe's words, he "had *heard of often*."[86] This admission of reliance on widely-spread ideas about Africans and Caribbeans is repeated more than once in the narrative and is, of course, very significant. For, it shows the extent to which Defoe's conception and representation of natives is shaped by an already existent collection of 'idées reçues' about non-Europeans in English culture. It also shows the extent of the propagation of such ideas in society in Defoe's times and points out the (at least, relatively speaking) authoritative character of that collection in literary writings then.

This collection of ideas, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters, is to be propagated still further and gain extra authority in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

[86] *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 163. Emphasis mine.

If not exactly the same clichés are to be found in *Kim* and in *A Passage*, due to these novels shift to the Orientalist 'register', they forcefully re-erupt in *Heart of Darkness*, which is set in black Africa, and prove to be still rhetorical key representations of non-Europeans "primitivism" and 'inferiority.'

Despite its being the prototypical colonial novel, then, *Robinson Crusoe* proves very reliant on, and actually consolidative of, an already developing colonialist discourse governed by the clear, precise, and easy-to-grasp logic Edward Said sums up: "There are Westerners, and there are [non-Westerners]. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated." [87] As demonstrated so far, *Robinson Crusoe*'s discourse does not in the least question *The Tempest*'s discourse, what to say of posing a threat to it or, in cultural materialist terms, subverting it.

This colonialist discourse and logic 'settle' the ethical problems of Crusoe's dominance in the same way they settled, a hundred years earlier, Prospero's ethical problems in *The Tempest*. They justify in advance Crusoe's colonialist actions as they justified those of Prospero before him. Crusoe is the 'civilised,' the 'enlightened,' the Master, and Africans, Moors, Caribbeans, Xury, and Friday are all 'inferior,' 'backward,' and 'savage,' so it is supposedly legitimate that Crusoe dominates them all.

Of course, the Europeans' dominance of non-Europeans means, in Said's words, "having their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled, their blood and treasure put at the disposal of one or another Western power,"[88] which is exactly what Crusoe does. In the manner of an eighteenth-century coloniser, he unscrupulously trades in African slaves, sells Xury when in need of money for a new start in Brazil, purchases a plantation there, and

[87] *Orientalism*, p. 36
[88] Ibid.

later takes possession of the island and subjugates Friday. In the words of J. S. Phillpot mentioned in the introduction, if Prospero can dispossess Caliban, so can Crusoe in 'his' island.

But the naked aggression of Crusoe's undertakings is, of course, not to appear as such. And here comes the role of colonial discourse: to cover the exploitative nature of the natives' subjugation, to obscure the colonialist mercantilist project by endowing the whole enterprise with the 'civilising' and 'enlightening' varnish. This euphemism can be evidenced, for instance, from Crusoe's conversion of Friday. As soon as Crusoe enslaves Friday, he begins teaching him every aspect of European culture: language, manners, lifestyle, and religion, claiming it is for the benefit of the "poor wretch" and repeatedly calling himself the saviour of Friday's life and soul. The reality, of course, is that Crusoe exploits Friday as a slave for his own benefit and never intends to bring him to any level of 'civility' that would entitle him to treatment as an equal, a move which would jeopardize his colonial project.

This euphemism pervades the whole of Defoe's narrative and, amazingly, reminds one of the mystifying character of *The Tempest*'s discourse. For in the same way the dethronement of the negligent Duke in *The Tempest* is re-presented "as a *felix culpa*, a fortunate fall,"[89] the shipwrecking of Crusoe is also represented as a fortunate fall for which he subsequently becomes very "thankful." "I frequently rejoiced," Crusoe says, "that ever I was brought to this place, which I had so often thought the most dreadful of all afflictions that could possibly have befallen me."[90]

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[89] Brown, Paul. "This Thing of Darkness I Acknowledge Mine," in Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield *Political Shakespeare*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988, 48-71, p. 60
[90] *Robinson Crusoe*, pp. 216-217

As Paul Brown convincingly argues, Prospero's 'colonisation' of Caliban's island is recounted in a rhetoric of love and charity. Through this rhetoric the *negligent* Duke, whose power was usurped by his wicked brother in what Brown rightly calls an "essentially political disjunction," shifts, in telling his story to Miranda, from the language of coutiership to that of courtship"[91] making his deposition become "a loving wrong" and himself become "a helpless exile who cries into the sea, which charitably responds, as does the wind, with pity."[92] This rhetoric, Brown explains, effects a transition from a discourse of power to one of powerlessness which "mystifies the origin of what is after all a colonialist regime on the island by producing it as the result of charitable acts … made out of pity for powerless exiles."[93]

The same rhetoric of love and charity, as made clear by Brown, is found to recount Crusoe's colonialist project in *Robinson Crusoe*. This is evident, for instance, from Crusoe's account of his escape from Sallee in the charity of the wind that was not violent and hindering but "fair" and "fresh", as he says, and that of the sea which was "smooth" and "quiet." It is also evident from his account of his shipwreck near the island. Crusoe, the only Englishman on board the ship, is singled from amongst all the Portuguese crew and saved from drowning. He is made to land on the best side and spot of the island: close to the sea, with a hill not far away fit for a "fortress," and unfrequented by cannibals. The wreck is brought so near that he manages in a number of trips between it and the island to empty it and supply himself with a stock of goods that lasted for years. As regards the island, it is, like Prospero's, most fertile, abundant in all sorts of food, and of a climate fit for double harvest.

[91] "This Thing of Darkness I Acknowledge Mine," op. cit., p. 60
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.

But Defoe does not only rely on the rhetoric of love and courtship to 'cover' up the colonialist project. He also draws on his puritan beliefs to 'sanctify' the enterprise, thus doubly mystifying it. After showing Crusoe musing for a while on his difficult life on the island he makes him conclude that "if nothing happens without [God's] appointment, He has appointed all this to befall [Crusoe]." To stress this providential determinism, Defoe makes Crusoe's Bible always open on lines such as "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver, and thou shalt glorify Me,"[94] or "I will never, never leave thee, nor forsake thee,"[95] or on "Wait on the Lord, and be of good cheer, and He shall strengthen thy heart; wait, I say, on the Lord."[96] In addition to effecting a transition from a discourse of power to one of powerlessness, this rhetoric of providential determinism also sanctifies Crusoe's colonial project as a godly mission of enlightenment and thus deters attention away from the purely exploitative and aggressive nature of the British colonial enterprise.

It has been argued so far that the foundational elements and ground rules established in *The Tempest* for Prospero's and Caliban's relationship are reinforced and consolidated in *Robinson Crusoe*. The same justificatory and legitimising colonial discourse is reactivated; the same logic of binarism and essentialism reinforced; the same assumptions of superiority consolidated; almost exactly the same clichés and stereotypes reiterated, and the same euphemism reemployed. However, Defoe is not Shakespeare; his views are different; his times are different and so are the geo-political, socio-economic, and cultural conditions in which he wrote his novel. Of course, all these have a bearing on his conception and representation of the colonial relationship. The question is: to what extent does Defoe's conception of the

[94] *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 95
[95] Ibid., p. 114
[96] Ibid., p. 156

relationship converge with that of Shakespeare, and to what degree does it diverge from it? The answer to the first part of the question will be the focus of the section that follows while the answer to the second part will be left for the last section of this chapter.

**II. Crusoe-Friday: The Colonial Encounter**

The ground rules for his relationship with natives thus established and his right to dominate and rule 'legitimised', Crusoe confesses that he is resolved to get himself a slave or two, "cost what it would." "It was a great while that [he] pleased [him]self with this affair,"[97] which is simply, as he puts it, "to manage to get hold of one, nay two or three savages…so as to make them entirely slaves to [him], to do whatever [he] should direct them, and to prevent them being able at any time to do [him] any hurt."[98] Crusoe does not in the least make mention of any intention of his to 'civilise' the savages as part of his plans. As can be deduced from his words, philanthropic and benevolent work is not what he aims at but purely personal interest, the propelling force of imperialism and colonialism.

But Defoe tones down the violence of this sheer exploitative project and cloaks it with sanctity, making Crusoe's encounter with his future native slave appear as divinely inspired. As in the dream of his repentance when Crusoe has a vision of a God-sent angel that comes to him and prompts him to repent, Crusoe again dreams of a native who runs away from enemy cannibals and, seeing Crusoe, kneels to him and voluntarily offers to be his servant. A year and a half later, Robinson's prophetic dream is realised in Defoe's world of reverie. From his hiding place, he observes "cannibals" preparing to feast upon an enemy captive who suddenly frees himself and runs away to hide in Crusoe's grove. Significantly, Crusoe's first reaction is

[97] *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 196
[98] Ibid., pp. 196-197

to tell himself “now was my time to get me a servant.” But, he immediately shifts to the euphemistic rhetoric of determinism and says “I was called plainly by Providence to save this poor creature’s life.”[99] Of course, it is not fortuitous that Crusoe’s procuring of a native slave is made to entail from a most horrific scene of cannibalism to which Crusoe is witness.

Crusoe shoots two of the ‘enemy’ cannibals dead and beckons to the astounded fugitive to come nearer to him. Here is how Crusoe describes his encounter with the native he later names Friday:

> I beckoned him again to come to me, and gave him all the signs of encouragement that I could think of; and he came nearer and nearer, kneeling down every ten or twelve steps in token of acknowledgement for my saving his life; I smiled at him and looked pleasantly and beckoned to him to come still nearer; at length he came close to me, and then he kneeled down again, kissed the ground, and laid his head upon the ground, and taking me by the foot, set my foot upon his head: this, it seems, was in token of swearing to be my slave for ever. I took him up, and made much of him, and encouraged him all I could.[100]

No better scene to demonstrate the coloniser’s triumphalism, his attitude of superiority, and his domineering character. It is the scene of the encounter between coloniser and colonised, an encounter that has, like Prospero’s and Caliban’s, become paradigmatic of all colonial relationships. It is also, with Crusoe’s foot upon Friday’s head, very symbolic. There is, of course, too much ‘staging’ in the encounter scene, but the latter is a crystallisation of the colonial project. This move is climatic in the narrative and is, in fact, necessary –after the wreck and the appropriation and taming of the island– for Crusoe’s dominance to be complete.

The encounter scene is also a good illustration of (technical and military) power importance in colonial relations. The fugitive’s kneeling is, of course, due to his extreme fright

[99] *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 199
[100]Ibid., pp. 199-200

at hearing the incomprehensible sound of Crusoe's deadly weapon that instantly and mysteriously, because unknown to him, put an end to his enemies' lives. It is a sign of good judgement on his part, then, to submit to Crusoe given the latter's evident superior weaponry. Crusoe, too, is aware that it is all a matter of force. He knows that hadn't it been for his 'power show' the fugitive would certainly not have kneeled down and Crusoe would have found it difficult to subjugate and conquer him, for nothing about Crusoe proves in any way whatsoever that he is 'essentially' or 'culturally' superior to the native (especially with his tanned skin from constant exposure to sun, his goatskin 'clothes', and his islander appearance). This is why Crusoe determinately decides to keep his 'rescued' native in the dark about the secret of his power so as to ensure his dominance. Might is right and it is on this basis that Crusoe and Friday meet. Yet, Defoe represents it as a 'natural' submission to the white man and an act of gratitude for his benevolence, thus rehabilitating technical superiority into a discourse of racial and cultural superiority.

In the manner of a coloniser, Crusoe also doubly mystifies the real nature of, and reason behind, his violent act of depriving a human of his freedom to exploit him. Firstly, he justifies it as a self-defence act against man-eaters who are "enemies" to his life, saying it is "self preservation in the highest degree" that prompts his attacking those "cannibals" "*as much as if they were actually assaulting* [*him*]"[101] even though the natives prove completely unaware of his existence on the island. Secondly, he calls his manoeuvre a humane act of life-saving thus mystifying what is actually an aggressive and deeply interested action through representing it as a highly disinterested and humane one. Crusoe also mystifies the real reason

[101] *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 196

behind the fugitive's submission, which is his fear of being killed at the hand of a clearly more powerful person and not his innate readiness to subjugation as Crusoe presents it.

In this respect, Crusoe does not in the least deviate from Prospero's path. For, Prospero, too, is pushed by personal interest, employs force to impose his will, and resorts to mystification to legitimise his actions. Because (technically and militarily) more powerful –his magic is more powerful than Sycorax's and Caliban's– Prospero enslaves Caliban and takes possession of his island, claiming it is an act for good: to control Caliban's supposed savagery –represented in terms of sexual licentiousness– while the truth is that he aims at reinstituting himself into civility; that is becoming 'Master' once again and exploiting the island's inhabitants and resources for the purpose of restoring his Dukedom. He even claims that his rule is predetermined by God: "I am Prospero," he tells Alonso and his company, "and that very Duke/ Which was thrust forth of Milan, who most strangely/ Upon this shore...was landed/ To be the Lord on't."[102]

Well-aware that it all hinges on power, Prospero secretes his magic books in his cell to prevent Caliban's getting hold of them. Caliban, too, knows that might is right. He is aware of the books importance for Prospero's power and tells Stephano that without them Prospero is "but a sot...nor hath not/ One spirit to command."[103] That is why, in his alliance with Stephano and Trinculo to kill Prospero, he repeatedly insists on first depriving him of his 'weaponry' evident from the phrases "...Having first seiz'd his books," "...Remember/ First to possess his books," and "Burn but his books."[104]

[102] *The Tempest*, V, i., p. 90
[103] Ibid., III ii., p. 68-69
[104] Ibid.

It is worth pointing out that Prospero's pretext of the natives' sexual licentiousness, like cannibalism, is an important motif in colonial literature employed, as in *The Tempest*, as a cementing element of the distinction between 'civilised' and 'savage' and used to legitimise the subjugation of non-Europeans. As Paul Brown argues, the rhetoric "of the promulgation/ resistance of fulfilling/ destructive sexual desire," is a strategy "common in colonialist discourse."[105] As will be discussed in the following chapter, the same rhetoric will be employed in *Kim*, manifested in Kim's resistance to the "pestering" sexuality of "Oriental" women. The rhetoric of *Heart of Darkness*, for its part, makes use of both motifs of cannibalism and sexual licentiousness.

As soon as subjugated, Friday is set to working for Crusoe's benefit. He cuts wood, works the land, sows it with barley, plants trees, and helps Crusoe make a canoe. Crusoe appears particularly happy with his slave being reliable at work, doing it not only quickly but also "very handily," "very dexterously," and like "an expert." Like Friday, Caliban was reserved for the drudgery of fishing, wood fetching, and dish-washing, of which he is happy to be rid when allied to Stephano as appears from his singing:

*No more dams I'll make for fish,*
*Nor fetch in firing, at requiring,*
*Nor scrape trenchering, nor wash dish*[106]

But, as mentioned above, the purely exploitative nature of the natives' domination is always obscured and covered with the supposedly ideal and humanitarian aims of 'civilising' and 'enlightening,' evident in *The Tempest* from Miranda's saying to Caliban:

...I pitied thee,
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour

[105] "This Thing of Darkness I Acknowledge Mine," op. cit., p. 51
[106] *The Tempest*, II., ii., p. 61

> One thing or other: when thou didst not (savage)
> Know thine own meaning; but wouldst gabble, like
> A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes
> With words that made them known[107]

The same rhetoric is reactivated in *Robinson Crusoe*. For, no sooner does Crusoe 'save' the native than he starts 'teaching' and 'civilising' him. The first thing he does is to name the native 'Friday' to commemorate the day of their encounter. He also commands Friday to call him "Master" not Robinson. Then Crusoe starts a whole process of conversion and acculturation, teaching Friday every aspect of European culture including language, manners of eating, clothing, behaving, and worshipping.

The violence underlying Friday's naming and acculturation is, of course, obvious. Paul Brown calls it a "symbolic violence."[108] Firstly, 'Friday' is not a human name but Crusoe's way of reminding the native of the pseudo life-saving day. So, the 'name' does not actually function as a nomination but as a sort of permanent reminder to the native of his bondage to Crusoe, which is similar to Prospero's permanent reminder to Ariel of his bondage due to his freeing him from imprisonment in the cloven pine tree.

Secondly, the naming is symbolically violent because it devalues the native's real and human name –Crusoe does not even bother to ask for it– and annihilates the whole of this native's precedent life and history in a single strike since the naming is a sort of new 'baptism', a re-initiation into life. As for Crusoe's choice of "Master" as a denomination for himself, the least that can be said about it is that it is a symbolic act of dominance imposition, an announcement of Friday's conquest, and also a permanent reminder to him not to overstep boundaries.

[107] *The Tempest*, I., ii., p. 38
[108] "This Thing of Darkness I Acknowledge Mine," p. 60

Thirdly and lastly, the whole process of acculturation is symbolically violent because it is, as is always the case in colonial relations, a one-way process of learning that implicitly lowers, devalues, and condemns non-European cultures to inferiority and insignificance. As was the case with Prospero, there is no sense of Crusoe's learning from Friday except what concerns knowledge of the land and natives to facilitate the execution of his plans. Besides, even the claimed "civilising" of Friday is in reality conducted to make him only better serve Crusoe. "Au colonisé, on ne demande que ses bras, et il n'est que cela,"[109] Memmi has it. That "civilising" never 'uplifts' him to 'civility' or gain him the treatment of an equal. As Crusoe sums it up, it is exclusively focused on teaching Friday "everything that [is] proper to make him useful, handy, and helpful."[110] The outcome, the master says, is that Friday becomes "able to do all the work for [Crusoe]" who proves very happy with his "diligent" slave.

But, why should things be otherwise? Crusoe's story is not one of a Utopian adventure but of a colonial endeavour. Crusoe does not venture into the sea, as the rule is in the Utopia tradition, to learn better things from natives and then return home to tell his people of better societies and their superior norms. On the contrary, he assumes that his culture and norms are superior and ventures abroad to spread them as part of a larger colonial project for purely political and economic aims. Thus, any sign of respect to the native's culture, or learning from it, any sign of genuine cultural exchange, would run counter to Crusoe's colonial assumptions and thus pose a threat to his dominance and to his colonial enterprise.

Because his domination of Friday is based on violence and power, Crusoe, in the manner of a coloniser, resorts to absolutism to ensure its durability. The absolutist character of

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[109] *Portrait du colonisé précédé de Portrait du colonisateur*, op. cit., p. 100
[110] *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 206

his rule appears even before Crusoe's meeting with Friday. Thus, while sitting to his dinner table in company of his pet animals, Crusoe says:

> It would have made a stoic smile to have seen me and my family sit down to dinner; there was my majesty, the prince and lord of the whole island: *I had the lives of all my subjects at my absolute command*. *I could hang, draw, give liberty, and take it away,* and no rebels among all my subjects.[111]

After his meeting with Friday and then the 'rescue' of his father and the Spaniard, the same absolutism is explicitly proclaimed:

> My island was now peopled, and I thought myself very rich in subjects; and it was a merry reflection, which I frequently made, how like a king I looked. First of all, the whole country was my own mere property, so that I had an undoubted right of dominion. Secondly, my people were *perfectly subjected*. I was *absolute lord and lawgiver*; they *all owed their lives to me*, and were ready to lay down their lives, if there had been occasion of it, for me."[112]

Crusoe, at times, does not only proclaim himself an absolute king who commands his subjects' lives and liberty but even fancies himself as a god, as in the scene of his meeting with the English captain marooned by his mutinous crew when Crusoe is decidedly flattered by the captain's wondering "Am I talking to God, or man!"[113] In fact, Crusoe's fancy is manifested even earlier, exactly in the scene of his meeting with Friday. For, Friday's kneeling and bending in the manner described above and his placing of Crusoe's foot upon his head is notably reminiscent of religious rituals of submission to deities not humans and can be considered a foreshadowing of the rituals of bending, kneeling, crawling, and even sacrifice-offering which Conrad's Kurtz demands that his colonised Africans should practise when approaching him. Crusoe's fancy, along with Kurtz's godlike posturing, is certainly symptomatic of a megalomaniac ego. Such an ego demands not only total submission to its

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[111] *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 147. Emphasis added.
[112] Ibid., p. 236. Emphasis added.
[113] Ibid., p. 249

will but even complete effacement in its presence and reminds one of Shakespeare's "Absolute Milan," Prospero. He, too, was a god figure that conjured tempests, commanded wind, rain, sea, island animals and insects, and controlled spirits and deities. Evidently, a coloniser cannot admit any opposition to his will and authority on the part of his colonised.

In this absolutist colonial setting, Crusoe hierarchises his subjects, placing Friday, and later his father, at the lowest level and preserving the Spaniard and the Englishman for a higher and supervisory position. Significantly, Crusoe does not rename the Spaniard he saves from "cannibals" and the Englishman even though, like Friday, they are grateful to him for his saving their lives and remain under his command on the island. As for Friday's father, Crusoe does not even bother to rename him; he remains a shadowy and nameless presence. The distinction between Europeans and non-Europeans is, of course, what accounts for this difference in treatment.

In essence, then, the Crusoe and Friday relationship reincarnates that of Prospero and Caliban, which explains their becoming mythical colonial figures. Yet, in *Robinson Crusoe* Defoe offers a variant to the flagrant antagonism between Caliban and Prospero that presents Crusoe's and Friday's relationship as a happy one. This variant, the extent to which it deviates from the essentially antagonistic relationship between Prospero and Caliban, and the most probable factors that made Defoe's conception diverge from that of Shakespeare is what the third section will address.

## III. Prospero-Caliban Updated

Speaking about a long discussion he has one day with Friday about Christianity, Crusoe says he is thankful to God for his bringing him to the island to save the life and soul of the "poor savage" and comments:

> In this thankful frame I continued all the remainder of my time, and the conversation which employed the hours between Friday and I was such as made *the three years which we lived there together perfectly and completely happy*, if any such thing as *complete happiness* can be formed in a sublunary state.[114]

Crusoe's words are confirmed by Friday who, so earnestly and with tears in his eyes, tells Crusoe that he would rather Crusoe kill him than separate with him or send him away: "kill Friday, no send Friday away,"[115] he says to his master. Defoe, as can be guessed from Crusoe's and Friday's words, offers a 'vision' of an 'ideal' –from a Eurocentric perspective– coloniser and colonised relationship; an 'idyll' of perfect, happy, and harmonious colonial relations.

According to this vision, Crusoe is represented as a fatherly master. He 'enlightens' the "poor savage" and 'civilises' him, through encouraging him to give up cannibalism, teaching him (European) manners and skills, and converting him to Christianity. He is thus not only the saviour of Friday's life but of his soul as well, as he describes himself. Crusoe says he is particularly very tolerant in religious matters and allows "liberty of conscience" on his dominions. He has three subjects who are of three different religions: Friday is Protestant, the Spaniard is Catholic, and Friday's father is heathen. This image of civiliser, of saviour of souls, is confirmed with words put in Friday's mouth: "You do great much good," Friday tells

[114] *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 217. Emphasis added.
[115] Ibid., p. 222

his master; "you teach wild mans be good sober tame mans; you tell them know God, pray God, and live new life."[116] Crusoe is so 'humane' a master, he claims, that his subjects are "ready to lay down their lives...for [him],"[117] a claim that is also confirmed with Friday's words: "Me die when you bid die, Master."[118]

As to Friday, here is how Crusoe describes him:

> *never man had a more faithful, loving, sincere servant than Friday* was to me; without passions, sullenness, or designs, perfectly obliged and engaged; his very affections were tied to me, like those of *a child to a father*; and I dare say he would have sacrificed his life for the saving mine upon any occasion whatsoever."[119]

As Crusoe's words attest, Friday is depicted as the exemplary image of the 'good' slave happy with his servitude, obedient, faithful to his master, and as pleased of his life with Crusoe as Crusoe is with his. In learning from Crusoe, he proves to be "the aptest scholar that ever was,"[120] "so merry," and "so constantly diligent." At work, Crusoe finds Friday very reliable as not only he does the work quickly but also does it "very handily", Crusoe says, "very dexterously" and like "an expert."

When converted to Christianity, Crusoe says Friday proves "such a Christian as [Crusoe] has known few equal to him in [his] life."[121] Friday is also "so honest" and "so innocent" Crusoe cannot doubt his fidelity. Indeed, Friday is so faithful he keeps company to his master throughout the rest of his life and gives up kith and kin, friends and countrymen, home and land, and even freedom for the sake of being slave to Crusoe. As mentioned above, Friday is even ready to die for his master.

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[116] *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 222
[117] Ibid., p. 236
[118] Ibid., p. 227
[119] Ibid., p. 205. Emphasis added
[120] Ibid., p. 207
[121] Ibid., p. 217

The 'positive' depiction of Friday even extends to his looks. Although he is in no particular way different from the novel's natives, Crusoe strikingly describes him at length and even says, astonishingly, that he has "all the sweetness and softness of an European." Having no full upturned lips, no big nose, no woolly hair, here is how he is described:

> a comely, handsome fellow, perfectly well made, with straight strong limbs, not too large, tall and well-shaped…about twenty-six years of age…had a very good countenance, not a fierce and surly aspect, but seemed to have something very manly in his face, and yet he had all the sweetness and softness of an European in his countenance too, especially when he smiled. His hair was long and black, not curled like wool; his forehead very high and large; and a great vivacity and sparkling sharpness in his eyes. The colour of his skin was not quite black, but very tawny; and yet not of an ugly yellow, nauseous tawny, as the Brazilians and Virginians, and other natives of America are; but of a bright kind of a dun olive colour that had in it something very agreeable, though not very easy to describe. His face was round and plump; his nose small, not flat like the Negroes', a very good mouth, thin lips, and his fine teeth well set, and white as ivory.[122]

This depiction, of course contrasts sharply with that of Caliban, the "freckl'd whelp", the "tortoise", "the beast", and the "monster." Actually, the whole of Defoe's 'idyllic vision' sharply contrasts with Shakespeare's 'vision' of the colonial encounter and makes of Crusoe and Friday hardly recognisable as coloniser and colonised figures respectively. Note how the prototypical Prospero and Caliban are first introduced in *The Tempest*:

> **Prospero:** Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself
> Upon thy wicked dam; come forth...
> **Caliban:** As wicked dew, as e'er my mother brush'd
> With raven's feather from unwholesome fen
> Drop on you both: a South-west blow on ye,
> And blister you all o'er.
> **Prospero:** For this be sure, to-night thou shalt have cramps,
> Side-stitches, that shall pen thy breath up, urchins
> Shall for that vast of night, that they may work
> All exercise on thee: thou shalt be pinch'd
> As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging
> Than bees that made 'em.[123]

[122] *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 202
[123] *The Tempest*, I ii, p. 37

Later in the play, Caliban describes to Stephano, the butler, the kind of master Prospero is and says: "I am subject to a tyrant, a sorcerer, that/ by his cunning hath cheated me of the Island."[124] Caliban recounts that when Prospero first landed on the island he affected kindness and friendliness towards Caliban and "wouldst give [Caliban]/ Water with berries in't,"[125] and then Caliban loved him. But, as soon as Caliban disclosed to him the secrets of his island Prospero dispossessed him of it, confined him to a rock, and made a slave of him. His kindness was mere treachery, as Caliban says. Unlike Crusoe, Prospero misuses Caliban and always resorts to bodily violence against him, as his words attest: "If thou neglec'ts, or dost unwillingly/ What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps,/ Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar,/ That beasts shall tremble at thy din"[126] Had it not been for his powerful magic Prospero would be "but a sot" with "...not/ One spirit to command," says Caliban, because "they all do hate him/ As rootedly as [Caliban]." [127] This Prospero, of course, in no way resembles Friday's master, Crusoe.

Nor does Caliban in Prospero's eyes resemble in any way whatsoever Crusoe's Friday. For, he "never/ Yields [Prospero and Miranda] kind answer."[128] Unlike Friday, Caliban is "malice;" he is "villain," "abhorred," "filth[y]," "capable of all ill," and is, in Prospero's words, a "most lying slave/ Whom stripes may move, not kindness."[129] Unlike Friday, too, Caliban is the obdurate "savage" who resists acculturation and "on whom [Prospero's] pains/ Humanly taken" are "all lost, quite lost," except for Prospero's language which Caliban constantly uses to curse his hated master and his daughter, Miranda, in their own tongue: "the

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[124] *The Tempest*, V i, p. 67.
[125] Ibid., I ii, p. 38
[126] Ibid, I ii, p. 39
[127] Ibid., III ii, pp. 68-69
[128] Ibid., I ii, p. 37
[129] Ibid, I ii, p. 38

red plague rid you,"[130] "...all the charms/ Of Sycorax: toads, beetles, bats light on you,"[131] "All the infections that the Sun sucks up/ From bogs, fens, flats, on Prospero fall,"[132] he often bursts out. Caliban's hatred towards his master is so intense that Caliban willingly offers to serve the drunken butler, Stephano, and the jester, Trinculo, for the rest of his life in return for their helping him to kill Prospero. In thus 'choosing' to abase himself Caliban believes he will gain his freedom and happily sings:

> Farewell master; farewell, farewell...
> *Ban' ban' Caliban*
> *Has a new master, get a new man.*
> Freedom, high-day, high-day freedom, freedom high-day, freedom.[133]

Clearly, Caliban's and Prospero's relationship is inimical and antagonistic while Friday's and Crusoe's is 'idyllic' and 'Utopic' from a European (Defoe's) perspective, of course. Defoe appears to propose a vision of colonial relations that is discordant with the prototypical colonial encounter. Yet, discordant as it is, his vision does accord with the prototypical idyllic alternative Shakespeare proposes in his play: that of Ariel's and Prospero's relationship. According to this alternative, Prospero is Ariel's "noble Master," "great Master," and "good Prospero," and Ariel is Prospero's "delicate spirit" and "brave spirit." Like Crusoe, Prospero is Ariel's saviour from Sycorax's magic that confined him to imprisonment in a cloven pine tree. In gratitude for his supposedly 'benevolent' 'saving' act, Ariel, like Friday, becomes Prospero's servant. Like Friday, too, Ariel is very obedient and is always eager to please his master and execute his orders even before "[Prospero] can say come, and go,/ And

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[130] *The Tempest*, I ii, p. 39
[131] Ibid., I ii, p. 38
[132] Ibid., II ii, p. 56
[133] Ibid., III i, pp. 61-62

breath twice."[134] Ariel seeks his master's satisfaction and when he asks Prospero "Do you love me Master? No?" Prospero answers him: "Dearly, my delicate Ariel."[135]

Of course, such a completely and perfectly happy relationship between coloniser and colonised can never exist except in such worlds of reverie as Defoe's and Shakespeare's. Yet, for all its apparently positive attributes to the colonised Friday, Defoe's reverie world does not represent him as an equal to Crusoe or to any of his Spanish or English subjects. Defoe's 'positive' depiction is not genuinely positive but merely apparently and superficially so. For, the few positive qualities attributed to Friday are already undermined in advance by the general tendency of the narrative to represent native islanders as essentially savage and inferior to Europeans, as discussed above. As a savage and cannibal islander, Friday can never be as 'good' as Crusoe and is 'naturally' fit for nothing but servitude to him. This is why Friday's submission is represented as voluntary and self-recognised.

In addition, one can remark that those few attributes to Friday regarding his innocence, honesty, and fidelity are typical of pseudo-positive representations of the colonised in colonial discourse. They are part of a rhetoric that only sharpens the colonised naivety and make him appear as inherently unsophisticated; that is primitive. As Memmi observes "Jamais [le colonisé] n'est considéré positivement ; ou s'il l'est, la qualité concédée relève d'un *manque* psychologique ou éthique."[136] And it is this "manque" that one senses in Friday's character not

[134] *The Tempest*, V i, p. 76
[135] Ibid., V i, p. 77
[136] *Portrait du colonisé précédé de Portrait du colonisateur*, op. cit., p. 103

genuine goodness, and it is this defect that makes Friday's 'fidelity', 'innocence', and 'honesty' strike one as abnormal and, in June Dwyer words, as "positively canine."[137]

Even the 'positive' attributes related to Friday's bodily strength are more bestial than human. He is, for instance, said to be "lusty strong", able to dig holes for two corpses with his bare hands and burry them but in a "quarter of an hour." He is also said to run like wind and "never man or horse runs like him." Although Friday is 'innocent' he is not of a delicate nature like Crusoe as he is shown to cut off the head of his pursuer with Crusoe's sword and then go "*laughing* to [Crusoe] in sign of triumph"[138] laying before him both sword and head. These attributes of unusual physical strength and brutality are also recurrent clichés in colonial discourse.

It is worth recalling at this stage that the parallel derogatory and pseudo-positive depiction of the colonised is not restricted to Defoe's novel. As discussed above, it is also found in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Actually, the representation of non-Europeans in Western literature in general tends to shift between the noble and the savage image, depending on the needs of the Whiteman's colonial system. Commenting on the rhetoric of civility and savagism Bernard Sheehan says that this rhetoric established a binary whereby native cultures exist in a "primal state" in which "savages might be either noble or ignoble, either the guardians of pristine virtue or the agents of violent disorder"[139] but fundamentally other, fundamentally different from an orderly, disciplined "civilised" England. The same double-edged rhetoric, it will be argued in the following chapters, is employed in *Heart of Darkness*,

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[137] June Dwyer. "Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* and the Evolution of the Shipwreck Narrative" in *Modern Language Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 2, 2005, 9-21, p. 14, at: www.jstor.org/stable/30039823. Accessed: 10/11/2009
[138] *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 200. Emphasis added.
[139] Quoted in *Re-reading the New World Romance: British Colonisation and the Construction of "Race" in the Early Modern Period* by Marisa Huerta, Ph.D thesis, Rhode Island: Brown University, 2005, p.41-42

and even in *Kim* and *A Passage*, the two novels marked by their Orientalist discourse. The Indians in *Kim*, for instance, are 'good' and 'innocent' but are wicked, backward, and in need of British protection and rule. In *A Passage*, Aziz is friendly and kind-hearted but, though an educated doctor and a poet, he lacks Fielding's rationality and sophistication.

The employment of this double-edged rhetoric about Indian, Caribbean, and black African peoples is, in fact, a dominant strategy not only in colonial discourse but in racial and hegemonic discourses as well. It is, for instance, still employed in contemporary US media, as Billy Hawkins argues, to represent black men either as "non-threatening and palatable" or "threatening and unpalatable"[140] depending upon the needs of the system of white supremacy.

Most probably Defoe's choice of the noble and palatable image of the natives and his proposition of an idyllic relation between coloniser and colonised are prescribed by his personal vision of the colonial system's needs in his times, what DuVall calls Defoe's "hopes for colonialism." [141] For, Defoe was a fervent pro-commercial and colonial propagandist, as his non-fictional writings such as *Atlas Maritimus & Commercialis* and *A Plan of the English Commerce* attest, and even used his fictional writings, as Maximilian Novak points out, as "an instrument for disseminating his political and economic arguments concerning colonialism and imperialism."[142] Actually, Defoe was not merely a supporter of Britain's incipient expansionism but had vested interests in the project as well. According to Patrick J. Keane,

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[140] Hawkins, Billy. "The White Supremacy Continuum of Images for Black Men." *Journal of African American Studies*, Vol. 3, 3, 7-18, at www.Springerlink.com/index/h8k2704070432043.pdf

[141] DuVall, Adrienne. *The Ethics of Enterprise: Imagining Colonisation in Eighteenth- Century Novels of Colonial Encounter*. Ph.D dissertation, Oregon: the University of Oregon, 2009, p. 126

[142] Quoted in Christopher Flynn "Nationalism, Commerce, and Imperial Anxiety in Defoe's Later Works" at: http//rmmla.wsu.edu/ereview/54.2/articles/Flynn.asp. Accessed: 26-01-08

Defoe had "long-standing connections, direct and indirect, with the slave trade" [143] and these connections prescribed the parameters of his imagined colonial work force. Also, he invested in The Royal African Company, and "his first patron had been agent-general of the Guinea coast,"[144] which accounts for the colonial bias of his writings.

But Defoe was not the sole writer to use his fictional writings as an instrument for dealing with colonial issues. The practice was quite common in eighteenth-century fiction. As DuVall judiciously argues in his study of that fiction, colonial novels "actively engage the idea of colonization," and should be taken seriously because these novels "themselves purport to be engagements with contemporaneous issues"[145] related to Britain's incipient colonialism. Quite commonly, the author of such novels "creates the perfect setting for a particular vision of colonialism."[146] These, of course, are not far-fetched ideas since, as mentioned in the present work's introduction, even non-colonial novels are not "free from worldly affiliations"[147] and, as Said argues in *Culture and Imperialism*, for centuries "were immensely important in the formation of imperial attitudes, references, and experiences."[148] So, what to say then of colonial novels which themselves purport to be engagements with the colonial reality?

Like all writers of eighteenth-century colonial novels, Defoe chose the elements of his *Robinson Crusoe* story purposefully to generate a vision of the colonial reality that accorded with his "hopes for colonialism." And what could the hopes of a writer having vested interests in the colonial enterprise such as Defoe be if not to see British colonial settlements succeed

[143] Quoted in *The Ethics of Enterprise: Imagining Colonisation in Eighteenth- Century Novels of Colonial Encounter*, op. cit., p. 174
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid., p. 44-45
[146] Ibid., p. 29
[147] *Culture and Imperialism*, op. cit., p. 13
[148] Ibid., p. xii

and its trade flourish and prosper, and thus immensely benefit himself and his nation's economy? And, for this colonial project to succeed, various obstacles had to be surmounted of which Defoe was well-aware.

He was well-aware, for instance, that it all hinged on power –military, economic, and technological– in the colonial world and that it was the rule for all interventionist policies. He was well aware that early-eighteenth-century Britain was certainly not as powerful as the Ottoman Empire, or Spain, or Portugal. It had colonies in America, it was true, but could not be said to figure as a world power. Actually, early-eighteenth-century Britain had still a long way to go before it emerged as the first power in the world. These concerns and fears about Britain's incipient expansionism were so compelling that Defoe could not deny them. This can be evidenced, for instance, from the episode of Sallee when, very significantly, the novice coloniser Crusoe becomes the Turks' 'colonised' subject.

In the episode, Crusoe has to sail through the Mediterranean Sea to trade with Africa. This sea, as is known, was the domain of one of the most powerful empires in the time, the Ottoman. The Turks had complete control over the region through their sea-ports in Algiers, Tunis, and Sallee, and no trade could be conducted there except under their watchful eyes. On one of their trading voyages to Guinea, Crusoe and his shipmates are attacked by Turkish pirates and many of them are taken as slaves to Sallee, including Crusoe. This episode, as Kugler persuasively argues in her thesis, "immediately places [Crusoe's] adventure into a

discourse of power involved in eighteenth-century oriental studies and the political reality of English interactions with the Mediterranean."[149]

Given the long history of interaction between the English and the Turks and the spread of narratives of captivity in "the Barbary" in the British Isles, this episode would certainly not have appeared as pure fiction for Defoe's readers. For, throughout the Stuart reign, Kugler says, "numerous English ships were taken by Turkish pirates at Algiers, Tunis, and Sallee, with the crown (along with the Commonwealth and Protectorate) was [sic] frequently petitioned by these prisoners and their relatives for relief."[150] As Nabil Matar argues, these attacks affected communities across ranks and throughout the British Isles:

> The Britons who were captured in these attacks came from . . . Liverpool to Dover, from Dundee to Hull, and from Edinburgh to Barnstaple, although the highest number came from London. . . .[Families] endured poverty as a result of the abduction of their wage-earning relatives and of the losses incurred by the traders who paid the salaries of those relatives.[151]

The episode definitely reflects the English concerns and fears about the precarious future of their colonial enterprise, fears that Defoe, in an attempt to present the enterprise as feasible, simplistically shatters in his novel through Crusoe's extraordinary outwitting of the Turks and his fantastic escape from Sallee. But captivity and subjection to the Turks is not all that confronted the British. They had also to face the New World traditional 'masters', namely the Spaniards and the Portuguese and avoid any conflicts with them. But, most importantly, they had to avoid conflict with native populations of overseas territories to secure their

[149] Kugler, Emily Meri Nitta. *Representations of Race and Romance in Eighteenth-Century English Novels*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 2007, p. 121
[150] Ibid., p. 123
[151] Quoted by Kugler in *Representations of Race and Romance in Eighteenth-Century English Novels*, pp. 123-124

settlements, ensure their durability, and thereby guarantee the success of their colonial project and gain themselves a firm foothold in the colonial world.

As for the Europeans, Defoe, at the stroke of a pen, dispels all rivalries with them and unites them with the British, represented by Crusoe, in what DuVall calls a "brotherhood of colonial prospectors"[152] that protects its members from the dangers of the ultimate alien enemy, the "cannibals," as well as from the dangers of the buccaneers and the colonial environment as a whole. This can be evidenced from Crusoe's striking and astonishing close friendship with all the Portuguese characters in the narrative. They are all helpful, most generous and obliging towards Crusoe and prove most loyal to him even when he is reported dead.

Even the Spanish colonists, the traditional ruthless enemies of the British, are included in this for-the-benefit-of-all brotherhood of Defoe. True, he criticises them and their colonial policies to promote the image of British colonialists as the best 'masters', but he ultimately makes Crusoe save one of them from the hands of the cannibals, and later allows a large number of them, together with the English mutinous ship crew, to populate his island and become allied colonists working for the common benefit of the whole island settlement.

As for the native populations, Defoe adopts the double-edged rhetoric that answers the needs of the colonial system: on the one hand, they are represented as 'ignoble' and threatening to the united European colonial community, which justifies their mastery and subjugation, and on the other hand, they are represented as 'noble', palatable and likely allies to the English colonists, such as the case of Friday to Crusoe. The natives' alliance with the

[152] *The Ethics of Enterprise… Op. cit.,* p. v

English, according to Defoe's vision, would probably prevent any conflicts with them, guarantee knowledge of the land, people, and resources, secure those native loyalties to the English against their rivals, and ensure stability and prosperity for trade with the colonies.

Although Defoe's vision is coloured with a touch of fantasy, it is not altogether unfounded. Many famous colonial figures before him adopted the strategy of alliance and friendship with "savages" mainly in order to get information about gold mines and other resources. Raleigh Trevelyan reports that, during his 1595 journey to Guiana, Sir Walter Raleigh's policy was "to win the confidence of the Indians and treat them as allies, while at the same time convincing them of the power of the great Queen of England, under whose protection they would be safe. In this way information might be coaxed out of them about locations of gold mines."[153] The sponsors of Captain Christopher Newport's mission to Virginia, too, advised him to avoid confrontation with the natives till the colony could maintain itself. Commenting on this company's policy, James Horn says "Perhaps with the experience of Roanoke[154] in mind, the company's leaders accepted that the colony might well be dependent on the goodwill of local peoples initially, not only for food supplies but also for information about the region and trade."[155]

As a pragmatic man of commerce, Defoe appears to opt for the strategy of alliance with natives in *Robinson Crusoe* at least because it was still common in the early-eighteenth-century age of colonialism. But, Defoe also opts for this policy of good relationship with the

[153] *The Ethics of Enterprise: Imagining Colonisation in Eighteenth- Century Novels …*, p. 152
[154] The Roanoke was the British first colony established in the New World, exactly on the Roanoke Island, not far from present North Carolina's coast. Raleigh made twice the attempt of establishing a colony on the isle, in 1585 and in 1587, but it was a complete failure. In 1590, explorers found no trace of the colonists on the spot. For more details refer to electronic site: http://www.serc.si.edu/education/resources/watershed/stories/roanoke.aspx; and http://www.dur.ac.uk/4schools/Roanoke/default.htm
[155] Quoted in *The Ethics of Enterprise…Op. cit.*, pp. 152-153

colonised because he always promotes the image of colonialism as a feasible and successful project beneficial to both European and native communities. In so doing Defoe assures his British readers that even when colonists are faced with adversity and ignorance of alien territories, the natives will be there to provide them with help and information, and even overwhelm them with their gratuitous servility. Europeans, for their part, will help natives get rid of their 'savage' and 'primitive' ways. This vision, of course, brings us back to the euphemising character of colonial discourse which obscures the violence of the natives' subjection and averts the attention away from the accumulative and exploitative nature of British expansionism.

Thus, if Defoe's Crusoe-Friday relationship seems to be one of perfect happiness and thus contrast with the paradigmatic Prospero-Caliban relationship, it, nonetheless, proves to be but a rhetorical strategy that does not affect the real nature of the colonial relation in *Robinson Crusoe*. The present chapter's study of the Crusoe-Friday colonial relation in *Robinson Crusoe* has so far proved the core of the relationship to be hard and stable. Friday is never Crusoe's equal colonial partner no matter how profoundly Crusoe claims to love him. He is the "savage" that needs to be colonised, and must remain "savage" for Crusoe's colonial project to remain founded.

# CHAPTER TWO

# Crusoe's and Friday's Reincarnations in *Kim*'s India

## II.

This chapter is devoted to the study of Kipling's masterpiece, *Kim*, a novel that was written in a particularly interesting period of time in the development of the British Empire. First published in 1901, *Kim* is the product of the heyday of British imperialism. Addressing the issue of colonial relations in *Kim*, many critics applaud the novel's stance. John McClure, for instance, argues that *Kim* "repudiates racist modes of representation" and "is a Utopian portrayal of future racial harmony."[1] The present work, however, attempts a deeper investigation of the novel's conception of colonial relations and aims, in its first section, to reveal that they are, contrary to what McClure states, far from being harmonious.

In the second section, however, I shall attempt to address the aspects of the novel that make those critics praise the work, its warm affection towards the colonised, and its utopian portrayal of racial harmony. It will be argued that in a time of great turmoil in India as regards colonial relations, Kipling appears to represent them in what one can call a sort of sequel to Defoe's idyllic vision in *Robinson Crusoe*.

Though it seems paradoxical that Kipling, the renowned jingoist, offers such a vision in such times of colonial pride, it will be argued, in the last section of the present chapter, that his vision is actually no more than a sophistication of his chauvinism, the aim of which is to slight the Indian resistance, a source of headache to many colonialists in those times, and consolidate the Empire's edifice which began to show signs of cracking then.

[1] Quoted by Patrick Williams in "*Kim* and Orientalism" in *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory*, Ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, Longman, 1994, p 480

## I. The Typical Coloniser-Colonised Relationship in *Kim*

The unequal, strong-to-weak relationship between the coloniser and the colonised in Kipling's *Kim* is what strikes the reader from the start. For the novel opens on a very symbolic scene: Kim, the British protagonist, is seated “astride Zam-Zammah, (a cannon at the Lahore Museum entrance) in defiance of municipal orders,”[2] playing the “king-of-the-castle” game with Abdullah, a Muslim boy, and Chota Lal, a Hindu. Kim plays the part of king and prevents the boys from ascending the cannon. Abdullah tries to make Kim step down but Kim tells him “All Mussalmans fell off Zam-Zammah long ago!”[3] Chota Lal, too, tries to ascend the cannon but Kim tells him “All Hindus fell off Zam-Zammah too. The Mussalmans pushed them off.”[4] To explain and justify Kim’s monopoly of the role of king and his preventing the Indian boys from ascending the canon, Kipling has the narrator say: “Who hold Zam-Zammah…hold the Punjab,” and “There was some justification for Kim[…]since the English held the Punjab, and Kim was English [and] was white.”[5]

Quite explicitly, Kim is representative of the British Raj in this scene. He is obviously the coloniser. His words, his domineering attitude, and his monopolistic “hold” of the cannon attest to that. Abdullah and Chota Lal, for their part, are the colonised. They are representative of the majority religious groups in India, Muslims and Hindus, and as such of the Indians in general. Zam-Zammah, the cannon, is a symbol of power, and Kim's “hold” of it is evidently analogous to, and symbolic of, British might and rule in India.

[2] Kipling, Rudyard. *Kim*. London: Penguin Books, 1994, p. 7. All following references are to this edition

[3] Ibid. p. 11

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

The game's name itself –"king-of-the-castle" – is also very symbolic, and proves that Kim's playing with the Indian boys is not so innocent after all. It is a game about who rules whom, and it is no coincidence that Kim is 'king' in the scene. He is ruler in the game because he is representative of the effective rulers of India, very conscious of his belonging to the colonisers' 'clan,' well-aware of the colonial reality, and acts accordingly.

*Kim*'s opening scene, then, is full of meaning. It is definitely a key scene in the novel and it is certainly not fortuitous that Kipling makes it his story's starting point. Firstly, the scene is a celebration of the Raj might in India and a 'reflection' of the high watermark of British colonialism. For Kim's triumphalist and self-gratifying attitude unmistakably reflects the confidence and pride of the late-nineteenth-century coloniser on whose empire 'the sun never sets'. Indeed, by late-nineteenth century the British were the world's masters, their Raj a must in India, and their Empire unparalleled. Neither the French nor the Spaniards, nor the Russians, or the Germans, could equal the British then. Writing about the British colonial expansion between 1870 and 1914, Willie Thompson says that

> [Britain's] formal empire was the biggest of any, its shipping dominated the commercial sea-lanes as its warfleet did the strategic harbours and communications. It overshadowed all rivals in the provision of commercial and financial services, its currency served as the world standard of value, its overseas investments eclipsed those of any competitor."[6]

Actually, by 1870 the British Empire "had […] already reached a size both in area and population greater than any of its rivals were to attain by 1914."[7]

Britain's colonial domination, direct and indirect, extended to all continents and affected diverse territories. But India, in particular, had a special position amongst British

[6] Thompson, Willie. *Global Expansion: Britain and its Empire, 1870–1914*. London: Pluto Press, 1999, p. 10
[7] Ibid., p. 15

colonies and was “the jewel in the crown.” The British were deeply interested in it and, as can be deduced from *Kim*’s opening scene, were not ready to make any concessions about its status as a British possession.

Well aware of the British paramount power, Kipling, notably constructs the British coloniser figure in *Kim* not as a helpless Prospero who, in Paul Brown’s words, “cries into the sea, which charitably responds, as does the wind, with pity”[8] or as a Crusoe cast on a desolate island and worried about securing himself and his appropriated territory against attacks from “savages” and “cannibals” or threats from Spanish and Portuguese rivals, but as the settled coloniser who confidently enjoys the privileges of an already completed and unparalleled expansion and who, despite his being a poor Irish boy, one “of the very poorest in India,” dominates the colonised Chota Lal, son of a most well-off tradesman in India, and prevents him from ‘ruling’ even if it is only a children's game.

Secondly, and more importantly, *Kim*’s opening scene, like the scene of Crusoe’s meeting with Friday, with his foot upon Friday’s head, functions as a basis for the establishment of the ground rules for colonial relations in the novel. Most obviously, it sets a clear-cut distinction between the coloniser and the colonised, with the former held up in a position of superiority in relation to the latter. This distinction is prescribed, as was the case with Prospero and Caliban and Crusoe and Friday, by the imbalance in power between the coloniser and the colonised. The coloniser is the more powerful; the ‘technically superior,’ and as such he is the dominant and his will is law. As will be clarified shortly, these ground rules

[8] Brown, Paul. “This Thing of Darkness I Acknowledge Mine,” in Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield *Political Shakespeare*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988, 48-71, p. 60

govern the narrative and prescribe the terms of interaction between the British and the Indians throughout the whole novel.

This is evident, for instance, from Kim's first 'mission.' No sooner is Kim introduced to the reader than he is made to participate, though unknowingly, in a mission for the benefit of the British Intelligence Service in India. The mission is of a purely interventionist nature the aim of which is to ensure the durability of the Raj and to thwart any "alien" plans in the sub-continent. It concerns the confederation of five Indian kings of "free" states, who in the narrator's words "had no business to confederate," and the disclosure of a semi-independent ruler's alliance with Russia. Thanks to Kim's efforts the mission succeeds and the semi-independent ruler is, as Kipling has it, "brought to book" on account of his "conspiracy" with the "alien power" against the Raj.

Clearly, despite their being rulers of "free" states, the five kings, because of the power imbalance between them and the British, are not treated as really "free." They are not seen as having the right to confederate unless the Raj considers it appropriate, and the least noticeable move on their part without the consent of the British government makes them liable to "punishment." The Commander-in-Chief declares to Colonel Creighton that the government should have "smash[ed] them thoroughly from the first."[9] As to the semi-independent ruler, his move is considered an act of treason for which he is, along with his subjects, severely punished through the waging of a war on the state.

It is interesting to note the pronounced triumphalist tone with which Kipling describes the war. In a celebratory zeal and with a marked pride reminiscent of Prospero's when, for

[9] Kim, p.54

instance, he tells about his unparalleled powers,[10] Kipling goes so far as to employ a mixture of supposedly ‘Oriental’ mystery and magic in terms of which he represents British soldiers as “first-class devils,” their regiment –the Mavericks– as the “finest in the world,” and their flag sign, the Red Bull, as the god of war and arms. Nine-hundred of these “devils,” Kipling writes, are deployed to bring the Indian prince to book on account of his conspiracy.

As a coloniser, Kim does not only inadvertently participate in the colonial project. On the contrary, he carefully secrets his identity papers and when time is ripe he deliberately starts a search for his fate in India. He knows it is different from that of the colonised Indians because he is a “Sahib and the son of a Sahib.” When introduced to the Great Game, as the spying activities in India are called, Kim shows great enthusiasm to learn and train as a secret agent at the service of the Raj. His wish is to “enjoy the dignity of a letter and a number –and a price upon his head”[11] like the agent Hurree Babu. He also dreams of “follow[ing] Kings and ministers” and, of course, punishing them if they “conspire” against the Raj. In short, Kim proves very attracted to a colonial ‘career’ in the same way Crusoe was determined to “go to sea”. That is why Kim excels at St. Xavier’s and as a trainee at Lurgan Sahib’s shop. Notably, at St. Xavier’s Kim always has in mind that “*one must never forget that one is a Sahib*, and that someday, when the exams are passed, *one will command natives*.”[12] Indeed, Kim ends up

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[10] In a triumphalist and celebratory tone, Prospero proudly describes his powers in the following lines:
[…]I have bedimm’d
The noontide Sun, call’d forth the mutinous winds,
And ’twixt the green sea, and the azur’d vault
Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder
Have I given fire, and rifted Jove’s stout oak
With his own bolt: the strong-bas’d promontory
Have I made shake, and by the spurs pluck’d up
The pine, and cedar. Graves at my command
Have wak’d their sleepers, op’d, and let ’em forth
By my so potent Art. (*The Tempest*, V, i, p. 86)

[11] *Kim*, p. 216

[12] Ibid., p. 125. Emphasis mine.

a prominent secret agent, loyal to the Raj and ready to do anything to perpetuate its rule and preserve the "jewel in the crown," as when he unscrupulously exploits the old Lama's meekness and uses his spiritual search as a cover for his spying mission in the Hills.

But, as always the case is in colonial writings, more specifically in *The Tempest* and in *Robinson Crusoe*, the real nature of the colonial relationship is, in Said's words, "disguised or mitigated"[13] and the huge imbalance in power always shifted from the plane of the 'technical' and military to that of the racial and cultural so as to justify and legitimise the colonial project. This shift is immediately evidenced by the narrator's justification of Kim's dominance over the Indian boys on the basis of his being "English" (meaning British, as Kim later appears to be Irish) and "white." The self-gratifying tone of this racial pronouncement is accentuated by the self-sufficiency of the signifiers 'English' and 'white' the disclosure of which in the first lines of the novel seems enough to articulate the supposedly technical, racial, and cultural superiority of the coloniser over the colonised. The reader is evidently supposed to catch up with the economy of the signifiers and consent to the implied racial distinction between Kim and the Indian boys, between the coloniser and the colonised.

The racial distinction thus announced at the beginning of the novel is maintained and persistently reinforced along the narrative. Also, through the study of *Kim*, it will appear that Kipling resorts to the same logic of essentialism, generalisation, binary opposition, and stereotyping employed by Shakespeare and Defoe to distinguish between the coloniser and the colonised and construct the colonised as the coloniser's inferior and as his uncivilised and incapable counterpart so as to elide the sheer aggressive and exploitative nature of the Raj's colonial rule.

[13] *Orientalism*, op. cit., p. 40

Exemplifying Kipling's resorting to binary opposition and generalisation is his writing early in the story that Kim remains "amazed" at the Lama's (the Buddhist priest's) truthfulness because "speaking the truth" is something "a native […] seldom presents."[14] A few lines later, Kipling has his narrator remark that "Kim [is] the one soul in the world who [has] never told [Mahbub Ali] a lie."[15] Evidently, while the statement singles out Kim and sets him as the opposite image of what the Indians are it also reinforces the earlier remark about the natives' untruthfulness and implicitly condemns them in general as inveterate liars. Once again and in the same page Kipling adds that "for his own ends or Mahbub's business, Kim could lie *like an Oriental*"[16] thus reinforcing more and more the trait as typically and essentially "oriental" and hardening the racial distinction between the Indians and the English who supposedly, through words put in Mahbub Ali's mouth some pages later, "do eternally tell the truth."[17]

With a similar insistence, Kipling proceeds with his construction of the Indians depicting them as treacherous and cunning people who, like the railways clerk, for instance, deal improper tickets to ignorant farmers and steal their money, or, as does the woman named Flower of Delight with Mahbub Ali: she tricks a man into drinking for a particular end then unashamedly reprimands him for having drunk against "the Law of the Prophet". Commenting on her assumed innate treachery, the narrator says: "*Asiatics* do not wink when they have outmaneuvered an enemy."[18] Kipling's Indians are also represented as rude, "sometimes very rude," and abusive, as the writings on the doors of the Kashmir Serai rooms attest. On the Grand Trunk Road, for instance, "the long-shouting, deep-voiced little mob […] of native

[14] *Kim*, p. 26
[15] Ibid., p. 36
[16] Ibid. Emphasis added.
[17] Ibid., p. 188
[18] Ibid., p. 38. Emphasis added.

soldiers on leave" say "the most outrageous things to the most respectable women in sight."[19] Compared to the Indians' abusive verbosity "two thirds of the white man abuse" appear "useless,"[20] Kipling writes.

In addition to their being liars, treacherous, rude, and abusive Kipling's Indians are marked by an all-level deficiency of character and cast as the English' debased counterparts. They are irrational, naïve and credulous, and Kim exploits their "immense simplicity" to get food, shelter, train tickets, and, as a secret agent, to facilitate his spying missions. The epitome of the Orientals' meekness and naivety is, of course, the Lama who is, in Patrick Williams' words, "childish, unthinking, incapable –to the point of self-destruction– of existence in the real world."[21] Despite Kipling's evident effort to paint a kind of affectionate relationship between the white boy and the old Buddhist priest one cannot fail to note how Kim unscrupulously exploits the Lama's meekness as mentioned earlier.

In the same manner, either for his own personal benefit or that of the British intelligence service, Kim exploits the natives' assumed superstition and belief in magic, spells and charms, and prophecy, as when he uses the information he gathered from his eavesdropping on Creighton's and the commander-in-chief's conversation about the war to trick the villagers and make them believe in "his probable descent from another world"[22] and in his prophetic abilities, or when, on the train, he terrifies the pretended superstitious Jat man telling him that if he looks on the proceedings of the secret agent E23's disguisement or tells anyone of its least details, great calamities will befall his property, farm, cattle, and crops. In

[19] *Kim*, p. 87
[20] Ibid., p. 144
[21] Williams, Patrick. "*Kim* and Orientalism" in *Colonial Discourse and Post Colonial Theory*: *A Reader*, Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman eds., Longman, 1994, p. 484
[22] *Kim*, p. 56

contrast to the Indians Kim –and by implication the English in general– is of a remarkably rational mindset. This can be evidenced from the scene when Lurgan Sahib attempts to hypnotise him but, unlike the Indians who prove very suggestible, Kim resorts to counting and resists Lurgan's hypnosis, which denotes his rationality.

A notable sign of Kipling's resorting to generalisation in his depiction of the Indians is his persistent scattering all along the narrative, like signposts, of expressions such as: "Orientals," "Asiatics," "like an Oriental," "as Orientals do," "after the Oriental fashion," ect. These expressions prevent any kind of individualisation of the Indian characters and instead consecrate their stable typicality and reinforce their depersonalisation. Commenting on this discursive strategy, Memmi writes:

> [a]utre signe de cette dépersonnalisation du colonisé : ce que l'on pourrait appeler *la marque du pluriel*. Le colonisé n'est jamais caractérisé d'une manière différentielle ; il n'a droit qu'à la noyade dans le collectif anonyme. («*Ils* sont ceci…*Ils* sont tous les mêmes.»)[23]

To stress the image of Indians as debased counterparts of the English Kipling deprives them of any adequate notion of order: "Kim dived into the happy Asiatic disorder;"[24] "of time: "even an Oriental, with an Oriental's views of the value of time;"[25] "All hours of the twenty-four are alike to Orientals, and their passenger traffic is regulated accordingly;"[26] of speed: "Swiftly –as Orientals understand speed –with long explanations, with abuse and windy talk, carelessly, amid a hundred checks for little things forgotten, the untidy camp broke up;"[27] of

[23] Memmi, Albert. *Portrait du colonisé précédé de Portrait du colonisateur*. Paris : Gallimard, 1985, p. 104
[24] *Kim*, p. 89
[25] Ibid., p. 34
[26] Ibid., p. 40
[27] Ibid., p. 191

arrangement and planning: “so he abandoned the project and fell back, Oriental fashion, on time and chance.”[28]

As Memmi writes:

> [a]insi s’effritent, l’une après l’autre, toutes les qualités qui font du colonisé un homme. Et l’humanité du colonisé, refusée par le colonisateur, lui devient en effet opaque. Il est vain, prétend-il**,** de chercher à *prévoir* les conduites du colonisé (“Ils sont imprévisibles!”…“Avec eux, on ne sait jamais!”)[29]

Indeed, the Indians’ humanity in *Kim* seems to be, as Colonel Creighton observes, opaque to the British. “The more one knows about natives, the less one can say what they will or won’t do,”[30] he says to Father Victor.

No doubt, Kipling’s negative depiction of the “Orientals” cries loud its Orientalist bias and makes us wonder how one can argue, as John McClure does, that such a typically Orientalist narrative as *Kim*’s “repudiates racist modes of representation” or that it “is a Utopian portrayal of future racial harmony.”[31] Clearly and quite explicitly, the narrative heavily relies on the Orientalist stock of stereotypical ideas about non-Europeans. Note how it echoes much of what Edward Said wrote about in this extract from his *Orientalism*:

> Orientals or Arabs are…shown to be gullible, “devoid of energy and initiative,” much given to “fulsome flattery,” intrigue, cunning, and unkindness to animals; Orientals cannot walk on either a road or pavement (their disordered minds fail to understand what the clever European grasps immediately, that roads and pavements are made for walking) ; Orientals are inveterate liars, they are “lethargic and suspicious,” and in everything oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race.[32]

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[28] *Kim*, p. 144
[29] *Portrait du colonisé précédé de Portrait du colonisateur*, op. cit., p. 104
[30] *Kim*, p. 151
[31] Quoted by Patrick Williams in “*Kim* and Orientalism” op. cit., p 480
[32] *Orientalism*, op. cit., pp. 38-39

This similarity of representation, of course, testifies to the discursive nature of Kipling's narrative and alerts us to the danger of taking such Orientalist descriptions of India as 'real' accounts about the country and its people. As expounded in the introduction of this study the Orientalist discourse has always been an undisputable ally to colonialism and imperialism. It does not only legitimise and justify in advance colonisation but, as mentioned above, diverts the attention away from its aggressive and exploitative nature through effecting a shift from the plane of the technical, military, political, and economic to the plane of the racial and cultural.

This shift is undoubtedly part of the mystifying process that sets philanthropic 'ideals' to the colonial project such as "civilizing" and enlightening." As discussed in the first chapter, Defoe relied on the Puritan ethics and employed the rhetoric of courtly love to gloss over the colonial project and effect a transition from a discourse of power to one of powerlessness. Kipling, too, as a fervent conservative, seems to resort to the very same rhetoric of religious determinism employed in *Robinson Crusoe* to cover up the real nature of colonial relations in India. This is evidenced by his stressing that Kim is "the friend of the stars," that his gods are gods of war and arms, and that it is Kim's "kismet" (fate) to rule in India.

It has been argued so far that the colonial relations in *Kim* do not at core differ from those of Prospero and Caliban, and Crusoe and Friday. They are of an aggressive and a weak-to-powerful nature which is disguised and mitigated, in *Kim*'s case, through recourse to a typically colonial discourse that, by late-nineteenth century, had become the reference for all kinds of writings about the Orient in general, namely the Orientalist discourse. This, of course, explains why terms such as "savage" and "cannibal," which litter *The Tempest* and *Robinson*

*Crusoe*, are not found in *Kim*. But even though Kipling does not employ the same stereotypes he, nevertheless, consolidates the foundational rules of the colonial encounter.

Paradoxically, the renowned jingoist Kipling, writing his novel in the climactic period of British colonialism, chooses, as will be exposed shortly, to conceive of colonial relations in the same pseudo-idyllic terms of Prospero's and Ariel's and of Crusoe's and Friday's and discards the Prospero-Caliban option. How he managed to do so will be the focus of the following section while the most probable factors behind his opting for such a 'vision' of colonial relations is left to the last section of the chapter.

## II. The Reincarnation of Crusoe's and Friday's Idyll in Kipling's India

Despite his apparent jingoism and unmistakable 'Orientalism', Kipling chooses to paint an image of a most harmonious, from the coloniser's point of view of course, colonial relationship in *Kim*. As will be argued in the present section, the novel offers a kind of sequel to *Robinson Crusoe*'s vision of coloniser/colonised relationship: an idyll in a sort of utopian India. This rather 'utopist' conception of colonial relations is, as will be exposed shortly, reached through a skillful painting of an exotic image of India and its people, a careful playing up of the Raj's 'benevolence' and glossing over, not to say complete wiping out, of Indian resistance, and the crystallisation of the utopian vision in a kind of father-son relationship between Kim and the Lama.

The skillful painting of an exotic image of India is achieved through Kipling's strewing the text with passages that describe Indian scenery in bright colors and represent it as beautiful, splendid, and very attractive, and, at the same time, his emphasising of Kim's

excitement at the sight of such scenery and his extreme joy of being in India. This diverts attention away from the accumulative nature of the British colonial project and its exploiting of the subcontinent's resources and peoples, and makes the reader see British colonisation as an enjoyable affair for colonisers and a blessing for the colonised.

An example of such passages is Kipling's description of the beautiful signs of day-coming in India which Kim happily contemplates: "Golden, rose, saffron, and pink, the morning mists smoked away across the flat green levels. All the rich Punjab lay out in the splendour of the keen sun."[33] Another more exemplary passage is the following:

> The diamond-bright dawn woke men and crows and bullocks together. Kim sat up and yawned, shook himself, and thrilled with delight. This was seeing the world in real truth; this was life as he would have it –bustling and shouting, the buckling of belts, and beating of bullocks and creaking of wheels, lighting of fires and cooking of food, and new sights at every turn of the approving eye. The morning mist swept off in a whorl of silver, the parrots shot away to some distant river in shrieking green hosts: all the well wheels within earshot went to work. India was awake, and Kim was in the middle of it, more awake and more excited than any one, chewing on a twig that he would presently use as a toothbrush; for he borrowed right- and left-handedly from all the customs of the country he knew and loved.[34]

This is certainly a passage that brightens the image of India and presents it to the reader in silvery lights. Also, as can be noted from the repetition of such expressions of happiness as "thrilled with delight," life as he would have it," "the approving eye," "excited," "the country he knew and loved" Kipling manages to create an atmosphere of pleasure and attraction to the land and the people. But more importantly Kipling manages, through emphasising Kim's pretended love of India, to trivialise the colonial exploitation of the people –symbolised by the Lama– and land resources in the sub-continent.

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[33]*Kim*, p. 46.
[34] Ibid., pp. 100-101.

Interestingly, such passages purport to represent the true and "real" India which Kim knows and loves. But one has to be prudent about such representations for, as will be discussed in the last chapter, Forster, too, purports to represent the "real" India in his *A Passage to India* but the reader will be astonished to find it dull and repulsive, which evidences the discursive nature of such representations and their being mere subjective conceptions that have nothing to do with "real" India and its people.

Combined to the passages of the exotic India are similarly strewn passages all along the narrative that kaleidoscopically picture Indian people and their castes, dialects, beliefs, customs, as well as their clothing, their animals, and their life in general. Note with what a skill Kipling describes the "broad, smiling river of life" bustling on the Grand Track, which Kim watches with "bright" and "wide open" eyes, in the following most exemplary passage:

> There were new people and new sights at every stride –castes he knew and castes that were altogether out of his experience. They met a troop of long-haired, strong-scented Sansis with baskets of lizards and other unclean food on their backs…Behind them walking wide and stiffly across the strong shadows… strode one newly released from jail; his full stomach and shiny skin to prove that the government fed its prisoners better than most honest men could feed themselves.[…] [H]ere and there they met or were overtaken by the gaily dressed crowds of whole villages turning out to some local fair.[…] A little later a marriage procession would strike into the Grand Trunk with music and shoutings, and a smell of marigold and jasmine stronger even than the reek of the dust.[…]Then Kim would join the Kentish-fire of good wishes and bad jokes, wishing the couple a hundred sons and no daughters, as the saying is. Still more interesting and more to be shouted over it was a strolling juggler with some half-trained monkeys…
>
> The lama never raised his eyes. He did not note the moneylender on his goose-rumped pony… or the long-shouting, deep-voiced little mob …of native soldiers on leave.[…] Even the seller of Ganges water he did not see.[…] But Kim was in the seventh heaven of joy… Kim felt these things, though he could not give tongue to his feelings, and so contented himself with buying peeled sugarcane and spitting the pith generously about the path.[35]

[35] *Kim*, op. cit., pp. 85-87

To complete the picture of his Indian colonial garden of Eden Kipling stresses the idea of the Raj assumed benevolence and philanthropy. He emphasises the government's work related, for instance, to the Grand Track and its security and the benefits of the train which facilitates travel and trade and, as the Jat man has it, "joins friends and unites the anxious,"[36] though the Indians' benefit from this indispensible infrastructure to colonial rule is only incidental. For it is obviously the economic and governmental exigencies that prescribe the implementation of such infrastructure not the colonised's needs.

Parallel to his stressing of the Raj's 'benevolence' Kipling pacifies colonial India. He wipes out all signs of resistance against the Raj and represents colonial life, which was by late-nineteenth century changing towards outright antagonism, as heavenly, pleasurable and felicitous; an Eden where coloniser and colonised live together peacefully and harmoniously enjoying the splendor of the colony. In *Kim*'s reformulated India, the English are absorbed in their ruling duties, alert to any 'alien' attempt of intrusion in the country, and the Indians are preoccupied by their daily-life activities, enjoying the seemingly non-pareil British bliss and philanthropy. There is not the least hint about the nationalist movement that was quite spread in India by the turn of the century. Not the least mentioning of The Indian National Congress which was established in 1885[37] and the anti-British sentiment that erupted more and more into widespread protest and violence is fantastically excluded in Kipling's narrative.

More than this, Kipling draws an image of the Indians, like Mahbub Ali and the Babu, as loyal servants of the Raj willing to risk their lives to consolidate colonial rule and secure it against the threats of "alien" powers (as if the British were not 'alien.') Kipling, as will be

[36] *Kim*, p. 263

[37] Bipan, Chandra. *India's Struggle for Independence: 1857-1947*. London: Penguin Books, 1989, pp. 107-110

discussed further in the last section, even goes so far as to construct the character of an old Indian soldier of a 'singular' loyalty to the Raj through which he evokes the Mutiny,[38] that monumental turning point in the Indian colonial history, but only to condemn it as "madness."

To finalise the image of his utopian India, Kipling crystallises his 'vision' of the harmonious relationship between the coloniser and the colonised in a sort of father-son relationship between the old Lama and Kim. He creates an atmosphere of warm affection between the orphaned Irish boy and the old Buddhist priest whose Indian disciple has succumbed to illness, and gradually creates a bond of friendship between them along their journey together. Very significantly, Kim is presented as a God-sent *chela* (disciple) whose mission is to take care of the priest in this earthly world. "He is, I think, not altogether of this world," says the old Lama to the village priest, "He was sent to aid me in this search and his

[38] The Mutiny, also called The Sepoy Mutiny or The Great Rebellion (actually the issue of nomenclature is still controversial in history studies), was, as agreed upon by most historians "a watershed event in the history of British India." Heather Streets writes that historians, such as T. A. Heathcote and Bernard Porter, argue that it "was by far the largest, most widespread, and dangerous threat to British rule in India in the nineteenth century." The co-authors of *India's Struggle for Independence* contend that it was "the most formidable challenge the British Empire had to face in India." Many factors, social, cultural, economic, colonial, and even religious are thought to have set off the uprising. Mostly recorded, though, was the rumor that ran amongst Indian regiments in 1856 that "the cartridges for the new…rifles being issued to the East India Company Army were greased with the fat of pork and beef," which was regarded by the Indians as a disregard to both Hindu and Islamic religions. For more than a year, the Indian military rebels "carried on their struggle against heavy odds. They had no source of arms and ammunition; what they had captured from the British arsenals could not carry them far. They were often forced to fight with swords and pikes against an enemy supplied with the most modern weapons," Bipan Chandra writes. The sepoys, as the Indian soldiers were called, were, Tara Fallon writes, "quickly joined by large numbers of civilians supporting the reinstatement of both a Moghul and a Maratha emperor and by landlords….Historians agree that the mutiny was characterised by violent reprisals on either side." On July 8, 1858, a peace treaty was signed and the war ended. As Heather Streets argues, the "violent disruption of the rebellion, and the bitterness with which it was fought on both sides, had effects in both Britain and India that went far beyond the cessation of hostilities. Politically and administratively, the Rebellion brought an end to the East India Company, as its powers and territories were officially transferred to the British Crown in 1859. Militarily, the Rebellion led to wide-ranging changes in the structure, composition, and outlook of both the Indian and British armies." For more details refer to: Bipan Chandra, Mridula Mukherjee, Aditya Mukherjee, K. N. Panikkar, Sucheta Mahajan, *India's Struggle For Independence 1857-1947*, London: Penguin Books, 1989; Nilesh Patel, "Sepoy Mutiny of 1857," 2012 ed., at: postcolonialstudies.emory.edu/sepoy-mutiny-of-1857; Heather Streets "The Rebellion of 1857: Origins, Consequences, and Themes" in *Teaching South Asia*, Vol I, No. 1, Winter 2001; Roy Kaushik, *The Indian Mutiny: 1857* (review), in *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 67, No. 4, October 2003, pp. 1289-1290; Tara Fallon "The Indian Mutiny of 1857-1858: Its Causes and Consequences,' at http://www.qub.ac.uk/imperial/india/mutiny.htm; "The Indian Mutiny of 1857" at: http://www-personal.une.edu.au/~hbrasted/kipling/topic04.html

name is Friend of all the World."[39] It is also supposedly "shown to [the lama] in his dreams that [his search for the River of the Arrow] was a matter not to be undertaken with any hope of success unless [the lama] had with him the one *chela appointed to bring the event to a happy issue.*"[40]

This mystificatory rhetoric, of course, reminds one of Prospero's and Crusoe's rhetoric that presents their shipwreck as a "*felix culpa*, a fortunate fall"[41] and as determined by God in the aim of 'enlightening' the savages and the heathen. While Prospero tells Alonso and his company "I am Prospero, and that very Duke/ Which was thrust forth of Milan, who most strangely/ Upon this shore...*was landed/ To be the Lord on't*,"[42] Crusoe says that "if nothing happens without [God's] appointment, He has appointed [the shipwreck] to befall [him]" and then says that "[he] frequently rejoiced that ever [he]*was brought* to [the island], which [he]had so often thought the most dreadful of all afflictions that could possibly have befallen [him]."[43] Such a rhetoric, as discussed earlier, is pure euphemism the aim of which is to divert attention away from the real nature of the aggressive and purely exploitative colonial enterprise.

To create the atmosphere of warm affection between Kim and the Lama, Kipling stresses the old man's fondness for Kim and the latter's fondness for the old priest. For instance, not long after their meeting, Kipling has the lama say to Kim "my heart went out to thee," and Kim answers "[a]nd mine to thee."[44] A few lines after, the Lama confirms his first

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[39] *Kim*, p. 65
[40] Ibid., p. 221. Emphasis added.
[41] Brown, Paul. "This Thing of Darkness I Acknowledge Mine," op. cit., p. 60
[42] *The Tempest*, V, i., p. 90. Emphasis added.
[43] *Robinson Crusoe*, pp. 216-217. Emphasis added.
[44] *Kim*, p. 124

affectionate avowal: “my heart went out to thee for thy charity and thy courtesy and the wisdom of thy little years.”[45] Later in the narrative, to the woman from Kulu the old priest says: “My *chela* is to me as is a son to the unenlightened,”[46] and, in another scene, looking lovingly at the deep-sleeping boy, the Lama tells Mahbub Ali “never was such a *chela*. Temperate, kindly, wise, of ungrudging disposition, a merry heart upon the road, never forgetting, learned, truthful, courteous.”[47]

The Lama calls Kim “child of my soul,”[48] and, in a letter to father Victor, he repeatedly calls the boy “apple of [my] eye.”[49] When Kim apologises for his negligence, the old man comforts him saying that “never was such a *chela*,” like him and even confesses to the boy that he doubts whether Ananda (Buddha’s disciple) more faithfully nursed his master Buddha. Through the strewing along the narrative of such affectionate avowals the Kiplingesque bond of friendship between the (colonised) Lama and the (coloniser) boy is gradually built and consistently strengthened and the Lama’s fondness for the boy even elevated to the level of a fatherly love.

In the same manner Kipling emphasises Kim’s love for the Old priest. As mentioned above, when the lama tells him “my heart went out to thee” Kim responds with the same affectionate words saying “[a]nd mine to thee.”[50] When father Victor, remarking Kim’s intense eagerness to learn about the Lama’s whereabouts, asks him “You’re fond of him, then?” Kim firmly answers “*Of* course I am fond of him. He was fond of me.”[51] In another

[45] *Kim*, p. 126
[46] Ibid., p. 363
[47] Ibid., p. 375
[48] Ibid., p. 361
[49] Ibid., p. 141
[50] Ibid., p. 124
[51] Ibid., p. 140

scene, the Lama asks the old Indian soldier what Kim has told him about his master and the soldier says: “Sweet words –an hundred thousand – that thou art his father and mother and such all.”[52]

In one of the most moving scenes in the novel, after the mission in the Hills, the Lama asks Kim: “*Chela*, hast thou never a wish to leave me?” and, though immensely preoccupied by his spying duties, Kim answers “No. I am not a dog or a snake to bite when I have learnt to love.” The old priest then says: “Thou art too tender towards me,” and Kim, a lump in his throat, says: “Holy One, my heart is very heavy for my many carelessnesses towards thee… I have walked thee too far: I have not picked good food always for thee; I have not considered the heat; I have talked to people on the road and left thee alone…I have –I have…*Hai mai*! But I love thee… and it is all too late,” and he breaks down and sobs at the Lama’s feet, but the old priest very gently comforts him saying “Thou hast never stepped a hair’s breadth away from the Way of Obedience. Neglect *me*? Child, I have lived on thy strength as an old tree lives on the lime of a new wall. Day by day, since Shamlegh down, I have stolen strength from thee. *Therefore*, not through any sin of thine, art thou weakened… Be comforted!”[53] And comforted Kim becomes as he immediately, “[w]ith a laugh across his tears,… kisse[s] the lama’s feet and set[s] about the tea-making.”[54]

Of course, as was the case in *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Tempest* with their Crusoe-Friday and Prospero-Ariel pseudo-idylls respectively, such a fantastically happy relationship between coloniser and colonised can never exist except in the reverie worlds of Kipling, Defoe, and Shakespeare. It is too fantastic to approximate ‘reality,’ not to say of *simulating* it

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[52] *Kim*, p. 223
[53] Ibid., p. 360
[54]Ibid., p. 361

in a ‘realist’ narrative. But still, it denotes that Kipling, like Defoe, discards Shakespeare’s option of inimical and antagonistic colonial relations, and opts for the second main alternative in colonial literature discussed in the previous chapter, which is ‘Utopian.’

But the reader should be prudent with this rather ‘Utopist’ vision, if it may be said, and not be easily beguiled by its ‘idealism’ because it is not profound. As will be argued shortly, despite all his efforts to paint an immaculately faultless image of colonial relations, Kipling, probably the most jingoisticly-reputed English writer, fails to overcome his racial bias. His narrative, it was discussed in the first section, is typically Orientalist and his Eurocentrism, like Defoe’s, is so prevailing and, as it were, so comprehensive that it undermines in advance any positive attitude towards the colonised.

This explains why the Indians, the Lama included, are always distinguished from Kim and the English characters, and no matter how ‘good’ they are, they definitely remain inferior to them. Despite his being a prominent secret agent, Mahbub Ali for instance, remains a treacherous and untruthful Afghan, and despite his learning and his English education Hurree Babu remains typically a ‘Bengali’ figure: superstitious, untrustworthy, and fearful. Neither their loyalty to the Raj, nor, in the case of the Babu, his MA diploma from Calcutta University, can elevate them to a level of equality to Kim, Lurgan Sahib, or Colonel Creighton. As “Asiatics” and “Orientals” the agents Mahbub Ali and the Babu are *condemned* to remain ‘Asiatics’ and ‘Orientals:’ a subject race, inferior to their English counterparts.

Besides, even when Kipling is ‘positive’ in his depiction of the Indians, his attitude, like Defoe’s, is not genuinely *positive*. It is ‘positive’ only apparently and superficially. Firstly, as demonstrated in the first section, Kipling maintains the distinction between the

coloniser and the colonised and consolidates the latter's status as an inferior in his relation with the former. As Edward Said argues in his study of *Kim* the distinction between white and non-white in Kipling's India is absolute. In all his writings, *Kim* included, Said beautifully comments, "a Sahib is a Sahib, and no amount of friendship or camaraderie can change the rudiments of racial difference. Kipling would no more have questioned that difference, and the right of the white European to rule, than he would have argued with the Himalayas."[55]

Secondly, Kipling's attitude points not to a truly positive quality in the character of the colonised but to a negative one. As discussed in the previous chapter, and in Albert Memmi's words, "[j]amais [le colonisé] n'est considéré positivement; ou s'il l'est, la qualité concédée relève d'un *manque* psychologique ou éthique."[56] This explains why despite Kipling's success to inspire feelings of love and affection for the Lama, the reader cannot fail to sense how immensely the old man's character is defective. He is of an incredible meekness, naivety, credulity, and irrationality. Despite his love for the Lama Kim repeatedly remarks that "[h]e is quite mad,"[57] and unscrupulously exploits his credulity and uses him as a cover for his spying mission in the Hills.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this is the outcome of a rhetorical strategy that accentuates the colonised naivety and makes him appear as inherently unsophisticated compared to the coloniser. Also, despite his apparent respect of the old man's knowledge and wisdom, Kim is definitely critical of the Lama's philosophy of life. The Lama teaches him to

[55] *Culture and Imperialism*, op. cit., p. 135
[56] Memmi, Albert. *Portrait du colonisé précédé de Portrait du colonisateur*. Paris: Gallimard, 1985, p. 103
[57] *Kim*, p. 31

"abstain from action," but Kim says "At the Gates of Learning we were taught that to abstain from action is unbefitting a Sahib. And I am a Sahib."[58]

Notably, and very significantly, though Kipling manages to create an affectionate father-son relationship between the Lama and Kim; yet instead of conveying the usual dependence of the son on the father Kipling inverts the natural turn of things and carefully stresses the priest's total dependence on Kim making the boy figure as the fatherly caretaker of the childlike old man. This appears from Kipling's repeated recounting of the details of the boy's caretaking of the old man in terms that certainly and significantly remind one of Kipling's well-known poem, "The Whiteman's Burden."[59] Note how this is conveyed to the reader in this very exemplary extract:

> It was never more than a couple of miles a day now, and Kim's shoulders bore all the weight of it –the burden of an old man, the burden of the heavy food-bag with the locked books, the load of the writings on his heart, and the details of the daily routine. He begged in the dawn, set blankets for the lama's meditations, held the weary head on his lap through the noonday heats, fanning away the flies till his wrist ached, begged again in the evenings, and rubbed the lama's feet.[60]

In the case of *Robinson Crusoe* the option of 'idyllic' colonial relations, as discussed earlier, was 'plausible' given the circumstances of the incipient British colonialism. But to opt for such a vision on the part of a fervent pro-imperialist figure like Kipling's at a time when the sun never set on the Empire seems incongruent with the colonial reality. The last section of this chapter will address this issue and argue that many factors: personal, historical, as well as geo-political, related to the late-nineteenth-century colonial actuality in India and the imperial

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[58] *Kim*, p. 31
[59] See Appendix
[60] *Kim*, p. 358

world, in general, account for Kipling's (strategic) vision of colonial relations in *Kim*, and are behind his adoption of such a fantastic vision.

**III. Fictitious Stratagems for Factual Colonial Relations**

In the light of what has been discussed so far, one cannot rely on the idea of Kipling's love of India and Indians to account for his 'Utopian' vision of colonial relations in *Kim*. The novel's "chauvinistic and racist overtones"[61] prevent the assumption of Kipling's giving up his jingoism and the suggestion of his changing his attitude towards the Indians and India. And this is not surprising because Kipling, the "apostle of the Empire, the embodiment of imperial aspiration,"[62] always "*was* and *remained* a Tory imperialist."[63]

To account for his 'Utopian' vision of colonial relations in *Kim* one has instead to take into account the fact that it was the colonial reality that was changing at the time of *Kim*'s writing. By late-nineteenth century the British Empire, it is true, was the first colonial power in the world, but this does not mean that it did not face any challenges. Competition from Britain's colonial rivals, represented in the novel by the Russian and French spies, reached its peak and was manifest in the infamous 'scramble for Africa.'[64] Also, dissatisfaction with the

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[61] Wegner, E. Phillip.""Life as He Would Have It": The Invention of India in Kipling's *Kim*," in *Cultural Critique*, No. 26 (Winter, 1993-1994), pp. 129-159, University of Minnesota Press, p. 129 at http://www.jstor.org/stable/1354458. Accessed: 14/01/2009 07:16

[62] Quoted in "Artist of Empire: Kipling and Kim" by Clara Claiborne Park in *The Hudson Review*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Winter, 2003), pp. 537-561, at http://www.jstor.org/stable/3852534. Accessed: 10/06/2009

[63] *Culture and Imperialism*, op. cit., p. 134. Emphasis added.

[64] The Scramble for Africa, or the Race for Africa, is the expression used to refer to, as it were, that 'fever' for colonisation of the African continent that took hold of European colonial powers between 1880 and the outbreak of the First World War. In a famous phrase in his "Geography and Some Explorers," Conrad calls it "the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience and geographical exploration." In the last quarter of the nineteenth-century new states "entered the business of imperialism, notably Belgium, Germany and Italy. So fierce was the competition that in 1884 an international congress was held in Berlin to establish demarcation lines between the new colonial possessions." By the outbreak of WWI European colonial possessions "covered over 84 percent of the surface of the Globe." For more information refer to "The Scramble for Africa" at http://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/the-scramble-for-africa, and "The Scramble for Africa" at www.joh.cam.ac.uk/library/library_exhibitions/schoolresources/exploration/scramble_for_africa/

British colonial policy in the colonies had grown considerably and signs of cracks in the Empire's edifice had already started to show up.

India, in particular, "was well on its way toward a dynamic of outright opposition to British rule."[65] The relationship between the British and the Indian people was manifestly changing. The Indian National Congress was established in 1885 and the nationalist movement was quite spread in India. By the time of *Kim*'s writing this movement gained great momentum and feelings of resentment against the Anglo-Indians, in particular, were at the root of the large-scale unrest that manifested itself, for instance, in widespread boycotts, protest meetings, marches, bombings, and assassinations.[66] Also, the memory of the Indian Mutiny, that turning point in the history of colonial relations in India, was not completely forgotten and the fear of future mutinies haunted the British minds.

In this atmosphere of great turmoil in the Indian subcontinent Kipling wrote *Kim* but, in Said's words, "resisted [the colonial] reality"[67] reformulating India and offering the reader a picture that, "exists in a deeply antithetical relationship with the development of the movement for Indian independence."[68] Why Kipling resisted the Indian colonial reality and opted for a 'utopian' vision of the coloniser/colonised relationship is not because he gave up his jingoism and stereotypic attitude towards the Indians but rather, as many critics argue, because he was an imperialist who was singularly concerned about how to preserve the Empire and the Raj, in particular, and maintain its rule in those changing times.

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[65] *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 135
[66] *India's Struggle for Independence: 1857-1947*, op. cit., pp. 107-110
[67] *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 135
[68] Ibid., p. 32

Phillip E. Wegner, for instance, attributes Kipling's vision of colonial relations in *Kim* to his desire "to bolster the fiction of an uncontested and incontestable British rule," [69] and argues that through the narrative action of *Kim* Kipling makes

> a strategic attempt to *re-contain* those anxiety-producing conflicts that threaten British rule in turn-of-the-century India. Kipling does not deny the existence of an anti-imperial presence, but rather engages in a careful negation of it.[70]

What makes Kipling undertake such a move Wegner attribute it to the fact that

> Kipling was pointedly concerned with how British imperial order might be maintained on the changing colonial periphery. Kipling thus produces a utopian figure of India –an India where conflict, disorder, and finally historical change have been eliminated."[71]

Sheng-yen Yu, for his part, points to Kipling's "softening of his Eurocentrism and prejudice against Indians"[72] and calls his pseudo-positive attitude a "co-option of Indian culture and civilization" arguing that it should be attributed not only to "his growing political sensitivity but also to the five years of natural calamities, troubles on the Frontier, and symptoms of political unrest that had started since 1894."[73] It is mainly against this historical background of Indian unrest that Yu discusses Kipling's utopist vision in *Kim* contending that it is a "*rhetorical strategy* that aims to help secure the British Raj."[74]

In the same vein Fernando Tamara, in his "Misrepresenting the Other in Kipling's *Kim*," argues that

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[69] "Life as He Would Have It", op. cit., p. 139
[70] Ibid., p. 140
[71] Ibid., p. 143
[72] Yu, Sheng-yen. *British Imperialism and the Rhetoric of Cross-Cultural Representations* in *Kim*, *Hindupore, the Prince of destiny* And *A Passage to India*, Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York, Stony Brook, 1996, p. 142
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid., Emphasis added

> Kipling creates a very particular portrayal of the political environment of India that pointedly ignores the growing conflict between the native Indians and their British rulers. His constructed misrepresentation of the Indian political environment serves to maintain the strength and validity of the British presence in India.[75]

Even defenders of Kipling, who hail his vision of colonial relations in *Kim* as non-racist, do not deny, in McClure's words, that "[i]n order to paint a picture of a harmonious India reconciled to imperial rule Kipling has no alternative but to exclude the Indian nationalists entirely, and he does so."[76] He simply "wipes out," McClure says, "erases from his picture of India, all those groups and forces that were making life there in his time difficult for any imperialist, country-born or not."[77]

It is actually a settled matter on which most critics agree that Kipling's vision of colonial relations in *Kim* is the outcome of a mind renowned for its virulent defense of the Empire and the Raj, in particular; the mind of someone who was not "a neutral figure in the Anglo-Indian situation, but a prominent actor in it;"[78] of someone who was "a political writer as few other literary figures are,"[79] and who was "unusually sensitive to the current of ideas on imperial responsibility."[80]

This explains, then, why Kipling paints India in so bright colours, why he stresses the Raj's supposed philanthropy, and why, most importantly, he pacifies the subcontinent, erasing all signs of resistance or opposition to British rule and promoting the image of colonial India

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[75] Tamara, Fernando. "Critical Essay on *Kim.*" *Novels for Students*. Ed. Ira Mark Milne. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2005, 174-178, p. 175
[76] Quoted in "Life as He Would Have It", p. 139
[77] Ibid.
[78] Said, Edward W. Introduction. *Kim*, by Rudyard Kipling. New York: Penguin Books, 1987, p. 11
[79] Varley, H. L. "Imperialism and Rudyard Kipling," in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Jan., 1953), pp. 124-135, University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 124, at http://www.jstor.org/stable/2707499. Accessed: 10/06/2009 05:01
[80] Ibid.

as a felicitous Eden where coloniser and colonised live happily and harmoniously like a united family, combining their efforts for the service of the Raj and the maintenance of its rule.

To measure the degree of Kipling's concern about the preservation of the Raj and gauge the extent of his readiness to wipe out any obstacle to its perpetuation one has only to consider his treatment of the Great Mutiny. Firstly, the mentioning of such a pivotal moment in the history of Indian independence movement is almost incidental; very brief and occasional, as the subject of the old soldier's conversation with Kim and the Lama is the philanthropy of British rule, apparent from its care for the security of the Grand Truck, not the Indian resistance. Had it not been for the purpose of censuring the Mutiny, Kipling wouldn't certainly have made any mention of it because for someone who deliberately wipes out all signs of the colonised resistance to the coloniser's domination, the Mutiny cannot but be part of what Said says is always "forcibly excluded"[81] in texts.

Secondly, the choice of a loyalist Indian character to speak about the Mutiny and censure it is in itself very significant. It is a very calculated move that has the effect of illegitimising any act of resistance to British rule not from the point of view of the English but of the Indians themselves. Finally, the condemnation of the historical Mutiny as "madness" is a flagrant sign of Kipling's recourse to a rhetorical strategy to censure the least sign of opposition to British rule. Commenting on this, Said asserts that

> [t]o reduce Indian resentment, Indian resistance…to British insensitivity to "madness," to represent Indian actions as mainly the congenital choice of killing British women and children –these are not merely innocent reductions of the Indian nationalist case but tendentious ones. And when Kipling has the old soldier describe the British counter-revolt… as "calling" the Indian mutineers "to strict account," we

[81] *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 67

have left the world of history and entered the world of imperialist polemic, in which the native is naturally a delinquent, the white man a stern but moral parent and judge.

It is worth mentioning here that Kipling's condemnation of the Mutiny as "madness" is not astonishing at all since it is very common, as Frantz Fanon argues in his *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*, that the colonised resistance is always slighted and denigrated. It is always seen, Fanon says, not as a manifestation of an oppressed population "au nom de principes avouables, mais tout simplement dans le but de défouler leur inconscient de "bicots".[82]

Kipling's denigration of the Indian nationalist movement and its political aspirations is not apparent only in *Kim*. Even in his other major works he treats the subject with extreme dismissiveness, as is the case, for instance, in his "The Enlightenment of Pagett, M.P." To slight the Indian National Congress, Kipling quotes a passage from Burke's "Reflections on the French Revolution":

> Because a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make a field ring with their importunate chink while thousands of great cattle, reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak, chew the cad and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field –that, of course, they are many in number– or that, after all, they are other than the little, shriveled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome insects of the hour.[83]

Clearly enough, Kipling suggests that Indian nationalists are comparable to the noisy grasshoppers and the Indian masses to the satisfied cattle, implying that there is no cause for political alarm in colonial India because, in Sheng-yen Yu words, "the Indian National Congress is not influential."[84]

[82] Fanon, Franz. *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*. Paris : Editions du Seuil, 1952, p. 84
[83] Yu, Sheng-yen. *British Imperialism and the Rhetoric of Cross-Cultural Representations*, pp. 126-27
[84] Ibid., p. 127

In addition to his pacifying of India and slighting of Indian nationalism Kipling proves to have a critical view of British colonial policy in the subcontinent, mainly issues relating to who can best represent British rule and work for its perpetuation and to the kind of education to provide so as to form these agents. Public school education, of course, was one of the most important pillars in the Empire's edifice responsible for its provision with rulers and officers. Kipling had first-hand experience with that education when, as Phillip Wegner explains, at the age of six he was torn from his home in India and "was thrust into the hostile environment of Victorian England and subjected to the ritual humiliations and sadisms that were then understood to be part of the proper training for low-level imperial bureaucrats."[85] This experience, about which he amply writes in his *Something of Myself*, maimed Kipling for life.

In his major work, Kipling criticises such a system of education and shows, as is the case in *Kim*, that it only results in tyrannical, intolerant, and ultimately ineffective imperial agents such as the narrow-minded and bigoted Reverend Arthur Bennett and the abusive drummer boy. This kind of agents does not in any way serve the Empire and are only a source of harm to it. In *Kim* we are shown how the education atmosphere in St. Xavier's school is so constraining and unbearable that Kim seizes every opportunity to run away. He feels fettered by, what Edward Said calls "useless authority."[86] Said explains that Kipling's view was that "boys ultimately should conceive of life and empire as governed by unbreakable laws, and that service is more enjoyable when thought of less like a story –linear, continuous, temporal– and

[85]"Life as He Would Have It," op. cit., p. 131
[86] *Culture and Imperialism*, op. cit., p. 137

more like a playing field –many-dimensional, discontinuous, spatial,”[87] as is the case of learning at Lurgan Sahib’s shop or in the Great Game with the Babu and Mahbub Ali.

In addition to his concern about the education of imperial agents Kipling also demonstrates a deep concern about their ability to deal appropriately and adequately with the Indians and the Indian affairs to win the native population’s confidence and loyalty and thus ensure the preservation of ‘the Jewel in the Crown.’ That is why Kipling criticises, not only in *Kim* but in many of his poems that were published in *Departmental Ditties* in 1886, those who are incompetent and ignorant and, as Varley says, rise in office “without merit but through graft, bribery, blackmail, or politics.”[88] But *Kim*, in particular, is replete with signs of uneasiness with those ignorant agents who know the land and the people not from first-hand contact but only from books and encyclopedias and their ignorance does not but result in misunderstanding and ultimately in conflict, the first source of menace to the Raj. The most explicit expression of this preoccupation in the novel comes out from the mouth of an Indian character, namely the woman of Kulu, who, teased by an English policeman, emphatically remarks:

> these be the sort to oversee justice. They know the land and the customs of the land. The others, all new from Europe, suckled by white women and learning our tongues from books, are worse than the pestilence.[89]

Commenting on this view of Kipling, Phillip Wegner contends that “Kipling's vision… falls in line with late nineteenth-century Orientalist ideologies that maintained that the most effective rulers would be those who truly “know” India.”[90] Indeed, this view was sufficiently

[87] *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 138
[88] “Imperialism and Rudyard Kipling,” op. cit., p. 128
[89] *Kim*, p. 104
[90] “Life as He Would Have It”, pp. 131-132

discussed by Edward Said in his seminal study of Orientalist ideology and it has almost become a fact that, as Said points out, "knowledge of subject races or Orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable" and that "knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control."[91]

Of this dialectic of information and control Kipling proves well-aware, for he opens his novel on an iconic representation of the tight connection between Britain's power and its will to knowledge, namely the Museum at Lahore, where all sorts of artifacts representing the Indian cultural heritage are assembled, studied, and catalogued. More than this, Kipling extrapolates the relation between the political and ethnographic interests and, in Said's words, "embodies it in the figure of Colonel Creighton, an ethnographer in charge of the Survey of India, also the head of the British intelligence services in India."[92] This iconic figure is very important in the novel, for its governmental work manifests, as Phillip Wegner argues, "the double desire of Kipling in particular … –and of the contemporary British empire in general-to know India in order to restabilise imperial power."[93]

But Colonel Creighton is not the only figure that embodies the interconnection of the political and ethnographic interests in Kipling's novel. The protagonist Kim is certainly of greater importance. He is an Intelligence agent who has been impregnated by Indian culture. As a boy, growing up in Lahore, Kim unwittingly learns the Indian culture: the customs, traditions, languages, religions, casts, and manners. This makes him "hand in glove" with Indians, and "a monkey…among trees" in the land. When later he becomes a spy he learns to

[91] *Orientalism*, p.36
[92] *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 56
[93] "Life as He Would Have It", p. 147

"tuck" any "new craft…away in his head" because "the more a man [knows] the better for him."[94]

Throughout the whole novel, the reader is shown how thanks to his cultural 'hybridity' and his love for India and Indians Kim succeeds as an Intelligence agent. He is very good at cross-cultural mimicry; he easily mingles with the Indians of all casts, adopting the proper manners and speaking the vernacular with perfect fluency, and more than this he exploits his knowledge and mastery of Indian culture for the service of the Raj. In doing this Kim sets "a good example for contemporary Anglo-Indian officials who were expected to strengthen the tie between England and India in an era of increasing Indian political agitation."[95]

[94] *Kim*, p. 218
[95] *British Imperialism and the Rhetoric of Cross-Cultural Representations*, p. 156

# CHAPTER THREE

# Prospero's and Caliban's Re-encounter in *Heart of Darkness*

## III.

This third chapter is devoted to the study of the other fictional byproduct of the heyday of British expansionism, namely Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Focusing mainly on the study of characterisation in the novella and its dramatisation of the colonial encounter, the present chapter attempts to cast light on some of the most controversial aspects of the work related to the treatment of both images of the coloniser and the colonised, and the kind of relationship interwoven between them by Conrad. The reference, of course, of this study is always the prototypical colonial encounter of Shakespeare's Prospero and Caliban.

In its first section, the present study argues that *Heart of Darkness* is indeed replete with images that reflect the real exploitative nature of the coloniser-colonised relationship and the appalling waste caused by the infamous Belgian colonisation in the Congo; images that unmask the ugly face of the coloniser and bring into light his aggression, voracity, greed, and cupidity and, at the same time, allow the reader a glimpse of the colonised's extreme misery at the heart of the colonial darkness. In this respect, the novella seems to offer an anti-imperialist vision and recount Prospero's and Caliban's encounter in bitter terms.

But, at a deeper investigation, it appears that *Heart of Darkness* is not against the colonisation of non-Europeans. If it denounces the fallen Belgian colonisers and their horrifying treatment of the colonised Africans it, nonetheless, proves to glorify the British colonisers and uphold their colonial assumptions. This stance explains why Edward Said is, in a certain way, right in judging that *Heart of Darkness* offers two visions: imperialist and anti-imperialist. But, what comes out of the study of the novella's seemingly double vision, in the second section, is the fact that the poor colonised Africans are merely condemned to a choice

of colonial nightmares. It will be argued that the British model of colonisation with its vision of colonial relations, as advocated by Marlow, does not *at root* differ from the Belgian one. For, according to both visions, it is unthinkable that Africans can rise above their level of 'savagery' and 'primitivism' and take over the reins of their own destiny because they are unquestionably an inferior race which cannot but be colonised.

Actually, and worse for the colonised, it will be argued in the last section, that, in his writing about the colonised dehumanisation at the hand of their colonisers, Conrad, in *Heart of Darkness*, is more preoccupied by the melting away, so to speak, of the European colonial 'ideals' under the supposed heat of the 'primitivism' reigning in Africa than he is by the colonised's plight. He is more compassionate towards those supposedly 'ideal' and 'civilised' colonisers, represented by Kurtz, who go to Africa to enlighten its presumed "darkness" but who, unfortunately for them, fall prey to the worst of their instincts, presumably under the effect of Africa's primitivism. Such purpose on the part of Conrad, while taking the veneer off 'civilised' (European) man, renders, by contrast, the plight of the colonised all the more unbearable.

## I. Prospero And Caliban In The Heart Of Colonial Darkness

Seeking shelter from the sun for a while after his arrival at the Outer Station, Marlow heads towards a nearby grove. But no sooner has he stepped in there than he has the impression he has stepped into "the gloomy circle of some inferno:"[1]

> Black shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees leaning against the trunks, clinging to the earth, half coming out, half effaced within the dim light, in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment, and despair. Another mine on the cliff went off, followed by a slight shudder of the soil under my feet. The work was going on. The Work! And this was the place where some of the helpers had withdrawn to die. They were dying slowly –it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals…nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom.[2]

Glancing down, Marlow sees the face of a dying young native. In a compassionate gesture he offers him a biscuit and, looking around, sees that "all about others were scattered in every pose of contorted collapse, as in some picture of a massacre or pestilence."[3] But the massacre or pestilence that has befallen these Africans is nothing but their colonisation by the Whites. In an earlier scene, Marlow tells of another dismal sight very expressive of the colonised sufferings at the hand of their white colonisers:

> Six black men advanced in a file toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads…each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them.[4]

Through such scenes *Heart of Darkness* takes the veil of the 'civilizing mission' off the colonial project in Africa and gives us a glimpse at the extremely appalling state of affairs regarding the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. It is a relationship of

[1] Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. Penguin Books. London : 1994, p. 24. All following references are to this edition.
[2] Ibid., p. 24
[3] Ibid., p. 25
[4] Ibid., p. 22

extreme exploitation. As the above scenes attest, the colonised Africans are said to be hired for work as 'free men' but the truth is that they are enslaved and subjected to inhuman treatment: their necks are, worse than a dog's, collared in iron and they are chained to each other and guarded against fleeing. In return for their blood sweating they are starved: they are given pieces of brass wire to exchange for provisions in the surrounding villages but, these pieces are of no use to them as the villages are all deserted. Thus, underfed, their force exhausted through hard work, and their bodies diseased, the colonised are reduced to shadowy figures that withdraw to the nearby 'death grove' for their final repose.

As for the colonisers, they are portrayed as rapacious creatures bent on stripping the colonised by force of everything dear to them, even their humanity. They are so rapacious that they seem to Marlow to be driven by some uncanny and evil force. Some of them, Marlow says, are driven by the devil of violence, some by the devil of greed, and others by "strong, lusty, and red-eyed devils"[5] of mercilessness and folly.

The situation of the colonised in *Heart of Darkness*, in the light of the picture painted by Marlow, appears to be worse than that of Caliban under the rule of Prospero. Although Caliban is enslaved and reduced to the state of a drudge, he is at least not starved to death. He is happy at the prospect of being freed from servitude to Prospero and from hard toil all day, singing: "No more dams I'll make for fish, /Nor fetch in firing, at requiring, /Nor scrape trenchering, nor wash dish,"[6] but makes no mentioning of being starved.

In addition to their inhuman treatment of the colonised Africans the white colonisers, Marlow observes, call them "enemies" and "criminals." They shell their villages from

[5] *Heart of Darkness*, 23
[6] *The Tempest*, op. cit., II., ii., p. 61

warships near the shore and raid them in search of labour force. If they are suspected of misconduct, as was the case with the agent Fresleven and the native chief, they are severely punished and summarily expelled from their villages. Of course, this policy is not new. Prospero had recourse to the same procedure with Caliban; he accused him of having attempted to rape Miranda, and subjected him to servitude, depriving him of his island and all his rights.

Despite the blatantly evident ravages they cause wherever they set foot, the colonisers pretend to be doing good for the colonised and for their land. Actually, everything about them is a pretence. Their "Work" Marlow likens to "some sordid farce acted in front of a sinister black-cloth,"[7] and their outposts have farcical names and are places where death and trade are 'happy' bed-fellows. The more Marlow advances towards the inner station the more appalling are the waste and destruction they cause. This makes Marlow's voyage upriver, he says, seem "like a weary pilgrimage amongst hints of nightmares."[8]

A specimen of these voracious colonisers is the local general manager of the ivory Company. He is a commonplace-kind-of man, as Marlow describes him, who has "no genius for organizing, for initiative, or for order even… no learning, and no intelligence."[9] His only merit is his solid health. What is notable about him is the indefinable, faint, and 'smiley' expression of his lips which makes his whole being inspire uneasiness. It seems to Marlow that the expression conceals the secret hollowness of the man; his being devoid of any kind of morals or ideals. The manager is also Kurtz's tough rival and sworn enemy, as Marlow deduces from his overhearing the manager's confiding in his uncle. His enmity stems from his

[7] *Heart of Darkness*, p. 19
[8] Ibid, p. 21
[9] Ibid., p. 31

fear of losing the chance of promotion in face of Kurtz's success and is behind his plotting of the wreck of Marlow's steamboat to delay the rescuing of Kurtz.

In fact, Marlow remarks that there is an air of plotting about the whole Central Station. One of the agents, for instance, spies upon the rest of the agents in the pay of the manager under the guise of brick-making. The other agents, whom Marlow calls "faithless pilgrims," do nothing but spend their time "backbiting and intriguing against each other.[10]" Their talk is unreal, their work a show, and their whole concern a philanthropic pretence. The only real thing in the station is these men's greed and desire to amass ivory. "The word "ivory,"" Marlow says, "rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it."[11]

But the worst of all these agents is Kurtz, the central character of the novella and the focus of Marlow's attention. At first, Marlow is told, he was the best agent. He came to Africa as an emissary of light; a 'Worker' "equipped with moral ideas," and was very decided to make of every station "a beacon on the road towards better things, a centre for trade of course, but also for humanizing, improving, instructing."[12] He was a very gifted and very learned man, interested in painting, music, and poetry, and was, and remained a particularly excellent orator.

Kurtz was educated partly in England and, because his mother is half-English and his father half-French, he proves open to various European cultures. "All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz," Marlow says. He represented the 'ideal' philanthropic colonist and

[10] *Heart of Darkness*, p. 35
[11] Ibid., p. 33
[12] Ibid., p. 47

epitomised the European civilising mission in 'dark' Africa. From this angle, Kurtz appears to be a close image of Prospero, the philosopher and scientist who gave up worldly concerns and devoted his whole time to books and research, and who, after his dethronement, was advertised as a philanthropist and civiliser who freed Ariel, instructed Caliban, and even 'saved' him from his own savagery by enslaving him.

However, not long after his settling in Africa, Kurtz, the man of virtue, is deeply changed. He becomes worse than a voracious monster that destroys everything in its way so as to get to its goal. He is no longer preoccupied with the mission of "humanizing, improving, instructing," but is solely obsessed by ivory-collecting by all means. "Evidently," says Marlow, "[his] appetite for more ivory ha[s] got the better of the…less material aspirations."[13] Armed to the teeth, he raids native villages in search of ivory and 'adorns' his station's fence-posts with the heads of those natives he calls "rebels," meaning those who dared contradict him. He is so rapacious that he even menaces to kill his Russian disciple to snatch his pile of ivory. His disciple tells Marlow that Kurtz "could be very terrible." When he wanted the Russian's pile of ivory he

> wouldn't hear reason. He declared he would shoot [the Russian] unless [he] gave him the ivory and then cleared out of the country, because he could do so, and had a fancy for it, and there was nothing on earth to prevent him killing whom he jolly well pleased.[14]

Worse than killing whom he jolly well pleases, Kurtz makes natives worship him as a deity. They do "not stir," the Russian tells Marlow, "till Mr. Kurtz [gives] the word."[15] He has the natives surround his station by their camps, and "the chiefs [come] every day to see him,"

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[13] *Heart of Darkness*, p. 82
[14] Ibid., p. 81
[15] Ibid., p. 83

crawling and offering him midnight dances that end with "unspeakable rites." "He ha[s] taken a high seat," Marlow says, "amongst the devils of the land" and "many powers of darkness claim him for their own."[16] Cupidity has got so strong a hold on Kurtz he thinks that everything belongs to him. Marlow says one has to hear him say "My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my…" to understand how low the man has been degraded. He has succumbed to the worst of his instincts and is driven, Marlow says, by "a flabby, pretending, weak-eyed devil of a rapacious and pitiless folly."[17]

Marlow, who longed at first to meet the "great genius" and witness his great philanthropic exploits, feels extremely disappointed when he finally, and after much suffering, meets him or, as Marlow says, what remains of him. He is so disappointed he regrets all the pain taken to save him. Actually, Marlow is so deeply affected by this man's appalling degradation he becomes disenchanted with all ideals and the whole mission of "civilising" and "instructing." When on their trip downriver the native announces Kurtz's death, Marlow does not stir and shows no sign of alarm. He calmly finishes his meal because for him the man is not worth grieving or mourning.

Astonishingly, when Kurtz is buried, so deeply disillusioned as Marlow is, he feels he is buried with the man, and admits that Kurtz is somehow a "remarkable man." He loathes his 'savage' practices against the colonised Africans but remains "faithful" to the man. In fact, despite his hatred of lying, Marlow even goes so far as to lie to Kurtz's intended so as to preserve a good memory of the man. What can explain this perplexing attitude of Marlow's the last section of this chapter will attempt to address.

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[16] *Heart of Darkness*, p. 70
[17] Ibid., p. 23

But, it is important to point out at this stage that all that has been disclosed so far, through Marlow, about the colonial encounter between the Europeans and the Africans has no parallel either in *The Tempest*, our reference, or even in *Robinson Crusoe*, or *Kim*. As discussed in the previous chapters, the coloniser is, no matter what he does or says, always exhibited as a philanthropist and civiliser even though his aim is blatantly material. Seen from this perspective, *Heart of Darkness* then is the first work, compared to the three works mentioned above, that outspokenly attacks the coloniser figure and discloses the plight of the colonised victims.

In the light of its treatment of the image of the coloniser and that of the colonised, and the outcome of their encounter in Africa, *Heart of Darkness* appears to inverse their roles. The coloniser is, as it were, 'Calibanised;' he is more comparable to Crusoe's "cannibals" and "savages" than he is to Prospero or Crusoe or Kim. He is 'barbarous' and 'monstrous.' As for the colonised, he strikingly appears for the first time as a victim of the rapacious creature that the coloniser is. But does this mean that the novella's vision of colonial relations is more humane and that Marlow, the English coloniser, is a real philanthropist and civiliser? The following section will attempt to answer these questions.

## II. Marlow and the Africans: A Civilisations' Encounter?

Despite Marlow's extensive exposure of the multi-faceted evil prevailing in colonised Africa, and his severe criticism of the colonisers' practices against the colonised, *Heart of Darkness* was no source of uneasiness or discomfort for Conrad's British readers. Instead, they remarkably felt secure against its 'attacks' as testifies the following review of the work after its publication in 1902.

> It must not be supposed that Mr. Conrad makes attack upon colonisation, expansion, even upon Imperialism. In no one is the essence of the adventurous spirit more instinctive. But cheap ideals, platitudes of civilisation are shrivelled up in the heat of such experiences[18]

The secret behind this feeling of security lies, firstly, in the fact that, in the reviewer's words, in no one is the essence of the adventurous spirit more instinctive than in Conrad. He indeed spent more than twenty years at the service of the Merchant Navy. Secondly, Conrad, at the beginning of his story, explicitly makes a lengthy eulogy of Britain's colonial enterprise. He extols the deeds of those men "of whom the nation is proud," who had gone out on that "venerable stream," the Thames, "bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of the might within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire"[19] to enlighten "the uttermost ends of the earth."

Thirdly, it is clearly stated in the story that the Trading Company that offered Marlow a job on one of its steamboats was "a Continental concern," namely a Belgian Company, as it is unanimously acknowledged nowadays, not a British one. This, of course, assures the readers that the criticism waged by the novella is not against British colonialism but against the system of a continental colonial power. Besides, Conrad has, through Marlow, laid beforehand the basis for his critique of European colonialism. In the opening scene of the novella Marlow, looking at the river Thames, recalls how the Romans conquered the region nineteen hundred years earlier. He tries to imagine how they dealt with the darkness and the savagery that reigned then and, sitting in a Buddha-like manner, meditates on the difference between "colonists" and "conquerors."

[18] `Mr. Conrad's New Book'. Unsigned review, in Norman Sherry ed., Joseph *Conrad: The Critical Heritage*. Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005, 99-100, p. 100. At: www.englishtips.org. Accessed: 04/01/2011.
[19] *Heart of Darkness*, p.7

What "conquerors" need for their conquest, according to Marlow's meditation, is brute force. Like the Romans, they merely grab what they can get hold of and their whole enterprise is, Marlow explains, "just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale and men going at it blind."[20] "Colonists", however, are different. Like the British, they are saved from condemnation, according to Marlow, by their 'efficiency' at 'work' and their having an 'idea' behind their colonial enterprise. It is "not a sentimental pretence," Marlow adds, "but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea –something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to."[21]

Thus, the reader of *Heart of Darkness* is induced to make a distinction between the (British) 'benign' and efficient colonialism, the one that supposedly civilises and brings light to the darkness in the hearts of "savages", and 'evil' colonialism, that which is devoid of such 'ideals' and the aim of which is, Marlow explains, "to tear treasure out of the bowels of the land … with no moral purpose at the back of it than there is in burglars breaking into a safe." Colonisation *per se* is not questioned. If one adds to all this the fact that the period of the work's serialisation and publication was marked by a worldwide criticism of the infamous Belgian colonial practices in the Congo[22], it becomes quite clear why the novella's British readers felt that their colonial enterprise was secure against the work's critique.

[20] *Heart of Darkness*, p. 10
[21] Ibid.
[22] From 1885 to 1908, under the reign of Leopold II, many atrocities were commited against the Congolese in The Congo Free State. Russell Schimmer records that the decree of 1892 domainal system, for instance, "enforced a *labor tax*" on the Congolese subjects requiring local chiefs to supply men to collect rubber, ivory, and other resources. "It essentially obliged natives to supply these products without payment… Leopold's agents held the wives and children of these men hostage until they returned with their rubber quota. Those who refused or failed to supply enough rubber often had their villages burned down, children murdered, and their hands cut off. Schimmer adds that "From 1885 to 1908, it is estimated that the Congolese native population decreased by about ten million people. Congolese historian Ndaywele Nziem estimates the death toll at thirteen million." Adam Jones also records that "to muster the forced labor (corvée) needed to supply (ivory and rubber), a reign of

Under the umbrella of the novella's logic of distinction between forms of colonialism, the coloniser in *Heart of Darkness* appears Janus-faced. Marlow represents the good sort of coloniser, the gang-of-virtue sort, or the 'colonist,' while all those in the novella responsible for the massive destruction discussed in the first section, such as the 'pilgrims', the general manager, and Kurtz, represent the bad sort, the conquerors. And since Marlow tells the story of these conquerors' encounter with the Africans within the frame of his own encounter with those African subjects *Heart of* Darkness, then, appears to offer a double-layered vision of the colonial encounter. In the first section of this chapter, the discussion was focused on the 'baddies'' encounter with the Africans, but in this second section, it will be devoted to Marlow's meeting with them; that is the supposedly "efficient" colonial encounter.

As clarified above, Marlow, as an Englishman, is portrayed, in *Heart of Darkness*, as "saved by efficiency." His conception of, and relationship with, the Africans is represented as 'humane' and 'ideal.' In addition to his being critical of the Belgian 'baddies,' he is advertised as belonging to "the gang-of-virtue' sort of colonisers: an exceptional and gifted creature; one of the "Workers," and an emissary of light. During his journey upriver, Marlow feels excited at the prospect of meeting Kurtz and is very curious to see how "this man, who had come out equipped with moral ideas of some sort…would set about his work."[23] He expects to find

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terror was imposed on African populations. The result was one of the most brutal and all-encompassing *corvée* institutions the world has known… Male rubber tappers and porters were mercilessly exploited and driven to death." The same pronouncements are confirmed by historian Baffour Ankomah who writes that "As more villages resisted the rubber order, Leopold's agents ordered the Force Publique army to raid the rebellious villages and kill the people. To make sure that the soldiers did not waste the bullets in hunting animals, their officers demanded to see the amputated right hand of every person they killed…'Sometimes', said one officer to a missionary, 'soldiers shot a cartridge at an animal in hunting; they then cut off a hand from a living man." For more details about the subject, see Russell Schimmer's "Congo Free State, 1885-1908," at: www.yale.edu/gsp/colonial/belgian_congo/; Adam Jones's *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*. Routledge, London and New York, 2006; Baffour Ankomah's *New African*, October 1999, at:www.africasia.com/icpubs/na/oct99/nacs1002.htm.

[23] *Heart of Darkness*, p. 44

Kurtz's station like "a beacon on the road towards better things, a centre… for humanizing, improving, instructing."[24]

As a 'humane' coloniser, Marlow advertises himself as very compassionate towards the colonised, as when in the grove he offers a biscuit to the dying young native, or when, on the steamboat, he throws the black helmsman's corpse overboard to prevent its being devoured by the cannibal crew. When the boat is attacked by Kurtz's native followers, Marlow proves very critical of the white agents' use of rifles and guns against them, and when leaving the inner station, after the rescue of Kurtz, he pulls the string of the whistle to frighten the natives and make them draw back so as to save them from being shot again by the "pilgrims."

But, for all his humane feelings and deeds, and despite his distancing himself from the inhumane Belgian colonisers, Marlow betrays, in words and deeds, signs of being not quite different from them. Nor is his conception of colonial relations different from theirs. Actually, he also appears to be not quite different from the coloniser-figures of Prospero, Crusoe, and his contemporary Kim, who are, as argued in the previous chapters, all advocates of the British imperial tenets of superiority to the colonised, the right to rule them, and the supposed duty of civilising them.

Firstly, when his aunt, who helped him get the position at the ivory Company, told him that she introduced him to the Companies managerial board as "an exceptional and gifted creature…an emissary of light" and a "sort of apostle" who would help in "weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways"[25] Marlow says that her words made him "quite

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[24] *Heart of Darkness*, p. 47
[25] Ibid., p. 18

uncomfortable" and he reminded her that "the Company was run for profit."[26] Thus, like Prospero who enslaves Caliban and appropriates his island to facilitate his plan of restituting his dukedom but pretends he aims at instructing Caliban, Marlow is very aware that his travel to Africa is for pure material gain, yet he contradicts himself speaks about the 'ideals' of "humanizing," "improving," and "instructing."

Secondly, Marlow condemns colonial practices but he is not against colonialism as a matter of principle, as mentioned above. He even proves to support its tenets and take for granted imperialist and racist prejudices. This is evident from his stereotyped and reductionist conception of Africans as well as from his 'othering' them as 'primitive' and backward in comparison with the Europeans. In this respect and as will be further clarified shortly, Marlow, too, does not seem to deviate from the path of Prospero, as well as those of Crusoe and Kim. His discourse certainly consolidates that of Prospero, of Crusoe, and of Kim.

Going upriver, for instance, Marlow says that the trip appears to him and to his European companions "like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world."[27] The supposedly 'civilised' crew glides along the river unable "to understand" the spectacle on the shore of frenzy and barbarity presented by the Africans who, Marlow says, "howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces."[28] They "could not understand" the "whirl of black limbs," the "mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling, under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage"[29] because, unlike the Africans who "still

[26] *Heart of Darkness*, p. 18
[27] Ibid, p. 48
[28] Ibid.p. 51
[29] Ibid.

belonged to the beginnings of time,"[30] "[Marlow and his white companions] were too far" from "those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign –and no memories."[31] Still, the Whites are thrilled by the spectacle of 'primitivism' and precisely, Marlow says, by "the thought of [their] remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar."[32]

According to Marlow's perspective Africans are backward, "primitive," and stand on the lowest level of development while Europeans stand on the highest one and are ages ahead of them. Evidently, Marlow's perspective is undeniably evolutionist. As A. James M. Johnson argues

> Marlow organizes Europeans and Africans along an evolutionary continuum with the Congolese engaging in frenzied, mindless activities…commensurate with their evidently primitive state. Europe's evolved position, "remote from the night of first ages," is signified by intellectual activity, that is, by "thought" and by the attempt to "comprehend" the "meaning" of the "prehistoric" spectacle.[33]

Marlow's evolutionist perspective, of course, is evidence of the novella's impregnation by the assumptions of Social Darwinism, a theory that was popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The theory was developed by Charles Darwin, particularly in his *The Descent of Man* (1871), and was adopted and strongly supported by the English philosopher and sociologist Herbert Spencer in his *Principles of Sociology*. According to this theory, persons, groups, and races are subject to the same laws of natural selection as Darwin had perceived in plants and animals in nature in his *Origin of Species* (1859).

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[30] *Heart of Darkness*, p. 58
[31] Ibid, p. 51
[32] Ibid.
[33] Johnson, A. James M. "Victorian Anthropology, Racism, and *Heart of Darkness*" in *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 28:4, 111-131, 1997, p. 113, at: www.ariel.ucalgary.ca/ariel/index.php/ariel/article/view/3269

In *The Descent of Man*, Darwin argues that "man is descended from some lowly-organized form" and that "there can hardly be a doubt that we are descended from barbarians."[34] Deepti Mahajan, in his "Social Darwinism" explains that according to that theory

> the weak were diminished and their cultures delimited, while the strong grew in power and in cultural influence over the weak. Social Darwinists held that the life of humans in society was a struggle for existence ruled by "survival of the fittest"… At the societal level, social Darwinism was used as a philosophical rationalization for imperialist, colonialist, and racist policies, sustaining belief in Anglo-Saxon or Aryan cultural and biological superiority.[35]

As will be further argued in the present section, the evolutionist assumptions find a strong echo in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and will appear to be the bedrock of its conception of colonial relations. Strikingly, there is a high degree of resemblance between Marlow's impressions at the sight of the Africans' "frenzy" on the shore and Darwin's impressions at the moment of his encounter with a group of Fuegians which he recorded in his *The Descent of Man*. Here is an extract of what Darwin wrote:

> The astonishment which I felt on first seeing a party of Fuegians on a wild and broken shore will never be forgotten by me, for the reflection at once rushed into my mind—such were our ancestors. These men were absolutely naked and bedaubed with paint, their long hair was tangled, their mouths frothed with excitement, and their expression was wild, startled, and distrustful. They possessed hardly any arts, and like wild animals lived on what they could catch; they had no government, and were merciless to every one not of their own small tribe. He who has seen a savage in his native land will not feel much shame, if forced to acknowledge that the blood of some more humble creature flows in his veins."[36]

To get back to our point of study, Marlow, in the manner of a coloniser, uses "niggers" as a signifier for Africans. But he frequently reanimates his 'Robinsonian' discursive heritage

[34] Quoted in "Victorian Anthropology, Racism, and *Heart of Darkness*," op. cit., p. 114
[35] Mahajan, Deepti. "Social Darwinism," Encyclopedia Britannica, at: www.britannica.com/topic/551058/history
[36] "Victorian Anthropology, Racism, and *Heart of Darkness*," op. cit., p. 114

and calls them “savages” or “cannibals”. Strikingly, like Prospero who claimed that before him the island was “not honour’d with a human shape”[37] and who called Caliban “the beast Caliban,”[38] a “freckl’d whelp,”[39] “hag-seed”, a “tortoise”, and a “poisonous slave,” Marlow says the Africans are “monstrous” and “wild,” and inhabit “a God-forsaken wilderness.”[40] They have faces like “grotesque masks” and are “ugly enough.” Sometimes, Marlow likens them to apes with tails swinging behind them and at times likens them, especially the literate ones, to “dogs in a parody of breeches and feather hats, walking on their hind-legs.”[41]

This is not all. According to Marlow’s stereotypical conception one cannot decide about the age of Africans from their look because “you know with them it’s hard to tell.”[42] Like Kipling’s Indians who have no appropriate notion of time, Marlow says that not “a single one of [the Africans] had any clear idea of time, as [the Europeans] at the end of countless ages have. They still belonged to the beginnings of time –had no inherited experience to teach them as it were.”[43] And like Defoe’s Friday who is said to be “lusty strong” and able to run like a horse, Conrad’s Africans, too, are said to be lusty strong. They are all “big powerful men,” have “bone, muscle, a wild vitality, [and] an intense energy of movement,”[44] but, supposedly like all non-Europeans, “with not much capacity to weigh the consequences”[45] of their actions.

[37] *The Tempest*, I., ii., p. 36
[38] Ibid., IV. i., p. 80
[39] Ibid., I. ii., p. 36
[40] *Heart of Darkness*, p.19
[41] Ibid., p. 52
[42] Ibid., p. 25
[43] Ibid., p. 58
[44] Ibid., p. 20
[45] Ibid., p. 59

Very notably, the 'Calibans' of *Heart of Darkness* are silenced. Apart from "short, grunting phrases" such as "catch' im," "Give 'im to us," and "Eat 'im", or the famous "Mistah Kurtz –he dead," they remain as awfully silent and speechless as the nature that surrounds them. Marlow makes no mentioning at all of their having a language of their own. The animal-like grunt of 'broken' English seems to be their sole means of expression, the only way out for their supposed dark thoughts and feelings. This impression of the Africans' dumbness is further reinforced with Conrad's persistent reference to the awful and overwhelming silence of nature which reigns over and weighs heavily on the whole land. Significantly, Prospero, too, claimed that Caliban was speechless and that thanks to his teaching and instruction Caliban could express himself. "I pitied thee," says Prospero to Caliban,

> Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
> One thing or other: when thou didst not (savage)
> Know thine own meaning; but wouldst gabble, like
> A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes
> With words that made them known.[46]

Of course, the denial of expression to the Africans and Caliban is a denial of culture and cultural identity. As Frantz Fanon pertinently argues, "Parler, … c'est surtout assumer une culture, supporter le poids d'une civilisation."[47] "Un homme qui possède le language," he says, "possède par contrecoup le monde exprimé et impliqué par ce language… il y a dans la possession du language une extraordinaire puissance" and the coloniser, of course, would never recognise to the colonised benefit this "puissance." Also, the denial of expression is a denial of a typically human faculty that differentiates humans from animals.

[46] *The Tempest*, I, ii, p. 38
[47] Fanon, Frantz. *Peau noir, masques blancs*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1952, p.13

Such a prejudiced and dehumanising conception of Africans definitely points to a racist mindset typical of all colonisers and evidences Marlow's recourse to the age-old generalisations, stereotypes, and reductionist constructs from which, in Achebe's words, "a section of mankind has suffered untold agonies and atrocities in the past and continues to do so in many ways and many places today.[48] Analysing this dehumanising attitude towards the colonised, Albert Memmi points out that it is very efficient as a way of denying the colonised any kind of human right. "On voit l'extraordinaire efficacité de cette opération," he says.

> Quel devoir sérieux a-t-on envers un animal ou une chose, à quoi ressemble de plus en plus le colonisé ? On comprend alors que le colonisateur puisse se permettre des attitudes, des jugements tellement scandaleux. Un colonisé conduisant une voiture est un spectacle auquel le colonisateur refuse de s'habituer ; il lui dénie toute normalité, comme pour une pantomime simiesque. [49]

How can one then, in the light of his dehumanising conception of Africans, qualify Marlow's act of biscuit offering to the dying native if it proves to be done through compassion not towards a human being but towards a creature which is more animal than human? Certainly, all of Marlow's 'humane' words and deeds will now acquire a totally different meaning. According to Marlow's logic, one can deduce that there is no harm in colonising the "primitive" Africans, as they are incapable of progressing and governing themselves. The harm, however, lies in being a "conqueror" not a 'good coloniser', or a philanthropist. And for one to succeed in one's colonisation, one has only to be as kindly with his colonised as one should be with one's pets or with animals in general. But no surprise, as it has always been the case with colonisers. Didn't Defoe's 'ideal' conception of Friday make him, as discussed in the first chapter, appear as Crusoe's dog? Didn't Kipling, too, argue in *Kim*, for a more 'humane' treatment of the Indians?

[48] Achebe, Chinua. "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*" *The Massachusetts Review*, 18:4 (1977), 782-794, p. 790.
[49] Memmi, Albert. *Portrait du colonisé précédé de Portrait du colonisateur*. Paris : Gallimard, 1985, p. 105

Another very striking character about Marlow's reductionist description of the natives is the curious way of his reducing them to bodily parts. He does not conceive of them as a whole but as arms, legs, eyes, breasts, etc. Note his manner of description in what follows:

> But suddenly, as we struggled round a bend, there would be a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass-roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling, under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage.[50]

Note again in another passage:

> and then suddenly…I made out, deep in the tangled gloom naked breasts, arms, legs, glaring eyes, –the bush was swarming with human limbs in movement, glistening, of bronze colour."[51]

Even when Marlow is most compassionate towards the natives here is what comes out of his compassion:

> These moribund shapes (in the grove) were free as air…I began to distinguish the gleam of the eyes under the trees. Then glancing down, I saw a face near my hand. The black bones reclined at full length with one shoulder against the tree, and slowly the eyelids rose and the sunken eyes looked up at me… Near the same tree two more bundles of acute angles sat with their legs drawn up.[52]

Decidedly, at the apex of the colonial enterprise, the colonised, or the 'Caliban' figure, in *Heart of Darkness* is, as it were, shattered into bodily parts and fragmentary shapes. It is reduced to a shadowy figure, inarticulate and indistinct from the 'incomprehensible' and 'impenetrable' environment that surrounds it. In a symbolic move that finds an echo in the final expression of Kurtz's report, "Exterminate all the brutes," Caliban is practically eradicated from the colonial scene which is left for the degenerate Prospero figure to roam

[50] *Heart of Darkness*, p. 51
[51] Ibid., p. 64
[52] Ibid., p. 24-25

with an insatiable greed for the colonised' land and resources; his sweat, muscle, and even blood.

In the light of all that has been argued so far, Marlow, the supposedly merciful colonist, according to his distinction, does not at root differ from Kurtz, the voracious "conqueror." For both of them the Africans are "savage" and "primitive" people with no civilisation or cultural heritage, incapable of change, or progress, or self-government, and as such cannot but be colonised and ruled. Thus, both Marlow and Kurtz are colonisers; participants in the purely exploitative and accumulative colonial enterprise. They advocate the same tenets of all colonial forms, which makes of them merely two sides of the very same coin.

What imports for the Africans to be colonised by a less "terrible" coloniser than Kurtz when they know that in either case they are doomed to subjugation, exploitation and dehumanisation? After all, if it weren't for purely political and economic rivalry, would the English, and Conrad through Marlow, have cared to raise that propagandist tempest against the Belgians? Were not, by late-nineteenth century, the same practices extant in all colonies be they British, French, Spanish, or Belgian? Marlow's criticism is no more than a rhetorical strategy to promote British colonialism and make it appear as the best option, and this is not new. Defoe did the same in his *Robinson Crusoe* representing Crusoe as a better master than the "cruel" Spaniards and Portuguese; and Kipling, too, pictured the British as better rulers of India than the Russians or the French.

But, what is equivocal about Marlow's stance is the fact that despite his harsh criticism of Kurtz and his practices, he still qualifies the man as "remarkable," and despite his judging

that Kurtz is the worst of all the Company's agents he opts for him as the "best choice" and remains faithful to him and to his memory. What the secret of this strange admiration can be is what the last section will attempt to address.

### III. The Coloniser as Victim of the Colonised's "Savagery"

A striking feature of Conrad's critique of the colonial practices and their impact on the colonised in *Heart of Darkness* is his absolute and strict focus on the coloniser. Apart from the images of their suffering at the beginning of his account, the victims of one of the most exploitative and inhuman systems in the history of mankind do not appear to hold Conrad's attention. Even in those early scenes of horror, Conrad appears unable to show the expected and natural compassion towards fellow humans and describes them as "shapes" and body parts in a way that points to his inability, or at least reluctance, to regard them simply as what they are, humans. In addition, and as mentioned above, Conrad's colonised victims, who normally should have been Conrad's primary source for his detailed criticism of the colonisers, are strangely condemned to dead silence. Not the least chance is given to the natives to express their suffering or draw attention to their plight as they experience it themselves.

More striking than his focus on the coloniser is, actually, Conrad's apparent preoccupation by, and pondering on, what one can only qualify as the 'bad fate' and 'plight' not of the colonised but of the coloniser in Africa: civilised and equipped with "moral ideas", Conrad seems to say, the European man, epitomised by Kurtz, comes to Africa at his peril. No sooner does he settle there than his morale is deteriorated under the effect of Africa's malignity. The change is so deep that this once 'civilised' and 'philanthropic' coloniser

becomes unrecognizable. He yields to atavism and succumbs to the vilest of his instincts, becoming more a wild beast than a human.

Conrad's concern with the deterioration of man's morale and ideals, actually, proves to have attracted critics' attention from the beginning after his novella's publication in 1902. In a *Manchester Guardian* article the reviewer wrote that *Heart of Darkness* was not an attack on colonisation and expansion, but a meditation on "cheap ideals, platitudes of civilisation" that were "shrivelled up in the heat of such experiences."[53] Edward Garnett, too, did not fail to underline the point in his review and wrote that the novella was

> the acutest analysis of the deterioration of the white man's morale, when he is let loose from European restraint, and planted down in the tropics as an `emissary of light' armed to the teeth, to make trade profits out of the 'subject races.'[54]

Some contemporary critics go even farther, in an attempt to defend Conrad and his work against the attacks of postcolonial critics, particularly Achebe's, making of this aspect the work's focal point. Sarvan, for instance, argues that the novella's reference "is not to a place (Africa), but to the condition of European man; not to a black people, but to colonialism," and Robertson maintains that Conrad "has deep truths to deliver about civilization." Watts, for his part, writes that "Conrad's tale asks whether civilization may be merely a hypocritical sophistication of savagery."[55] While it is unfair to so dismissively overlook Africa's role in the work, it would equally be unfair to neglect the novella's evident interest in (European) man's deterioration.

[53] "Mr. Conrad's New Book," unsigned review, Manchester Guardian 10 December 1902, 3, in Norman Sherry *Joseph Conrad: The Critical Heritage*. Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005, 99-100, p. 100, at: www.englishtips.org. Accessed: 04/01/2011.

[54] Garnett, Edward, unsigned review, in *Academy and Literature*, 6 December 1902, 606, in Norman Sherry *Joseph Conrad: The Critical Heritage*. Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005, 97- 99, p. 98, at: www.englishtips.org. Accessed: 04/01/2011.

[55] All three writers are quoted in A. James M. Johnson, "Victorian Anthropology, Racism, and *Heart of Darkness*" p. 127, footnote 2.

It is indeed hardly possible to miss the point while reading the novella. At first, things are not very clear because Marlow only hints at clues to the theme. Sitting Buddha-like on board the *Nellie*, Marlow recalls his experiences in Africa in the aim, as he states, of making his European audience understand the "effect" on him of his meeting with "the poor chap," Kurtz. Marlow then remarks that the place where he meets this man is "the culminating point of [his] experience;" an experience that has thrown "a kind of light on everything about [him] –and into [his] thoughts." [56] To stress more the importance of Kurtz and his "effect" he adds, after having told his listeners about his meeting with the accountant, that hadn't the latter been the one from whose lips he first heard "the name of the man…so indissolubly connected with the memories" he is about to narrate, he would not have mentioned him at all. Clearly, Kurtz and his effect appear to be the focal point of Marlow's "yarn."

Then the more one reads the story, the more one understands Kurtz's importance. As mentioned above, he is not any man. He is a "universal genius," and, as Marlow says, all Europe contributed to his making. He is exceptionally intelligent and extremely gifted. He is a musician, a painter, a journalist, a trader, a philosopher and a rhetorician. This exceptional characterisation of Kurtz makes him appear more as a symbolic figure than an ordinary character. He appears to represent European man and all that is 'ideal' about him and his civilisation. This is why Conrad frequently refers to his "moral ideas" and to his being (Europe's?) "emissary of pity, and science, and progress" who believes "each station should be like a beacon on the road towards better things…for humanizing, improving, instructing."[57] Certainly, Kurtz is the embodiment of all that is ideal in European civilization, which makes

[56] *Heart of Darkness*, p. 18
[57] Ibid., p. 47

Marlow so eager to meet him, and so deeply affected when he ultimately meets what remains of him in the heart of 'dark' Africa.

Under the effect of Africa's supposed malignity, Kurtz's moral ideas of civilizing and humanizing are "shrivelled up". Worse, his "primitive" instincts, Marlow says, revive, get the better of him, and he surrenders to atavism.

> The wilderness had patted him on the head…it had caressed him, and –lo! – he had withered; it had taken him, loved him, embraced him, got into his veins, consumed his flesh, and sealed his soul to its own by the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish initiation,[58]

Marlow says. It has "whispered to him things about himself which he did not know"[59] and Kurtz's "forgotten and brutal instincts" have awakened in him and gained the upper hand over his moral ideas. Under the heat of his experience in that supposedly "primitive" milieu that is Africa, Kurtz's 'civilisation' has melted away, as it were, and, like a varnish has faded away. What Marlow meets at the end of his journey up-river is "a flabby, pretending, weak-eyed devil of a rapacious and pitiless folly"[60] worse than all kinds of devils he has ever seen. He has long struggled to meet the 'ideal' man and see his civilising work, but finally meets a wild beast instead.

Marlow is so deeply affected he almost pays for it with his life. He says that he has ever since remained haunted by the monstrous image of Kurtz who, from having been the embodiment of good, has turned into the personification of evil. Consequently, Marlow becomes disenchanted not only with European civilisation, but with all ideals, beliefs, and principles. This is the "effect" Marlow tries to make his audience –listeners and readers–

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[58] *Heart of Darkness*, p. 69
[59] Ibid., p. 83
[60] Ibid., p. 23

understand, and this is why he sits Buddha-like and meditates on, rather than narrates in an ordinary manner, his experiences. This is also why his narrative is so gloomy and equivocal.

Interestingly, Marlow's gloomy outlook and his pondering on the bestial instincts in man's nature tally with, and reflect, Conrad's pessimistic outlook and interest in the 'evil inside.' The theme, many scholars of Conrad note, is one that preoccupied Conrad particularly in late 1890s owing to his having been deeply influenced by Darwin's theory but, particularly, because of the influence of Schopenhauer's pessimism.[61] Kenneth Graham, for instance, argues that Conrad "responded - indirectly but powerfully, through his fiction - to the theories of Darwin, [and] Schopenhauer." [62] Owen Knowles, for his part, contends that the theme of "*L'homme est un animal méchant*" in Conrad's letter of 8 February 1899 to Cunningham Graham "directly echoes Schopenhauer's essay on "Human Nature" and its recurrent theme of "*L'animal méchant par excellence*."[63] He also mentions William J. Scheich who says *Heart of*

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[61] According to Schopenhauer happiness in our world is impossible and life is vain. In his "On the Sufferings of the World" Schopenhauer writes: "It is absurd to look upon the enormous amount of pain that abounds everywhere in the world, and originates in needs and necessities inseparable from life itself, as serving no purpose at all and the result of mere chance. Each separate misfortune, as it comes, seems, no doubt, to be something exceptional; but misfortune in general is the rule."[5] "In a world where all is unstable, and nought can endure" he also writes in his "The Vanity of Existence," "… in such a world, happiness is inconceivable. How can it dwell where, as Plato says, continual *Becoming and never Being* is the sole form of existence?"[19] On the 'evil inside' he writes in his "On Human Nature": "…there are more serious reflections to be made, and worse things to be recorded. Man is at bottom a savage, horrible beast. We know it, if only in the business of taming and restraining him which we call civilisation. Hence it is that we are terrified if now and then his nature breaks out. … A hundred records, old and new, produce the conviction that in his unrelenting cruelty man is in no way inferior to the tiger and the hyaena."[15] For more detail on Schopenhauer's pessimist philosophy see *The Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer; Volume Four: Studies in Pessimism* trans. T. Bailey Saunders and *The Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer; Volume Two: On Human Nature*, trans. T. Bailey Saunders, both volumes at : http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/schopenhauer/

[62] Graham, Kenneth. "Conrad and Modernism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*. Stape, J. H. ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.162

[63] Knowles, Owen. "Who's afraid of Arthur Schopenhauer?" In *Nineteenth-century Literature,* vol. 49, 1 (Jun; 1994), pp 75-106, note 9, P. 77-78, Univ. of California Press, at: www.JSTOR.org/stable/2934045. Accessed: 30/11/2008

*Darkness* is probably "Conrad's most pronounced experiment in Schopenhauerian aesthetics."[64]

Thus, due to his disenchanting experiences in Africa, and in accordance with the Darwinian and Schopenhauerian pronouncements, Marlow judges that the European man's inner primitivism has hardly changed with time and that no sooner is he exposed to the heat of African savagery and primitivism than his coat of varnish –civilisation– melts away, disclosing his real face. Here is one of the most important and telling passages in *Heart of Darkness* in which Marlow, pondering over the natives' attack of the boat, sums it up.

> The earth seemed unearthly. We are accustomed to look upon the shackled form of a conquered monster, but there –there you could look at a thing monstrous and free. It was unearthly, and the men were – No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it –this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity –like yours –the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you –you so remote from the night of first ages– could comprehend. And why not? The mind of man is capable of anything –because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future. What was there after all? Joy, fear, sorrow, devotion, valour, rage –who can tell? –but truth –truth stripped of its cloak of time. Let the fool gape and shudder –the man knows, and can look on without a wink. But he must at least be as much of a man as these on the shore. He must meet that truth with his own true staff –with his own inborn strength. Principles won't do. Acquisitions, clothes, pretty rags –rags that would fly off at the first good shake. No; you want a deliberate belief.[65]

In Europe, Marlow explains, the beasts in men are "shackled" with law, order, morals, and values, but in Africa they are free. Looking at the "wild" Africans, Marlow recognizes his "remote" kinship with them for they are supposedly the image of what Europeans were nine hundred years ago. Despite his disgust, Marlow ascertains that any one "man enough" will

[64] "Who's afraid of Arthur Schopenhauer?" op. cit., p. 77
[65] *Heart of Darkness*, p. 51-52

admit that he finds in himself an echo of the Africans' wilderness because his 'past' primitivism is still there inside him. No matter what kind of emotions and qualities fill man his true nature, that beastly nature, is there inside unaffected by time. This is a harsh truth to face for people, Marlow goes on saying, but those men enough will look on it and bravely accept it as Africans do. Principles won't help in the acceptance of this harsh truth. They are not part of man's innate being but only acquisitions. They are man-made; pretty rags people cover themselves with and, like Kurtz's ideas, will "fly off at the first good shake."

Significantly, there is a striking similarity between Marlow's deductions and Schopenhauer's pronouncements on the 'evil inside' of man in his "On Human Nature." Note how Marlow's words echo much of what that influential philosopher says:

> Man is at bottom a savage, horrible beast. We know it, if only in the business of taming and restraining him which we call civilisation. Hence it is that we are terrified if now and then his nature breaks out. Wherever and whenever the locks and chains of law and order fall off and give place to anarchy, he shows himself for what he is. But it is unnecessary to wait for anarchy in order to gain enlightenment on this subject. A hundred records, old and new, produce the conviction that in his unrelenting cruelty man is in no way inferior to the tiger and the hyaena.[66]

"It is a fact, then," Schopenhauer concludes, "that in the heart of every man there lies a wild beast which only waits for an opportunity to storm and rage, in its desire to inflict pain on others, or, if they stand in his way, to kill them."[67]

Interestingly, even in his effort to prove the validity of his pronouncements Schopenhauer, like Conrad, makes use of the same subject of the Blacks' exploitation, but, in his case, in reference to the slave-trade enterprise:

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[66] *The Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer; Volume Two: On Human Nature*, trans. T. Bailey Saunders, 2005, p.15, at: http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/schopenhauer/ schopenhauer-2.pdf

[67] Ibid., p.18

> A forcible example is supplied by a publication of the year 1841 entitled_*Slavery and the Internal Slave Trade in the United States of North America*: being replies to questions transmitted by the British Anti-slavery Society to the American Antislavery Society. This book constitutes one of the heaviest indictments against the human race. No one can put it down with a feeling of horror, and few without tears. For whatever the reader may have ever heard, or imagined, or dreamt, of the unhappy condition of slavery, or indeed of human cruelty in general, it will seem small to him when he reads of the way in which those devils in human form, those bigoted, church-going, strictly Sabbatarian rascals--and in particular the Anglican priests among them--treated their innocent black brothers, who by wrong and violence had got into their diabolical clutches.[68]

Unquestionably, these few extracts from amongst much of Schopenhauer's writings not only point to the high degree of Conrad's impregnation with the pessimistic views of the philosopher, but also cast light on much of what appears to be Conrad's focus in *Heart of Darkness*, such as (European) civilisation, principles, ideals, savagery, primitivism, and the evil or beast inside. Conrad, through Marlow, contends that civilisation and principles are mere acquisitions, "clothes, pretty rags –rags that would fly off at the first good shake." To support his view he dramatises Kurtz's degradation in 'dark' Africa. Interestingly, Conrad's qualifying of civilisation as mere "pretty rags" also echoes Schopenhauer's words when he ironically asks "For what is our civilized world but a big masquerade?"[69]

In the light of what has been discussed so far, one comes to a better understanding of Conrad's focus on Kurtz and his degradation. Yet, it remains that one cannot understand how despite his evident condemnation of Kurtz's degradation and surrender to the wildest of his bestial instincts, Marlow feels sympathy and compassion towards him, says he is "remarkable," and pledges loyalty to him and to his memory. More than this, and despite his extreme hatred of lying, Marlow willingly lies to Kurtz's intended so as to preserve a good memory of him. Again, Schopenhauer has the answer:

[68] *The Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer; Volume Two: On Human Nature*, op. cit., p.15
[69] Ibid., p.13

Whatever folly men commit, be their shortcomings or their vices what they may, let us exercise forbearance; remembering that when these faults appear in others, it is our follies and vices that we behold. They are the shortcomings of humanity, to which we belong; whose faults, one and all, we share; yes, even those very faults at which we now wax so indignant, merely because they have not yet appeared in ourselves… In fact, the conviction that the world and man is something that had better not have been, is of a kind to fill us with indulgence towards one another. Nay, from this point of view, we might well consider the proper form of address to be, not Monsieur, Sir, mein Herr, but my *fellow-sufferer*, *Soci malorum*, *compagnon de miseres*! This may perhaps sound strange, but it is in keeping with the facts; it puts others in a right light; and it reminds us of that which is after all the most necessary thing in life—the tolerance, patience, regard, and love of neighbor, of which everyone stands in need, and which, therefore, every man owes to his fellow.[70]

In the light of what has been clarified above about Marlow's and Conrad's focus in *Heart of Darkness*, the scene of the grove filled with dying Africans, the picture of the miserable chain-gang, the appalling waste in the outer station, the destruction, the greed and rapacity of the "pilgrims," the decapitated heads ornamenting the posts of Kurtz's station, his raiding of villages for ivory, the human sacrifices offered to him, and the unspeakable ceremonies of approaching him, all these scenes and pictures in *Heart of Darkness* certainly acquire a new and totally different meaning: they are neither signs of compassion towards the colonised nor signs of condemnation of the coloniser. Instead, they are merely signs, traces, footprints, as it were, of the evil inside of which colonisation is but one form of a multitude of its wild manifestations.

Evidently, Conrad writes *Heart of Darkness* not in the aim of crying out against the atrocities committed against the poor colonised Africans and drawing attention to their sufferance at the hand of their oppressive colonisers as some critics of the work claim but, worse and unfortunately for the colonised, in the aim of bringing to light the European man's 'plight' and his desperate struggle against his fate in this miserable and unhappy world.

[70] *The Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer: Volume Four: Studies in Pessimism*, trans. by T. Bailey Saunders, 2005, pp. 16-17, at: http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/schopenhauer/ schopenhauer-4.pdf

Conrad, of course, could have treated this subject in reference to any other aspect in the European man's life. But he chooses to write about colonisation because, as he says in a letter to William Blackwood, "the criminality of inefficiency and pure selfishness when tackling the civilizing work in Africa is a justifiable idea. The subject is of our time distinctly, though not topically treated."[71] So, Conrad only seizes upon the opportunity of European colonisation of Africa and surely the widely spread propagandist criticism of the Belgian colonial policies in the 'free' State of Congo to write on his subject because of their being up-to-date. But this should not blind us to the fact that Africa and its inhabitants, according to Conrad's evolutionary outlook, are definitely "primitive." Africa is supposedly a 'dark' Continent and its people are monstrous, ugly, wild, and evil and thus can be 'perfect' as a backdrop for his narrative. This is evident from Marlow's saying when he goes out at night to bring back Kurtz on board the steamboat:

> I tried to break the spell - the heavy, mute spell of the wilderness – that seemed to draw him to its pitiless breast by the awakening of forgotten and brutal instincts, by the memory of gratified and monstrous passions. This alone, I was convinced, had driven him out to the edge of the forest, to the bush, towards the gleam of fires, the throb of drums, the drone of weird incantations; this alone had beguiled his unlawful soul beyond the bounds of permitted aspirations[72]

This is obviously an extremely reductionist view of a continent that has witnessed many civilizations. It is also extremely reductionist to so blatantly deny its people any right to whatever form of culture, representing them as animal-like creatures let loose in a wilderness. This kind of imperialist attitude is what makes Achebe, and he is right in doing so, condemn *Heart of Darkness* as a story that reduces "Africa to the role of props for the break-up of one

[71] Conrad to William Blackwood, in letter of 31 December 1898 (*Joseph Conrad: Letters to William Blackwood and David S. Meldrum, ed. William Blackburn*, 1958, p. 37) in Norman Sherry ed., Joseph *Conrad: The Critical Heritage*, p. 96
[72] *Heart of Darkness*, pp. 94-95

petty European mind."[73] This makes us conclude, that despite its surface criticism of colonisers and their practices and its apparent sympathy towards the colonised, *Heart of Darkness* does not present a genuine critique of colonialism. Instead it proves to uphold colonisers' discourses and reinforce the same racist views about the colonised endorsed by precedent colonial texts

[73] "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*," op. cit., p.789

# CHAPTER FOUR

# Prospero-Caliban

# in

# *A Passage to India*

## IV

Compared with the previously studied novels, Forster's *A Passage to India* appears to be focused on the theme of colonial relationships. Right from its beginning, it asks the question of whether or not the coloniser and the colonised can be 'friends' and tries throughout the narrative to discuss the issue and cast light on the obstacles that rise against such a relationship so as to give an answer to the question.

According to Forster's vision, the blame for the tension in relations between the English and the Indians, as will be discussed in the first section of this chapter, falls mostly on the Anglo-Indians due to their irrational racism, prejudice and bigotry. Forster appears to sympathise with the colonised, unveiling the ugly and hypocritical face of the colonisers who pretend to have a mission to accomplish vis-à-vis the Indian subjects, but prove unable to even 'approach' them. In this stifling atmosphere, Forster attempts to leave some hope for a belief in the possibility of friendship between coloniser and colonised through his weaving of a relationship between Aziz and Fielding.

Yet, despite his 'sympathising' with the colonised, Forster proves to regard them as unequal to the English and defective in many respects. Actually, as will be argued in the second section, Forster conceives of the Indians as an inferior race and proves to believe that a wide and insurmountable gulf separates them from the English; which makes connection between them impossible and accounts for his ending of Aziz's and Fielding's friendship.

This paradoxical stance of Forster's instigates the questioning of his, so to speak, attack on the Raj rule as a whole and his defense of the Indians' anti-English views, as well as

his initial interweaving of a supposedly exemplary colonial relationship and then its ending. The questioning task and an attempt to account for the most probable factors behind Forster's ambivalence will be reserved for the last section of the chapter.

## I. The Possibility for Caliban to Befriend Prospero

More than any of the preceding authors discussed in this study, Edward Morgan Forster seems very interested in tackling the issue of relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. The subject seems to be central to his *A Passage to India*. Opening the second chapter of his narrative is the scene of three Indians, namely Hamidullah, Mahmoud Ali and Aziz, discussing "whether or not it is possible to be friends with an Englishman."[74] The three of them almost agree that it is impossible:

> 'I only contend that it is possible in England' replied Hamidullah, who had been to that country long ago, before the big rush, and had received a cordial welcome at Cambridge.
>
> 'It is impossible here. Aziz! The red-nosed boy has again insulted me in Court. I do not blame him. He was told he ought to insult me. Until lately he was quite a nice boy, but the others have got hold of him.'
>
> 'Yes, they have no chance here, that is my point. They come out intending to be gentlemen, and are told it will not do. Look at Lesley, look at Blakiston, now it is your red-nosed boy, and Fielding will go next. Why, I remember when Turton came out first. It was in another part of the Province. You fellows will not believe me, but I have driven, with Turton in his carriage –Turton! Oh, yes, we were once quite intimate. He has shown me his stamp collection.'
>
> 'He would expect you to steal it now. Turton! But red-nosed boy will be far worse than Turton!'
>
> 'I do not think so. They all become exactly the same –not worse, not better. I give any Englishman two years, be he Turton or Burton. It is only the difference of a letter. And I give any Englishwoman six months. All are exactly alike. Do you not agree with me?'
>
> 'I do not' replied Mahmoud Ali, entering into the bitter fun, and feeling both pain and amusement at each word that was uttered. 'For my own part I find such profound differences among our rulers. Red-nose mumbles, Turton talks distinctly,

[74] Forster, Edward Morgan. *A Passage to India*. London: Penguin Books, 1979, p. 5. All subsequent references are to this edition.

> Mrs Turton takes bribes, Mrs Red-nose does not and cannot, because so far there is no Mrs Red-nose.'
>
> […] Aziz joined in. 'Why talk about the English? Brrrr…! Why be either friends with the follows or not friends? Let us shut them out and be jolly. Queen Victoria and Mrs Bannister were the only exceptions, and they're dead.'[75]

As apparent from the three Indians' views the blame for the failure of friendship is put on the Anglo-Indians' manners for, men and women alike are mean, offensive, and haughty. The Indians, for their part, try to be pleasant and friendly but are always scorned and offended. An instance of how things go on between the two groups is straight away provided. No sooner have Hamidullah and his guests dinned than a servant interrupts their delicious moment of fun, informing Dr. Aziz that Major Callendar, the Civil Surgeon, wants to see him in his bungalow. Infuriated, Aziz complains that there is no object in this nightly call from his superior but to spoil their evening as usual "in order to show his power."[76]

Arriving at Callendar's compound, Aziz leaves his carriage and proceeds to the bungalow on foot. To his surprise, he is told that Major Callendar is out and has left no message. While Aziz is still inquiring about his superior, Mrs Callendar and Mrs Lesley come out. Aziz lifts his hat in respect but both of the English women "glanced at the Indian and turned instinctively away,"[77] ignoring him and his bow. Worse, the women get into his carriage without bothering to ask for his permission. Frustrated by the usual snub, Aziz walks away and heads to a mosque to rest.

Having thus introduced the colonised Indians to the reader and their desperate attempts to be friendly towards the English colonisers, Forster turns to the English, or the Anglo-Indians, as they are called in the novel, and introduces them, too. The very Mrs Callendar and

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[75] *A Passage*, pp. 5-6
[76] Ibid., p. 10
[77] Ibid., p. 11

Mrs Lesley are presented at the Bridge Party in company of the two newly-come ladies from England, old Mrs Moor and Miss Adela Quested. The new-comers, particularly Miss Quested, say that they are desirous of seeing India and Indians but Mrs. Callendar and Mrs. Lesley, along with a group of other Anglo-Indian women, make them the centre of their amusement. Mrs. Callendar tries to dissuade them saying:

> '[…] I was a nurse before my marriage, and came across [the Indians] a great deal, so I know. I really do know the truth about Indians. A most unsuitable position for any Englishwoman –I was a nurse in a native state. One's only hope was to hold sternly aloof.'
>
> 'Even from one's patients?'
>
> 'Why, the kindest thing one can do to a native is to let him die,' sa[ys] Mrs. Callendar.
>
> 'How if he went to Heaven?' ask[s] Mrs. Moor, with a gentle but crooked smile.
>
> 'He can go where he likes as long as he doesn't come near me. They give me the creeps.'[78]

Then Mrs Moor asks Mrs Turton, the Collector's wife, to introduce the Indian ladies to her and to Miss Quested. "You're superior to them, anyway," says Mrs Turton. "Don't forget that. You're superior to everyone in India except one or two of the Ranis (Indian Queens), and they're on an equality."[79] Mrs. Turton's comment is evidently illustrative of her extreme racism which the novel presents as typical of Englishwomen in India.

In thus introducing the Anglo-Indians to the reader, Forster not only confirms the views expressed in the aforementioned introductory scene about the English meanness and arrogance towards their Indian subjects, but also reinforces them through his stressing, in these two scenes, the extreme cruelty and inhumanity of Mrs. Callendar, Mrs. Lesley, and Mrs. Turton.

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[78] *A Passage*, p. 20

[79] Ibid., p. 33

To enable the reader to have a clearer idea about the subject of friendship between the coloniser and the colonised, Forster tackles the issue from the opposing perspective; that is from the vintage point of the English. This he does through the agency of Mrs. Moor, the kind-hearted and gentle newly-come old lady whom Aziz meets at the mosque, and with whom he has a very cheering conversation. In the first scene, Mrs. Moor is shown telling her son, Ronny Heaslop, the City Magistrate, about her meeting with a nice doctor at the mosque. Mrs. Moor does not specify that he was an Indian, but as soon as she says "he didn't come into the club" because he "was not allowed to," Ronny cries: "Oh, good gracious! Not a Mohammedan? Why ever didn't you tell me you'd been talking to a native? I was going all wrong."[80] The magistrate "was ruffled" that his mother didn't indicate "by the tone of her voice that she was talking about an Indian"[81] and starts interrogating her about details of what Aziz did and said.

Answering his inquiring about whether or not the native expressed views about the Anglo-Indians, Mrs. Moor says that Aziz criticised the Callendars. To her big surprise, her son says that he will pass it on to Major Callendar and adds that certainly Aziz "abused the Major in order to impress [her]"[82] as all natives do. His kind mother tells him "'You never used to judge people like this at home'," and Ronny "rudely" retorts "India isn't home."[83] Then Ronny asks his mother not to tell his betrothed, Miss Quested, about Aziz because she will be worried and will "begin wondering whether we treat the natives properly, and *all that sort of nonsense*."[84]

[80] *A Passage*, p. 24
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid., p. 26
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid., p 27. Emphasis added.

Ronny, as the City Magistrate, is obviously representative not only of the British Raj's rule but of the Anglo-Indian community as well. As such his words, deeds, and behaviour are illustrative of the community's attitude, and it is certainly not fortuitous that Forster depicts him in this manner. He does not trust natives and believes that even in speech they should not be talked about as 'ordinary' people. Worse for a representative Magistrate, Ronny believes that the question of whether to treat natives properly or badly is "nonsense."

In a second scene, after the Bridge Party which was supposedly organised to "bridge" the gap between the English and the Indians, Mrs. Moor is again shown telling her son Ronny that his betrothed does not like the way the Anglo-Indians treat the natives. The Magistrate becomes nervous and, to her surprise, exclaims "Oh, how like a women to worry over a side-issue!"[85] Mrs. Moor asks him repeatedly "A side-issue, a side-issue? [...] How can it be that?" Ronny coldly says "We're not out here for the purpose of behaving pleasantly! […] We're out here to do justice and keep the peace. Them's my sentiments. India isn't a drawing-room." Annoyed but still calm she tells him: "Your sentiments are those of a god." Trying to recover his temper, Ronny says: "India likes gods," to which Mrs. Moor answers "And Englishmen like posing as gods."[86] At this point, Ronny breaks out pathetically:

> […]the country's got to put up with us, gods or no gods. Oh, look here,[…]what do you and Adela want me to do? Go against my class, against all the people I respect and admire out here? Lose such power as I have for doing good in this country, because my behaviour isn't pleasant? You neither of you understand what work is, or you'd never talk such eyewash. It's morbidly sensitive to go on as Adela and you do [...] I am out here to work, mind, and hold this wretched country by force. I'm not a missionary or a Labour Member or a vague sentimental sympathetic literary man. I'm

[85] *A Passage*, p. 40
[86] Ibid., p.41

> just a servant of the government […] We're not pleasant in India, and we don't intend to be pleasant. We've something more important to do.[87]

Ronny's callous and scornful attitude towards the Indians evidences his, and by extension the Anglo-Indians', extreme denigration of them and denotes that, for him and his fellow countrymen, the idea of befriending natives is absolutely unthinkable. His hatred of the country and its people points to the spuriousness of his claimed responsibility towards them and the hollowness of the pretended civilising 'ideals.' Worse, the Magistrate, under the effect of his rage, loses all self-control and reveals that what truly concerns him in India is only how to please his Anglo-Indian community and gain their admiration, and how to get ahead and acquire more power.

In thus presenting the 'reality' of colonial relations between the Indians and the Anglo-Indians Forster appears very critical of the English behaviour and attitude towards their subjects. He evidently seems very pessimistic about the subject of friendship or at least 'good' relations between the two camps. Notably, compared with the preceding authors discussed in this study, Forster seems more 'generous' with his colonised characters. As the introductory scene of his second chapter demonstrates, he not only gives voice to the colonised but even goes so far as to allow them to vent their anger and frustration regarding the Anglo-Indians. Of course, it could be argued that Shakespeare, too, allowed Caliban to "curse" Prospero and Miranda and never "yield [them] good answer,"[88] but the difference is that Caliban was purposefully given voice to curse and abuse his supposedly humane master so as to stress and sharpen his "savagery" and thus justify, by implication, the necessity of controlling and

[87] *A Passage*, p. 41
[88] *The Tempest*, I. ii., p. 37

subjugating him while in the case of *A Passage* the Indians views are not contradicted by the narrative voice but rather confirmed.

In this hostile colonial atmosphere to any attempt at connecting between coloniser and colonised, Forster makes an effort and manages to clear a space for the burgeoning of a friendly relationship between Aziz, the Indian doctor, and Fielding, the Principal of the Government College. Aziz is a widower and father of three children. He is a kind-hearted and well-disposed man who easily gets on with unprejudiced and understanding people. Mrs. Moor liked him at once from her very short meeting with him at the mosque and he, too, liked her for her understanding and wished all the Anglo-Indians were like her.

As to Fielding, he is an unmarried middle-aged man who loves ideas interchange. Unlike his fellow countrymen, he is said to have "no racial feeling," which is precisely what makes him distrustful in the eyes of the Turtons and Burtons and Callendars clan. He has matured, the narrator says, "in a different atmosphere, where the herd-instinct does not flourish"[89] and thus seems immunized against their infectious prejudice vis-à-vis the Indians. For Fielding the world "is a globe of men who are trying to reach one another and can best do so by the help of good will plus culture and intelligence.[90]

In a gesture of hospitality, Fielding invites the newly-come Mrs. Moor and Adela Quested for tea at college, and sends an invitation to Aziz whom the ladies appear to appreciate. Aziz has received a similar invitation before but, completely forgetting about it, has neither honored the invitation nor sent excuses. This time, however, deducing that Fielding holds no grudge against him and taking the invitation as a sign of a good heart, Aziz joyfully

[89] *A Passage*, p. 52
[90] Ibid.

writes “an affectionate reply” and hurries to Hamidullah’s house to ask him about everything concerning the “splendid fellow” whom he has never met but expects to be the one he has for years longed to meet.

As soon as they meet the two men feel instant liking for each other. They talk and laugh without formality and easily become intimate. When Aziz falls ill Fielding pays him a visit in his deplorable house, but remains unaffected and friendly. Aziz shows him a picture of his dead wife, a privilege no other Englishman has ever enjoyed. Astonished, Fielding says: “Really, I don’t know why you pay me this great compliment, Aziz, but I do appreciate it.”[91] Aziz tells him it is because of his kindness and then confides: “Mr. Fielding, no one can ever realize how much kindness we Indians need, we do not realize it ourselves. But we know when it has been given. […] Kindness, more kindness, and even after that more kindness. I assure you it is the only hope”[92]

But the hope of friendship between them does not seem to last for long. On their return from the Marabar expedition, Aziz is arrested due to Adela’s claims of an attempted sexual assault in the Caves. Terrorised at the news, Aziz finds no friend so supportive and sympathetic as Fielding. He vehemently defends him and, while even some Indian friends doubt his innocence, proves certain that Aziz is innocent and acts accordingly. He does his best to make Miss Quested recognise her mistake and drop the accusation and has arguments with the Club members on account of his support of Aziz, which makes him decide to quit the Club definitively. He even goes so far as to threaten to leave India if his friend is convicted.

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[91]*A Passage*, p. 100
[92] Ibid.

During the period of Aziz's imprisonment, tension between the two clans of colonisers and colonised heightens, hatred intensifies and more and more racist feelings erupt. Thus, for instance, Mr Callendar exposes his experience of the disastrous consequences of any connection between the English and Indians:

> During those twenty-five years I have never known anything but disaster result when English people and Indians attempt to be intimate socially. Intercourse, yes. Courtesy, by all means. Intimacy – never, never …. if there has been mutual respect and esteem, it is because both peoples kept to this simple rule. Newcomers set our traditions aside, and in an instant what you see happens, the work of years is undone.[93]

Also, he blames Fielding for what happens, claiming that the Caves' attack on Adela "was what is to be expected when a man mixes himself up with natives; always ends in some indignity."[94] The Police Superintendent, McBryde finds it an appropriate occasion to profess his racist view of Indian psychology as a scientific fact, stating, for instance, "all unfortunate natives are criminals at heart, for the simple reason that they live south of latitude 30."[95] Mrs Turton, for her part, complains, in a reference to the Crawling Order[96], that the Indians "ought to crawl from [Chandrapore] to the caves on their hands and knees whenever an

[93] *A Passage*, p. 146
[94] Ibid., p. 165
[95] Ibid., p. 148
[96] On April 19th, after the Amritsar Massacre, General Dyer, adding insult to injury, "promulgated the 'Crawling Order' in Amritsar which had been placed under marital law. Under the Order all Indian passing the Kusha Kaurhianwala lane, where an Anglo-Indian woman had been attacked, had to go down on all fours and crawl. A flogging booth was placed in the middle of the lane and any infraction of the order was punished immediately with a number of lashes administered at the flogging post. Fifty people were compelled to undergo the indignity of crawling on their bellies. For more details refer to: Bipan Chandra, Mridula Mukherjee, Aditya Mukherjee, K. N. Panikkar, Sucheta Mahajan, *India's Struggle For Independence 1857-1947*, London: Penguin Books, 1989, pp. 165-167; V. Longer, "Massacre in the Bagh," 2006, at: www.wb.gov.in/BanglarMukh/Download; "Massacre of Amritsar" at: www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/21847/Massacre-of-Amritsar; "The Jallianwala Bagh massacre" at: www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/History/British/Crawling.html; "Massacre of Amritsar" at: http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1224

Englishwoman's in sight, they oughtn't to be spoken to, they ought to be spat at, they ought to be ground into the dust, we've been far too kind with our Bridge Parties and the rest."[97]

As to the Indians, Aziz's trial presents an occasion for them to band together and face the oppression of their colonisers. As Forster has it, "a new spirit seemed abroad, a rearrangement, which no one in the stern little band of whites could explain."[98] Indians grow more assertive, organising riots in the city of Chandrapore and, like the city sweepers, calling for strikes. Even the women band together and decide to hold hunger strikes. Everybody, indeed, seems to feel concerned and is ready to do something to put an end to the Anglo-Indian oppression.

After the trial and Aziz's acquittal, Fielding convinces Aziz to abandon his lawsuit against Adela as it will ruin her, especially that she has bravely admitted her mistake and stood against all the Anglo-Indians and Aziz finally agrees. But, due to the widespread rumours about Fielding and Adela, Aziz loses confidence in his English friend and thinks that he betrays him so as to marry Adela and benefit from her money. He loses all hope of friendship with the English, never reads or answers Fielding's letters and turns into a confident nationalist.

When later in the narrative the two ex-friends meet again in the State of Mau their misunderstandings are cleared, yet Aziz and Fielding find it impossible to connect again. Each one of them appears to have undergone a deep change in convictions about relationships between the English and the Indians in colonised India. Everything in India seems, as Forster

[97] *A Passage*, p. 240
[98] Ibid., p. 190

has it, to say "No, not yet…No not there."[99] Why does Forster, who evidently sympathises with the Indians and criticises the Anglo-Indians, ultimately shatter all hope of connection between Aziz and Fielding when their friendship seems be so promising? Is he not totally for 'good' relations between coloniser and colonised? This is what the following section attempts to address.

## II. Forster's Liberal Imperialism

Despite his 'sympathy' towards the Indian characters, especially Aziz, Forster's characterisation of them does not prove to be genuinely humanistic. A careful examination of his colonised' figures indisputably leads to the conclusion that they are far from being equal to his coloniser figures. They are given voice, it is true, and are allowed to 'criticise' the Anglo-Indians, yet they are definitely kept on a lower pedestal compared to their oppressors. Actually, it will appear in the light of the forthcoming discussion of Forster's characterisation of the English and the Indians, that Forster is no better than Kipling as he, too, resorts to Orientalist generalisations and stereotypes to represent the Indians and to binarism to contrast them with the English.

Let us take Forster's two representative figures, Aziz and Fielding, for instance, and compare them. Although both are depicted as gregarious and sociable men, ready to overcome racial boundaries to connect, yet they are different in many other respects, precisely as men belonging to different races. While Aziz is impulsive, emotional, and sensitive Fielding is rational and sensible. Aziz meets Mrs. Moor at the mosque for few minutes and instantly takes her for a trustful friend and confides in her his inimical sentiments towards the Callendars. Although the old woman does not do anything worth mentioning to Aziz and even refuses to

[99] *A Passage*, p. 288

help him in the trial, when Aziz meets her son Ralph he tells him “your mother was my best friend in all the world.”[100]

In his first meeting with Fielding, Aziz impulsively pulls his collar-stud out of his shirt and gives it to Fielding and then prays that his collar will not spring up during the tea party. In their second meeting he even goes so far as to show Fielding a picture of his wife, something he has never done even with close Indian friends. Even Fielding appears very surprised and wonders why Aziz does this.

When arrested after the Marabar Caves picnic Aziz, like a “baby”, cries and weeps and wants to run away but sensible Fielding takes hold of him, calms him down, and prompts him to behave in a manly manner rather than as a child, telling him that there must be a mistake and that everything will be all right. Commenting on this picture of Aziz, Maria Davidis writes: “Aziz is depicted as Victorian racial theory describes the black man, as a child if not an animal.”[101] Even before the arrest, when still at the caves, Fielding proves wise enough to suspect that something has gone wrong seeing Adela leaving hurriedly with Miss Derek without the company of Aziz or a servant. He keeps asking Aziz about Adela and how she has left, but Aziz proves completely unable to suspect anything or grasp the strangeness of her behaviour.

But Forster’s reductionist construction of Aziz does not stop here. When he was in England for his medicine studies, Forster writes, Aziz “was repelled by the pedantry and fuss

[100] *A Passage*, p. 278

[101] Davidis, Maria M. “Forster's Imperial Romance: Chivalry, Motherhood, and Questing in *A Passage to India*,” *Journal of Modern Literature*, XXII, 2 (Winter 1999-2000), pp. 259-276, Foundation for Modern Literature, 2000, p. 263

with which Europe tabulates the facts of sex,”[102] and one reads that “it [is] his hand, not his mind, that [is] scientific.” Thus, despite his being a doctor, Aziz is repelled by “the boredom of regime and hygiene” so that “after inoculating a man for enteric”, for instance, “he would go away and drink unfiltered water himself.”[103] Imprudent as he is, he is shown furiously riding his bike at night despite its having “neither light nor bell nor […]a brake.”[104] Arguing against Forster’s portrayal of Aziz and natives as being non-racist C. Chaudhuri writes: “if we can at all speak of having driven the 'blasted Englishman into the sea,' as Aziz puts it, it was not men of his type who accomplished the feat... Aziz and his friends belong to the servile section and are all inverted toadies.”[105]

Indeed, Aziz is definitely servile and obsequious. Like Kipling’s child-like Lama, he has nothing to do with obdurate Caliban and, instead, reminds us of Ariel. His eagerness, for instance, to serve Mrs. Moor, Adela, and Fielding reminds one of Ariel’s eagerness to serve his master and execute his orders even before “[Prospero] can say come, and go,/ And breath twice,”[106] as Ariel says. No sooner has Aziz met the English newcomers than he hurries to organise a costly trip for them to the Caves. He does not ask for much from the English, only kind treatment and everything will be all right for him under the Raj rule.

What strikes the reader, however, about Forster’s depiction of Aziz, and Indians in general, is the fact that it appears to draw heavily on the Orientalist tradition of writings about the Orient. This appears from Forster’s employment of the label “Orientals” in reference to the Indians and from his notable shift from the depiction of Aziz as an individual to his depiction

[102] *A Passage*, p. 88
[103] Ibid., p. 44
[104] Ibid., p. 10
[105] “Forster’s Critique of Imperialism in *A Passage to India*,” op. cit., p. 58
[106] *The Tempest*, V i, p. 76

of him as a typical "Oriental." "*Like most Orientals*," Forster writes, "Aziz overrated hospitality, mistaking it for intimacy."[107] Instead of, for instance, Aziz suspects Fielding and Adela because he is a suspicious man, one reads "suspicion in the Oriental is a sort of malignant tumor, a mental malady, that makes him self-conscious and unfriendly suddenly,"[108] implying that Aziz is *naturally* suspicious because he is Indian.

At times, Forster even proclaims such generalisations through Aziz himself. When Fielding blames his friend for believing rumours about him and Miss Quested, Aziz apologises saying "pardon… The licentious oriental imagination was at work."[109] Also, in an earlier scene at the mosque, Mrs. Moor tells Aziz "I don't think I understand people very well. I only know whether I like or dislike them," and instead of telling her that she bases her friendships on intuition not on knowledge of people Aziz replies: "Then you are an Oriental."[110]

Actually, even Forster's 'non-racist' character, Fielding, who chooses to side with the Indians against his English community is not *truly* non-racist. As will be argued shortly, he is constructed as a supposedly 'impartial' figure but is frequently employed as a means for confirming and reinforcing the racial bias of the narrative. When he criticises the Anglo-Indian manners he does so without implying that they are "innate" English defects, but as bad ways of behaviour that propagate amongst the small and tightly connected English community. The proof is that most Englishmen come to India intending to be gentle and it is only after a period of time there that they acquire those racist attitudes. Fielding himself is a proof that the

[107] *A Passage*, p. 126. Emphasis added
[108] Ibid., p 248
[109] Ibid., p 242
[110] Ibid., p. 17

English are not scornful, haughty, and racist. But when it comes to the Indians, Fielding proves to reason differently.

Thus, despite his having "no racial feeling" Fielding always feels a (racial) barrier between him and Aziz, and the Indians in general. Struck by Aziz's sentimentality and impulsiveness when he shows him his wife's photograph, Fielding agrees with Aziz that kindness can help people connect, but thinks "Kindness, kindness, and more kindness – yes, that [I] might supply, but was that really all that the queer nation needed? Did it not also demand an occasional intoxication of the blood? What had [I] done to deserve this outburst of confidence, and what hostage could [I] give in exchange?[111]

After the Marabar Caves incident, Aziz appears very annoyed by the idea that he is disgraced because of an ugly woman like Adela. This puzzles Fielding because "this derived sensuality … was alien to his own emotions, and he felt a barrier between himself and Aziz whenever it arose."[112] Convinced that Aziz is innocent Fielding takes the side of his friend against all the Anglo-Indians, but at the moment "when he [is] throwing his lot with Indians, he realise[s] the profundity of the gulf that divide[s] him from them. They always do something disappointing."[113] Even when from Venice he sends picture-postcards to his Indian friends, one reads that Fielding feels "that all of them [will] miss the joys he experience[s] now, the joys of form, and that this constitute[s] a serious barrier."[114] Commenting on this

[111] *A Passage*, p. 101
[112] Ibid., p. 214
[113] Ibid., p. 153
[114] Ibid., p. 250

feeling, Ahmad M.S. Abu Baker contends that Forster himself, like Fielding, felt this barrier. He states that "[t]he sense of racial tension, of incompatibility, never left [him]."[115]

In the light of what has been discussed so far, Forster is far from being that truly liberal humanist who believes in justice and freedom for all. Here he is trying to 'sympathise' with the colonised Indians and criticise the colonisers but ultimately proves to be no better than Rudyard Kipling. True, he discarded the 'Caliban' figure from *A Passage* but, like Kipling, Forster portrayed the Indians as servile Ariel figures. He also stereotypically constructed his colonised, drawing heavily on the Orientalist tradition, as discussed above, and, like Defoe, Kipling, and Conrad, resorts to binarism, essentialism, and generalisations to represent the colonised as backward and inferior to the English colonisers who are supposedly destined to rule.

**III. Prospero's And Caliban's Survival**

To account for Forster's stance and his vision of colonial relations in *A Passage to India* one has first to bear in mind and base one's evaluations on the fact that Forster, as Hiren Gohain asserts, "never makes a clean avowal of the fact that he dislikes and condemns colonialism."[116] Despite his criticism of imperial defective policies and shameful practices Forster is a pro-imperialist writer. S. R. Moosavinia argues that "Forster proves to be almost as pro-Empire as writers like Kipling."[117] Susan de Sola Rodstein, for her part, contends that "Forster is a critic of imperialism but by situation an imperialist writer nevertheless, a bias that

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[115] Abu Baker, Ahmad M.S. "Rethinking Identity: The Coloniser in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*." *Nebula,*3.2-3, September 2006, 68-85, p. 80
[116] Gohain, Hiren. "The Other Side of the Moon: E M Forster's India," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 17, No. 31, 1982, PE58-PE63, p. PE58, at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4371184Accessed: 10/06/2009
[117] Moosavinia, S. R. *Texts and Politics: Postcolonial Revaluations of two British Classics*, p. 67

touches everything he writes about India."[118] Indeed, as argued in the second section of this chapter, Forster's *A Passage to India* is unquestionably "touched" by an "imperialist bias" evident from its depiction of the Indians which heavily draws on the Orientalist tradition of representing the "Orientals" as inferior and backward, and reactivates its age-old clichés and stereotypes.

Thus Forster's criticism of the Raj rule and of the Anglo-Indians' attitudes and manners does not aim at liberating the Indians and ending the British colonisation of India. It is on the contrary an attempt at improving the Raj and thus perpetuating its rule. As Susan de Sola Rodstein argues, Forster believed "that the British empire in India was an improvable (not discardable) institution."[119] Indeed, signs of Forster's 'wish' to improve British rule in India are frequent in his narrative. An instance is Forster's insistence through Mrs. Moor to Ronny, the Magistrate, that the "English *are* out here to be pleasant."[120] She deeply regrets that he "revels in the drawbacks of his situation" and immensely wishes to catch a sign of regret in his words. "One touch of regret –not the canny substitute but the true regret from the heart – would have made him *a different man, and the British Empire a different institution*."[121]

Forster expresses the same wish through Indian characters and Aziz, in particular. When arguing for the impossibility of friendship with the English because of their horrible manners, for instance, Hamidullah, who knew the kind Bannisters when a student at Cambridge, speaks about the subject "with evident emotion" and tells Aziz that this is "a very

[118] Susan de Sola Rodstein. *Invisible Empire: Event and Revision in Modern British Fiction*. Ph.D. thesis. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1997, 146-239, p. 170.
[119] *Invisible Empire: Event and Revision in Modern British Fiction*, p. 170
[120] *A Passage*, p. 42
[121] Ibid. Emphasis mine

sad talk." He wishes that the Anglo-Indians were like the Bannisters so that the Indians and they could be "friends." At the mosque with Mrs. Moor, Aziz, too, deeply regrets that the Anglo-Indians are not so gentle and kind as the old lady, telling her "You understand me, you know what I feel. Oh, if others resembled you!"[122] On another occasion with Fielding, Aziz emphatically declares: "Mr. Fielding, no one can ever realize how much kindness we Indians need…Kindness, more kindness, and even after that more kindness. I assure you it is the only hope."[123] Without "kindness", as Aziz calls it, or pleasantness as Mrs. Moor says, there is no hope, Forster seems to contend, for longer relationships between the Indians and the English, and there is no hope of a future in India for the Raj.

Actually, Forster's insistence on the necessity of "improving" the Raj so as to maintain its rule is what accounts for his, so to speak, 'sympathetic' and 'improved' treatment of the Indians in *A Passage*. He gives them voice and allows them to criticise the Anglo-Indians, as discussed earlier, not because he is an anti-imperialist and an opponent to British colonialism, and not because he regards the Indians as equals to the English, having a right for independence and self- rule. His conception of them as an inferior race prevents such an assumption. Besides, as Said has it, "the novel's nineteenth-century legacy of seeing the natives as subordinate and dependent is still powerful"[124] during Forster's writing of his novel, and for Forster "the English had better go on doing it, despite their mistakes: "they" (natives) are not yet ready for self-rule."[125]

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[122] *A Passage*, p. 17
[123] Ibid., p. 100
[124] *Culture and Imperialism*, op. cit., p. 207
[125] Ibid., p. 204-05

The most probable factor behind Forster's urge to this, as it were, all-level reform of attitude towards the Indians is mainly the uncontestable widespread resistance to British rule in India, particularly after the Amritsar Massacre[126], and its devastating repercussions on the Empire's edifice. Compared to Kipling's and Conrad times, the British Empire "moved further towards its decline when Forster was writing and publishing *A Passage to India*."[127] Said stresses the difference between Forster's and Kipling's times arguing that "the main difference between the two is that the impinging disturbance of resisting natives had been thrust on Forster's awareness." [128] While Kipling, as discussed in the previous chapter, simply wipes out Indian burgeoning resistance, Forster, Said argues, "could not ignore" it. It became too bold to be ignored. In line with this argument is Moosavinia's contention that

> Forster…felt the native resistance and took it more seriously in his work [than Kipling]. Writing his novel at a later time, he had no other choice except to be more sympathetic towards the native. The sympathy appeared in the form of characterization, the nature of dialogue between Anglo-Indians and Indians, and in the narration on the whole. [129]

Yet, Forster, too, appears to make light of Indians nationalist aspirations. Note Forster's dismissive tone in the following passage:

> Hamidullah had called in on his way to a worrying committee of notables, nationalist in tendency, where Hindus, Moslems, two Sikhs, a Jain, and a Native Christian tried to like one another more than came natural to them. As long as someone abused the

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[126] "The Massacre of Amritsar, or the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, (April 13, 1919), incident in which British troops fired on a crowd of unarmed Indian protesters, killing about 400 and wounding about 1,200 according to official reports. The massacre left a permanent scar on Indo-British relations and was the prelude to Mahatma Gandhi's noncooperation movement of 1920–22." For more details refer to: Bipan Chandra, Mridula Mukherjee, Aditya Mukherjee, K. N. Panikkar, Sucheta Mahajan, *India's Struggle For Independence 1857-1947*, London: Penguin Books, 1989, pp. 165-167; V. Longer, "Massacre in the Bagh," 2006, at: www.wb.gov.in/BanglarMukh/Download; "Massacre of Amritsar" at: www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/21847/Massacre-of-Amritsar; "The Jallianwala Bagh massacre" at: www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/History/British/Crawling.html; "Massacre of Amritsar" at: http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1224

[127] Moosavinia, S. R. Texts and Politics: Postcolonial Revaluations of two British Classics, p. 67

[128] *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 75

[129] *Texts and Politics: Postcolonial Revaluations of two British Classics*, op. cit., p. 75

> English, all went well, but nothing constructive had been achieved, and if the English were to leave India the committee would vanish also. He was glad that Aziz, whom he loved and whose family was connected with his own, took no interest in politics, which ruin the character and career, yet nothing can be achieved without them. He thought of Cambridge –sadly, as of another poem that had ended. How happy he had been there, twenty years ago! Politics had not mattered in Mr and Mrs Bannister's rectory. There, games, work and pleasant society had interwoven, and appeared to be sufficient substructure for national life. Here all was wiring-pulling and fear.[130]

Commenting on this passage, Edward Said writes that Forster's "view of Indians as a nation contending with Britain for sovereignty is not politically very serious, or even respectful.'[131] But, as Moosavinia argues above, Forster, contrary to what Said says, proves well-aware that Indian nationalism has gained great momentum after the War and does not seem to draw back. This is precisely why he attempts, I think, to dismiss it in his novel. Otherwise, what could compel him to compromise and show more 'sympathy' towards the colonised Indians than Kipling? Certainly not his liberal imperialism. Commenting on the English ideal of freedom, Francis Hutchins says:

> I know very well how limited, and open to criticism, English freedom is. It is race-bound and it's class-bound. It means freedom for the Englishman, but not for the subject races of his Empire. If you invite the average Englishman to share his liberties with the inhabitants of India or Kenya, he will reply, "Never," if he is a Tory, and "Not until I consider them worthy," if he is a Liberal."[132]

Forster, as argued earlier, is of this latter brand of liberal Englishmen, who has proven that he does not consider the Indians as worthy yet of freedom and self-rule.

Caught between his liberal imperialism and 'wish' to perpetuate British rule, on the one hand, and the undeniable growing Indian resistance, on the other, Forster seems to foresee the doom of the Empire and thus appears to lose hope in colonial relations as *he* and his

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[130] *A Passage*, pp. 91-92
[131] *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 204
[132] Quote in *Invisible Empire*, op. cit., p. 235, end note 43

countrymen, and colonisers in general, conceive of them. This explains his apparent disillusionment in the letter he wrote to Syed Masood on the 27th of September 1922, explaining his intention in writing *A Passage to India*:

> When I began the book I thought of it as a little bridge of sympathy between East and West, but this conception has had to go, my sense of truth forbids anything so comfortable. I think that most Indians, like most English people, are shits, and I am not interested whether they sympathize with one another or not.[133]

These words written after Forster's second visit to India are confirmed by his writing in *The Hill of Devi*:

> I began this novel before my 1921 visit, and took out the opening chapters with me, with the intention of continuing them. But as soon as they were confronted with the country they purported to describe, they seemed to wilt and go dead and I could do nothing with them. I used to look at them of an evening in Dewas, and felt only distaste and despair. The gap between India remembered and India experienced was too wide. When I got back to England the gap narrowed and I was able to resume.[134]

It is largely known that the novel was begun after Forster's 1912-13 visit to India and only completed after his second visit in 1921. The most important historical events that took place during this period are WWI and, in India in particular, the Amritsar massacre in 1919. "The long period of composition," Susan de Sola Rodstein contends "incorporates the post-war repercussions, and the precipitate escalation of the nationalist activity in the wake of Amritsar, through which India…would become a 'trouble spot' of empire."[135] The Amritsar Massacre as Rodstein goes on arguing could be interpreted as a "revolutionary break from which one can trace the modern nationalist movement and the inevitability of independence."[136]

[133] Abu Baker, Ahmad M.S. "Rethinking Identity: The Coloniser in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*." *Nebula,*3.2-3, September 2006, 68-85, p. 69

[134] Quoted in *Invisible Empire*, op. cit., p. 147

[135] Ibid., p. 148

[136] Ibid.

This inevitability is, I think, what struck Forster and compelled him, in his effort to preserve the Raj, to soften his prejudice against the Indians and opt for the Prospero-Ariel type of colonial relations between Aziz and Fielding instead of the antagonistic Prospero-Caliban type.

# Conclusion

# CONCLUSION

> "*For three hundred years I served you. Three hundred years I served you breakfast…in my white jacket on a white veranda, boss, bwana, effendi, bacra, sahib…that was my pantomime.*"[1]

This study has been conducted with the aim of verifying the hypothesis that the colonial encounter in the English colonial novel is repeatedly conceived in terms of binary opposition; that is basically as a superior-inferior relationship that never changes throughout the history of British expansionism despite the changing historical contexts and the shifting views of writers vis-à-vis the enterprise. The remarkable immutability of imperial assumptions along the history of the Empire, it is argued, consolidates and solidifies the core of the relationship making it permanently hard and stable.

As I hope to have shown in the preceding pages, the colonial encounter in all of the four novels discussed in this study proves to pivot on the binary superior-inferior with its implicit multitude of rearticulation such as human-inhuman, civilised-uncivilised, developed-primitive…etc regardless of the historical moments of their writing and publication in parallel with the history of British imperialism.

Daniel Defoe, in his archetypal colonial novel *Robinson Crusoe*, seems at a first approach to offer an idyllic vision of colonial relationships that contrasts sharply with Prospero's and Caliban's model, but which, at deeper investigation, proves to be idyllic only superficially. For, it has been argued, that at root it is definitely a relation of superior to inferior, of coloniser to colonised; the rules of their interaction being similar to those of Prospero and Caliban.

[1] Quoted by Thomas Cartelli in *Repositioning Shakespeare*, op.cit., p. 103

In the course of our study of *Robinson Crusoe* it has also been demonstrated that such 'idyllic' relationships, as many Western critics prefer to have them qualified, do not represent a radical alternative to the Prospero-Caliban colonial prototype, but only a superficial variation of it. This type of colonial relationship is comparable to the Prospero-Ariel binary and, it has been argued, is a traditional variation in colonial literature to the downright antagonistic colonial relationship.

Defoe's option for an 'idyllic' relationship between Crusoe and Friday, as argued, is not attributed to a more humane conception of the colonised, but prescribed by the challenges of imperial rivalry and relative menace of native populations that confronted the incipient British imperialism, as well as by Defoe's own vested interest in the enterprise, and his 'wish' to present it as feasible and successful.

Rudyard Kipling, in his *Kim*, also opts for 'idyllic' colonial relationships and crystallises his vision in the Kim-Lama binary. As is the case with Defoe, Kipling's choice of this alternative, it has been argued, is not a sign of change in his well-known jingoism in the heyday of British imperialism, as the idyllic type and the antagonistic type of colonial encounters are at root similar. His vision of colonial relations, as argued, is closer to Prospero's and Ariel's than to Prospero's and Caliban's, and proves to be a mere rhetorical strategy to 'reform', as it were, the Raj so as to ensure its perpetuation as signs of cracks in its edifice have begun to show up due to the burgeoning of Indian resistance to its rule.

In *Kim*'s contemporaneous fictional work, namely Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad, unlike Kipling who constructs the colonial community of colonisers and colonised as a happy family, unabashedly disfigures the coloniser and unveils his rapacious and greedy

nature and points to the catastrophic plight of the colonised at the hand of his coloniser. In doing so Conrad seems to go against the grain of colonial writings and inverse the binary of Prospero and Caliban. The coloniser is, as it were, Calibanised and presented as the "savage" and "primitive."

But at deeper investigation it has been proved that Conrad's conception and construction of the African colonised does not elevate them to any level of equality with the white colonisers, for according to Conrad's vision the Africans are doomed to primitivism and savagery while the Whites have 'evolved' and proved their superiority to the Blacks. This difference, according to Conrad's vision, indisputably qualifies the Whites to lead and rule the Africans because they are superior to them. Thus, it has been argued, the core of colonial relationships is, despite the deterioration of the colonisers in Africa and their 'Calibanisation', still hard and stable.

The last novel studied in this present work is Edward Forster's *A Passage to India*. It is a novel that was published in 1924 by a liberal-humanist writer known for his advocacy of justice and individual freedom. In this novel Forster seems particularly focused on the issue of colonial relationships. Forster appears to discard the view of the impossibility of any connection between the coloniser and the colonised contending that good will, education, and intelligence are the best means for dispelling traditional colonial antagonism and replacing it with practically good relationships between the coloniser and the colonised for the benefit of both. Under this precept, Forster, and in the midst of sheer colonial antagonism in colonial India, interweaves a sort of 'idyllic' relationship between Aziz, an Indian, and Fielding, an Anglo-Indian.

On the surface Forster makes it appear as a relationship of equals but at root, it has been argued, the friendship of Aziz and Fielding proves to be a copy of Prospero's and Ariel's relationship. The same paternalistic attitude is proved to underlie the friendship and the same stable and hard superior-inferior core appears to be at the heart of the relationship. What is striking in Forster's vision is the fact that no sooner is the relation begun than it is ended under the pressure of colonial antinomy. It appears that Forster, though a liberal, is unable to give up his prejudice and bridge the gap that separates the coloniser and the colonised. In addition, being aware of the growing pressure of the Indian national resistance and the looming of the Empire's-falling-apart idea on the horizon, Forster loses all hope in the preservation of the colonial status quo and thus decides for the ending of Aziz's and Fielding's 'friendship.'

In the course of my research, and in my attempt to account for the stability of the basis of all colonial relations in the four studied novels, I have constantly stressed Edward Said's contention that

> Throughout the exchange between Europeans and their "others" that began systematically half a millennium ago, *the one idea that has scarcely varied* is that there is an "us" and a "them", each quite settled, clear, unassailably self-evident [2]

as well as his contended rule that "there are Westerners, and there are [non-Westerners]. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated" [3] so as to support my hypothesis and prove that it is verifiable. Eventually, I came to the conclusion that no matter when the colonial novel is written, and how the imperial context presents itself, and what the writer's predilections are, the colonial encounter is permanently conceived as the encounter between a superior and an inferior on all levels. It is a stable and hard core that is immune to all kinds of

[2] *Culture and Imperialism*, op.cit., p. xxv. Emphasis added.
[3] *Orientalism*, op. cit., p. 36

changes in the colonial context as has so far been argued in comparison with the history of British imperialism.

**Appendix**

**Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden," 1899**

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*This famous poem, written by Britain's imperial poet, was a response to the American take over of the Philippines after the Spanish-American War.*

---

Take up the White Man's burden--
Send forth the best ye breed--
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild--
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child.

Take up the White Man's burden--
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain
To seek another's profit,
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden--
The savage wars of peace--
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
The end for others sought,
Watch sloth and heathen Folly
Bring all your hopes to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden--
No tawdry rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper--
The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
The roads ye shall not tread,
Go mark them with your living,
And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden--
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard--
The cry of hosts ye humour
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:--
"Why brought he us from bondage,
Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden--
Ye dare not stoop to less--
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloke your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper,
By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples
Shall weigh your gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden--
Have done with childish days--
The lightly proferred laurel,
The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers![4]

[4] Kipling, Rudyard. "The White Man's Burden," 1899, at: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/kipling.asp

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# ملخّص

مرتكزة أساسا على النظرية مابعد الكولونيالية و المادّية الثقافية و متخذة كمرجع اللقاء الكولونيالي النموذجي لبروسبيرو و كالبان، تحاول هذه الدراسة التطرّق إلى علاقة المستعمِر و المستعمَر في أربعة من الروايات المكرّسة في الأدب الانجليزي و هي روبنسون كروسو لمؤلفها دانيال ديفو، رواية كيم لرديارد كبلين، في قلب الظلمة لجوزيف كونراد، و رواية العبور إلى الهند لكاتبها إدوارد مورغان فورستر. تتم هذه الدراسة بالمقارنة مع تطور الإمبراطورية البريطانية منذ بداية ظهورها إلى انحطاطها في القرن العشرين.

تفحص هذه الدراسة كيفية تأثير تغيّر الإطار التاريخي للاستعمار البريطاني على نظرة الكاتب للعلاقة الكولونيالية كما تتجلى في روايته من خلال تشكيله لشخصياته الروائية و تصويره للقاء الكولونيالي، محاولة في ذات الوقت تتبّع علامات التماثل في تصوير الروائيين الأربع للعلاقات الكولونياليه قصد التحقق من فرضية أنه رغم اختلاف وجهات نظر الكتّاب و رغم التأثير غير المشكوك فيه للاطار الكولونيالي المتغير فان اللّقاء بين المستعمِر و المستعمَر يُصوّر دائما كعلاقة بين القويّ والضعيف و بين الأفضل و الدنيء لُبها محصّن ضد التغيرات التاريخية للتوسع البريطاني.



**الكلمات-مفتاح**

المستعمر؛ المحتل؛ بروسبيرو؛ كالبان؛ الإستعمار؛ العلاقات الإستعمارية؛ التوسع؛ الإمبراطورية؛ السياق التاريخي و الإستعماري؛ ما بعد الكولونيالية؛ المادية الثقافية؛ الإستشراق؛ الرواية.

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
وزارة التعليم العالي و البحث العلمي
جامعة محمد بوقرة، بومرداس
كلية العلوم
قسم اللغات الأجنبية
فرع الإنجليزية

# بروسبيرو و كالبان

# في روايات *روبنسون كروسو*، *كيم*، *في قلب الظّلمة*، و *العبور إلى الهند*

أطروحة مقدّمة من أجل الحصول على درجة الماجستير في الأدب و التاريخ الإنجليزي

**المترشّحة:**
بوالفخار سعيدة

**المشرف:**
سي عبد الرحمن أعراب

**طاقم المناقشين**

**رئيس الطاقم:** الأستاذ محمد بن سمان، جامعة الجزائر 2

**المشرف:** الأستاذ سي عبد الرحمن أعراب، جامعة بومرداس

**المناقشون:**

1. الأستاذ بوثلجة ريش، جامعة تيزي وزو
2. الأستاذة أمينة بقاط، جامعة البليدة

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