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## ORIENTALIST REPRESENTATION OF KIM IN KIPLING'S KIM

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### ABSTRACT:

This study covers the elements of Orientalism, in the character of Kim, in the novel, Kim. Kim, the major character, is focused who exhibits both as an Occident and an Orient. Some events show the features that Kim learns from them and the characteristics that he installs in Orientals. Kim depicts the land of the subcontinent, a hard abode for everyone. This study applies Orientalist approach on two levels: impressionism and expressionism. Here, impressionism is the impression that the West has about the East. Expressionism, likely, is the performing of many inhumane and senseless actions that an Oriental is thought to be having. In this way, the major character of this novel, Kim, is depicted as devoid of any good and socially acceptable habits. Orientalists are considered to be devoid of any positive trait. So, the very concept of Orientalism is a danger to humanity in the mind of the West. This study focuses on the many black deeds that are associated with the East whether those bad habits are present there or not. It proves the allegations false against the East and shows to the readers that good and bad are part of every human society and the West is not a standard for the East.

**Introduction:**

The colonial period (1857-1947) has had much more impacts on the Indians. The people of the subcontinent are suffering from the colonial influences since the first day of colonization. The colonizers spent time in the subcontinent. They were the rulers of India. They came here with the motto to civilize the subcontinent. They had made a peculiar mind about the colonized people that they have nothing up to standard that may help humanity in any form. They are a burden on overall humanity. Like that, the colonizers have associated every black deed with the colonized people.

Orientalists are those people, for the West, who are human like beings but are not human beings in any form. They can eat and drink but cannot yield anything positive. Though, the colonizers have spent time in the land of the colonized and they have observed the positive side of the East as well but they have ignored that. The East is portrayed to the world in such a way that it needs a permanent powerful hand upon it. Without a strong hand on the East, it is very difficult to breathe over there. In this way, the West pictured the subcontinent which is a biased depiction. So, this study focuses on those aspects that show that the people of the subcontinent are Orientalists.

One of the most important things in the novel is that one can find that the character Kim repeats over and over again the question, "who is Kim?" "What is Kim?" This shows his search for his identity in this multicultural world.

**Statement of the Problem:**

The novel represents orientalist concept of the occidentals about the Indians in various characters. Indians are considered of lower standard in each and every field of life. The native characters of the occident are represented in a glorious manner while the natives of the orient are represented in a dark way which shows their prejudice and superiority on their part. The Indians are presented in a manner that they are disloyal, dishonest and unreliable while the character of Kim is represented as an honest and reliable to the standard of the occident. The study aims to find out reasons behind such depiction of the characters with opposite traits.

**Research Questions:**

- Why are characters of the colonized community represented with Orientalist features in the novel, Kim?
- Why is the character of Kim differentiated from other Indian characters?

**Significance of the Study:**

Kim throws light on the lives of the citizens belonging to third world countries particularly those once colonized. The novel has explored on many topics but my main focus is on orientalism. The researcher focuses on the issue of orientalism. And also tries to explore all the aspects of the study regarding identity in the superior and powerful once colonizer nations. Kipling depicts the representations of the two cultures...the colonizer and the colonized in his writings, the colonized are not shown in much positive light and the hypocrisy of the colonial masters are fully exposed. Kipling, though an English writer realistically portrays the true nature of the colonial masters in his fiction.

## Literature Review:

This chapter discusses different analytical studies conducted on the novel, *Kim*. The studies conducted earlier can cast light on the different aspects of the novel. These earlier studies are presented as the direction for the research that is to be conducted now.

Said (2014) writes that “cultural entities—to say nothing of historical entities –such locales, regions geographical sectors as “Orient” and “Occident” are man-made”. (Said, 2014, p.11) There is nothing in the history that justifies this classification. Further, he is of the opinion that Orientalism is the product of a specific school of thought. There are people who want to divide the sphere of world into ‘our’ and ‘theirs’. Some people are given preference while others are considered inferior due to their skin color. He writes, “Orient was essentially an idea, or a creation with no corresponding reality.” (Said, 2014, p.11) This shows that the philosophy of orientalism is for the interest of a specific group of people, race, or geography. The study about orientalism shows that it follows the interest of the West only. Said (2014) writes in the same regards:

Orientalism can also express the strength of the West and the Orient’s weakness—as seen by the West. Such strength and such weakness are as intrinsic to Orientalism as they are to any view that divides the world into large general divisions, entities that coexist in a state of tension produced by what is believed to be radical difference. (Said, 2014, p.11)

The whole discussion shows that orientalism is the negative concept of the West regarding the East. In the novel, *Kim*, the people of the subcontinent are pictures with the features of Orientals who do not possess any kind of positive traits (Said, 2014).

Wegner (1993) talks about the exploration of the subcontinent by the West. The critic (1993) writes that Kipling creates contrast for the readers between the West and the East. He brings few things for this categorization. He talks about mystic experiences and practices, sensual behaviors, saints being on one side and their opposites, the rogues, on the other. The depiction of the West is superior, confident, and being logical. It seems that the West and the East are complete opposite to each other where good qualities are the assets of the former and bad ones are for the latter. The critic writes; “Kim emphatically asserts that the “good” imperial agents are those who “know the land and the customs of the land.” (Wegner, 1993, p.132)

In order to be like an Indian, “Kim must learn to think of human relationships in terms of monetary exchange. This process is most emphatically highlighted early in the novel by Mahbub Ali, who oversees Kim’s early, informal education.” (Christensen, 2012, p.16) Kim’s own wish, his friend’s struggle, and the effect of the society, in which he was living, made him appear like an Indian and to be a good spy to the British government.

Fellion (2013) talks about Kim in *Kim* (1901) in his article. There are ethnic stereotypes in the novel discussed by Kipling. There is stock information related to Edward Said’s ‘Orientalism’. Kipling has too differently presented the subcontinent. There is an implicit description of skirmishes between Russia and the Great Britain. Kim shows how Indian people and society show resistance to the British.

Another critic, Hubel (2004) too focuses the character of Kim in her analysis. She writes that Kim was a character from middle class. He was used and controlled by others the way people are controlled in a capitalist society. (Hubel, 2004)

Edwards (2003) talks about political aspect of the novel, *Kim* (1901). He mentions the phrase, 'the Great Game'. He writes that Kipling's *Kim* (1901) popularized this term. In his opinion, this novel has importance internationally and it covers the aspects of not only the subcontinent but other countries as well. (Edwards, 2003)

Abu Baker (2009) says that *Kim* is an elusive controversial text that generated a lot of contradictory criticism. Some critics regarded it as pro-Indian whereas others considered it anti-Indian. Kinkead-Weekes (1994), for example, states that *Kim* is an "the answer to nine-tenths of the charges leveled against Kipling and the refutation of most of the generalizations about him." He further says that "a whole kaleidoscope of race, caste, custom, and creed, all seen with a warm affection that is almost unique in Kipling" (Weekes, 1994, p.480). (Weekes, 1994; Baker, 2009)

Kipling vividly describes the custom and manners of people of about hundred years ago. Their habit of cleaning the teeth with a freshly picked twig is mentioned. Some of these people are fond of smoking the hookah after their meals. They seem superstitious and have their own beliefs. There seem caste and class disputes among them occasionally. The references regarding the injustice and suffering in the society is also incorporated in the novel. The people living in the mountains have their own way of living. (Choudhari, 2016)

Šumberová (2016) is of the view that the novel of Kipling, *Kim*, is not only believed to be an extraordinary piece and contribution to the writing of the novels but it is also believed and expected to be a reflection of the various opinions being created by the britishers who were admiring the Indian people and its government. He had beautifully appreciated the various points of the colonizers and he was also of the opinion that the British had the only opinion of making them the rulers and the Indians as their servants.

Nandy (1989) has also emphasized more on such a point. He argues that at that time, the British were believed and expected to be the rightful rulers of India and it was also expected that the Indians were believed to be their slaves and they were treated like slaves. It was also argued that the Indians should receive the benefits of the civilization from them in such a way that they are civilized and socialized. For *Kim*, there are strong images for the ruler in the whites and they are supposed and believed to be receiving the benefits of civilization and they are also believed to be having the very string elements of the soldiers and the rulers. *Kim* is also having the same feature and has been the victim of the same ruler's arrogance of the natives.

My rationale for choosing this topic is the appealing character of *Kim* who is both an Oriental and an Occidental. The other characters in the novel collaborates *Kim* to understand the East. In this way, *Kim* becomes half Oriental and, so, an attractive topic for a research. This is the gap that this study fulfills.

### **Research Methodology:**

This research is qualitative in nature. The main source is the text book of *Kim*, a novel by Rudyard Kipling. The secondary sources are consulted for the research including books, articles, journals, paper and secondary data.

### **Methodology:**

In this part, the methodology of the current project is explained through which the research conducts the research. Qualitative and quantitative methods are always used for conducting research. There is always a difference between these two methods. There are many qualitative techniques used for drawing a conclusion from the research i.e. to explore the

protagonist, Kim with its focus on the Orientalist Representation of Indians. (Carson et al., 1988; Hirschman, 1985; Neuman, 2000; Berger and Luckman, 1967; Hudson and Ozanne; 1988)

The focus is on closed textual analysis of the novel in order to explore the protagonist, Kim with its focus on the Orientalist Representation of Indians and for this purpose, evidences and references are taken from the novel, Kim (1901).

Theoretical framework for this study is the Orientalist theory of Edward Said which states that the West represents the East but in a negative way. Said (1978) writes that the West relates every negative characteristic with the people of the East. The Easterners are thought to be devoid of any positive faculty. They are no more but a parasite on human society. The study conducted on the novel, Kim, focuses on the elements of the novel that represent the East as Oriental land.

### **Textual Analysis:**

#### **Representation of Kim as Oriental:**

In this part, the focus is on the text of Kim. Here, the character of Kim as well as other Indian characters is under close observation. As Kim has spent some time in the subcontinent, so, some other characters around Kim cannot be ignored as they have a vital role in the shaping of Kim's personality. Kim has the habits of both the East and the West. He exhibits those habits according to the demand of the situation. This is why, he has a fluctuating identity and cannot remain either an Occident or an Oriental. In short, in this chapter, through the character of Kim, those actions and events are traced out that lead towards Orientalism.

People in the colonial world are supposed to live under strict rules and regulations. They are thought to be devoid of any kind of consciousness. The West thinks of the Orientals as robots who are driven and controlled by some outer forces. The novel says that they should abide by municipal orders (Kipling, 1901, p.14). These orders and rules are set by colonists for the oriental. They cannot live a peaceful life if the colonists do not look after them. This kind of mind set changes one person's perspective towards another. This is in other word, denial of another's person existence in such state of mind the powerful entity would not accept anything of the weaker entity. 'The British thought of the people of subcontinent as items of a wonder house' (Kipling, 1901, p.14). This world is too fascinating. The illusion about a wonder house and the subcontinent was the same for the subcontinent was the same for the colonists. The fascination was in the sense that a wonder house keeps everything that is inhuman. These things fascinate and wonder human here the people of the subcontinent are the fascinating tools and the British are human. Only the British have the sense of feeling and observing. This was an illusion that British people built for themselves.

To fulfill and make true their illusion the British captured many areas and held the Punjab as well (Kipling, 1901, p.14). The major character of the novel Kim lived over there. He was British by nation but his skin color was like the native people. He was blackish in color and resembled Orientals in his outlook. When the Punjab was captured, Kim found himself confused. He was the master and the slave at the same time. He was English and inhabitant of the Punjab and attackers on the Punjab were the British. He got favor from both the sides. The British favored him as the thought him of their own caste and native people treated him as their master. Thought this was a good time for him but still inwardly he considered himself as a slave.

Kim was “white – a poor where of the very poorest” (Kipling, 1901, p.14) in the sense that he was British by birth though he was not brought up in a completely British environment but, by blood, he was British. This is the reason that he is called poor white. This whiteness is not about his skin color but about ancestry. Kim spends his childhood with the native people and their children in the Punjab. This special tenure has special effect upon him throughout his life. Kim's father was an army man. His father spent time in “Sindh” Punjab and Delhi railways (Kipling, 1901, p.14). In this way, Kim had the experience of few different areas of the subcontinent. Kim's father “Kimball O'Hara was left by his regiment” (Kipling, 1901, p.15). This was the time when Kim converted from rich to poor white. Kim's father “died as poor whites do in India” (Kipling, 1901, p.15) Kim was brought up by one of his aunt (Kipling, 1901, p.14). His childhood was with the children of the subcontinent instead of the Britishers.

As Kim grew in the subcontinent his mind was like the people of that inhabitant. He selected and rejected things just like an oriental. Kipling writes; “As he reached the tears of indiscretion he learned to avoid missionaries and white men of serious aspect who asked white men of serious aspect who asked who he was and what he did. For Kim did nothing with an immense success” (Kipling, 1901, p.16). This extract alludes to some serious aspects of Kim's life. First, he avoids missionaries. Second, he does not give left to white men. Then his identity is challenged with the question. That who he was last but not the least his actions and consequences are asked. These are the questions that are asked by every oriental. Every oriental goes through the same condition. Any oriental that can think seriously detests missionaries. The Orientals do not want to talk with, go with, read with, or perform any activity with the missionaries. Muslims have a specific ideology regarding missionaries that they are an ultimate danger to the religion; Islam Followers of other religions have their own objections against them. In short, missionaries in the East are not liked and that is what Kim does.

Next important point is that Kim did not like white men. By blood, Kim is white but he did not like white men. Native people of the subcontinent have changed the psyche of Kim. Now he has lost the spirit of patriotism for the British. He behaves with them the way Orientals behave with the white men. Next point is of questioning the identity of Kim both the native and the British knew that Kim was a white man but still he is asked that who he was this is because Kim's actions are in the midst of the West and the East. He does not present one side completely. He is an amalgamation of the two extremes of the world. Physically he is from the West but mentally he thinks like the East. This is the condition of every oriental. He is questioned everywhere though the other knows that he is an oriental but still he is not recognized and acknowledged. The West has blurred the identity of the oriental and they are presented in the way what the West wants.

In the land of Orientals if someone does a good task he is not acknowledged as the man from the subcontinent. Then the colonists say “perhaps it is a man; but he is man of India ever seen” (Kipling, 1901, p.18). This sentence means that if a person performs a productive activity, he will not be a person of India because India is thought to be nil in this regard so, the good action of an Indian does not get due privileges. Instead the action are connected with the questions like ‘what is your caste? Where is your house?’ (Kipling, 1901, p.19). This means that the pre-requisite for goodness is to be from high caste and a beautiful bangle, everyone knows that only rich people can keep such a house and only they can perform some good activities. Along with that the religion of the subcontinent is misrepresented in the novel. It says “All

priests of their acquaintance begged” (Kipling, 1901, p.19). This is too much biased comment. Most of the people give charity to the priests. At times, they demand as well but they do not beg. The priests themselves preach against begging but the novel has a sweeping comment about all the priests. Exceptional cases are everywhere and there might be few priests who would beg but it would be injustice if the whole lot of priests is labeled as beggars.

Kim talks about the native people and says that “Old law was not well followed” (Kipling, 1901, p.23). This means that those people are astrayed from the path of their ancestors. Their forefathers were kings and queens but they are slaved because they did not play the role for which they were supposed to, their ancestors left for them a greater amount of wisdom and wealth; but unfortunately they lavishly used that assets and the result is that now they are slaved of the British people. Lama is the same context, says that as Kim was chela so he “begged for me as the Rule demands” (Kipling, 1901, p.27). This means that those who are inferior and slaves to other, they will beg for their masters. The shameful act is done by orients and the income goes to the British. On the other hand if there is anything good, that is related to the British as the novel tells; “I worshipped none child. I bowed before the excellent law” (Kipling, 1901, p.27). This is how they represent themselves in comparison to the orients. They imposed their well on the people of the subcontinent while they had no other choice but to surrender to those laws, they “accepted this new God without emotions” (Kipling, 1901, p.28). There was no warmth or wholeheartedness in the service of that so called new God. These gods astrayed the Orientals from the right path and they were told that those who beg in silence starve in silence” (Kipling, 1901, p.28). This was the very teaching of the new operators hand, if someone showed some hesitation in blindly following the orders, they were terms as “ thy man is rather yogi {bad-tempered} than yogi { a holy man }”( Kipling, 1901, p.28). This was the reason that most of the oriental became yogi instead of yogi. They then felt pride in following the accidents. Kim describes a woman in this regard. He “loafed over to the tobacco-seller, a rather lively young Mohammedan woman, and begged a rank cigar of the brand that they sell to the students of the Punjab University who copy English customs” (Kipling, 1901, p.30). Multiple things are combined in that extract. A Muslim woman is pictured with a black and filthy mask. Female gender is portrayed as collaborator in sinful deeds. Students are shown as that they like to follow English customs. The solution for this kind of thinking is to accept the existence of the other. As a country or a caste cannot live in complete isolation, rather, it has to be mixed up with other countries; so, that country should tolerate the differences in the other countrymen. Said (2003) writes, “we need to concentrate on the slow working together of cultures that overlap, borrow from each other, and live together in far more interesting ways than any abridged or inauthentic mode of understanding can allow” (Said, 2003, p.5).

To conclude, many characters in the novel are depicted as the real personas of the devil. The only thing that a reader may extract from this novel is the negative depiction of the East by the West. The goodness in the people of the subcontinent is completely ignored and only negative and inhumane characteristics are highlighted. In short, if this novel is remained, it would be good to call it a book of ‘orientalism with the West’s perspective’.

### **Conclusion:**

This research basically focused on the aspects of orientalism in the novel Kim by Rudyard Kipling. It focused on the various grounds that are pre-requisites for being an oriental. It talked about the follies of the East. On the other hand, the West was idealized and highlighted with

positive traits. In the novel, it seems that the East is in immense need of guiding and teaching morality, sociability, and awareness in every aspect of life. The picture portrayed of the subcontinent is too blurred with negativity. No one, who is not resident of the subcontinent, would not like even to pay a visit to this barren land, staying here is a day-dreaming. But, the reality is just the opposite. There have been and still pure hearts that have illuminated the whole world with their humanly teachings. The West has totally ignored that side of the East. It seems that this novel has been written to justify British control and occupation of the subcontinent. It is also an invitation to the remaining countries as well that they should control the subcontinent in order to bring morality and awareness in it. As told earlier, this is just a try to legalize the illegitimate control of the subcontinent by the West. In this research, those questions have been answered from the text that was asked in the introduction part. Those questions are:

- Why are characters of the colonized community represented with Orientalist features in the novel, Kim?
- What are the features that are acquired or induced in the character of Kim?

The first question is answered as the West relates each and every negative aspect to the people of the East. They are of the opinion that the people of the subcontinent are uneducated, uncivilized, and devoid of any human feelings. They are no less than barbaric animals. (See it on page-29) In the novel, Indian characters are named after different animals..

The next question is answered that the East has some impacts upon Kim. As mentioned earlier, he was British by blood but he spent his early life in India. He was out of his family as well because his parents had died in his childhood. Resultantly, he was brought up by Indians. It was unconscious and inevitable for him to engulf some of the characteristics of the Orientals. The first and foremost habit that he adopted was begging. He started this black deed in his very childhood. The West does not like this job. Kim's representation as a beggar is for the ridiculing of the East.

He is represented as a beggar in the sense that those who live in the land of Orientals would adopt bad habits i.e. become a beggar. Kim is, though, called friend of the world, still, some negative aspects are related to him. This is done for the purpose that British are good people by nature but certain other factors make them filthy. (See it on page-31) One of them is Orientalism which should be cured by the West. So they made a way to the East and attacked India.

This research explored the characteristics of orientalism in English and Indian characters. The crux of the whole research can be narrated in one sentence which is 'if there is any negative and inhuman feature, it means that there is orientalism'. This novel has no or very less positive comments for the people of the East.

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