



Colonial Representation of Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King* : Theme Analysis

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Abstract— This paper aims to discover the representation of colonialism in literary work “The Man Who Would Be King” written by Rudyard Kipling. This paper uses descriptive qualitative in analyzing the collected data. In this study, the writer used four characteristics to find the colonialism theme. It is found that the theme presented in thoughts and conversation of the main characters affects the event of the story. This study reveals that the cause of colonialism in the story is the dominant power hierarchy of the Colonizer. The superstition of being White also makes the colonizer feel superior than its subjugates. The representation of colonialism also shown when the Native is considered as primitive and uncivilized, while the Colonizer is narrated for being more modern and have more power.

Keywords— Colonialism, British Empire, Power Hierarchy

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I. INTRODUCTION

Talking about literary work, there are many definitions stated by experts that literature is the mirror of human life that portrays human feeling, thought, imagination and perception which can be viewed based on personal judgment. It means that literature is the representation of what happened in the society. Author writes the literature based on their perspective or based on reality. Perspective of author developed by the various element of society. Through literature, author shares the ideas and express a theme that are timeless and universal.

Stanton (1965) stated that the elements that built the literary work are: theme, plot, setting, characterization, etc. Theme is a message, moral of the story, or a main idea a story or literary work. Author will focus in one theme in purpose to tell the authors' view to the reader. For example, the belief in good people. Theme is often referred to the moral of the story. A number of literary works developed in advanced themes like morality or value of life. In literary works, theme playing role in delivering the idea to the reader. Conversely, theme is more than a simple checklist. It enlightened with complex mind question, ponders, and responds. In the whole literary work, theme interpreted in many ways whereas in the character, the plot, setting, prologue or monologue. Hence, all elements of a literary work point toward the development of the theme. Theme makes a story linger in reader's heart and mind long after reading it. The story built with theme as the foundation. A story will reveal with theme as the central idea

or insight about life or human behavior. In most of literature works, theme is not written directly but it is disclosed through the characters' experiences.

The key characteristic of themes is the universality. The writer presents theme in literary work through several means. A writer could express the theme through the main character, about the subject that the main character chooses. In addition, theme is presented through conversation and thoughts from the story's characters. The main characters' experience is giving the reader idea about its theme. Finally, the action and event in the narrative are significant in determining its theme. Through themes, author tried to give the readers insight into how the world works or how people view human life. There are 4(four) ways author could express the theme: 1) Themes can be presented in conversation and thoughts 2) Author expressed themes by making the reader feel by sharing the feeling of the main character. 2) Theme presents in thoughts and conversation. 3) Theme is suggested through the character. 4) The action or event in the story reflect the theme.

As follows, one of literary work contains of social values is a work by Ruyard Kipling entitled *The Man Who Would Be King* that was published in 1888 by its publisher A. H. Wheeler & Co. of Allahabad. There are many views can be found in the novel. In this study is aimed to reveals the representation of colonialism through its theme.

Colonialism happened in worldwide, it encompasses the domination of a society by settlers from different society (Anheier et al., 2012). Indeed, colonialism is a direct and

overall domination of one country by another on the basis of state power being in the hands of a foreign power (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). The purpose of colonialism is for political domination and for exploitation of the colonized country. It is characterized by the domination in which doing subjugation of one to other people. It involves the colonizer who hold power and citizens from the colony.

Colonialism is a term refers to a large-scale political and economic system that permit one geopolitical entity (such as a nation state or city state) to establish controls beyond its traditional geographic borders in the service of increased profit or power (Alaimo, 2017). It is a process in which there are a construction of human settlement to hold power, gain control, profit in the colonized country, and establish the outside borders of their place of origin. In the history among colonialism, the dominated empires extended to claim or dominate island and people. Colonial system destruct human labor, capitalism, natural resources, and gain the modern global system. Violence also happened in colonialism as the expression of intimate, terms of material for controlling bodies, ecologic, and social relations that happened in person's life. This violence gives a significant impact to control gender roles, sexuality, and domestic labor.

Colonialism also involved a combination of several processes, recurring with remarkable consistency across various instances (Seeman, 2008). Anheier et al., (2012) explains that colonialism allowed the routine practice of all elements of what later came to be decided as Nazi violence within Europe, on non-European populations overseas. In addition, colonialism was a total system, in which the dominates control almost all aspects such as politic, economic, and social.

There are many terms related to colonialism, one which is Orientalism. It refers to the manifestation of the colonialism itself. According to Said (2003), Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. The orient in this case is people who were oppressed by the colonizer, while the Occident is the colonizer. Said states that the Orient is not a nature thing. It is constructed by many intellectuals for a long time and by generalizing many Orientalist assumptions and stereotypes (Ashcroft et al., 2013).

Said confirms that between the colonizer and colonized is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony. Based on this statement, it reveals that actually the colonizer recreates the Orient, or the Oppressed, or the Colonized because they are the one who discovered the Orient.

Ruyard Kipling's works which mostly represents European pride shows the Orientalism or the Colonialism by British. The theme of colonialism is portrayed in Rudyard Kipling's work. Hence, the writer of study is interested to analyzed colonialism in literary work entitled *The Man Who Would Be King* written by Rudyard Kipling. Based on the background of the study above, this paper aims to answer the following question: How colonialism represented in the *Man who Would Be King*? Meanwhile, the objective of this paper is to acquire the representation of colonialism in the story.

II. METHOD

This study attempts to find the representation of colonialism in a literary work entitled *The Man Who Would Be King*. The researcher uses cultural studies on literature in doing the analysis. By using this method, the researcher is able to know the historical and traditions of literature through the critical interpretation and dialogue. The source of data is the short story text of one of work by Ruyard Kipling "*The Man Who Would Be King*". Documentation and note taking were used by the researcher during analyses. The data gained were examined and displayed descriptively and the interpretation and conclusion of the data displayed to answer research question which is how colonialism is represented in the story.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

One of well-known act of colonialism is the establishment of broad colonial empire by British empire. Basically, this empire point of view is a formal, organized colonial settlement. However, it created a worldwide system in which it controlled the labor, laws, ecology and social organization of distant lands for promoting the political and economic interest of the English upper and middle classes (Alaimo, 2017).

The Man Who Would Be King is the typical of Victorian adventure story that going out and finding new land, exploring new place and conquering new places. The story setting is between reality and fantasy. There are contradictions between Kafiristan (fantasy country) and India (Reality Country). Ridout (2014) states that *The Man who Would be King* highlights the power of the imagination (between fantasy and reality country). The story tells journey of Daniel Dravot and Peachey Carnehan in Karifistan to be the native's king. They had plan to go to Kafiristan to become a ruler of Kafiristan.

In this study the researcher found that the themes of colonialism can already be seen in the beginning of the story in which usually the colonizer country is depicted as the superpower country touch by modernity and is better in every aspect, while the colonized country is portrayed as the weak one. The author portrays the comparison of East and West through India and Kafiristan. India is described as a modern place in which there was a railway-train and people's job is described intelligent. On the other hand, Karifistan is portrayed as "...sketchy and inaccurate as can be... no one knows anything about it really. Here, we can see that the colonized country "Kafiristan" is seen and uncivilized place and the people there is categorized as primitive. Hence, the act of British people feels superior to the subjugates clearly shows the theme of colonialism.

The main character in the story is Peache Carnehan and Daniel Dravot that have a plan to have an expedition to conquer Kafiristan in the exotic colonial locations that set in what is now Afghanistan. The setting of this story is the exotic colonial locations that prepared young men to go out and serve the empire in the colonies as these two young men is from British empire. Further, British empire always prepared young men for colonial service and preparing people for empire development. The story line of the man who would be king is told of duty an honor of young people with spirit of adventure, exploration, and spirit of expanding the empire

combined with a sort of Anglo-Indian disdain or distrust for government and sort of interest in Europe. Carnehan and Dravot adventures who go out to Kafiristan and establish their own kingdom. It was big preoccupation of the British since they are a massive empire and needed soldiers to garrison place made preparing people for empire is important and the interesting blend of duty for British empire.

Furthermore, the example of Karifistan as primitive is depicted when the narrator says people of Kafiristan likes to fight. "The people are utter brutes and likes to fight each other". It makes assumption that the native of Kafiristan as primitive based on their fighting habits, savage, and uncivilized. It also implies the weakness and inferiority of Native people that leads the colonizers to take control of their subjugates.

The colonialism idea once again has been portrayed in the beginning of story. It was told when Carnehan and Dravot have subjugated Kafiristan, they wanted a justification of their colonization by the way of claiming that people's lives have been prospered because they already asked the village priest as the judge in a fundamental legal system. He also notes that he has provided military training and teach people to preserve their food better. Their action is obviously a paternalism act since they think it helps their people become civilized. Their idea about governing is a heavier obligation for the colonizer than the colonized shows that they oppressed their people already. Meaning that they did not think it is something wrong and should not be done. The narrator described the cruelty of Native States of India:

"The Native States have a wholesome horror of English newspapers, which may throw light on their peculiar methods of government, and do their best to choke correspondents with champagne, or drive them out of their mind with four-in-hand barouches. They do not understand that nobody cares a straw for the internal administration of Native States so long as oppression and crime are kept within decent limits, and the ruler is not drugged, drunk, or diseased from one end of the year to the other. Native States were created by Providence in order to supply picturesque scenery, tigers and tall-writing. They are the dark places of the earth, full of unimaginable cruelty, touching the Railway and the Telegraph on one side, and on the other, the days of Harun-al-Raschid." Page 13- (Kipling, 2013)

These quotes from the story clearly reveals the role class of hierarchy in British Indian Society. Here the racial and the monetary social stratification shows those who have worth in the British colonial system. The poverty of the colonized explains the gap between the have and the poor. The poverty and deaths of the native is considered a common situation while the deaths and the hardship of the colonizer is assumed as weightier situation. Here the author is pointing out whose life matters because there is no single statement discusses all the people in the colonized empire and no concern is shown to what is being done to the culture of the colonized village under Dravot and Carnehan rules.

It also describes the situation of colonization would still exist as long as the colonizer have power to rule the land. Indeed, the narrator provide the suggesting moral basis for colonialism that European colonizers get from the British Empire. Obviously, based on the statement above the author used the character thoughts and conversation to convey the theme of colonialism.

Furthermore, Carnehan and Dravot act as representative of the British empire in the way they are trekking about all over India swindling the natives out of money. As Carnehan gave an idea to force money from the king of nearby Degumber State. The idea is pretending to be correspondent for the backwoodsman and menace to reveal that the prince murdered his own stepmother. It is emphasizing that the native states are uncivilized and only served for colonialism. The theme in this story line is delivered in the action or event since the main character started to act as the British empire representative.

The disguise idea above is a full success. Afterward, the presence of the Martini rifles upholds this idea about Carnehan and Dravot will carry the finest British military technology. In this story, the author emphasizes the superiority of European technology, which gave Carnehan and Dravot an edge over the "uncivilized" Kafirs. It the means, colonialism theme delivered through the character. Indeed, the main character proudly introduced the British Military technology to get the Kafiristan attention. In that way, British empire will get new colonized land as the goals of the main character voyage to explore new land. It will not be a case if the Kafirs are white. The racist argument for colonialism does not appear here. The colonialism symbols of the best British technology continue to allow Carnehan and Dravot to oppress the less "civilized" Kafirs. Moreover, Carnehan and Dravot's act of violence also appears justified since it allows them to force discipline.

The idea of colonialism appears when the author points out how weapons and military tactics enable the colonizer the prosper and be successful imperial power. In all, the theme in here showed up in the main character action. The act of colonialism also can be found when the characters gone out to find new land to be colonized. He said:

"The country is not half worked out because they that governs it will not let you touch it. They spend all their blessed time governing it. You cannot lift a spade, nor chip a rock nor look for oil nor anything like that without all the government saying leave it alone and let us govern. Therefore, such as it is, we will let it alone and go away to some other place where man is not crowded and can come to his town". Page 34

Regarding to this statement, this impulse to sort of go and explore and find new land and new source for wealth whether that is gold, jewels, oil, iron. Going out and find things that initially indicated the vary plan they had. Based on Stanton (1965) the author defined the theme by presenting it in thoughts and conversation.

Furthermore, the other statement is where Dravot has started to come a bit psychologically unhinged and got long speech about building up the power of his empire which is British empire, and he said: "There are 250.000 men in his

army ready to cut in on Russia's right flank which he tries for India" (Page 128). In here, Dravot is imagining his empire as a sort of buffer zone between the Russian empire and British Indian. In condition that both this empire is tried to control of Afghanistan. In addition, he said: "When everything as ship shape, I would hand over the crown. This crown I am wearing now to queen Victoria on my knees and she will say Rise up sir Daniel Dravot" (Page 92). Regarding to this statement, he got the sense of colonialism from the Queen of British Empire. Whereas this expansion, from the sort of conquest by Dravot and Carnehan is for the benefit of the British Empire. Accordingly, to Dravot at any rates, the goal of them is going to build a kingdom, build up their empire, establish themselves as a barrier between Russia and British India and turn over their kingdom to Victoria and become part of the British Empire. Indeed, the suggestion from British empire for young men to go out, explore and discover new lands, find new resources in the service of British Empire. Dravot states that personal power is more crucial to him rather than improving Kafiristan. His goal is "to make Kafiristan a country where every man should eat in peace and drink in quiet, and specially obey us". (Page 529) "It means he wants to hold power so that the colonized obeyed them.

One idea of colonialism can also be seen when the colonizer looked down the race of its subjugates and is over proud of one particular race. It I shown when Dravot states.

I'll make an Empire! These men aren't niggers; These men aren't niggers; they're English! Look at their eyes--look at their mouths. Look at the way they stand up. They sit on chairs in their own houses. They're the Lost Tribes, or something like it, and they've grown to be English..." (Page 182)

The quotes above clearly states the act of how colonizer treat its colonizer by looking down on one race by stating "nigger" which is a harsh word referring to black people. Dravot was being over proud by the idea of whiteness of white people.

One act of colonialism can be portrayed to the act of inferiority of the colonized country and the superiority of the Colonizer. It is shown in the following quotations "Damn, they're stinkin' lot of heathens, but this book here says they think they're related to us English.". Here we can see that the Englishman does not want to be related with the people of the natives. They feel superior to them.

Another fact of colonialism is usually the colonizer wants the native people to immerse into their culture. In the story, Dravot and Carnehan's attempt to enforce their superiority to the native by changing the name of the native such as Billy Fish, Holly Dillworth, Pikky Kergan. It signifies the penetration culture of European (the colonizer) to the native people.

Hence, The Man who Would be King represents many acts of colonialism in which become the main theme found in the novel. The theme can be found firstly by depicting the setting of the novel where India is described as a modern place in which there was a railway-train while Karifistan is portrayed as uncivilized place that no one knows. Next, the colonized country is also stereotyped as primitive which implies the weakness and inferiority of Native people

that leads the colonizers to take control of their subjugates. Furthermore, the colonialism is revealed through the portrayal of the role class of hierarchy in British Indian Society. The superior or the colonizer looked down the race of its subjugates and is overproud of one particular race. Finally, colonialism appears through the portrayal of the power of weapon possession which enable the colonizer the prosper and be successful imperial power.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

From the data analysis, the researcher found that this short story told a lot in how British perceive the empire, the way they see India and what they want young people who are going to be part of the colonial project to think about the benefit for the empire. Regarding to Kipling's theme, author attempts to justify the colonialism as a large part of the stereotype in seeing colonized people as primitive, superstitious, and cruel. The behavior of British empire in India portrayed the colonized as fundamentally uncivilized, which means the portrayal to seeks and justify colonialism as one superior group helping their inferiors. In conclusion, the way author presents the theme presents in thoughts and conversation of the main characters that affect to the events of the story. The author of the story had a deep connection for India, its culture and heritage since he was born there. However, the fact that he was up brought in British made the superiority complex beliefs of western men. Colonialism using young men to spread out the empire by exploding young men to explore new land but as the empire representative and after success to gain new land, the young men will report to the empire leader as the author mostly used the main character in delivering the theme ideas.

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