

## Edward Said's *Orientalism* and the Study of the Self and the Other in Orwell's *Burmese Days*

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**Abstract:** Critics unanimously regard Said's *Orientalism* as the cornerstone of postcolonial canon. It was this celebrated work that generated other related books and materials. Orientalism is a Western style for Orientalizing the Orient, i.e. how from knowledge of the Orient particularly from nineteenth century the Orient is defined by a set of recurring images and clichés and how afterwards this knowledge of the Orient is put into practice by colonialism and imperialism. Orientalism is affiliated with the representation of the Self or Occident and the Other or Orient in which the Self is privileged and has upper hand to define, reconstruct the passive, silent and weak Other. For Said, this geographical line made between the Occident and the Orient is arbitrary and numerous Western scholars, orientalists such as Burton, Lane, Lyall, Massignon, among others and literary figures like Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Austin, Flaubert, Kipling, Conrad, etc. contributed to the shaping of this discourse about the Orient and/or misrepresenting the Orient. Orwell as a Western writer was born in India and served five years in Indian Imperial Police in Burma and one of his major concerns during his life was the issue of imperialism and colonialism which is reflected in many works such as *Burmese Days*, *Shooting an Elephant*, *Marrakech* and *Hanging*. One characteristic which is shared among these western works and similar ones is the author's conflicting feelings within them about the Orient and Orientals through Western's lens. In this study, the relationship of the representer or Westerners and the represented or Easterners is fully expounded in *Burmese Days* in the light of Said's *Orientalism*.

**Key words:** Edward Said; *Orientalism*; Binary opposition; Orwell; The Self and the Other; *Burmese Days*

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## INTRODUCTION

Robert Young calls Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha, as the 'Holy Trinity' of postcolonial critics while at the same time Spivak and Bhabha found themselves indebted to Said and his pioneering work, *Orientalism*. Bhabha in 'Postcolonial Criticism' (1992) for instance, asserts that '*Orientalism* inaugurated the postcolonial field' and Gayatri Spivak describes it in similarly glowing terms as 'the source book in our discipline (Moore-Gilbert, 1997:34).

Orientalism is a Western style for coming to terms with the Orient. For this purpose first the Orient should be known, and scholars, philologists, travellers, administrators, etc. contributed to this end. Later this knowledge of the Orient transforms to power structures and appears in forms of colonialism and imperialism. At this moment the relationship of the Occident and Orient becomes the relationship of "power, of domination, of varying degree of a complex hegemony" (Said, 1978:5). This discourse is a new study of colonialism and states that the representation of the Orient in European literary canon has contributed to the creation of a binary opposition between Europe's and its other. Although the geographical line between the West and East is an imaginary and artificial one, the acceptance of this binarism with the former as privileged and the latter as unprivileged is taken for granted by the Western scholars.

With an oversimplified designation, we can define Orientalism as the study of the Orient, i.e. East by the Orientalists or Western scholars. This definition carries three presuppositions: that Orientalism is the field of the study, that the subject of the study is the Orient and that European scholars deal with it. But this definition is inadequate because this definition overlooks many intentions and interests behind the study which are political, commercial, and scientific. In addition, Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an "ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of time) the Occident" (1).

Orientalism as a Western discourse about the Orient is guilty of legitimizing civilizing mission, essentialism, expansionism and imperialism and on the other hand, convincing natives of their own inferiority.

Said in his book demonstrates how the Western literary and cultural canon has otherized its other and how they have misrepresented the Orient. The book begins with a quotation by Karl Marx: 'they cannot represent themselves, they must be represented'. As a result, it is a Western career to represent them.

The relationship of power and knowledge is essential in postcolonial discourse on how through this knowledge which is gathered from different sources, Orientalists and European administrators were able to reimpose colonial domination. Influenced mostly by Foucault and less Gramsci, he elucidates how the West constructed Orient in various works such as travelogues, historical accounts, state and official archives and novels. For Said, Orient and Oriental do not exist, however, the Westerners construct and counterfeit the Orient.

Said is concerned about how the knowledge of the Orient shapes power structures. The knowledge about Orient is in control of Westerners. Knowledge as Loomba maintains, 'is not *innocent* but profoundly connected with the operations of power' (p43). The power determines what the reality of both East and West might be. Knowledge of the Orient, because it was generated out of this cultural strength, 'in a sense creates the Orient, the Oriental and his world (Ashcroft, 1995:59).

Said asserts that European knowledge of the East goes arm in arm with expansionism, exploration and settlement. He argues that the 'Orient' is constructed and represented in the binary opposition against the Occident, as the 'Other'. In many respects, the Orient is seen by European values, assumptions, cultural codes and as the Occident's other. He criticizes the way that the Occident views the Orient by her own culturally-determined and biased and limited historical perspectives.

Said's intervention is designed to illustrate the manner in which the representation of Europe's 'others' has been institutionalized since at least the eighteenth century as a feature of its cultural dominance. Orientalism describes the various disciplines, institutions, process of investigation and styles of thought by

which the Europeans came to 'know' the 'Orient' (57). This system as a 'willed human work', institutionalizes the imaginary boundary between 'two unequal halves' and materializes it in the shape of colonialism and imperialism.

Orientalism is closely related to the concept of the Self and the Other because as Said points out in his second definition of Orientalism, it makes a distinction between the Occident, i.e. self and the Orient, i.e. the Other, since the analysis of the relationship of the 'self' and the 'other' is at the heart of Postcolonialism and many define Postcolonialism in terms of the relationship of the self and the Other. For instance, Boehmer emphasizes that 'Postcolonial theories swivel the conventional axis of interaction between the colonizer and colonized or the self and the Other'.

Orientalism, as Ashcroft notes, is a Western invention, knowledge which constructs the East as the "other". Therefore, in Said's formulation, it is principally a way of defining and 'locating' Europe's others (Ashcroft, 1995: 50). The outcome of Orientalism is the building on a binary opposition between Occident and Orient. Orient is imposed as everything that the West is not, exotic, alien, dangerous, unreliable, to be tamed, exhibited, a threat to the West.

Western metaphysics is based on binary oppositions, a hierarchy in which one is privileged and the other is unprivileged. Binarism ranges from general binaries such as light/dark, white/black to some more complicated and culturally weighted as man/woman, the colonizer/ the colonized and in the case under consideration the self/other. This binary opposition takes a prominent place within feminist, psychoanalysis, postcolonial and queer theory. The Self – whether it is conceived as male, white, European – is constructed as positive term. Conversely, the Other – be it female, black, non-European – is constructed as its negative reflections (Peter Childs & Roger Fowler, 2006:165). For Loomba, as a postcolonial critic, the self is the colonialist and the Other is the colonized. The Other is everything that lies outside of the self (p 144). The Self is the familiar (Europe, the West, "us") and the Other is strange (the Orient, the east, "them") (Said, 1978:43).

The Self and the Other can be translated to the Occident / Orient, us /them, The West /the rest, center/margin, metropolitan/colonial subjects, vocal/silent. In all these cases Western literary and cultural canon defines "its other" in relation to himself, the other is an alien and alter ego, to and of the self, as the inferior reflection of Europe.

By the process of Othering, the colonizers treat the colonized as 'not fully human', and as a result, it dehumanizes natives. Othering codifies and fixes the self as the true human and the other as other than human. The Colonizers consider themselves as the embodiment of "proper self" while label the colonized as "savages".

The "savage" is usually considered, as Tyson mentions, as 'demonic or exotic' other. For the former, the savage is evil as well as inferior, but for the latter the "savage" is perceived as possessing a "primitive" beauty or nobility born of a closeness to nature. In either case, however, the "savage" remains other and, therefore, not fully human (Tyson, 2006: 420).

Orientalism must create its own other; because of this other it can strengthen its own identity and superiority and because of this other it can set off against the Orient as " a sort of surrogate and even underground self(Said, 1978:3).

Said argues that Orientalism has helped Westerners to define a European self-image. He believes that the idea of Orientalism is not far from the collective notion identifying European as 'us' against those non-Europeans. Here European identity and culture is superior to all other cultures and peoples (7).

In colonial novels, such as those of Kipling, Forster, Conrad, the Orient and Orientals are viewed through the lens of a Western writer who has taken the upper hand to manipulate, construct and re-present the Orient. The imaginary line between the Orient and Occident becomes 'clear, visible, and there', as Kipling says: "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet". Besides, the common characteristic which is shared by all these writers is that they appear contradictory and paradoxical in their views toward the Orient and the Orientals from time to time; as a result, the survey and analysis of their works need subtle inquiry. George Orwell as a British writer who was directly involved by the Orient and the Oriental is not an exemption.

He was born in Motihari in India with his colonial roots and served five years in Indian Imperial Police. His firsthand experiences as a sahib and agent of British Raj gave him, as he claims, a glimpse for better understanding of 'the nature of imperialism'. Moreover, as a police in Colonial Burma, he was responsible for bullying, kicking, torturing and hanging prostrated Burmans and a double oppression on the Burmese.

Seeing "the wretched prisoners, the grey cowed faces of convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been flogged with bamboos, the women and children howling when their menfolk were led away under arrest" left him with bad conscience and he decided to chuck up his job. Shouldering immense weight of guilt, he wrote *Burmese Days*, Shooting an Elephant among his works, to atone his guilt.

Orwell, like other colonial novelists appears contradictory, simultaneously criticizes, resents and sympathizes with both the colonizers and the colonized; since one should speak of ORWELLS or Eric Blair and his transformation from his salad days to maturity should be considered. The double perspective or duplicity in *Burmese Days* is discussed in this study.

## 2. DISCUSSION

### 2.1 Preview

For Said, controversy about the postcolonial discourse begins with the term of *re*-presentation which gives the Westerners upper-hand as a "genuine creator, whose life-giving power represents, animates, constitutes, the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries" (p57). This representation is so powerful which brought the concept of the Orient, first of all in Western academics, "then Western consciousness, and later Western empire (p 203). The effect of this representation is the creation of binary opposition of the self and other which posits the former in the privileged position that permits himself to define, describe and articulate the Orient as she wishes, and the former in the position of a silent, disabled object of study. Said continues that one cannot make any distinction between representation and misrepresentation and the difference is matter of degree.

While he surveys Massignon's work and points how he and other Westerners like him misrepresented Islam, Said believes that, like that of Massignon's:

...The real issue is whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations, because they are representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer. If the latter alternative is the correct one ( as I believe it is), then we must be prepared to accept the fact that a representation is eo ipso implicated, intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many things besides the "truth", which is itself a representation (272).

Orientalism promotes the clear-cut distinction and gulf between Occident .i.e. (Europe, The West, "us") and strange (the Orient, the East, "them") (p43). Said demonstrates how these hard-and-fast distinctions are accepted both by the Orientals and Orientalists. These 'geographical sectors as "Orient" and "Occident" are man-made" (p5).

*Burmese Days* revolves around the binary opposition of the Self and the Other, and the very essence of the Club is to make the distinction between the whites and non-whites more conspicuous. Hence, all the characters of the novel lay fitly on two categories: The natives and non-natives, the whites and non-whites, the Indians and Anglo-Indians, the familiar or stranger, the civilized and uncivilized or barbaric, the European and Asian, the us and them, and the Self and the Other. In addition, a set of stereotypes and clichés are attributed to the natives that have contributed to Orientalize them.

### 2.2. The Self and the Other in *Burmese Days*

*Burmese Days* is commonly referred to as an anti-imperialist novel which closes down 'the entire genre of imperial heroics' (Holderness et al, p 2). It is true that Orwell has created a novel which is distinguished

from earlier colonial writings, such as those Kipling and Forster by, but as it is mentioned before, 'it lacks a firm commitment to anti-imperialism, both on the part of Flory and his author' (Terry Eagleton, qtd. in Quinn, p 90); or as Boehmer points out appropriately *Burmese Days* 'does not diverge significantly from a colonialist semiotic' (p 4) and it is an 'ambivalent text' (Ibid).

Burma is viewed through a Westerner's lens and functions just as a setting with its fauna and flora. The novel focuses on the White community and they are at the center and Burmans are totally marginalized in the novel. There is no hint of their culture, lifestyle, customs and etc. and the novel concentrates on a Flory's loneliness and ostracization rather than a critique of imperialism and 'the novel deals not so much with the problems of the Burmese as with the problems of the English in Burma' (Kalechofsky, p 29).

Orwell is trapped in the role of Westerner's representer by an 'Orientalist mindset' and personified in Flory who is torn between loyalty to British Raj and sentimental sympathy for the natives, 'doubleness between membership among the dominant and an affinity for the dominated' (Stewart, p 40). 'He did not speak of his sympathy for the Burmese' (Slater, p 25) and follows the 'White man's code of silence in the East' (Ibid).

Holderness et al assert that if one takes the novel as a critique of imperialism, one cannot 'find in this text a critique of racist assumptions' (Ibid, p5). For Orwell, anti-imperialism and anti-racism are two different things. Racism and racial bigotry are not criticized by the narrator and as Blyemel states, 'Orwell's exposure of extremist color prejudice is unsettling (p156).

'Unironic use of adjectives' for natives is very unsettling too, when the narrator calls the Burmese as swines, ticks, black coolies, the sneaking, cowardly hounds, bloody sods, damned and smelly natives, gutless curs, yellow bellies, evil and unclean Orientals, greasy little babus, little pot-bellied dirty niggers, those with the scents and stench of coconut oil, sandalwood, garlic, cinnamon, turmeric, sweat, and those with black skins, brown, malicious and epicene faces and filthy black lips.

These racial attitudes and fierce racism are taken for granted and the narrator never comments on them. It is true that this bigotry is mostly expressed by rabid Ellis and racist Elizabeth with their vicious tongues, but the triangle of narrator, Flory and Orwell retain the 'superior side of racial dichotomy'. As a result, the racial divide in the novel is unbreakable. As Kipling notes: "A sahib is a sahib, and no amount of friendship or camaraderie can change the rudiments of racial difference (qtd. in Moosavinia, p 50).

Blyemel (2004) asserts that 'the most effective agents for showing off British color-hatred are Ellis and Elizabeth memsahib' (156). Sadistic outburst of Ellis provokes other members even Flory who pals up with Veraswami, not to sign petition for native's nomination. Ellis's fury and his blatant racism are exacerbated in two positions, when they propose native's membership in the club and when he knew the Maxwell's death news. In the first situation, his reaction is as following:

If we aren't going to rule, why the devil don't we clear out? Here we are, supposed to be governing a set of damn black swine who've been slaves since the beginning of history, and instead of ruling them in the only way they understand, we go and treat them as equals. And you silly b--s take it for granted (*Burmese Days*, p 13).

His remarks as 'we don't want to see any black hides in this Club' were accepted by other members and Flory's act of cowardice hindered him to vote Veraswami. For Ellis, all natives are 'subject people' and those with black skins are inferior (*Italics mine*).

The second situation is when he was informed about Maxwell's death by natives and near-riot when 'the rage was stewing in his body like a bitter juice' (Ibid, 148). He cannot accept a scum had killed a WHITE and he denounces the 'cursed kid-glove laws' that forbid him to

'raid their villages, kill their cattle, burn their crops, decimate them, blow them from the guns' as good old Germans...Shoot them, ride them down, horses' hooves trample their guts out, whips cut their faces in slices! (Ibid, pp. 148-149).

He came out and saw a row of smooth students who were grinning at him that Ellis called them 'Nationalists'. He cannot tolerate this insolence and said that 'Here! What are you laughing at, you young

ticks?'(149) when one of the boys responded that 'Not your business', Ellis was maddened and hit furiously with his cane across the boy's eyes and blinded him. Ellis is not only ashamed of his violence, he also considers it as a 'surprise' for them and spurs his friends to fight and label them as 'sneaking, mangy little rats and 'the incestuous children of pigs' (149). Surprisingly enough, it is Ellis that wrote to Macgregor and accused of being assaulted, demanding retaliation.

Elizabeth as a memsahib is also bigoted and she felt 'the hatefulness of being kin to creatures with black faces' (p71). Eliza's overt racism is also shown in two occasions: when Flory, assuming that 'she was different from that herd of fools at the Club' (60) and she will appreciate native's culture, took her to a pwe, a kind of Burmese play. Another occasion was when they paid a visit to bazaar.

At first she is shocked when she sees how they have blocked the road for their performance, and Flory answers that "there are no traffic regulations here" (p61). The native music is a 'fearful 'pandemonium, a strident squeal of pipes, a rattle like castanets and the hoarse thump of drums' (60). Elizabeth felt insecure to go among 'that smelly native crowd' and she watches 'the hideous and savage spectacle' with tediousness and horror:

It's grotesque, it's even ugly, with a sort of willful ugliness. And there's something sinister in it too. There's a touch of the diabolical in all Mongols. And yet when you look closely, what art, what centuries of culture you can see behind it! ...Whenever you look closely at the art of these Eastern peoples you can see that--a civilization stretching back and back, practically the same, into times when we were dressed in woad (62).

Eliza comes from the 'civilized places, and her superiority is blatantly expressed when she calls them with a very offensive term even in that time, Mongols. She considers the White racially and civilizationally superior to the Burmese. The word woad signifies that the present-day Burma is less civilized than the ancient Briton (in that times, woad was used for painting their bodies). Furthermore, they are connected to devil and devil worship (as the term diabolical and sinister connote); besides, the dancer girl becomes a 'demon' figure for her. She reproaches herself for coming among 'this horde of natives' with garlic and sweat smell' and COARSE-LOOKING; like some kind of animal (p71).

In the bazaar's scene, Eliza once more humiliates the Orient and Orientals. The bazaar is described as 'large cattle pen' by 'a cold putrid stench of dung or decay' (60), and 'Everything's so horribly dirty' (75). Eliza becomes insecure and asked herself why Flory has brought her to 'watch their filthy, disgusting habits' (Ibid). The barbarity of the bazar and absolute savages was stifling her. The natives were 'damnable dressed'. All the children are naked and one was 'crawling like a large yellow frog' (77). The Chinese women practice deforming their insteps, a sign of being 'behind the times', an anachronism. She is too arrogant to say thank you to girls fanned them and poured out tea. It is a 'sort of infra dig' to sit in their houses. At length Eliza cannot tolerate the 'absolutely DISGUSTING people' and 'bestly Oriental things' and went out. Flory tries to calm her down that one should not expect all the people behave at the same manner, suppose, for instance, you were back in the Middle Ages (79).

Flory, the protagonist of the novel, at the first look, is against British Empire and he hates the devotion to Pukka Sahib code. He is ashamed of themselves and wonders how they oppose to Veraswami's admission in the club only for his black skin.

This seemingly animosity toward British Empire is revealed during a long conversation with Dr. Veraswami that he admits that we are here to "rub our dirt on them, and "wreck the whole Burmese national culture" (p23). He goes further and prefers Thibaw, the last king of Burma to his white fellows. He believes that we do not have any "purpose except to steal".

What bothers Flory more than anything else is a lie, 'slimy white man's burden humbug', the pukka sahib pose. Flory knows that this lie corrupts not only the natives, but also the Whites themselves. The colonizers 'build prison and call it progress'. The progress is equal to vanishing forests, pagodas, villages and monasteries. A question that rises here is that to what extent Flory is honest to the denunciation of British Raj?

Flory confesses that he is one of the thieves that have come to Burma to make money. In addition, 'he does not like 'the Burmans to drive them out of their country' (22). This double perspective, to disapprove British Empire and at the same time willingness to stay in Burma as an expatriate and allegiance to pukka sahib beatitudes is hypocritical.

These five chief beatitudes of the pukka sahib are as follows: "Keeping up our prestige, the firm hand (without the velvet glove), we white men must hang together, Give them an inch and they'll take an ell, and Esprit de Corps" (116).

In fact as Stewart argues, 'Flory's willingness to tout high moral and political standards in private conversations with Veraswami or with Elizabeth, but then to act in complete opposition to these standards when they are put to the test' is very hypocritical (p44). Though he pals up with some natives and cares for natives' lifestyle to a degree, he humiliated them in different situations.

The way he treats Ma Hla May and ruins her, 'go away this instant. If you make any trouble I will afterwards take a bamboo and beat you till not one of your ribs is whole' (89) indicates that a Burmese woman is of little worth for him. By appearing Elizabeth, this little worth for Ma Hla May vanishes for good.

His friendship with Veraswami also suffers from his self-interest and egoism. He never addresses the way doctor speaks to him, for instance, Veraswami over and over addresses him as my friend but Flory refuses to do so. Additionally, in complete act of cowardice, Flory did not poll his friend, Dr. Veraswami. He says: "no, he could not face that row! It was not worth it" (27). This indicates that Flory's friendship with Dr. Veraswami is not a candid one.

Flory cannot come to terms with the colonial situation: a dilemma in which pukka sahib code demands him as an agent of empire and he succumbed to it, and his hatred of this Raj. This ambivalent position makes worse when it accompanies love's failure. He told Veraswami that 'you've got to be a pukka sahib or die in this country' (24).

He accuses the privilege— being male, Englishman, White— which himself relies on and this stems from his duplicity. He tries to pretend that he is the only Anglo-Indian who appreciates the Burmese culture, whereas it is selfishness that motivates him.

Flory appears as a hero for quelling the rebellion and redeems the respect of all the Club members in particular Ellis and Eliza. The near-riot was for the reason that Ellis blinded a boy and now the angry crowd intended to take revenge on him. He knows the riot ludicrous from the start, and coward Flory for polling Veraswami is now transformed into a hero to rescue the White community, a hint that suggests again his duplicity and camaraderie to pukka sahibs. Douglas Kerr connects this quelling of the riot to anti-nationalism of George Orwell:

But some of the language of his critique of Indian nationalism – its violence and hysteria, its blindness to realities, the sinister interests of its backers, its failure to achieve a 'grown-up mentality' – has an emotional coloring that is reminiscent of the hostile depiction of anti-British groups in Burma, in *Burmese Days* and 'Shooting an Elephant'. Both these narratives are sympathetic to the Burmese, while at the same time attributing to them qualities of hysteria, dishonesty, fanaticism, vengefulness and immaturity, familiar from the lexicon of 'Orientalism'. Orwell was an anti-imperialist, but also an anti-nationalist... (p50).

At the end, the reader sympathizes unconsciously for Flory not for 'the Wretched of the Earth', whom are exploited and colonized by the White Europeans in their own land. Orwell never explicitly depicts the backwash of a colonial power in a settled land. In contrast, what one can see is an indistinct and hypocritical critique of colonialism mostly by Flory which is counterattacked by Dr. Veraswami.

After giving this thumbnail sketch of the Anglo-Indians society in Burma, it is necessary to explore the Asians' representation and depiction.

All the Asians in *Burmese Days* are re-presented as racially, civilizationally, and humanly inferior to the Europeans. They blackmail, accepts bribes, betray and believe that the end justifies the means. They are lazy, superstitious, primitive, awkward and clumsy— for example for speaking English— and demote

their own culture and promote European culture. Orwell is guilty of commodification and essentialism. JanMohamed observes that:

The European writer commodifies the natives by negating his individuality, his subjectivity; so that he is now perceived as a generic being that can be exchanged for any other native (they look like, act alike and so on). (qtd. in Holderness et al, p5).

Commodification is an act of turning the natives into a commodity and essentialism, as Wisker points out, is the 'representation and construction of the people as if each individual were the same as the next and that people. It is 'a reductive way of labeling and stereotyping colonized people'. In the course of the novel, the narrator lowers the natives to the level of inanimate creatures, less than humans. Using the expressions such as HORDE of natives, Burmans, servants; or a FLOCK of pot-bellied, naked children, SWARMS of stocky peasants, black CLOUDs; a MOB of People, a KNOT of Burmans, STRING of Burmans, a SWATH of hay are a way of labeling them.

Furthermore, Orwell designates the Burmans in the manner he describes the animals. The old Mattu, the Hindu who looked after the European church is a 'fever stricken creature, more like a grasshopper than a human being' (24). He is bend like a caterpillar; the oval faces of girls are compared to kittens' (62); the villagers with their rustic faces are like wild animals (83), and rebels like an enormous swarm of bees (154) with their 'animal heat' are just some examples. Dr. Veraswami calls them 'barbarous cattle' (88).

U Po Kyin is a crude caricature that Burmese suffers from his wicked deeds and insidious more than the colonizers themselves. He defames Macgregor, downgrades Veraswami, foments a rebellion and by giving bribe to Ma Hla May, paves the way for Flory's suicide.

From his childhood, while working for a rice merchant, he sometimes practices stealing, then he joins "a ring of clerks making a steady income by misappropriating Government stores"(1), and then denounces candidates for office's jobs. He advanced himself by corruption, thievery, betrayal and extortion.

Soon after he becomes magistrate, and takes bribes from both sides. He has his own share on "large-sized robberies". He does not upset when his servant tells him that a village girl has come with a baby and says that baby is his and it becomes clear that 'his brain, though cunning, was quite barbaric' (2).

He has high opinion for the Europeans, 'from childhood he knew that his own people were no match for this race of giants' (1) and believes in European right-to-power. U Po Kyin is a testimony of the tyranny, despotism, corruption, and cabal in the Orient. His only goal is nomination in the club by any means.

Dr. Veraswami is a foil for U Po Kyin; however, both of them are equal in their aspirations. He befriends Flory because the white man is like a barometer for uplifting his position. The Club's membership brings him prestige, sacrosanctity, invulnerability and security against his enemies such as U Po Kyin.

He is the spokesperson of British Imperialism, a pro-English doctor. By the degree he esteems British Empire; he loathes the Orient and Orientals. Ironically enough as Kalechofsky asserts 'it is Dr. Veraswami who justifies the British colonialism' (p31) not Europeans. He believes wholeheartedly that Westerners bring civilization and progress to their land:

They construct roads, they irrigate deserts, they conquer famines, they build schools, they set up hospitals, they combat plague, cholera, leprosy, smallpox, venereal disease (24).

This idea is challenged by Flory. As an intense admirer of the British, Veraswami tries to mention all English values and decency. The 'honorable English gentlemen' is his catchword. He refers to the pukka sahibs as 'the salt of the earth' and those with golden hearts (21). They have done 'great things for British India' (Ibid); the Occidentals have some sterling qualities, such as public spirit, loyalty that 'Orientals lack'. He rejects the idea that the colonizers are thieves, on the contrary, these gentlemen of high gifts sacrifices to elevate the natives and to bring law and order for them. He gives prominence to the uprush of modern progress for civilizing 'the horrible sloth and the degeneracy of the Oriental'.



Veraswami warns Flory about U Po Kyin's cunning and intrigue and stipulates that only an Oriental, not the white men, can know him, because all the Orientals are from the same dough, and trickery and conspiracy are innate on them.

The resistance of the European Club's members for admission of natives and their final triumph of their determination indicate that the gulf between Orient and Occident is so vast that cannot be filled. In *A Passage to India*, at least there is a hope for bridging the gap between the Occident and Orient but *Burmese Days* ends in pessimism and as Zwerdling suggests, 'the novel suggests no way out of morass' (p 64).

### **2.3 Some stereotypes and clichés attributed to the Orientals**

The Orient and Orientals are stamped with an otherness (Said, p97), and this otherness is a threat that should be avoided. In all colonial novels, some negative attitudes and a set of fixed clichés are ascribed to this otherness. Edward Said underscores that the starting point for all Orientalists is to recognize these stereotypes. Criticizing one of these Orientalists [Sir Alfred Lyall], he marks some of these recurring images:

Orientals or Arabs are thereafter 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 a 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"(p 39).

It is not a difficult task to see; to some extent these images come true in *Burmese Days*. For instance, all the natives particularly the servants are lazy and lethargic, as Mrs. Lackersteen complains about the laziness of the servants (15), or Ko S'la, Flory's servant is lazy and dirty, and his ex-wife as 'a fat, lazy cat' (44).

U Po Kyin, more than anyone else stands for cunning, intrigue and flattery which were mentioned earlier. His brain though cunning was quite barbaric (2).

For their distorted minds, Eliza mocks them for blocking up the roadway for spectacle, as Flory answered that 'there are no traffic regulations here' (61). Flory calls Ma Hla May a 'liar' when she said no brown hands touched me, however the readers know that she had an affair with a brown man.

The Orientals have no nobility and grace except by accompanying and camaraderie with the occidentals. U Po Kyin and Veraswami's efforts for admission to the Club are for this nobility and prestige, as Dr. Veraswami pointed it in his example of barometer.

For mistreatment to animals, one can remember the scene that 'a fat yellow woman with her longyi hitched under her armpits was chasing a dog round a hut, smacking at it with a bamboo and laughing (34).

Recurring images do not confine to the abovementioned and many other labels such as superstition, strangeness, polygamy are also attributed to the Orientals.

The natives believe that the 'strips of alligator hide' has magical properties (76); Ma Hla May sometimes puts love-philters in Flory's food (31); "The Burmese bullock-cart drivers seldom grease their axles, probably because they believe that the screaming keeps away evil spirits" (34); as the medicine, they eat and drink 'herbs gathered under the new moon, tigers' whiskers, rhinoceros horn, urine, menstrual blood!' (87) And finally Weiksa or magician who distributes magic bullet-proof jackets (101).

Burma is an exotic place for Westerners and Orientals' strangeness and exoticism generate from that exotic locale. Elizabeth is terrified by this 'strangeness', as Adela in *A Passage to India* did. Accordingly, the bushes are foreign-looking, rhythms of the tropical seasons and hollow cries are strange (38); Eliza among the natives' spectacle wishes to escape from this strange place to familiar one, i.e. the Club and she always barked at strange Orientals (48).

Ko S'la is an 'obscure martyrs of bigamy' and Li Yeik, the Chinese shopkeeper had two girls as his concubines. In short, in *Burmese Days* like other colonial novels, a web of colonial images and cultural stereotypes are attributed to the Burmese which fix them in their inferior position.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The relationship between the European and the non-European in *Burmese Days* is in accordance with Said's concept of the Self and the Other: the familiar (Europe, The West, "us") and the strange (the Orient, the East, "them").

The gulf between the Occidentals and Orientals is so enormous that keeps them fixed in their own positions the former as superior and the latter inferior.

In *Burmese Days*, the Burmese culture, people and lifestyle are in the background, they are on the periphery and marginalized by their white settlers. The story swivels around the axis of the Anglo-Indians, focusing mostly on them. The very reality of the Club is to highlight the line between the natives and non-natives.

The opposition of European community to the native's admission signifies that the Burmese are less human than their white masters. All the Anglo- Europeans are bigoted, racist, mistreating the natives. Flory ruins a Burmese woman, Ellis blinds a school boy, Elizabeth disparages the Burmese culture, and all of them are affected with tropics and colonialism. They keep a distance from the natives and Flory tries to come close to the natives unsuccessfully. Flory has taken a double perspective about natives that makes him alienated and estranged which ends in committing suicide.

He cannot come to terms with his situation as an expatriate in foreign land which does not have any end except to steal and to destroy the Burma economically and culturally and a moral internal conflict. Their faces are hidden behind the masks and their faces grow to them. This mask is 'civilizing mission', a slimy lie that undergoes to uplift their black brothers.

Flory's suicide displays a deep pessimism about the relationship of the natives and non-natives. Flory as the protagonist not only can erase this dividing line between the Anglo-Indians and Burmese, but also by his duplicity and cowardice and devotion to pukka sahib beatitudes make this line clear and visible.

On the other hand, the natives such as U Po Kyin, Dr. Veraswami, and Ma Hla May, among others are in the unprivileged positions. Ma Hla May is double colonized by Flory as a male and as an agent of the empire. Dr. Veraswami or as Ellis calls him Dr. very-slimy is a mouthful of the British Empire and in spite of his adoration for her, demotes at the end. U Po Kyin is a typical Oriental, though cunning but quite barbaric. He believes that end justifies the means and for gaining his goal i.e. to become a club's member, he does the most vicious deeds.

Because of the imaginary line between these two poles, some stereotypes and clichés are attributed to the Orientals such as cunning, treachery, lethargy, mendacity, superstition, etc. They are reduced to the level of objects and animals.

As a result, the representation of the Self and the Other in *Burmese Days* and designation of some stereotypes and clichés to the Orientals follow Said's model which is elaborated in his *Orientalism*. As Said himself alleges, one cannot get around this binary opposition and others like it and pretends that they do not exist. Therefore, we cannot disregard the Orientalist distinction between 'us' and 'them' (327).

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