

**East-West relationship and the Anglo-Indian disorder:
Locating (post)colonial disability in
Rudyard Kipling's short stories**

Abhijit Maity*

Abstract: This article examines representations of desire, disorder, and disability in Rudyard Kipling's stories. Using the theoretical framework of postcolonial disability, this article offers a close textual analysis of stories titled 'Yoked with an Unbeliever', 'In the Pride of His Youth', and 'Beyond the Pale'. The analysis points to the psychological conflicts formed within the colonial desire and colonizing subjects that made them suffer from the disease, dysfunctional behaviours, and madness. One of the central foci of this article is to locate the physical and psychopathological disabilities as represented in these stories. This study not only points at the fallibility of the rhetoric of empire but also attempts to understand the ideologies of the British Raj. I argue that whereas the orientalist discourse defines the colonized space as weak, diseased, and lacking sanity, the colonists in India are represented as highly prone to disease, sickness, and disability in many ways. The discussion also reveals that the colonial enterprise has been harboring an unmethodical system that deliberately dehumanizes the colonists living in the colonies.

Keywords: British Empire, colonial desire, disorder, disability, Rudyard Kipling

Introduction

Writing about the nature of hybridity within cultural miscegenation, Robert Young discusses the various forms of polarities and differences within cultural contact in colonial space. His thesis points to "the self-claimed superiority of the colonising culture" and "the heterosexual transgression of racial lines" by the colonizing subjects (Castle 1996, 136). Within the forms of physical colonization, this sense of

* Abhijit Maity (✉)

Department of English, Mahishadal Girls' College, Vidyasagar University, West Bengal, India

e-mail: amengvu@gmail.com

superiority is acted out in their participation in many direct or indirect forms of domination and within the methods of control. Since the “idea of colonization itself is grounded in a sexualized discourse of rape, penetration and impregnation”, the colonizing subjects can be considered, as it goes in postcolonial theories, as powerful, strong and abled (Ashcroft et al. 2007, 36).

This article aims to offer a close textual re-reading of Rudyard Kipling’s select stories in order to interrogate this idea of the colonizers as being powerful and strong. The ways in which Kipling represented the colonizing subjects as the characters in his story will show how the process of empire-building was not methodical enough to perpetuate and maintain the level of ability and strength required for surviving in a country like India. Working through the exemplary texts, this study will explore various forms of physical and psychological disabilities created within/by the conflicts of colonial desire and through many sudden strange experiences encountered within an apparently weak space.

As a multidisciplinary field of studies, theorization of disability cover a wide range of critical scholarships including race, class, sex, gender, and post/colonialism (Parekh 2008; Barker and Murray 2010; Ghai 2012; Goodley et al. 2014; Grech 2017; Cleall 2024). Borrowed from medical science, disability in social science studies is connected to physical and social identities, cultural politics, and complex societal interactions that create a binary between ‘normality’ and beyond (De 2024). So far as the comparative studies developed between postcolonialism and disability are concerned, an intricate balance can be found in them which shows that either postcolonial theory is used to understand the latent disabled condition or vice versa. Many scholars have sufficiently recognized a “metaphorical connection” between postcolonialism and disability studies, stating that “disability is often used as a metaphor for the problems often experienced by a nation” (Sherry 2007, 11). For example, Frantz Fanon’s well-known work *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963, 14) is centered on the argument that one of the major characteristics of the system of colonialism is “the creation of specific mental ‘pathologies’ and ‘disorders’ as a result of the colonial relationship”. Fanon significantly focuses on the mental illness of the colonized subjects caused by the mechanisms of colonial enterprise but his study remains little concerned about the debilitating conditions of the colonizing self while they wished to fulfill their

desire for the colonized other. Rob Michalko uses Said's idea of 'exile' in his observation on the condition of disability and blind people:

Like Said's exile, the blind person knows that in a world of contingency, homes are provisional. We can be sighted today and blind tomorrow. Like the exile's experience of crossing political and geographical boundaries, crossing the border from sightedness to blindness provides the possibility of breaking the barriers of "thought and experience". (Michalko 1999, 107)

Largely influenced by postcolonial theorists like Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, and others, Tom Shakespeare, a professor of Disability Research at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, compares "the disability experience to that of colonialism and imperialism" (Sherry 2007, 13). What is noticeable in the above references is that there remains a constructive theoretical gap between the representation of disability in literary texts and disability as a medical condition, whilst postcolonialism and disability have been used interchangeably in a particular comparative context. Until recently, this gap has quite critically been fulfilled by Ato Quayson. In an interview regarding his book *Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation* (2007), professor Quayson discusses "the dominant rules of representation within literary text" and makes a reverse reading of "plot, structure and so on". He further states:

My main argument on this score is that because the disabled character is first and foremost a literary product, she comes to share certain discursive features with other aspects of the literary representation (such as other characters, the descriptions of the setting, and spatiotemporal coordinates). However, on top of that, the disabled character also serves to reorganize the entire textual domain within which he is being represented. This is because literary discourse suffers a kind of seizure or discursive constriction in dealing with the disabled. Thus disability's effect on the literary aesthetic domain is not dissimilar to that of the sacred or of pain, both of which tend to simultaneously incite and frustrate or distort representation. (*An Interview with Ato Quayson*)

Therefore, the disabled character and its literary representation reveal certain discursive patterns of a phenomenon that happened at a particular time and space.

Using critical discourse analysis as a theoretical method, this essay problematizes the idea of disability and its relation to colonialism. Quayson's idea of "disability-as-superior-insight" can be treated as the core conceptual energy in this essay, since the colonizers self-sufficiently claimed themselves to be superior in all aspects to the

colonized people. By analysing the representation of disabled characters and also by identifying the fundamental source and superstructure that causes of such disabilities, this essay attempts to excavate certain discursive patterns within the idea of colonialism and empire-building. The stories included in this discussion are ‘Yoked with an Unbeliever’, ‘In the Pride of His Youth’ and ‘Beyond the Pale’, taken from the collection *Plain Tales from the Hills*, first published in 1888 (see Kipling 2011). The concepts used in this study are taken from both psychoanalysis and postcolonial theory in order to explore the psychological conflicts within the colonial desire that made the colonizing subjects suffer from disease and madness.

Mechanizing empire and commoditizing colonizers

One of the prominent examples that can be used to study the disabled condition of the colonizing subjects is the representation of Phill Garron, the main character in Kipling’s story ‘Yoked with an Unbeliever’. Kipling wrote this story during the prime period of British colonization in India. The emotional ambiance with which the story begins presents Garron’s fiancé Miss Agnes Laiter weeping severely because the only person she loves or “ever could love” is leaving her in England (Kipling 2011, 34). It can be asserted that the fear of impending danger in a new land unsettles her as she knows well, and as Kipling states, “India...is divided equally between jungle, tigers, cobras, and sepoy” (Ibid.). This type of fear was pertinent and prominent within them because the family members of colonizers were aware of the ecogeological heterogeneity of the colonized space, besides the matter of ‘losing’ someone in a far more hostile environment. Noel Annan, while discussing the socio-historical configuration in Kipling’s writings, states:

None of the conditions of life [in India] resembled those of England. Here nature was inconceivably hostile. The pitiless sun spread famine and the rain floods, and cholera, fever, reptiles, and wild beasts brought death. Death was always at a man’s elbow, and Anglo-Indians in remote villages met regularly to prove to each other that they were still alive. (Annan 1966, 102)

Annan’s view on the difficulties of life for the colonizers in India also hints at the fact that the Empire should have heeded to managing well the eligible or capable people, who, both physically and mentally, would be able to handle the difficulties properly. It can be argued that the heterogeneous, hostile nature of the colonized space might not be

the only cause of their sufferings; instead, it might be the physical and mental weakness or unpreparedness of the colonizers that easily made them sick.

The story begins with a Punjabi proverb, which also gives hint at the lack of such mental stability, “[I] am dying for you, and you are dying for another” (Kipling 2011, 34). This proverb, which sets the central motif of the story, has two layers of meaning: on the one hand, it means that Miss Laiter was unable to accept the sudden departure of Garron, who might die for a greater reason; and, on the other hand, it expresses her unacknowledged dilemma that her husband might fall in love with another woman in another country. In India, when Garron started working like a horse in the mysterious tree plants in Darjeeling, the dehumanizing treatment of the empire with respect to human labor has been realized by him – an image of 'real' India (read, empire) became transparent to him. Initially, he was unhappy and tried to imagine that his hard work would bring him success and that he would be able to marry his dream girl. His situation reveals how the colonialist discourse creates a fantasy world in the psyche of the colonizers by promising them that by serving the Empire one can buy happiness in life. But in most cases, the colonizers realized that these are false promises. A few days later, “the face of Agnes Laiter went out of his mind”, and he did not come to feel it unnatural (Kipling 2011, 35). Within a fortnight he forgot almost everything about his relationship at ‘home’. Certainly, something has happened to him while serving the empire which has turned him unconcerned about or indifferent to the planned future as well as dreams of his life. Garron lost his natural mental balance in such a way that even after receiving a final letter from Laiter, in which she informed him about her decision to finally marry an “eligible person” in England, it took him much time to memorize the nature of his relationship he had been with her, and he stared at an old photograph so that it could help him to write an emotional letter (Ibid.). Garron is represented as a colonizer mechanized by the system of colonization.

It can also be argued that not the hostile environment but the heavy pressure of colonial duty is responsible for such abnormal behaviour. Many colonists like Garron started behaving abnormally because of the system which made “one man to do the work of two and a half man” (Kipling 2011, 8). Besides sultry weather, the workload affected many sensitive colonizers in India. It can be mentioned here that for those officers who turned mentally disbalanced/disabled, an asylum was

built at Bhowanipur in Calcutta. But these asylums were “filthy, congested quarters –abandoned stables, vacated barracks or unused prisons...the mortality rates were extremely high and inmates of such institutions continued to be perceived as public nuisances”, and the insane colonizers cannot be kept there (Hartnack 1973, 26). In order to avoid public attention, a new asylum was built in Ranchi (now in the state of Jharkhand), which was a far, desolate, distanced place from the colonial center, and the inmates were shifted there. Owen Berkeley Hill, who was appointed the post of Superintendent at the European Asylum, Ranchi, for twelve years, recorded his experience of the place:

It did not take me long to see that I had been asked to take charge, not of an asylum but of a bear garden. My heart sank [...] I felt so overcome with disappointment [...] a sixteen feet high wall [sic] had been erected around an area of eighteen acres, and the European males and females were [...] swept through the huge iron gates [...] and lost sight of behind the formidable walls. (Qtd. in Bandyopadhyay 2011, 137)

These mentally affected or disabled colonists turned, Bandyopadhyay (2005) quotes Hartnack's phrase, into “stripped natives” (58). They were nothing but useless almost reduced to dead bodies, without proper clothing (Hill 1939): a systemic disability of the colonial mission. To his much disappointment, Hill further narrates in his autobiography:

Inside I found plenty of dust and all sorts of rubbish. As far as I can recollect, there were a few chairs, a bed or so, a couple of tables and some bathroom furniture. It then began to dawn on me why Colonel Vaughan had said so little to me about the asylum. The place was obviously a fraud. That afternoon I made an intensive inspection of the whole institution, after which I was completely overcome with a feeling of impotent despair. (Hill 1939, 246)

Here, one can also raise the question of colonial ethics, but that is beyond the scope of this essay.

However, this example of the disabled condition of Garron, which is similar to that of Jack Pansey, who turns insane and dies at last in Kipling's other story ‘The Phantom Rickshaw’, can itself interrogate the ability of the (un)methodical, (un)planned, (dis)functional nature of the colonial enterprise. So much so, in order to avoid being criticized over the performance of colonial mechanisms from within, Kipling plays well the role of an imperialist by providing rather a favourable

way of looking at Garron's situation. The narrator brings up another reason for his unnatural behaviour. Garron fell in love with a native hill-girl named Dunmaya. An intertextual reading of this incident reveals that the freedom of choice – which is not offered to the English soldier in 'Lispeth', Kipling's other story, in which a hill-girl is betrayed and disheartened by the Englishman by breaking up the promise of marriage because she is a native woman – is offered to Garron by Kipling in this story. This also points out a technique in Kipling's artistic development and interrogates the limits of his representations. Garron's disability is expressed through his desire of transforming himself into a native by "dropping all his English correspondents one by one, and beginning more and more to look upon India as his home" (Kipling 2011, 36). Kipling also confirms that many of the Englishmen, like Garron, felt no interest, no reason to return to England. This would also consequently lead to the formation of yet another type of Anglo-Indian community in India: mixed-blood Anglo-Indians. And that would have been a great direct threat to the establishment and permanence of the colonial power, something that the policies of the Empire tried to resist.

The story can also be analysed from the perspective of psychoanalytic hermeneutics. According to Sigmund Freud, the principal cause of our sense of misery comes from what we call civilization. It is, therefore, the civilizational conditions that are responsible for much of our psychic, often unconscious, disorders or trauma. So, the more we become civilized the more we retreat to inhibited conditions within our most intimate and powerful yearnings. In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud states:

[I]t was discovered that people became neurotic because they could not endure the degree of privation that society imposed on them in the service of its cultural ideals; and it was inferred that a suspension or a substantial reduction of its demands would mean a return to possibilities of happiness. (Freud 2002, 25)

When the character Garron in the story 'Yoked with an Unbeliever' found in India a similar kind of suspension or reduction of the civilizational conditions, which was otherwise imposed on him at 'home', he found a way of possibility to fulfill his inhibited desire. The attempt of assimilation to live in India considering it a 'home' as well as to be loved by an Indian woman enables him to reactivate his participatory drive in fulfilling something that has otherwise been

disabled by the system of colonization. He accepts the fact that something he lacks, and therefore desires, could not be fulfilled within the civilized normative order until he succumbs to some unaccepted, if not ‘uncivilizational’, conditions. This is also another cause of mental suffering to some sensitive colonizers because it created a realization in them regarding the shortcomings of the so-called ‘civilized’ race.

Another major cause of suffering that also leads to disabled characters/colonizers is the sense of fear and guilt created out of the realization that there are dangers at every step in a new land and that colonized subjects are helpless at the ruthless torture permeated by the colonizers. This is more aggravated by a sense of disgust and detestation towards the nature of the work they are expected to do. The colonial mission in some way or another practically destroys the natural course of living for the colonizers. Their sense of self-abhorrence also constitutes their passivity in acknowledging the obstacles of the imperial mission and in realizing the (in/dis)abilities to improve the “efficiency and governing emotion” in them (Linstrum 2016, 2). Arguably, the people/colonizers positioned in India sometimes realise that they had to suffer more than the people they had been ruling. The mechanisms of empire have ruined the lives of many men and women living both in India with an endless dream to return home and in England with hopeful longings to see their faces. But most of the time, these expectations remain unfulfilled. The story ‘In the Pride of His Youth’, also collected in *Plain Tales from the Hills*, represents such problems that diseased the colonizing subject both physically and mentally. The entire story can be seen to be one of Kipling's most appealing but indirect attempts at framing up his critique of the mechanisms of the British Empire, being responsible for the disability of its own people.

Desire as critique of colonial enterprise

Kipling's stories can also be read as subverting the colonial order into a disordered political phenomenon. In many stories, Kipling technically uses the issue of desire for the dreadful other as a critique of the entire colonial enterprise. The story ‘In the Pride of His Youth’, centered on a young Englishman of twenty-one, named Dicky Hatt, who secretly got married to a girl of nineteen at home, is an embodiment of the painful conflicts suffered by the colonizing self. The entire plan of their marriage was imagined with a fascinating future plan, reminding us of a similar kind of false colonial treachery

that has victimized Garron in the above discussion. This fascination, finagled by the colonial mission, revolves around the handsome salary that Dicky Hatt would be receiving while working in India. The problem with such dubious hallucination is that in most cases these people have surely had obscure knowledge about the *real* India and about the nature of the work they were expected to do; besides that, they were not properly trained. When Dicky Hatt came to India leaving his newly wedded wife at home, his hopes and fantastic promises collided with the unknown and the difficulties of life in a new land. Throughout the story, the narrator called Mr. Hatt a “boy”, who is yet to surmise “the full beauty of his future” (Kipling 2011, 165). By calling Hatt a boy, who has got an appointment to serve the empire, Kipling probably means that to work in a country like India one needs maturity not by age but by experience. So, Hatt here represents those inexperienced young Englishmen, who have not only suffered from the pains of leaving their nearest ones in England but are also affected by the work pressure. The lack of competence and efficiency of the colonizers is likely observed by Kipling himself while living in India. In addition to that, many Englishmen like Hatt experienced such intolerable situations as “hot weather”, “a green oil-cloth table cover, one chair, one bedstead, one photograph, one tooth-glass”, “a seven rupee eight *anna* filter”, and “no *punkah*” [fan] (Ibid., 165).

Soon Dicky Hatt, like Garron in ‘Yoked with an Unbeliever’, started losing his mental balance and turned neurotic as time passed and suffering frequented, pointing towards the (ir)responsibility of the empire. He grew fear-stricken about his future, his wife's future, and the future of his unseen baby. Hatt was terribly in need of money, albeit working “like a horse” and spending a simple lifestyle in India forgetting any kind of amusements in which many of his friends usually participated. While living in India, Kipling must have been aware of many men like Hatt, who was “overtaken with the nervous, haunting fear that besets married men when they are out of sorts” (Kipling 2011, 165). One midnight lying on the hot roof, Dicky was thinking that perhaps he would suddenly die of heart disease, suffering badly but still he could not tell anyone about his sickness because the senior officers never took the trouble to any kind of sufferings befallen over to a young one of their own rhyme and race. This kind of mistreatment and humiliation that the young officials received from their seniors is also mentioned in another story ‘His Wedded Wife’, in which the young officer, Henry Augustus, was called a worm by his

seniors in the mess. That type of behaviour of the senior officers not only baffled the recently recruited ones but also affected their psyche by immediately alienating them from their community within a colonial space (Parry 2014; Marinou 2015). Such a bafflingly alienation makes them feel disabled being unable to establish a stable position within the hyphenation of the colonizing Self and the colonized Other.

These sufferings sometimes also push them to identify themselves with colonized people. Like Dicky Hatt, many of the colonizers misrecognized by their 'own' people in India slowly became traumatized by the feeling of being an other (junior, inexperienced, deranged, weak, imbalanced, disturbed, stripped off, and so on) within the Other (India, colonial space, empire, and so on). When Hatt came to know the news of his little infant's death from the letter that "struck at Dicky's naked heart", he was drowned with sorrows but "he could show no sign of trouble" (Ibid., 166). Psychologically, he was made to feel more marginalized and alienated when he failed to share his feelings with the people of his own community. A feeling of being de-affiliated also causes disability in them. Generally, the colonists in India created a private space of their own, far away from the public sphere of the natives, and they shared almost the same characteristics within that private space. Here, in Hatt's case, he had to create a secret private space of his own within another private space. His inability to connect or commune with others, who are part of his Self, estranged him more within a strange land.

Hatt is more traumatized by the news that his wife cannot wait any more, and went with "a handsomer man" (Kipling 2011, 167). Ironic enough, the wife at home assumes that Hatt has been spending a healthy and happier life in India, and misrecognizes him in thinking that Hatt is undesirous/unwilling to send her as much money as she requires; but the truth is that Hatt is dying in tropical weather and soulfully trying to spend as little as he can so that saved money can be sent to his wife. Kipling states that this is "the natural sequence of the others if Dicky had only known it". Here, Hatt represents the experience of disability reflected through loss, mental torture, disease, and madness caused not only by the hostile weather in a new land but also by the weakness of the colonizing subjects and the lack of proper training and support. But Kipling's representation always oscillates between the extent to which he can expose the faults of the colonial mechanism and the limit at which he can refrain from welcoming

unfavorable responses from the serious readers at 'home' who enjoy reading colonial tales (MacKendrick 1956).

Moreover, Kipling succumbs to the frigidities of the colonial enterprise as he compels to finish the story overtly establishing the goodness of the Government. When Dicky's salary is increased to seven hundred rupees a month "enough to have saved the wife and the little son", it reveals how the colonizing self is commodified within a capitalist colonial system (Kipling 2011, 168). Just to save the authority from being ignominious in the imagination of the contemporary audience in England, Kipling had to manipulate the ending of this story. Dicky's rejection of the 'satisfactory' salary offered by the administration shows Kipling's attempt to represent the passivity and weakness of Dicky's character to the readers; thereby, the attention is immediately shifted from the cruel colonial systems to the personal, mental disinclination and madness of the character. As if Dicky himself is merely responsible for his tragic outcome. At the end of the story, the Head comments that "the boy is mad," and the narrator supports this view by stating that "I think he was right". Dicky's roaring laughter and his fanatical expression at the end can be explained as an exposure of his suppressed angst towards the colonial Order/Other but is expressed, symbolically, in a non-normative manner (by smiling), since he cannot revolt or protest against the authority. Thus the colonizing self is turned into a colonizing other, furthering the boundary in experiencing a sense of disability within the colonial space.

Furthermore, Kipling was also falsifying the people's perception, particularly those in England, by delimiting their knowledge about the stark realities of Anglo-Indian lives in India. Of course, Kipling had to compromise with his own feelings for the colonizing subjects, and at the same time, he has to manage the colonialist sentiments. At the end of the story, both Kipling and his character Dicky use two alternate falsifiers: the former using a metalinguistic trope and the latter a semiotic trope (smiling). The direction of these tropes merges together when the objectivity of both of them is revealed to be the same: to hide what is *real* and to surface the unreal. Such complicated position of Kipling as a writer, his feeling of "indeterminacy and ambivalence", and his inability to secure some absolute ground either for the cause of empire or for his "best-beloved India", has been discussed by Zohreh T. Sullivan (1993, 3) in her famous book *Narratives of Empire*.

Therefore, it can be said that the story represents situations that undermine the disability of the character, author, and the empire.

The representation of character disability can also be traced in the following analysis of the story 'Beyond the Pale'. The central motif of the story reflects upon the idea of colonial culture, which, as Robert Young (1995, 53) states, "never stands alone but always participates in a conflictual economy acting out the tension between sameness and difference". The matter of sameness and difference arises when the western people came in contact with a new colonial culture. The story draws attention to the tension, conflicts, and consequence of the participation of colonial desire. One of the important factors to get a stronghold on colonizing mission is that it has to keep the borderline between colonizers and colonized intact because "desire for a kind of hybridity, miscegenation, is ... in constant tension with the disgust of the alien, inferior other" (Castle 1996, 136). So, the colonial conditions of the so-called 'civilized' race restricted the freedom of its own people. The Englishmen in India tried to perform their roles in accordance with the colonial rules to avoid any obstacles in civilizing missions. But in reverse, it creates conflicts and mental and physical suffering within themselves. When the colonizers first saw the colonized (weak) other, they (un)consciously started liking them, desiring to be like them. They found that the (un)civilizational conditions of these people are less restricted, less demanding, and less restrained than themselves (see Trotter 1990; Collins 2010). Thereby, the colonizers also slowly realized that the colonized people enjoyed satisfaction in a much more liberal way. Such realization incited a kind of aversion to the refinement and facilitation that their civilizational conditions could offer them. The more closely they encountered the colonized other the more indistinct the barrier in-between them began to appear since they considered themselves potent, powerful, and stronger than the colonized people. But within this conflict of colonial desire and racial transgression, there are always fears from both sides: mainly, the fear of being caught by the natives and the fear of being terminated by the empire for disobeying the rule. These fears sometimes make them less potent, powerless, and weak, while dealing with the colonized other. Thus Kipling's distrust of colonial power and hegemony on the 'white men' turns out a burden on its own people (Singh 2010).

The problems of such an inter-racial relationship and the tension or risk in it are the central focus of the story 'Beyond the Pale'. This story will be helpful to understand how the desire of the colonizing subjects

is thwarted by the colonial situations by disabling the least possibility of pleasure in colonized space. At the beginning of the story, Kipling provides a kind of circumstantial judgment reserved for contemporary readers that the story is about a man who goes beyond his 'limits' and has to pay for it. It is clear that the limitation referred to is about the colonial restriction over any racial transgression (Mizutani 2002; Retief 2013). From a psychoanalytic point of view, it may be interpreted as the paternal prohibition over its subjects, an obstacle that stands between the desiring subject and the desired object. If the desiring subject disobeys the prohibition, it will immediately be declared unlawful and so be punished, something that Kipling also justifies at the end of this story. Kipling opens the story with such kind of colonial warning, "a man should, whatever happens, keep to his own caste, race and breed" (Kipling 2011, 134). But this man named Trejago "took too deep an interest in native life", and consequently, suffered from a painful experience, when someone thrashed upon him like a wild beast and stroke him heavily with a sharp knife that cuts through his groin. Trejago left the place "raging and shouting like a madman between those pitiless walls", and "he found himself near the river as the dawn was breaking, threw away his *boorka* and went home bareheaded" (Ibid., 139). The man's interest in a native woman, Bisesa, shows his inclination to instinctual satisfaction through disobeying the colonial prohibition, which, as he experiences, has deprived him of that satisfaction by disabling the farthest opportunity at his range. In other words, his inclination and frequent nocturnal visits to the 'savage' life also expresses his dissatisfaction towards the 'civilized' life of his 'own' people. This can be more transparent if we look into Freud's notion of civilization and how it measures the possibility of instinctive satisfaction. In chapter three of *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud (2002, 24-25) states, "... we should be far happier if we were to abandon it [civilizational conditions] and revert to primitive conditions". Freud also explains "[C]ivilization has been attained through the renunciation of instinctual satisfaction, and it demands the same renunciation from each newcomer in turn" (Ibid., 69). The entire business of colonialism stood on the ground that fermented a lot of disgraceful activities in the name of civilizational progress. The British Empire, based on the idea of the civilizing mission, has thrown away the colonizers into conflicting situations both by enabling and by disabling the least advantage of instinctual satisfaction they could attain.

Marghanita Laski (1987) in her book *From Palm to Pine: Rudyard Kipling at Home and Abroad* states that the relationship between Trejago and Bisesa “could never have come to good”, because having “amatory relationships between sahibs and Indian were beyond the pale”, and sharply “unthinkable” (39). But evidently, the relationship between a ‘sahib’ (Trejago) and an Indian (Bisesa) is already formed, and racial boundary already transgressed, except for the fact that the ‘sahib’ is not allowed to proceed further within the writer’s creative imagination. Furthermore, the uninhibited romantic participation on the part of Trejago is a sign of his repressed sense of “Othering or nativisation” (Bandyopadhyay 2005, 57). Kipling himself was familiar with this kind of yearning desire for nativization, even though it deflects the rules of the empire. It also points to another layer of disability within the psyche of the colonizing subjects. However, Kipling’s position as a writer is very problematic in this context: he can neither controvert nor suppress the desire of the Self for the Other nor support it publicly if one of his characters is made to do so. Trejago here is slightly allowed to do that, but Kipling cannot help him call a “madman” (Kipling 2011, 139). Interestingly, Kipling knew very well that if he could not define Trejago’s actions as insane, it was fearsomely obvious that his representation might not favorably be received by the readers of the Anglo-Indian community, who publicly despised such transgression. So, Kipling must give his recalcitrant character Trejago the punishment he deserved.

We should not forget that the slightest liberty offered to Trejago in this story has not been offered to the Englishman in ‘Lispeth’. Here, Trejago has at least crossed the limit/barrier that the soldier in ‘Lispeth’ was not allowed to do; and for disobeying the administrative prohibition the former has had his reward – a stroke that made him limp/disabled whilst the latter did not have to face any such consequences. Trejago’s relationship with Bisesa is disapproved, disavowed, and reprimanded by both his own people (including Kipling) and by the natives, and thereby, his subject position can itself be found to be disinherited and abandoned, since he was excluded from both the Self and the Other. The love between Trejago and Bisesa—an Englishman and an Indian woman—is thus represented as doubly restricted, forbidden, and prohibited from both sides. In this way, the state of character disability caused by the conflicting desire is revealed in Kipling’s narratives.

Conclusion

Kipling's writings about the relations between the colonizers and the colonized underlie an understated self-reflexivity, showing a new way of understanding the embedded meaning in these stories. It can be revealed that the orientalist discourse, which generally defines the colonized space as weak, diseased, and lacking in sanity, has been confronted with these representations that establish the colonizers as sick and pathologized in many ways. Apparently, Kipling's representation asserts his strong support of the imperial mission but the disabling conditions of the seemingly strong masculine colonial space reveal a pattern of submissiveness to the strange, unknown colonized space. The above discussion thus points to the disability of the colonized subjects and their volatile relation with the colonized space. The study also shows how the colonial enterprise and its unmethodical system dehumanise the colonists living in the colonies. The complex rhetoric of the Empire can thus be questioned through such representations of character disability in colonial tales highlighting the relationship between the colonizers and colonized. The above discussion also problematizes the ideas that the sufferings of the colonizing subjects are caused not just by the incommensurability and incomprehensibility of the ecogeological dangers of the colonized space but also by the mismanagement and unsystematic functions of the colonial enterprise.

Acknowledgment: An earlier version of this article is a part of my M. Phil dissertation. I am deeply grateful to Prof. Debashis Bandyopadhyay, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Kazi Nazrul University, who not only supervised my M. Phil. dissertation but also shaped my critical understanding of literary and visual texts.

References:

- An Interview with Ato Quayson.* (n.d.). Columbia University Press. <https://cup.columbia.edu/author-interviews/quayson-aesthetic-nervousness> [accessed: 17.08.2021].
- Annan, Noel. 1966. "Kipling's Place in the History of Ideas". In Andrew Rutherford (Ed.), *Kipling's Mind and Art: Selected Critical Essays*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. 2007. *Post-colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. London and New York: Routledge.

- Barker, Clare, and Stuart Murray. 2010. Disabling postcolonialism: Global disability cultures and democratic criticism. *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* 4 (3): 219-236.
- Bandyopadhyay, Debashis. 2005. The Past Unearthed: New Reading of Ruskin Bond's Supernatural Tales. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 30 (1): 53-71. Project MUSE.
- Bandyopadhyay, Debashis. 2011. *Locating the Anglo-Indian Self in Ruskin Bond: A Postcolonial Review*. London: Anthem Press.
- Berkeley-Hill, Owen. 1939. *All Too Human: An Unconventional Autobiography*. London: Peter Davis.
- Castle, David. 1996. Robert J. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. Review of *Colonial Desire*, by Robert J. Young. *Left History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Historical Inquiry and Debate* 4 (2): 135-137. <https://doi.org/10.25071/1913-9632.6992>.
- Cleall, Esme. 2024. Disability and postcolonialism. *Postcolonial Studies*: 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2024.2322252>.
- Collins, Jo. 2010. "The Alterity of Terror: Reading Kipling's 'Uncanny' India." In Caroline Rooney & Kaori Nagai (Eds.), *Kipling and Beyond: Patriotism, Globalisation and Postcolonialism*, pp. 79-100. London: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230290471_5.
- De, Asis. 2024. Fragility as metaphor: disability, difference and postcoloniality in Firdaus Kanga's *Trying to Grow*. *Postcolonial Studies*: 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2024.2320089>.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1964. *Civilization, Society and Religion: Group Psychology, Civilization and Its Discontents and Other Works*. Translated by James Strachey and edited by Albert Dickson. London: Penguin Books.
- Freud, Sigmund. 2002. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Translated by David McLintock. London: Penguin Books.
- Ghai, Anita. 2012. Engaging with disability with postcolonial theory. In Dan Goodley, Bill Hughes, Lennard Davis (Eds.), *Disability and Social Theory: New Developments and Directions*, pp. 270-286. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Goodley, Dan, Rebecca Lawthom, and Katherine Runswick Cole. 2014. Posthuman disability studies. *Subjectivity* 7: 342-361. <https://doi.org/10.1057/sub.2014.15>.
- Grech, Shaun. 2017. Decolonising Eurocentric disability studies: why colonialism matters in the disability and global South debate. In Karen Soldatic & Shaun Grech (Eds.), *Disability and Colonialism*, pp. 16-31. London: Routledge.
- Hartnack, Christiane. 1973. *Psychoanalysis in Colonial India*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Kipling, Rudyard. 2010. *The Phantom Rickshaw and Other Erie Tales*. Penguin Global.
- Kipling, Rudyard. 2011. *Plain Tales from the Hills*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Laski, Marghanita. 1987. *From Palm to Pine: Rudyard Kipling at Home and Abroad*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson.
- Linstrum, Erik. 2016. *Ruling Minds: Psychology in the British Empire*. Harvard University Press.
- MacKendrick, Paul. 1956. Kipling and the Nature of the Classical. *The Classical Journal* 52 (2): 67-76. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3294939> [accessed: 08.05.2023].

- Marinou, Chryssa. 2015. Rudyard Kipling and other Imperial traces: Projections of the colonial periphery into the Imperial centre in Dorothy Richardson's *The Tunnel* and *Interim*. *Pilgrimages: The Journal of Dorothy Richardson Studies* 7: 30–43. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26653412> [accessed: 08.05.2023].
- Michalko, Rob. 1999. *The Two-In-One: Walking with Smokie, Walking with Blindness*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Mizutani, Satoshi. 2002. Rethinking inclusion and exclusion: the question of mixed-race presence in late colonial India. *University of Sussex Journal of contemporary history* 5: 1-22.
- Nagai, Kaori. 2011. "Introduction". *Plain Tales from the Hills* by Rudyard Kipling, pp. xix-xxxv. London: Penguin Classics.
- Parekh, Pushpa Naidu. 2008. Gender, disability and the postcolonial nexus. *Wagadu* 4: 173-195.
- Parry, Benita. 2014. "The Content and Discontents of Kipling's Imperialism." In Lyn Pykett (Ed.), *Reading Fin de Siècle Fictions*, pp. 210-222. London: Routledge.
- Retief, Zed. 2013. *Unsettling whiteness : Kipling's Boers and the case for a white subalternity*. Master Thesis. University of Cape Town. <http://hdl.handle.net/11427/18794> [accessed: 08.05.2023].
- Sherry, Mark. 2007. (Post)colonising Disability. *Wagadu: Intersecting Gender and Disability Perspectives in Rethinking Postcolonial Identities*, 4: 10-22.
- Singh, R.B. 2010. Kipling's other burden: Counter-narrating Empire. In Caroline Rooney & Kaori Nagai (Eds.), *Kipling and Beyond: Patriotism, Globalisation and Postcolonialism*, pp. 101-119. London: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230290471_6.
- Sullivan, Zohreh T. 1993. *Narratives of Empire: The Fiction of Rudyard Kipling*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Trotter, David. 1990. Colonial subjects. *Critical Quarterly* 32 (3): 3-20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8705.1990.tb00600.x>.
- Young, Robert. 1995. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race*. London: Routledge.