

SUBJECTIVE RESPONSES OF THE COLONIAL MEN TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THE EMPIRE AS REFLECTED IN THREE LITERARY TEXTS

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Abstract

In contemporary history, Western colonialism, based on its ideological and epistemological visions, has affected almost all the modes of life across the world. Apart from other things, it has given birth to volumes of literary narratives dealing with colonial experiences. Many colonial people have served the objectives of colonialism and some of them have been immortalized in the pieces of literary representations. At the collective level, they served the invariable objectives of colonialism within their respective capacities but at the personal level, these people responded to colonialism in varying moods, introspections and reflections. In this paper, we are making a comparative and contrastive analysis to reveal how individual colonial men variably responded to colonial experiences while serving and executing almost invariable objectives of colonialism as reflected in three canonical literary texts- *An Outpost of Progress* by Joseph Conrad, *Shooting an Elephant* by George Orwell and *A Passage to India* by E M Forster.

Keywords: Epistemology, rationalism, capitalism, colonialism, subjectivity

Introduction

Historically saying, it is often commonly agreed that colonization or imperialism is as old as human civilizations. Man's imperial desire to colonize others has variously been interpreted and theorized by the political scientists. The world by this time has witnessed the rises and falls of so many Empires. In the modern history of the world, Western imperialism has so massively shaped and determined the history that it is often said- 'West is not in the west now; it is everywhere.'

To insightfully deal with the study we are going to undertake in this

paper, it would be rewarding for us to briefly revisit the construction of Western colonial history. At root of western imperialism, there is the growingly organized and systematic consolidation of industrial capitalism based on the principles of *laissez faire* (1) an interest-based banking system and a tight currency system for controlling finances. Based on multi-faceted dominating factors-technological, economic and military, Western or European imperialism had been flourishing during sixteen or seventeen century Christian era mostly led by –Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French, British, German etc. These colonial forces had been ‘mutually competitive and hostile’ yet, they had emerged out to ‘an ideally unified world-wide imperialistic venture of European Expansionism.’ About the immediate preceding history of the Western imperial expansion, Khan judgmentally remarks,

For various reasons, the rise of this western commercial capitalism coincided with the decadence and downfall of the old Empires of the Turkish Ottomans, Iranian Safavids and Indian Mughuls. (1990:13)

At the ideological level, western imperialism has grounded its roots on rationalism .In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber attempts to establish relationship rationalism and the birth of capitalism (Qtd in Lin:1997,140) . Western Rationalism fertilized by the western historical Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment has always been at struggle to place Man at the centre of the universe constructing absolute autonomy of the human subjectivity. There has been a conjugal relationship between rationalism and capitalism. It is this attitude of rationalist thought enabled the west to dominate over various fields. Having designated rationalism as characteristic of Western culture, Weber is able to demonstrate that capitalism as an economic system is made possible in the West only by means of ‘rational organization’ (Qtd in Lin: 1997, 140).

At the epistemological level, Western expansionism has systematically developed the idea of ‘Orientalism’ which has been ably critiqued by Edward Said (1978).To the Western colonial man, Orientalist vision has provided almost the ethical complacency of being racially superior, culturally advanced and civilized as contrasted with the colonial natives who are systematically metamorphosed and constructed to be inferior, savage, unadvanced etc .On other hand, rationalistic capitalism has structured his lifestyle in the almost inescapable frame of ‘capitalistic individualism, egotism and blind personal interest’ (Qtd in Khan, 1990,15).He has always found grounds and justifications to support and legitimize the hegemonic rule of colonialism and to carry ‘The Whiteman’s Burden.’

It is under these colonial phenomena that colonial men often worked, acted, reacted, interacted and reflected their experiences. Under the macro

structure of the colonial administration, so many micros/colonial men have served the colonial missions/ objectives. While serving the almost common colonial objectives, these men have responded to their experiences with their varying subjective outlooks. In this paper, we are undertaking an attempt to investigate into three literary texts and show how the major characters in them varyingly respond to the colonial experiences at the subjective levels even though they have all been serving the almost invariable purpose of colonialism. The three texts are *An Outpost of Progress* by Joseph Conrad, *Shooting an Elephant* by George Orwell and *A Passage to India* by E M Forster. We would introspectively look into the subjective responses of some particular characters to colonialism reflected and represented in these literary texts.

From the outset, Conrad orientates our reading towards the issue of what should be a civilized and decent representation of Empire in Africa, precisely by sketching an unrepresentative pair of agents: clearly, Kayerts and Carlier do not embody the advertised imperial fortitude. They are mock-heroes who belie the qualities of efficiency and determination which reputedly characterize European commerce in Africa. Their physical portrait is anything but flattering, with Kayerts presented as “short and fat”, and “Carlier the assistant [...] tall, with a large head and a very broad trunk perched upon a long pair of thin legs” (83). They are written off by their director as mentally unfit for their mission, which is why they are appointed to a far-off and barely productive trading station.

As an aside meant for the reader, Conrad makes the director address his servant on board the departing steamer to refer to them as “two imbeciles” with no skills:

I told those fellows to plant a vegetable garden, build new store houses and fences and construct a landing stage. I bet nothing will be done! They won't know how to begin. I always thought the station on this river is useless, and they just fit the station. (85)

As Ted Boyle remarks, “Conrad surrounds Kayerts and Carlier with some powerfully conceived images of decay, resulting from the men's neglect and untidiness” (Boyle, 1965:88). Indeed, their house is poorly kept, and for edibles the two men rely on the dwindling Company supplies of pulse and rice since they have not planted a vegetable garden to support themselves as their director told them to do before his departure. They largely depend on the food lavished by Gobila, the chief of neighbouring villages, despite his being arrogantly described as “a grey-headed savage” (91). Deflation is very much the privileged medium for their moral portrait, and they are recurrently shown as poor examples of imperial authority and inventiveness. Thus the image of the resourceful West which they are supposed to represent is derided by those “savages” who, contrary to them,

combine industry with generosity, and regularly offer them “fowls, and sweet potatoes and palm-wine and sometimes a goat” (92).

The reversal of hierarchical roles is further amplified by the presence of Makola, the black assistant in the station, whose portrait exudes cold determination, and who receives the new arrivals as “more white men to play with” (84). He is “taciturn, impenetrable [and he] despised the two white men.” (83). His composure and steadfastness counterpoint the carelessness of his white superiors. He actually acts as surrogate agent of the Company’s interests where Kayerts and Carlier prove unable to make business thrive. As Andrea White notes, not only does Makola “run the Company’s business of ivory collecting,” (White, 1996: 190), but he behaves as if he were the actual manager of the trading station. His decision to do business with black slave dealers to increase the amount of ivory in the station indicates his compliance with the Company’s mercantile objectives. The switching of roles is well rendered in this exchange, when Kayerts discovers that their native workers have been sold:

‘I did the best for you and the company’, said Makola imperturbably. ‘Why you shout so much? Look at this tusk’.

‘I dismiss you! I will report you- I won’t look at the tusk. I forbid you to touch them. I order you to throw them into the river. You-you!’

‘You very red, Mr Kayerts. If you are so irritable in the sun, you will get fever and die- like the first chief!’ pronounced Makola impressively (98).

The irony of the situation functions in the sense that the competence of action in the territory is handed over to the “subaltern”, who is made to speak and re-order the course of action. Kayerts and Carlier’s inadequacy comes as an impaired picture of imperial achievement, just like in this ‘dark’ place of the world, the usual objects of light and civilization fail to perform their duty. Indeed, the ship due to return to the station and relieve the white tradesmen from hunger and disease comes dramatically late, the trading station’s mercantile activities grind to a stop and in the end, the elephant tusks, to be refined and turned into precious objects, lose all meaning in this remote corner of the world.

There exist many traditions, and many debates, of ‘landscape’ studies in geography and the social sciences. Schein (1997, 660), for example, notes that landscape has been conceived as symbolic, as representative, and as representation. These alternative conceptions have been – and continue to be – (re)worked in the literature, as evidenced by the recent discussions forwarded by Walton (1995 1996), Mitchell (1996) and Peet (1996). Likewise, the place of landscape in literature has also been contested; this is seen, for example, in the contrasting positions of Sharp (2000) with Salter and Lloyd (1977). In this section I follow Riley (1997), who advocates an understanding of landscape not simply as something visible (able to be seen)

or visual (viewed through interpretation), but as places that convey meaning in everyday life. This conforms to Schein (1997, 662), who argues that the cultural landscape is produced and implicated in the ongoing reproduction of social and cultural life. Schein continues that ‘As part of that production, spatial relationships – distributions, partitioning, enclosure, circulation, division – served as part of dispersed disciplinary mechanisms . . .’ (1997, 662). ‘Some texts may present revolutionary worldviews,’ Sharp writes, ‘but unless they are widely read, their influence on popular imaginations will be slight’ (2000, 332). She concludes that it ‘is important at least to consider the consumption of particular texts’ (2000, 332). ‘Shooting an elephant’ is, arguably, one of the best known of Orwell’s essays (Alldritt 1969). Since the 1950s this essay has been included in numerous literary anthologies; moreover, the essay has been adopted as a ‘model’ in introductory composition courses (see Rodden 1989, 390–3). It is common, for example, to employ ‘Shooting an elephant’ as a template for the writing of essays. I suggest, though, that this essay may also be read as a means to understand the intersection of landscape and human experience (see Salter and Lloyd 1977, 2). Literature cannot be truly fictitious any more than it can achieve verisimilitude (Sharp 2000, 330). And indeed, ambiguity shrouds the ‘real’ of ‘Shooting an elephant’. Full of intent and densely realized description, the story cannot be fixed to a particular date or locale (Taylor 2003, 79). Written in firstperson, it is often presumed that the narrator is Orwell himself. Certainly, as Assistant Superintendent, in 1926 Orwell did serve in Moulmein, the setting of the story. However, according to Taylor (2003, 79), the story is actually based on Major E.C. Kenny, a subdivisional officer who did shoot an elephant. Also, as indicated earlier, ‘Shooting an elephant’ was written a decade after the supposed incident. The tenor of the story is that of contemplation. Meyers, for example, suggests that the significance of the story ‘lies in the interplay between the young man’s view of the situation and the older, wiser, more reflective voice of the narrator’ (2000, 71). The question of who the protagonist is, therefore, calls into question notions of autobiography and author. Given this ambiguity, I refer to the lead character in ‘Shooting an elephant’ as Orwell’s narrator. Orwell’s narrator explains that his tale is about a ‘tiny incident’ that gave him a better glimpse of the real nature of imperialism, and the real motives for which despotic governments act (1981, 149). From the outset, therefore, the reader is informed that the significance of the tale transcends the actual killing of an elephant. However, the significance of the tale is not so readily apparent. Orwell’s narrator is initially cryptic as to the ‘real nature of imperialism’. Indeed, Orwell’s intention is further enhanced by the stylistic form adopted. Written in first-person essay form, Orwell is able to convey ‘not so much the experience itself, but the experience as a state of mind, a state of mind in which Orwell

comes to a new awareness' (Alldritt 1969, 98). 'Shooting an elephant' is set within a colonial landscape, one that is immediately familiar to readers of Fanon and other post-colonial theorists – though not necessarily to the readers of Orwell in the 1930s and 1940s. In his critique of colonialism, for example, Fanon (1963, 41) declared that the 'colonial world is a Manichean world' a world that is cut in two. These 'two worlds' of the colonial landscape are reinforced through various techniques and instruments of discipline. For Fanon, In the colonies it is the policeman and the soldier who are the official, instituted go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression. (1963, 38) Orwell's story in fact begins with the narrator explaining:

In Moulmein, in Lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people – the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me. I was sub-divisional police officer of the town. . . . As a police officer I was an obvious target . . . (1981, 148)

The narrator subsequently provides a detailed litany of experiences of hatred between the Europeans and the Burmans. He relates, for example, of a time when he was tripped on football field and of having 'sneering yellow faces' meeting his face. These incidences were unsettling because, according to the narrator, he 'had already made up [his] mind that imperialism was an evil thing' and that, secretly, he 'was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British' (1981, 148). Following this Manichean set-up between colonizer and colonized, the immediate plot-line begins with a shift in the cultural landscape. Apparently, a usually tame elephant was in must and, having broken its chain, was ravaging a local bazaar. Orwell's narrator takes his .44 Winchester rifle, a weapon he knew to be insufficient to kill an elephant if the situation required him to do so. Symbolically, readers understand that the taking of the weapon was largely for show. Orwell's narrator must enter the space of the Other and must do so as an agent of the British empire. Tellingly, the narrator goes to 'a very poor quarter, a labyrinth of squalid bamboo huts, thatched with palm-leaf, winding all over a steep hillside' (1981, 150). Reminiscent of Joseph Conrad's *Hearts of darkness*, Orwell's narrator must literally and symbolically journey further into the space of the colonized. The narrator travels a short distant to the scene and, after a period of questioning villagers, finds a dead body – that of a Dravidian who had been crushed by the elephant. And nearby, the elephant is calmly eating bunches of grass. The narrator sends for a more powerful gun. By this point a crowd of approximately 2000 Burmans had gathered. The narrator is unsure how to proceed. He inquires as to the 'state' of the elephant. He considers approaching the elephant. The ground, though, is too soft and muddy to approach; if elephant the attacked, the narrator would be unable to move fast enough to escape. Orwell's narrator is confronted with

the realization that his subjectivity, his sense of self, is inextricable from the alterity of the colonized others and, indeed, of the elephant. This moment occurs through a temporary displacement. Geographic allegorization becomes a central constituent of identity. In fact, the significance of landscape is that it serves as a situational marker of subjectivity. Subjectivity must have a point of reference. The colonizer is constituted by his or her relation to the colonized. Under the watchful eyes of the crowd, described as ‘sea of yellow faces’, Orwell’s narrator relates:

I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man’s dominion in the East. . . . I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. (1981, 152)

Neither subject positions are of their own choosing; each is dependent upon the other. As Bhabha writes, the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a self-fulfilling prophecy – it is always the production of an ‘image’ of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image. (1999, 187) Two scenes, each marked by violence, in ‘Shooting an elephant’ relate to just such a transformation. The first is the narrator’s description of the dead Dravidian. The narrator describes the scene: Landscape and the mask of self

I . . . saw a man’s dead body sprawling in the mud. He was an Indian, a black Dravidian coolie, almost naked. . . . [The elephant] had put its foot on his back and ground him into the earth. This was the rainy season and the ground was soft, and his face had scorched a trench a foot deep and a couple of yards long. He was lying on his belly with arms crucified and head sharply twisted to one side. His face was coated with mud, the eyes wide open, the teeth bared and grinning with an expression of unendurable agony. . . . The friction of the great beast’s foot had stripped the skin from his back as neatly as one skins a rabbit. (1981, 150–1)

While this scene may be read as a graphic metaphor for the brutality of British imperialism, with the elephant smashing the life out of the colonized Other, I contend that the passage more effectively reveals a concern with the narrator’s sense of self. Here I juxtapose Orwell’s writing with Fanon’s well-known scene in *Black skin/white masks* of being singled out by his appearance, of having a small child exclaim ‘Look, a Negro! . . .

Mom, see the Negro! I’m frightened!’ (1967, 112). Fanon continues:

My body was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recolored, clad in mourning in that white winter day. The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad . . . (1967, 113) Fanon explained that the small boy’s cry of ‘Look, a Negro!’ was transformative: ‘I become aware of my uniform. I had not seen it’ (1967, 114). Under the dissecting eyes of the crowd, his appearance – his body, his uniform – was open for all to see. And so, recognizing what he had become – not what he was, but what was made of him through his relations

with whites, from his place in a white society – Fanon understood that ‘A man was expected to behave like a man. I was expected to behave like a black man . . .’ (Fanon 1967, 114).

A second scene follows the narrator’s decision to shoot the elephant. He hits the animal with his first shot; the elephant, however, does not die immediately. Consequently, he continues shooting until the elephant collapses; the elephant, however, does not die for another agonizingly slow hour. The narrator explains that ‘It seemed dreadful to see the great beast lying there, powerless to move and yet powerless to die, and not even to be able to finish him’ (1981, 155). In this scene both the elephant and the narrator are trapped in a liminal space, neither of their choosing. The elephant, on one hand, is caught between life and death, its existence held in temporary abeyance. Orwell’s narrator, on the other hand, is powerless to ‘fix’ the elephant. He can no longer give the elephant life but, disturbingly, he is also unable to give the animal death. Orwell’s narrator is confronted with his own subjectivity; he understands that his persona, his existence, is irreparably related to the Burmans. Colonial identities are neither perfectly achieved nor fixed. Rather, as Bhabha explains, the masks of self entails: a doubling, dissembling image of being in at least two places at once . . . It is not the Colonialist Self or the Colonised Other, but the disturbing distance in between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness – the White man’s artifice inscribed on the Black man’s body. It is in relation to this impossible object that emerges the liminal problem of colonial identity and its vicissitudes. (1999, 117) For Meyers and other commentators, ‘the elephant . . . symbolizes the death throes of the British Empire’ (2000, 72). Symbolically, the elephant does not die quickly and thus may signify a decaying, struggling empire. If we agree, for the moment, that the elephant does symbolize the British Empire (and I’m not so sure that we must), it seems all the more appropriate for the Burmans to likewise slaughter the elephant. However, Meyers also notes that ‘brutalized by the system and out for blood and glory’, the narrator (presumably Orwell) ‘actually wanted to shoot the elephant’ (2000, 72). Meyers concludes that Blair had been brought up to believe that imperialism was justified because British civilization was superior to that of the barbaric people they ruled, but experience taught him otherwise. (2000, 72)

Such a reading, however, downplays the significance of the dialectics of subjectivity and the literary landscape. Alldritt, for example, argues that the experience related is subsidiary and is merely used as an illustration by the essayist, whose voice and personality are the main matter of the piece. The experience is no longer an image, but merely an anecdote that forms but part of a discourse on the contradictions in the author’s thoughts and situation. (1969, 100–1) Pressed to kill the elephant, Orwell’s narrator

experiences a transformation. The narrator explains:

It is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the 'natives', and so in every crisis he has got to do what the 'natives' expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it. (Orwell 1981, 152)

Mrs. Moor is portrayed as a kind, God fearing Christian, who is meant to be extremely sympathetic towards the Indians and is very unhappy at the cruel treatment of the Indians by the Raj and its functionaries. She reminds her son Ronny that as Christians, they are duty bound to love Indians as well. Fielding, the principal of Government College, is presented as the new face of empire. He is not satisfied with the cosmic changes brought about by a few transfers and postings. It is for Kincaid(1988) to reveal the true reality of the British love for knowledge, and their enthusiasm to impart the same to the natives. Raj can continue only if its officials are compassionate and genuinely friendly towards the Indians. In the changing circumstances, the nineteenth century attitude and mode of administration cannot continue, "Ah, that won't take us far. Indians know whether they are liked or not—they cannot be fooled here. Justice never satisfies them, and that is why the British Empire rests on sand".

The Lieutenant-Governor Sir Gilbert also belongs to the new school of thought, regarding the administration of the colonies. Forster is not an opponent of empire, he only knows like Sir Gilbert that the hands of the clock move forward and not back. In a sense Forster intends to disarm the possible nationalistic uprising against the colonizers. The British need to come up with a solid new strategy to maintain their hold over India. Fielding believes, "we all build upon sand; and the more modern the country gets, the worse will be the crash". Forster through Fielding makes his new philosophy crystal clear. "In the old eighteenth century, when cruelty and injustice raged, an invisible power repaired their ravages. Every thing echoes now; there is no stopping the echo. The original sound may be harmless, but the echo is always evil".

Portrayal of the Growth of the Indian identity:

Though, India is shown slowly and gradually moving towards its roots and identity, but it has not resulted in the development of national identity and resistance against colonialism. It is very difficult to agree with Cronin, that Aziz becomes "a nationalist hero", after his acquittal (1989). He never becomes one. He is nowhere seen challenging the British and asking them to quit India, in the spirit of a nationalist hero. Singh (1975) is right when he claims that Aziz is not a hero. However, his claim that Forster's knowledge of Anglo- India shows insight and penetration is an exaggeration. It is the repetition of the same old Orientalist construction. Forster has portrayed the Indians, even the educated ones as living in the past, immersed

in pathos. The poetry of Aziz is full of references to Cordova and Samarkand. Aziz is portrayed as an escapist and not as a fighter. Instead of fighting against the Raj, against its oppression and injustice, he retires to a native state, which is described as “jungle state”. Aziz displays only the 1st stage of colonial encounter (Fanon, 2001). He does experience the 2nd stage of disturbance, but never moves on to the third phase, the fighting phase. Aziz is shown again reverting to a non-scientific and non-professional attitude.

The distorted impact of imperial culture can be seen even in the temple. God is Love becomes God si Love. The Hindu music at the temple and religious festivals is complemented by British music and bands. Europeanized bands play Nights of Gladness while the Hindu choir of Godbole repeats Takram, Takram. Even in the midst of his meditation the image of Mrs. Moor appears in Godbole’s mind and never leaves him . This is the portrayal of the impact of imperial culture and the resultant hybridity. India is throughout described as a land where everything is unpunctual. The divisions in the Hindu community are highlighted. Indian soil is a land of fissures (indirectly suggesting the relevance of the British as a force which can handle these fissures).

The Indian freedom fighters and nationalists are portrayed as people who kick and scream on committees. Dr. Aziz is Forster’s version of an Indian, who in reality lives in the past and retires to a native state and composes poems about bulbuls and roses. At the end he makes his peace with the English. Godbole, cannot even build the school he wants to build. Aziz is a memento, a trophy of the illegitimate embrace between India and the English. Aziz is so different from Sri Ram (Narayan,2001), who totally rejects imperial culture. The final message of the narrative is that so long as, there are people like Godbole and Aziz, Raj is not threatened and will continue to exert its influence even if Raj is formally withdrawn. Crane on the basis of the “progress” towards the relationship between the Indians and the British calls *A Passage to India* “an optimistic novel” (1992). This reveals the limitation of Crane. He associates himself with the British, a model for the neo-assimilative mode of hegemony.

The study has shown that E. M. Forster’s novel, *A Passage to India*, reinforces the colonialist ideology of superiority and its narrative strengthens the stereotypes, and the East –West division, invented by the West about India and the Indians. The study has proved its basic proposition that *A Passage to India* is a colonialist discourse and as one form of Orientalism has strengthened and reinforced the stereotype image of India and Indians. The study has shown that Forster has not made even a passing reference to the oppression and the pandemic brutalities of the natives by the colonizers. He has not mentioned any Indian leader or the struggle put up by the Indians to

get rid of their oppressors. The study has also shown the deep link between culture and imperialism. The Indians are shown to have assimilated the culture of their masters. The Indians are portrayed as ashamed of themselves, of their culture and of their identity. Throughout the novel, the Indians are presented as lesser people, who cannot manage their affairs like mature, responsible individuals. This is the projection of the European hegemonic assumptions, which have been exposed by the present study. The analysis also has highlighted the portrayal of the internal divisions and infighting among the Indians, on social and religious grounds. This was meant to justify the presence of the British in India.

The British characters occupy the center stage, while all Indian characters exist on the margins. The study has shown that Forster has reservations about the old style conduct of some Raj officials. He believes that such policies and conduct are not in the interest of the empire. He disapproves the nineteenth century attitude of the Raj, represented by the club, towards the Indians. He offers an alternative approach through the characters of Mrs. Moor, Fielding and Sir Gilbert. The study has shown that *A Passage to India* is an instance of literature in the service of Empire, as envisioned by Martin Green (1980). Forster's concern is that if and when the empire comes to its end, even then there should be some understanding between the British and the Indians. The study has shown that Forster has portrayed the Indians and the Indian landscape as lesser, with the objective to contain India and Indians along with their culture. He has presented the English as superior human beings, better administrators and responsible individuals. The Indians are presented as superstitious, diffident, irrational and excitable. Forster believes that this relationship between empire and India can continue. It might not be, strictly speaking, a master-slave relationship, but it will sustain the empire in the changed environment. The study has proved its assumptions regarding the portrayal of the Indians as stereotypes by Forster.

Commonly, which has been affected most by their experiences in the colonial administrative structure are their 'selves' and their moments of realization provoke us to ask echoing Ashcroft et al.

If the subject is produced by ideology, discourse or language, is it trapped in this subjectivity beyond the power of choice, recognition or resistance? (2000, 225)

At this crisis Fanon concludes,

It is through the effort to recapture the self and to scrutinize the self, it is through the lasting tension of their freedom that men [sic] will be able to create the ideal conditions of existence for a human world. (1967, 231)

Another common ground for colonial men was that their subjectivity had been more or less constructed by ideological and epistemological visions

of colonialism. So, to them, ‘imperialism was a sort of religion’ (Aziz 1975, 18). Aziz further argues:

...the Englishman, whatever his political convictions or party loyalties was an imperialist at heart. Imperialism became a sort of public religion to which practically everyone subscribed because he found in it to please his heart (common man), to ease his conscience (the missionary), to enrich his pocket (the trader), to satisfy his curiosity (the explorer), to fulfill his earthly mission (the upholder of progress and civilization), to win laurels (the soldier and governor), to improve his family (the younger sons of aristocracy), and to indulge his ego (the white man’s burden). (1975, 9).

Also, we would argue that colonial men’s responses to their experiences at the subjective level are peculiarly and revealingly varying. In *An Outpost of Progress* by Joseph Conrad, we find Kayerts and Carlier, the two low-posted trading agents to be men with narrow minds and incapable of dealing with the situations. In Orwell’s *Shooting an Elephant*, we discover an almost reluctant imperialist with highly sensible and sensitive outlooks. In E M Forster’s *A Passage to India*, we experience a rubber-stump type of colonial man in the character of Rony Heaslop who appears to be uncompromisingly rigid, arrogant and illiberal.

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