

Imperialism from the Perspectives of Two British Authors, George Orwell and Rudyard Kipling

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ABSTRACT

George Orwell and Rudyard Kipling are British authors who are different in viewing imperialism. The essays “*Shooting an Elephant*” and “*A Hanging*” by George Orwell and the novel “*The Jungle Book*” by Rudyard Kipling, represent imperialism as the main point. This research finds out the intention of George Orwell and Rudyard Kipling for describing the concept of imperialism. It also purposes to find out the way the authors express their thoughts in literary work as the response towards imperialism. This research applies the sociology of literature approach in analyzing data and employs Alan Swingewood’s theory in digging how George Orwell and Rudyard Kipling develop their thoughts about imperialism into work. This research reveals that George Orwell and Rudyard Kipling’s works are the expressions of their idea that concerns not on the difference in the type of works, but on the values in each work to treat other people as human beings. Through his works, Orwell shows people not to violate others’ rights. Meanwhile, Kipling introduces to children for imparting imperialism since childhood. These contradicting ways of describing imperialism encourage both of the authors to show their intention in supporting anti-imperialism and pro-imperialist concept.

1. INTRODUCTION

Each of the literary works represents certain cultural backgrounds or other aspects at that time, including imperialism as a social phenomenon. No wonder if literary works have a big contribution in developing the way people think and changing the people mindset to face the problem. This article discusses imperialism as the main issue that threaten people in Eastern countries. Unfortunately, the situation in Eastern countries is an un-written event. Therefore, the existence of literary work is important in society, because it is not only art in the form of words but it is a window to look at the situation of other people to treat them with the same right and position as human beings.

This imperialism issue is a social problem that always changes from time to time because imperialism or colonization emerges in society following the development of life. In general, imperialism is related to physical abuse, war, and torture in the past, yet, this consideration about imperialism shifts to become more subtle, nowadays it is the war of thought. In the present day, imperialism is the way which is brought by the scholar or activist to spread their idea about imperialism through their works.

Many famous authors give much knowledge and their view regarding imperialism issue. Their work gives contribution to imperialism development. Two of the authors who see imperialism differently are George Orwell and Rudyard Kipling. They as famous writers, are influential to spread the concept of imperialism. Through their works, the essays “*Shooting an Elephant*” and “*A Hanging*” by George Orwell and the novel “*The Jungle Book*” by Rudyard Kipling”, they have spread the image of imperialism according to their perspective.

The different perspectives between George Orwell and Rudyard Kipling on imperialism become the highlight of this article especially the way two British authors present the concept of imperialism. They use their style based on their experience living in a diaspora. They have a unique style in explaining the concept of imperialism, but they choose the same path to spread their idea of imperialism through work.

Through literary work, imperialism is depicted in Orwell’s works as a rigid system. Imperialism oppresses the Burmese and Orwell’s life. Orwell delineates in his work an unfair situation that seizes people’s rights in society. This happened because colonization divides people into two groups with a contradictory condition, one is privileged and the other is unprivileged (A. Ghaforian, A. Gholi, 2015).

The privileged refers to the British government as the colonizer, and the unprivileged represents the natives as the colonized people. They are like a play of a boss and servant. Britain as the boss creates rules and gives instruction, while the natives are demanded to be submissive to the British government. It is referred to George Orwell's work "*Shooting an Elephant*" that shows how Orwell is powerless to mobilize people. Because of his position as the British cop, he has to comply with the rules of the British government, he is a subordinate who does not have power. "*A Hanging*" also mentions that the natives' life as prisoners is hard. It describes the bad temperament of the cop in treating the prisoners. This makes people want to fight and get free from colonization practice.

"*Shooting an Elephant*" and "*A Hanging*" portray the effect of imperialism that restricts the right of people. The Burmese do not get prosperity as expected when the colonizer arrived for the first time. The natives must accept their condition, although, it is hard and unjust for them. People realize that the colonizer is a cheater, although, the natives cannot overthrow the constituted authority because they are uneducated. Thus, they cannot make any constitutional stride to sue for freedom.

Meanwhile, imperialism that is represented in Kipling's novel, "*The Jungle Book*", does not go far from the statement that colonizer helps the colonized people. Yet, on the other side, Kipling disagrees with the statement that colonizers only pretend to make natives civilized. It is an excuse to attract the natives for allowing the colonizer to enter their territory.

Imperialism is generally started in an attempt to make the colonized more civilized. Yet, it also wants to spread the mission of expansion. In their mission, the colonizer brings 3M that is Money, Military, Missionary or people are more familiar with 3G that is Gold, Glory, and Gospel. 3M and 3G have the same meaning that is Gold or Money which refers to their mission to gain treasure or wealth, Glory or Military means having the sovereignty of the conquered regions, Gospel or Missionary is spreading the parochial or religion. Using 3G or 3M makes the colonizer easier to undergo their mission of imperialism.

The roots of world problems are triggered by colonialism because colonialism is the way to release greed. Yet, greed is one of the bad of human nature and it has a bad impact on a society that makes other people suffer. The way to keep the world from suffering which is caused by imperialism becomes the job for all people, not only for some people or individuals. This is our duty together, by adjusting with their profession and ability. Nowadays, colonization is not fought with weapons or physical struggles. It is fought with thought to erase the concept of imperialism. Thus, this paper attempts to compare the perspective of George Orwell and Rudyard Kipling on imperialism.

2. METHOD

This research is qualitative descriptive research. Qualitative descriptive research portrays the phenomenon that is rather difficult to understand in quantification. Sally Thorne conveys qualitative description as interpretive description. She emphasizes applying qualitative evidence to practice (Thorne, 2008). It means the result of research in the form of description to explain the concept of imperialism to be understandable. Woods states that "qualitative research is to find out the meaning that attaches to their behavior, how they interpret the situation and how they view on a particular issue" (Woods, 2006, p. 2).

In conducting research, qualitative descriptive research is relevant to discover the perspective of George Orwell and Rudyard Kipling towards imperialism as the social phenomenon in Eastern countries through their work "*Shooting an Elephant*" and "*A Hanging*" written by George Orwell and "*The Jungle Book*" a novel by Rudyard Kipling. Moreover, the insights from both of the authors are influential to persuade people to think of imperialism as a social phenomenon in society.

The data consist of primary and secondary data. The sources of the primary data in this research are the essays "*Shooting an Elephant*" and "*A Hanging*" written by George Orwell, and the novel "*The Jungle Book*" by Rudyard Kipling. The sources of the data are the "*Shooting an Elephant*" and "*A Hanging*" written by George Orwell which are first published in late 1936 and 1931, and "*The Jungle Book*" novel by Rudyard Kipling published by Saddleback in 2001. It is a result of the adaptation "*The Jungle Book*" that is first published in 1894.

The primary data are in the form of expressing pertaining imperialism issue in "*Shooting an Elephant*" and "*A Hanging*", and also in "*The Jungle Book*" by Rudyard Kipling. The secondary data are gathered from other previous researches and textbooks related to imperialism issues. The secondary data are in the form of words, phrases, and sentences that discuss Orwell's works, "*Shooting an Elephant*" and "*A Hanging*", as well as the novel from Rudyard Kipling, "*The Jungle Book*", and articles of British Imperialism in Burma and Eastern countries.

The data of this research are collected through close-reading. The data are collected by reading "*Shooting an Elephant*", and "*A Hanging*" by George Orwell, and the novel "*The Jungle Book*" by Rudyard Kipling. The data are understood through close-reading by selecting the sentences or phrases that are related to the imperialism

issue. The sentences or phrases that represent the imperialism issue are used to describe the intention of the authors, George Orwell and Rudyard Kipling, towards imperialism.

The data from the novel and essay contain the knowledge of the idea and existential situation that is understood as the depiction from the authors' idea (Bingham, 2010). According to Andrew B. Bingham, nowadays the novelists and modernist theories treat novels and essays with the same level for making a depiction of thinking.

The data analysis began with note-taking and highlighting the relevant texts according to the topic. After taking notes and highlighting texts, the data is analyzed using the sociology of literature theory by Alan Swingewood. According to Alan Swingewood, the sociology of literature has some approaches. The first approach is the conception of the mirror. It reveals that the great authors exceptionally depict their work by seeing literature as the reflection of social life. It is because every author has their styles and intentions in delivering the meaning based on daily life. Through literary work, the condition of the natives and the situation at that time can be depicted. The data from the literary work can be used to know the background of social conditions at that time and also the background of the author to write it into literary work.

The second approach is publishing house as the writer's patronage for publishing the work. The patronage is important because it influences the market and profit which encourages the author to produce great works. Thus, the two approaches have the same purpose in using the literary work as the method to embed certain understanding by carrying out the intellectual method to educate society. In this case, the target reader of both of the authors is different. George Orwell targets his works to adults with any background of life, while Rudyard Kipling targets children as the main target.

The third approach is perpetuating the idea from the author to be accepted by the reader in all of the circles in society as a different insight. Both of the authors have contradicting perspectives towards imperialism. Even though, it is not something new discussing new imperialism in the form of ideology, the contradicting perspective towards imperialism that is brought by both of the authors still give a big influence on the people thinking.

The secondary data are also analyzed using the same technique to support the finding. Then, the conclusion is whether the contradicting perspectives towards imperialism perpetuating the readers' mindset, giving the certain intention of both authors to be spread out their ideology in the society, and contributing in Literary Studies are accepted through the works "*Shooting an Elephant*", "*A Hanging*", and also "*The Jungle Book*".

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Literary work is influential to implement a certain thought. It is an attempt to express the author's feelings by writing. This is the way the author communicates with people widely. By writing a literary work, the connection between the author and the reader is built up. Therefore, it will be easy for the author to guide the reader in understanding the author's intention through the literary work.

Surely every work has a purpose. This purpose depends on the author's purpose. If the author has a good purpose, the purpose will also be good and vice versa. Yet, the background knowledge of the reader can also influence the way the readers accept the new value that is offered in the literary work. Ultimately, the author and the reader demand to be perceptive and wise towards the idea that is offered. Thus, the readers must have their perspectives and cannot be forced to agree with the author's perspective.

"*Shooting an Elephant*", "*A Hanging*", and "*The Jungle Book*" are written as literary work that concerns the social term. Viewing from the probability of the content, "*Shooting an Elephant*", "*A Hanging*", and "*The Jungle Book*" have a similarity by putting imperialism as the main issue. This research uses sociology of literature by Alan Swingewood to answer the question in my analysis: How is imperialism viewed by two British authors, which is represented through George Orwell's "*Shooting an Elephant*" and "*A Hanging*" and Rudyard Kipling's "*The Jungle Book*"?

This research is conducted through observation by close-reading. After conducting observation, it gains three significant issues. Below is the result of the analysis data.

3.1. Imperialism in Orwell and Kipling's work

George Orwell in "*Shooting an Elephant*" describes that the natives' hatred towards the British is the peak of human capability. It is revealed by the natives who frankly express their fury toward Britain. That action is showed in the scene when the natives do mockery Orwell who is on duty as a police officer. The Burmese people often target Orwell with sneering to show that they aren't afraid. This situation happens as the effect of imperialism which allows a party to oppress the other one. Therefore, Orwell tries to understand the situation and chooses to be patient-facing the situation.

Rather than giving a counter-attack to those who insult him, Orwell tries to think positively that he becomes popular. It shows that Orwell tries to entertain himself. Orwell feels that his position becomes important enough

and his existence is admitted by people. It proves that Orwell enjoys getting the attention that he never gets. However, he is still not respected. Orwell's opinion that he becomes popular is the way to comfort himself. Orwell tries to decrease his worry coming from the pressure outside and inside himself.

In "*Shooting an Elephant*", Orwell frequently expresses his guilt to Burmese through the plot of the story which is wrapped with empathy. This work delineates a lot of things about his daily life as a police officer including how the natives mock him, how Burmese find difficulties living in the poor condition, and how Orwell feels deeply guilty about the Burmese. He feels as if he betrays himself if he treats the natives unwell. His sense of humanity encourages him to ignore imperialism. That is why Orwell complying with people's request for shooting the elephant. He thinks that he is responsible to solve the problem. However, he never means to shoot the elephant.

Besides, the mobilization of the Burmese people intimidates Orwell as part of the British officer. The people's insult to Orwell makes him a bit worry and feels useless. Thus, Orwell follows his desire to get attention from people. He shoots the elephant to raise his pride. Fortunately, this action is obscure in showing Orwell's purpose to support the natives to fight Britain. Yet, this incident does not make the British government suspecting Orwell. They think that Orwell is still part of the British government. It becomes a great strategy to become a double agent in the British government and the Burmese supporter.

Meanwhile, "*A Hanging*" portrays that there are a lot of people who need help in the conquered area, but there are also a lot of people living in the independent country who do not care about their problem who live under colonization. We all are human, but, why some of us cannot relate to our situation. As a human, we have to ask our heart, are we still human? Why do we pretend not to know their existence? Do we deserve to be called human when our humanity dies?

Meanwhile, Rudyard Kipling shows the concept of imperialism in a different way. Through his novel "*The Jungle Book*", Kipling describes imperialism in the type of fable story to make it easy to be understood. The main character in his novel is Mowgli. Mowgli is a man-cub who is pursued by Shere Khan, a tiger. Fortunately, Mowgli is found by the wolf and treated by the wolf's pack as a part of their group.

Kipling in "*The Jungle Book*" does not mention that colonizer is bad. He tried to blur the border between pro-imperialism and anti-imperialism. He tries to make the readers think logically that the imperialism value is not bad. The application of imperialism depends on the individual itself because human tends to cause of the troubles or destruction in nature. The destruction or problem in imperialism is caused by human error. This human error occurs as the effect of men who follow their desire. This desire triggers greed, and greed makes a person want to have more power in society.

The human natures, including greed, affection, and humanism are presented in the novel "*The Jungle Book*". The human natures are represented in the form of animals and humans as the characters in the novel. Through "*The Jungle Book*", Kipling elaborates the system of authority by analogizing human natures in the plot of the story. From "*The Jungle Book*", we get the lesson or image to have a position in an authority. The attempt to gain position is described when Mowgli is starting his authority as the jungle leader to lead the wolves-pack. That scene tells that Mowgli had to build a relationship with the jungle residents. Approaching the other animals takes a long time until the jungle residents accept him as a member of the jungle. Yet, to become a member of the jungle-residents, Mowgli must give a good impression to the animals and make them trust him.

3.2. The Difference between Orwell and Kipling's works in viewing imperialism

For distinguishing the authors' works can be seen from their attempt to figure out the certain atmosphere during reading their works. Both authors offer a different atmosphere contradicting one another. Orwell uses a lot of expressions to represent his feeling. Orwell does not extremely show his hatred towards British Imperialism. In "*Shooting an Elephant*", Orwell images his loser character to make the story flow smoothly.

For someone who has been proven guilty of all of his acts, Orwell is a kind of moderate person in which he does not use provocative words to express his hatred of British Imperialism. Orwell seems quite calm in showing that colonization makes people suffer. Instead of using bad words to describe Britain, he tells about his experience as a police officer under the British government in Burma. His works, "*Shooting an Elephant*" and "*A Hanging*" are the turning point of his life in which he realizes that he has made other people suffer and he sees the dishonesty conducted by the government. However, he does not explain the rottenness of Britain government in detail. Orwell describes his feeling obviously, but he keeps concerning in a good manner to deliver his message without using harsh words.

One of the reasons which actuate him to support the Burmese is the feeling he shared with the natives who are restricted by Britain. The natives do not have the opportunity to possess their natural resources legally, because the natural resources are controlled by the British government. Yet, the British government treats Burmese badly by making them work as labor. Meanwhile, Orwell also does not have the opportunity to do his job properly as a British officer and anti-colonial, because he is just a puppet of imperialism. As a British officer,

Orwell has a job that makes the natives suffer, in which it contradicts his feeling. Moreover, Orwell is a descendant of an English man, so the natives may never believe that he will support the natives.

Through "*Shooting an Elephant*", Orwell shows that he is a victim of imperialism, due to the treatment that he experiences from both the Burmese and the British government. In addition, Orwell is insulted and not respected. While the British government never appreciates his job or gets attention upon his action stopping the elephant which escapes. Therefore, "*Shooting an Elephant*" is full of the nuance pouring of his sensitivity towards the humanity issue in Burma.

Meanwhile, in "*A Hanging*", Orwell delineates that the death of the prisoner becomes a reason of happiness by the colonizer and betrayal because they have done their job. They do not have the heart of human beings. They whose heart is attached to wealth will be hard to find a sense of humanity. Those who conquer other regions consider that the natives are not human. The natives are treated as cattle that should obey their owners without having the bargaining power or fight. Surrender is the only choice. The people who are born as natives or colonizers never choose the way they live their life. Yet, natives are always getting hurt by the colonizer.

Different from Orwell, Kipling tells his work vaguely. He hides the true intention in his novel in the form of a fable. Kipling also tries to play with logical thinking to make people understand the story behind it. According to Kipling, there is nothing wrong with imperialism. The problem comes from the people who cannot appropriately implement the imperialism value.

As described in the novel "*The Jungle Book*", Mowgli, the main character in this novel, delineates that he is the only man in the jungle and the control of the jungle is under his hand after he vanquishes all of the things which obstruct him. Mowgli proves his potential as the leader after he can solve any problem that threatens the sovereignty of the jungle. The changing of leaders causes Mowgli considered as the change-maker in which he gives the lesson and example to use their guts and wits to survive. By relying on his experience and what Baloo teaches, Mowgli lives his life easier in the jungle even though it is full of danger.

The novel "*The Jungle Book*" seems just like ordinary work, but if we observe the explanation above, the novel ignores the response of society which labels imperialism as the evil system for earning natural resources. As the work of the result of thinking, it is attractive for children. Yet, this novel is quite hard to be used for campaigning imperialism. By reading this novel, it gives knowledge to people that imperialism uses a smooth way to penetrate society. People who know Kipling's tendency become aware to ignore this system. In his novel, Kipling does not know that imperialism ideology becomes a problem for himself or others. This awareness emerges simultaneously with the thought that imperialism ideology can destroy each nation.

Kipling uses a tactic to redefine imperialism as the shelter to promote (Nyman, 2001) that the British are a good protector of the next generation from the threats of the natives. The threats appear when the natives are negligent and they rely on the colonizer, then, the colonizers leave them. It makes the natives completely shatter. It is like a scene in "*The Jungle Book*", the jungle-residents depending on Mowgli, dispose of anything to Mowgli.

Thus, reading Orwell and Kipling's works gives impact to the reader in viewing imperialism. Orwell shows his confidence, although he delineates his weakness. It becomes a positive way because his work makes people think and seek the rightness of that incident. By describing his weakness, Orwell represents the natives who are as powerless as him. Orwell encourages people to do something like him who tries to rise and struggle for their future.

Meanwhile, Kipling shows his strength through his work. He tries to reject the fact that imperialism is unacceptable. In his novel, he shows that he lives in a utopia in which imperialism is hard to be accepted, but he tries to penetrate it through fable characters with a kid as the main character. Whereas, introducing people to accept imperialism is an attempt to save himself before people realize that imperialism capitalizes on them.

3.3. *The ideological intention of the authors*

Every author has an intention when he writes a work, and so do Orwell and Kipling. Through his work "*Shooting an Elephant*" and "*A Hanging*", Orwell tries to show all people in the world about an injustice that happens in Burma. Although those literary works do not mention certain institutions or people who have the power to help Burmese, what Orwell has done is a big deal. His work makes people realize to take care of other people wherever they are.

Shooting an elephant is just an attempt to increase capability in front of people. George Orwell hides his weakness behind the rifle because he is worthless without a weapon. He is just like the native if he does not have a rifle, he is just an ordinary person because he gets the command from people behind. Shooting an elephant is also an attempt to protect himself from being suspected as a traitor. In this way, the British side trusts him that he is still on the British side. This way, Orwell can write his experience into literary work that can open the mind of a lot of people not only in Britain but also in the entire world.

"*A Hanging*," tells that the indigenous people do not have the will to defend themselves. The prisoners do not have a future. The gallows are settled upon their destiny. They cannot do many things except waiting for death to

come. Both of Orwell's works tell the same topic, but they are wrapped in different concerns. "*Shooting an Elephant*" focuses on Orwell himself who feels guilty towards the Burmese, and "*A Hanging*" concerns the convict or the native as the prisoner who has lost their hope.

From the statement above, this research finds that Orwell in his works expresses his sympathy towards the indigenous people, but he is a white person who works as the cop of the British government so he cannot do much. He does not have a high position in government and the natives also hate him because they take him as a part of the British government. Thus, Orwell chooses to write down his work in a realistic way adjusting the real condition to make it easy to understand.

While Kipling encourages people to think deeply about the imperial system from Kipling's side, the system itself is a product to make people civilized. Thus, something that makes people conquered is coming from the man himself who makes the system unsuitable.

In his novel "*The Jungle Book*", Kipling offers another option to grasp what the British government is. Kipling describes the condition with the animal to smoothen the notion or opinion about racism. Yet it cannot go far from that way. "*The Jungle Book*" is fiction but it contains a political issue in it. The shape or type of this story is the distraction of the intention behind it. That encourages people to accept imperialism.

Kipling does not show the hint obviously that refers to his tendency. Through his novel, Kipling offers the story that if we only look for a glance it seems that the story is for children, but when we understand and behold, this story is beyond our expectation about the fable. The main character, Mowgli, is a man-cub found out by the wolf's family. He grows along with other animals in the jungle. Mowgli is representing imperialism trying to mingle with society and offering help to make people improve.

The Jungle Book is a novel becoming a form of concern of the colonist who cannot control the natives. It is made to influence people to accept imperialism open-handedly in which it is based on a thought that conveys imperialism is an ordinary system that will not harm anyone unless it is controlled by a capable person who runs the system well.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the issue of imperialism based on the perspectives of two well-known British authors, George Orwell and Rudyard Kipling, this research can be concluded that George Orwell attempts to give a signal. The signal informs that at that time, there were violations towards humanity. Besides, Orwell is also against coercion, thus he expresses his hatred towards imperialism through his literary work "*Shooting an Elephant*" and "*A Hanging*". This work is aimed to prevent the same incident to occur in the future. Therefore, literary work can be used as guidance for those who experience the same feeling like the victims of colonizers. Thus, people who do not experience that situation that oppresses their rights can understand the feeling of being an imperialism victim. Moreover, those who support the colonizers can realize and prevent the same tragedy which restricts people's rights. Orwell shows his feeling in his literary works, "*Shooting an Elephant*" and "*A Hanging*", in which those works assist him to find his way as a human who treats other people as human too. Through his works, Orwell persuades people to protect and respect each other without violating others' rights.

Meanwhile, Rudyard Kipling offers different images in literary work as a medium for embodying his thought. He has a different view of imperialism. Through his work "*The Jungle Book*", Kipling introduces imperialism to children/young generation. This step is carried out to impart the imperialism value since childhood when children are growing to become teenagers. Thus, the mindset of imperialism is not a dangerous thought which is ingrained in people. Imperialism is just a system developed to organize a country which through the times, always changes adjusting the people's needs. Although the system first comes from imperialism, it changes to a system that is not the same as before such as westernization. Many aspects of this system are omitted or replaced by new ones following trends. Eventually, this developing system drives people to be very eager to have something and do anything to gain their ambition to dominate others.

From this point, people realize that this system is not suitable to apply in real life. It will sacrifice many things including human resources and natural resources. People who have initiated the movement to oppose colonialism are orientalist or anti-imperialists. They try to awaken society about the disadvantages of imperialism, including by publishing their works with imperialism as the theme. Through their works, people in this world realize that a lot of injustice has happened. Thus, who else will bring good change to uphold justice for all humans, if it is not the human themselves?

From Orwell's works, we learn that we can start a change from ourselves. It does not have to be a big change, just be ourselves and listen to our heart, because the heart will always be honest in distinguishing what is right and what is wrong. From Kipling's perspective, we can see that his attempt at campaigning imperialism is different. He does not give up attracting people's sympathy. Moreover, he tries to impart the thought of imperialism in children through a fiction novel.

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