

## Teaching the Empire to Write Back: Locating Kipling's "english" in the Postcolonial Literatures of the Subcontinent

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Partly because of empire, all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic (Said, 1993, p. xxix).

### Abstract

The paper traces the literary legacy of postcolonial literatures, particularly many of their linguistic features, and claims that, long before any other writer from the British colonies, it was Rudyard Kipling who set the foundation of postcolonial "englishes" by using English in a bold and innovative manner. The paper not only upholds the earlier critical propositions – that Kipling's Indian fiction has inspired a vast body of postcolonial fiction in India and Pakistan as suggested by Richard Cronin (1985), Sara Suleri (1992), Michael Gorra (1994), Feroza Jussawalla (1998) and B. J. Moore-Gilbert (2002) – but proposes further that it was Kipling whose linguistic innovations, strategies of appropriation, and stylistic deviations from the "standard English," particularly in his Indian fiction, paved the way for the postcolonial writers and critics to appropriate English through various linguistic strategies. Those linguistic features and strategies that Kachru (1983), Ashcroft et al. (1998), and others have discovered in the postcolonial creative writings have been first employed by Kipling as this paper demonstrates. Keeping in view Kipling's reputation as an empire man, the basic claim of this paper would sound problematic and ironic, to some Kipling critics at least.

**Keywords:** *Kipling, postcolonial english(es), linguistic appropriation*

### Introduction

Since the rise of postcolonial literatures and theory, new varieties of English language began to emerge not only on the literary landscapes of the former colonies but even in the former metropolitan/colonial centers. Of course, the earliest of such 'deviations' was American English. This phenomenon had been studied by a number of critics such as Kachru (1983), Baumgardner, Kennedy and Shamim (1993), Fowler (1996), and more recently by Schneider (2007), Kachru and Nelson (2009), and Kachru (2009). Most of these critics trace the development of such varieties in socio-linguistic factors. However, as the present study claims, the genealogy of postcolonial "englishes" begins with the linguistic experimentation of Rudyard Kipling, a writer who is often regarded as a hardcore imperialist. By taking an original, critical departure from the existing studies, I intend to explore to what extent Kipling can be given the credit of initiating a linguistic "revolution" of sorts that resulted into the formation and evolution of varieties of English around the

world, especially in postcolonial literary texts. The paper especially emphasizes the strategies of linguistic appropriation for creative purposes by a number of postcolonial/post-Independence writers from the Subcontinent.

## **Kipling and the Question of Postcolonial Language**

In 1998, Feroza Jussawalla proposed, "Consider the possibility that one can read Rudyard Kipling as the father of postcolonial literature, if not the father of postcolonial theory" (1998, pp. 112-30). Clara Claiborne Park made the explicit claim that Kipling's magnum opus, *Kim*, can be easily read as a postcolonial/postmodern text (1997, pp. 43-62). On these lines, Moore-Gilbert explored the possibilities of a postcolonial reading of *Kim* (2002, pp. 39-58). In this regard, the question of Kipling's originality as a writer with Indian themes would be central. Although a number of Anglo-Indian writers were writing on Indian themes and settings, as early as the 1860s, none of them experimented linguistically as did Kipling in his short stories published in *The Civil and Military Gazette*, (later collected in *Plain Tale from the Hills*).<sup>1</sup> Unlike writers prior to him, Kipling's depiction of India is mostly free from the racial and cultural stereotypes that characterize many other nineteenth century creative writings by Anglo-Indian writers like William Browne Hockley, Philip Meadows Taylor, W. D. Arnold, and others.<sup>2</sup> That Kipling was a novel and distinguished presence among the Anglo-Indian writers is supported by the reviewers of his work even before he reached London in September 1889. J. M. Barrie, for example, declared that Kipling "owes nothing to any other writer. No one helped to form him" (Moore-Gilbert, 1986, pp. 19-20). Similarly, Francis Mannsaker omits Kipling from his *The Literature of Anglo-India 1757-1914* because his "thinking is not typical of the bulk of these Anglo-Indian writers" (Moore-Gilbert, 1986, p. ii). Not only in terms of themes and style he is different from all major Anglo-Indian writers of his time, Kipling developed a distinct idiom to capture the richness and variety of Indian life and culture.

Kipling's contrapuntal patterns, in terms of the employment of a culturally-specific language in his Indian fiction, clamor for positioning in the postcolonial discourse. In terms of form and style, his linguistic and cultural hybridity draws on the "eastern religious epic . . . Western forms of spy thriller and *Bildungsroman*" (Moore-Gilbert, 2002, p. 39) that make him master of culturally hybrid texts. In particular, he has created complex, hybrid characters like Kim who are liminal figures, living on the cusp of cultures. That is why Kim, as one conspicuous example, is ambivalent about his identity and tries to recover his selfhood, in the manner of many "postcolonials" that one encounters in the fictional creations of Rushdie, Naipaul, Ghose, Kureishi, and others.

However, keeping in view the cultural politics of postcolonial theory as well as Kipling's own politics of Empire, it would be considered controversial to give Kipling the full credit of founding postcolonial writings. What can be conceded, however, is that Kipling must be acknowledged as a source of inspiration, at least

in terms of the employment of a “hybrid” language, for a number of writers who adopted (and adapted) English as the medium of their creative writings. The question of Kipling’s notion of “The Whiteman’s Burden” is bound to crop up in this debate. To which I would only suggest that even his idea of Empire is stalled on the verge of ambivalence, particularly his Indian fiction is an achievement in cultural synchronicity.<sup>3</sup> Kipling’s rectification of Empire, subtle and nuanced in its own right, has often been glossed over. Suleri concedes that

As a study of cultural possession and dispossession *Kim* remains one of the most disturbing narrations of nineteenth-century colonial astonishment . . . the text distributes cultural surprise equally between colonizer and colonized. The protagonist embodies both aspects of such surprise, in that his status as dispossessed colonizer is perpetually mediated by his intimacy with and filiation to the cultures of the colonized ... the ambivalence of the narrative allows for no easy resolutions of such questions. (Suleri, 1992, pp. 117-8)

Suleri has underscored the value of *Kim* as a narrative of ambivalence and cultural complexity. Such suggestions as those of Suleri, Jussawalla and Moore-Gilbert underscore multiple possibilities of postcolonial re-readings of Kipling’s Indian stories.<sup>4</sup>

## **Evolution of Postcolonial Literary Discourse**

I envisage the evolution of English in the Subcontinent in the following four stages, that is, (a) imposition of English curriculum after Macaulay’s intervention through his Minutes on Indian Education, (b) beginnings of imitative writings in English, (c) appropriation of the colonizers’ language by the native creative writers, and (d) development of a “deviant” variety of English for creative purposes. Going through these stages, the new variety of English began to acquire new forms in terms of syntax, grammar, vocabulary etc. Such new varieties of English were dubbed by the metropolitan critics as “deviant,” something lesser than the “standard” English. These “deviant” varieties have been shaped due to the incorporation of indigenous speech patterns that not only won social/cultural acceptability it also established an “interanimation of languages”<sup>5</sup> as sources of literary consciousness and creative medium.

One of the earliest “imitative” writings produced in India was Sake Dean Mohammad’s *Travels* which appeared in 1794 and established the Subcontinent “as one of the first regions outside the United Kingdom and the United States of America to have used English for literary purposes” (Hashmi, 1989, p. 110).<sup>6</sup> The style and language of Dean Mohammad’s *Travels* reveals that the Indian writers, before Kipling, were writing in mere imitation of the canonical writers. Kipling, in my view, within the Indian context, was the first writer whose artistic contributions provided impetus to many subsequent Indo-Pakistani writers to follow his lead and write independently of the colonizers’ original language by appropriating and

shaping it as a new variety. Appropriation is a process which reconstitutes the language of the centre to express the “differing cultural experiences.” It seizes the language of the centre and replaces it in “a discourse fully adapted to the colonized place” (Ashcroft et al., 1989, pp. 37-38). This process results into the formation of new “dialects” that are, at times, referred to as “languages” for political reasons, as, for example, the evolution of “many englishes,” providing a scope to reject the illusion of standard and correct use of English (Ashcroft et al., 1989, p. 37). The function of such new varieties is to encompass the multiplicity of one’s own culture since it is “maltreated in an alien language” (Rao, 1938, p. 5). As Riemenschneider writes about Indian English “that Indian English can and does embody many different distinctly Indian realities; it is a more multi-cultural language medium in its many effective uses, poetic and practical, than probably any other language used in India” (2004, p. 181).

A number of Indo-Pakistani writers have developed an elaborate local idiom to write in English for artistic and creative purposes. But the question is who initiated and evolved such multi-cultural language? Kipling’s influence, in terms of the innovative use of language, is obvious on such writers as Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Ahmed Ali before the 1947 Partition of India and, since Independence, on Salman Rushdie, Bapsi Sidhwa, Arundathi Roy, Khushwant Singh, and others. Taufiq Rafat, the renowned Pakistani poet, has been influential in shaping a local, Pakistani idiom which is not formed merely with translations of Urdu or Punjabi words into English. In an essay, Rafat has explained the nature of such an idiom, culminating into a language, thus:

It is not by the use of Hindi or Urdu words that you can create Indian or Pakistani English. These are mere superficialities. The roots of an idiom lie much deeper. It is untranslatable. One has merely to refer to the dictionary to know what an idiom really is: a characteristic mode of expression; a vocabulary of a particular dialect or district. (Rafat, 1970, p. 66)<sup>7</sup>

However, what needs to be conceded and further explored is that such an idiom did not shape itself; it did evolve from the uses of English by Kipling in his Indian fiction. Before we illustrate this aspect of Kipling’s contribution, it would be appropriate to outline various linguistic strategies usually adopted by a number of postcolonial writers.

## **Appropriation and Indigenization of English**

Kachru notes that the theoretical grounds of indigenization of English are almost the same in Asia and Africa, but the linguistic innovations are culturally specific. Since colonization during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and subsequent decolonization in the twentieth, various strategies of language appropriation have been employed by the native creative writers. Both Kachru (1980) and Ashcroft et al. (2002) have pointed out those strategies.

Ashcroft et al. (2002)	Kachru (1980)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Glossing</li> <li>2. Untranslated Words</li> <li>3. Interlanguage</li> <li>4. Syntactic Fusion</li> <li>5. Code Switching and Vernacular Transcription</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lexical innovations</li> <li>2. Translation equivalence</li> <li>3. Contextual redefinition</li> <li>4. Rhetorical and functional styles</li> </ol>

Kachru (1980) and Ashcroft et al. (2002) have analyzed a number of postcolonial writings<sup>8</sup> to discuss these strategies. Drawing on those strategies, Chelliah (2006) has established that many postcolonial Indian writers use Indian English as strategies of appropriation and textual apparatus to depict “authentic topoi of Indian culture.” She has created a database of dialogue for each character by analyzing Rohinton Mistry’s *Such a Long Journey* (1991) and Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* (1998).

It is interesting to note that Kipling used almost all these linguistic devices: Glossing, untranslated words, syntactic fusion, code-switching, vernacular transcription, lexical innovation, translation equivalence and contextual redefinition. He negotiated the “gap between the worlds” imparting the cross-cultural sense to literature (Ashcroft et al., 2002, p. 39). To substantiate this claim, I have culled a number of examples from Kipling’s Indian fiction. Under each strategy, I first give the cluster of words, phrases, native idiomatic expressions, translations, code-switching, etc. derived from various Kipling stories and then quote the relevant sentences to show how Kipling has used them in different contexts.

<b>1</b>	<b>Glossing</b>
	<p>Telis, mata, takkus, cloaks, izzat, bhai-bund, dooli, Be-shukl, be-ukl, be-ank, Bus, dikh, dikh-dari, bunao, khitmatgar, Panee lao, Belait, gali, ghi, paharen, Dekho, Choor, bhusa.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ... it was <i>mata</i> –the smallpox. (“Little Tobra”)</li> <li>2. We be <i>Telis</i>, oil-pressers, said Little Tobrah. (ibid.)</li> <li>3. Paying only once for the takkus-stamps on the papers. (ibid.)</li> <li>4. Nothing but <i>dikh</i>, trouble, <i>dikh</i>. (ibid.)</li> <li>5. So he went, that very night at eleven, into Amir Nath's Gully, clad in a <i>boorka</i>, which cloaks a man as well as a woman. (“Beyond The Pale”)</li> </ol>
<b>2</b>	<b>Untranslated Words</b>
	<p>Kismet, Sirkar, bundobust, Jehannum, vakils, chaprassis, bustee, dhak, kerani, Fakir, Khitmutgaar, "Kubber-kargaz-ki-yektraaa,", Sansis, ‘Huzoor!’, ‘Khodawund!’, Chubara, benowti, huqa, purdahnashin, Sais, kutcherry, Jadoo-Gher.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That was <i>Kismet</i>. (“Watches of the Night”)</li> <li>2. Mark again how <i>Kismet</i> works! (Ibid.)</li> <li>3. I am, I said, a <i>kerani</i> –one who writes with a pen upon paper, not being in the</li> </ol>

	<p>service of the Government. (“Preface to <i>Life’s Handicap</i>”)</p> <p>I am not a fool, and why should the <i>Sirkar</i> say I am a child? (“Tods’ Amendment”)</p> <p>4. And he says: At the end of five years, by this new <i>bundobust</i>, I must go. If I do not go, I must get fresh seals and <i>takkus</i>-stamps on the papers, perhaps in the middle of the harvest, and to go to the law-courts once is wisdom, but to go twice is <i>Jehannum</i>. (ibid.)</p> <p>5. And Ditta Mull says:--Always fresh <i>takkus</i> and paying money to <i>vakils</i> and <i>chaprassis</i>... (ibid.)</p> <p>6. Deep away in the heart of the City, behind Jitha Megji’s <i>bustee</i>, lies Amir Nath’s Gully. (“Beyond The Pale”)</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Inter-language</b></p> <p>Talk the straight talk, said the Head Groom, or I will make you clean out the stable of that large red stallion who bites like a camel [seedhi tarah baat karo]. (“Little Tobra”)</p> <p>The child nodded resolutely. Yea, I DO play. <i>PERLAYBALL OW-AT! RAN, RAN, RAN!</i> I know it all. (“The Finances of the Gods”)</p> <p>For five years I take my ground for which I have saved money, and a wife I take too, and a little son is born.</p> <p>If I am a fool and do not know, after forty years, good land when I see it, let me die!</p> <p>My little son is a man, and I am burnt, and he takes the ground or another ground, paying only once for the <i>takkus</i>-stamps on the papers, and his little son is born, and at the end of fifteen years is a man too.</p> <p>When a man knows who dances the <i>Halli-Hukkk</i>, and how, and when, and where, he knows something to be proud of.</p> <p>If your mirror be broken, look into still water; but have a care that you do not fall in.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Syntactic Fusion</b></p> <p>The Chubara of Dhunni Bhagat, fakirs, sadhus, sannyasis, Sansis, bairagis, nihangs, mullahs, Telis, murramuttet, vakils, chaprassis, Musalmans, tazias.</p> <p>1. In northern India stood a monastery called the <i>Chubara</i> of Dhunni Bhagat. (“Preface to <i>Life’s Handicap</i>”)</p> <p>2. They trooped up, <i>fakirs, sadhus, sannyasis, bairagis, nihangs</i>, and <i>mullahs</i>, priests of all faiths,... (ibid.)</p> <p>3. Oh, I know <i>all</i> about that! Has it been <i>murramuttet</i> yet, Councillor Sahib? (“Tods’ Amendment”)</p> <p>4. <i>Murramuttet</i>--mended.--Put <i>theek</i>, you know--made nice to please Ditta Mull! (ibid.)</p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Vernacular Transcription</b></p> <p>Hutt, you old beast! (“The Bronckhorst Divorce Case”)</p> <p>I play ker-li-kit like the rest.</p>

	<p>Thou play kerlikit! PERLAYBALL OW-AT! RAN, RAN, RAN! I know it all.</p> <p>te-rain'</p> <p>I must <i>fink</i> in English</p> <p>"This interferin' bit av a Benira man," said Mulvaney, "did the thrick for us himself; for, on me sowl, we hadn't a notion av what was to come afther the next minut. He was shoppin' in the bazar on fut. Twas dhrawin' dusk thin, an' we stud watchin' the little man hoppin' in an' out av the shops, thryin' to injuce the naygurs to <i>mallum</i> his <i>bat</i>. Prisintly, he sthrols up, his arrums full av thruck, an' he sez in a consiquinshal way, shticking out his little belly, 'Me good men,' sez he, 'have ye seen the Kernel's b'roosh?'--'B'roosh?' says Learoyd. 'There's no b'roosh here--nobbut a <i>hekka</i>.'--'Fwhat's that?' sez Thrigg. Learoyd shows him wan down the sthreet, an' he sez, 'How thruly Orientil! I will ride on a <i>hekka</i>.' I saw thin that our Rigimintal Saint was for givin' Thrigg over to us neck an' brisket. I purshued a <i>hekka</i>, an' I sez to the dhriver-divil, I sez, 'Ye black limb, there's a <i>_Sahib_</i> comin' for this <i>hekka</i>. He wants to go <i>jildi</i> to the Padsahi Jhil'--'twas about tu moiles away--'to shoot snipe--<i>chirria</i>. You dhrive <i>Jehannum ke marfik</i>, <i>mallum</i>--like Hell? 'Tis no manner av use <i>bukkin'</i> to the <i>Sahib</i>, bekaze he doesn't <i>samjao</i> your talk. Av he <i>bolos</i> anything, just you <i>choop</i> and <i>chel</i>. <i>Dekker?</i> Go <i>arsty</i> for the first <i>arder</i> mile from cantonmints. Thin <i>chel</i>, <i>Shaitan ke marfik</i>, an' the <i>chooper</i> you <i>choops</i> an' the <i>jildier</i> you <i>chels</i> the better <i>kooshy</i> will that <i>Sahib</i> be; an' here's a rupee for ye?'</p>
6	<p><b>Lexical innovations</b></p>
	<p>Fakements, police-wallas.</p>
7	<p><b>Translation equivalence/Native Proverbs, idioms, songs, etc.</b></p>
	<p>Talk the straight talk [a literal translation of 'seedhi tarah baat karo']; When Man and Woman are agreed, what can the Kazi do? [a literal translation of Mian Bevi razi to kia karay ga qazi]; Nothing at all does the Servant of the Presence know [Huzoor ka ghumam kuch nahi jaanta]; Have a care [apna khayal rakho]; From the mouths of many [kai logon ki zubani].</p> <p>1. Talk the straight talk, said the Head Groom, or I will make you clean out the stable of that large red stallion who bites like a camel. ("Little Tobrah")</p> <p>Kipling is conscious that a lot of cultural specificity is lost in translation. As he writes in "Beyond the Pale":</p> <p>Directly the gongs in the City made the hour, the little voice behind the grating took up "The Love Song of Har Dyal" at the verse where the Panthan girl calls upon Har Dyal to return. The song is really pretty in the Vernacular. In English you miss the wail of it. It runs something like this:--</p> <p><i>Alone upon the housetops, to the North I turn and watch the lightning in the sky,-- The glamour of thy footsteps in the North, Come back to me, Beloved, or I die!</i></p>

	<i>Below my feet the still bazar is laid  Far, far below the weary camels lie,--  The camels and the captives of thy raid,  Come back to me, Beloved, or I die!"</i>
<b>8</b>	<b>Contextual Redefinition</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amma-ji,</li> <li>2. <i>Khitmutgaar</i> ("Bronckhoorst Divorce Case")</li> <li>3. <i>Nay, Sahib, nay.</i> ("The Finances of the Gods")</li> </ol>

In the above table, only a few examples of various strategies are taken from the eighteen selected stories. It is not possible to discuss all of them in detail. However, code-switching is discussed in detail as it encompasses other strategies such as syntactic fusion, glossing, untranslated words, etc. The choice of a non-English expression by an author is an indication that the selected code is the most appropriate for the given occasion. Kipling frequently codeswitches, employing its different types – inter-sentential, intra-sentential or intra-word and tag switching.

**Intersentential Codeswitching:** Some examples of intersentential codeswitching are found in Kipling’s works which occur at the boundary of a clause or sentence confirming the rules of both the languages. For instance, instead of using an English counterpart, the author prefers to codeswitch, as in “In The House of Suddhoo,” “I heard her say "*Asli nahin! Fareib!*" scornfully under her breath” (Kipling, 1994[1888], p. 56).

Similarly, he switches to the local vernacular on other occasions as in “William the Conqueror” (part 1):

*Kubber-kargaz-ki-yektraaa,*" the man whined, handing down the newspaper extra - a slip printed on one side only, and damp from the press.

“Ham dekhta hai” (Kipling, 1994[1888], p. 61).

Through codeswitching Kipling demonstrate that he is quite familiar with the Indian culture and he is not writing about it as an alien/ outsider. Likewise, Kipling’s familiarity with the religio-cultural conventions, permeated in the Indian Muslim society especially, provides him the opportunity to codeswitch. As in “The Story of Muhammad Din” he greets the child as "Salaam Muhammad Din."

**Intra-sentential Codeswitching:** Further there are many examples of intra-sentential codeswitching that is within a clause or sentence boundary or mixing within a word boundary, as in “William the Conqueror” (part 1):

-It's declared! he cried. One, two, three - eight districts go under the operations of the Famine Code *ek dum*.

-It's *pukka* famine, by the looks of it (Kipling, 1994[1888], p. 69). Or as in *The Son of His Father*.

-Father, I am a man. – I am not afraid. It is my *izzat* – my honour.

-There will be none of my *bhai-bund* [brotherhood] up there, he said disconsolately, 'and they say that I must lie in a *dooli* [palanquin] for a day and a night...

-Sheer *badmashi*

-there has been great *dikh-dari* [trouble-giving]

-It was all for the sake of show that they caught people. Assuredly they all knew it was *benowti* (Kipling, 1994[1888], p. 87). Similarly, in "The Story of Muhammad Din," Kipling has relied on codeswitching on a number of occasions:

-This boy, said Imam Din, judicially, "is a *budmash*, a big *budmash*. He will, without doubt, go to the *jail-khana* for his behavior.

-You put some *juldee* in it. *Juldee* means hurry. (Kipling, 1994[1888], p. 97)

But since "juldee" is noun, Kipling has used "put" to make it an action word.

**Tag-switching:** Insertion of discourse markers or tag-switching is also evident in a number of stories, as "*Bus* [enough] said Adam, between sucks at his mango" in "The Son of His Father" and "*Hutt*, you old beast!" in "Bronckhoorst Divorce Case." In "Laid Low" (1884), the narrator gives instructions to a gardener and shows him how to prune trees and plants:

*Dekho!* Look here. *Ye burra hai*,

And this is *chota*, don't you see?

And Priest of that dread creed am I

Which worships Uniformity.

*Iswasti, baito* by the beds

And cut *kurro* the lumbar heads (Islam, 1969)

Kipling's use of Hindustani (or Urdu/Hindi) is a testament to his vast knowledge of Indian customs, creeds, castes and cultures. According to *A Glossary of Hindustani Urdu-Hindi Words to be found in Kipling's Works*, prepared by Michael Smith,<sup>9</sup> there are more than 400 words and phrases that Kipling has used. Not only individual words, there is a vast number of proverbs, anecdotes, and references to folklore that Kipling has effectively incorporated in his works.

## Language of *Kim*

Some of those strategies listed above have been used more elaborately in *Kim* that transpired from his Indian experience. It is marked by a strong local idiom. He uses Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, and Panjabi words and phrases<sup>10</sup> that has become a standard practice now for many postcolonial writers. It has been noted by Kipling critics that he uses the vernacular only in his early writings since at that time he was writing for a limited Anglo-Indian audience. However, the fact is that Kipling continued to incorporate Indian languages and dialects in his work long after he left India. *Kim*, published in 1901 (and written during 1899-1901), is a prominent example of such vernacular, "deviant" usages that Kipling seems to have imbibed from the oral literary tradition of the Subcontinent. David Stewart in his article, "Orality in Kipling's *Kim*," claims that in *Kim* Kipling makes use of at least four "languages," each distinct from the other:

- (i) Kipling's or the narrator's language which is his trademark.
- (ii) Standard English or the voices from England (or *Balait* as Kim says)
- (iii) Kim's language, a mixture of the normative and the native English.
- (iv) Urdu translated and at times transliterated into English (Stewart, 1987, pp. 101-02).

Shamsul Islam has also suggested that the use of the vernacular languages in Kipling's works is highly functional and artistic. He has pointed out not only Urdu/Hindi words and phrases but also a number of Punjabi expressions. Islam suggests that Indo-Pakistani words and phrases in Kipling's work (a) contribute to a particular atmosphere; (b) add realism and conviction; (c) create a distance between the story and the reader; and (d) are instrumental in the production of a highly complex effect of involvement and detachment simultaneously (Islam, 1969).

The linguistic and cultural creolization and hybridization that Kipling achieves in *Kim* is one of the byproducts of colonial experience, and it has become a standard practice now in most postcolonial writings. His work is the prime example of the transformative influence of the colonized cultures and languages upon those of the colonizers and their texts. Kipling, in spite of his imperialist tendencies, was one of the earliest writers who realized that no culture, including those of the colonizers, would be in a position to claim purity after going through the colonial experience. The nature of such cultural and linguistic hybridization has been sufficiently explained by Bhabha and Bakhtin. As Bakhtin informs, it is a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation, or by some other factor (Bakhtin, 1974, p. 358).

Kipling has displayed such a complex consciousnesses in his Indian fiction that facilitated him to create linguistically and culturally hybrid texts. If pure English culture existed on one side of that cultural interstice (where Kipling could be located), on the other side of it were located a host of Indian cultures – Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, etc – that influenced Kipling’s sensibility and made him what he turned out to be – a writer of complex cultural texts.

Some of the following examples have been culled by Stewart, though with a different thesis, that is, to study orality in *Kim*. I have added more examples to demonstrate how Kipling has contributed in shaping later postcolonial *varieties* of English. According to Stewart, Kipling has generously translated from the vernacular that “creates an unusual aural medium.” One of the characteristic features of Urdu language is that it uses an “elevated” vocabulary in order to show respect to those who are socially at a higher pedestal. Such a use, according to Stewart, would seem “inappropriate in plain English.” For example:

Kim tells Colonel Creighton, "it is *inexpedient* to write the names of strangers." The Jat farmer says of his sick son, "he *esteemed* the salt lozenges"... Such diction is incompatible with these characters' vocabularies in English, but here in "translation" it seems normal, therefore doubly suggestive. A second example: the novel is full of oral formulae—

“Let the Hand of Friendship turn aside the Whip of Calamity”—

that are unknown in English yet familiar because they conform to the structure of maxims. A speaker of Urdu can actually translate some of them back into the original, so that he may read

I am thy sacrifice

but hear

“*Main tum pe qurban jaoon,*” (as cited in Stewart, 1987, pp. 110-112)

Urdu had evolved out of a long oral tradition in the multilingual, multi-racial ambience of the Indian Mughal army. Therefore, by its nature and history, it is a hybrid language that contains Arabic, Persian, Turkish and other linguistic traditions. The orality of Urdu is also reflected in *Kim*. Urdu/Hindi oaths, slang expressions, exclamations and imperatives abound in *Kim*. Dialogue is sparingly written in the “Standard English”:

“Hear and obey!—Let all listen to the Jâtakas!—The Search is sure!—Hear the most excellent Law!—It is found!—Be quiett!—“

“Ohe, Mahbub Ali!” he[Kim] whispered, “have a care” (Kipling, 1995[1901], p. 148).

“Have a care” is the literal translation of the Urdu expression *apna khayal rakho*; it became a standard expression in the Victorian English.

Compare the above dialogue with the speech pattern of a character in Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*: “Come on phaelwan: a ride in my Packard, okay?” And talking at the same time is Mary Pereira, “Chocolate cake,” she is promising, “laddoos, pista-ki-lauz, meat samosas, kulfi. So thin you got, baba, the wind will blow you away” (Rushdie, 1981, p. 239).

Rushdie’s “inscription of alterity” when he switches between two codes is analyzed thus by Juliette Myers who writes, “verbal play, internal rhyme, and strange verbal conjoinings characterize the linguistics of postmodernism” (Myers, 1996). However, while exploring postmodernist features in the use of language by such writers as Rushdie, one may not ignore the historical processes and the contribution Kipling who, long before Rushdie, achieved such diversity and multiplicity of meanings through language use. Here are a few more examples from *Kim*:

(a) Have I not said a hundred times that the South is a good land? Here is a virtuous and high-born widow of a Hill Raja on pilgrimage... *She it is sends us those dishes* (p. 76).

(b) --that she must *eat gali* [abuse] as men eat *ghi* [cooking fat] (p. 80).

(c) That is a *nut-cut* [rogue], she said. All police constables are *nut-cuts*; but the police-wallas are the worse. *Hai*, my son, thou hast never learned all that since thou camest from *Belait* [Europe]. Who suckled thee? (p. 82).

(d) A *paharen* –a hillwoman of Dalhousie... (p. 82).

(e) [Kim] heard this sort of speculation again and again, *from the mouths of many* whom the English would not consider imaginative (76)<sup>11</sup> [emphasis added].

The emphasized expressions are translations from Urdu dialogue that Kipling seems to have thought first in Urdu and then converted them into English. They confirm that Kipling has extensively employed the “vernacular formations, and ‘Indianized’ English, the occasional use of Hindi terms, and an abundance of folk-sayings, proverbs, and parables. Kipling here carefully differentiates between the cultural idioms of various speakers, highlighting the Islamic-rooted expressions of Mahbub Ali and the Lama’s Buddhist ones” (Adam, 1997, pp. 66-78).

Such words as “te-rain” for train in *Kim* are reminiscent of the language that Zulfikar Ghose, the Pakistani-American novelist and poet, uses in his novel *The Murder of Aziz Khan*; it underlines the idiosyncratic speech patterns of various characters. Tariq Rehman has characterized this feature as “rhotic” (1990, p. 67) since it gives double stress to certain letters, particularly words ending on the letter ‘r’. This feature is due to the influence of Urdu and Arabic in which certain

letters get double stress in pronunciation. The following dialogue between Akram Shah's wife, Faridah, and a cloth merchant, is a typical example of such stress patterns. When Faridah asks whether pink color is available, the shopkeeper says: "Begum Sahiba, I have each and every *culler* for your *sootability*, pink, *saalmun* red *turkwise*, *emmaruld* green, *purpel*... the *cumpleet* range, Begum Sahiba, the *cumpleet* range" (Ghose, 1998, p. 76) [emphasis added].

Similarly, in *Kim*, Babu Hurree Chander's dialogues are marked by certain linguistic features that one may call as characteristic of "Indian English" now. Kipling "seems ... to recognize that British English is not fully adequate to describe India: his own narrative language implies that the development of a special Indian literary variety of English will be necessary" (Tulloch, 1992, pp. 35-46). Not only the natives of India, even the British characters speak in their regional dialects of English. For example, the Drummer-boy from Liverpool, Colonel Creighton and the Irish priest, all speak in their native, regional accents. There is no question of one "standard" monolithic language for cultural expression in the multicultural settings of this novel.

Due to such innovative linguistic strategies, Kipling, I believe, may easily be regarded as the first English writer who has paved the way for generations of postcolonial writers, especially those writing in India and Pakistan, to devise new phrases, employ local idioms and thus create new varieties of English like "Singlish," "Paklish," "Inglish"<sup>12</sup> etc. Since the end of colonial rule in India, many Indo-Pakistani writers like Ahmed Ali, Rushdie, Bapsi Sidhwa, Taufiq Rafat, Sara Suleri, Vikram Seth, Arundathi Roy, and others, taking their cue from Kipling's multi-lingual experiences and experiments, were encouraged to employ various linguistic strategies of appropriation to give a distinctive cultural flavor to their writings. In *Ice-Candy-Man* (1988) Sidhwa sounds like Kipling when she uses words like "*Churrail*,"<sup>13</sup> and idioms like "*Hassi tay Phassi*," or "to paint their hands yellow" (referring to the tradition of henna-decorated hands of Punjabi brides).<sup>14</sup> She also uses verses from many Urdu poets such as Iqbal and Faiz, empowering her narrative with the local cultural crossings. The postcolonial Indo-Pakistani writers have emulated Kipling's linguistic and stylistic experiments, though often without acknowledging their debt to Kipling. Some of them have definitely admired his work, as Rushdie, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Sara Suleri and others but few of them as unambiguously as Kipling deserves.

Thus language in Kipling's Indian fiction is fashioned out of his hybrid vision about the Indian social and cultural life. From my own experience of reading Kipling and comparing his use of English with that of a number of postcolonial Indo-Pakistani writers, I have realized that Kipling is the first master of the Subcontinental creole. Kipling might not be the father of postcolonial literatures, as Jussawala proposed, but is most certainly the father of postcolonial english(es) in the Subcontinent and even beyond.

## Notes

1. It was only in the 1930s that the Indian writers began to experiment creatively with the lexical expressions and syntax of the English language to give an indigenous look to their creative writings, long after Kipling became known both in India, the US and Europe. For details please see, for example, Meenakshi Mukherjee, *Twice Born Fiction*, pp. 170-203; William Walsh, *The Big Three*, pp. 26-36; Leela Gandhi, *Novelists of the 1930s and 1940s*, pp. 168-192.
2. For details please see Udayon Misra's *The Raj in Fiction*. Delhi: B. R. Publishing, 1987.
3. Kipling is generally perceived as a hidebound imperialist and calibrated as a canonical construct. Since Said's contrapuntal critique of *Kim*, the postcolonial critics have consistently bracketed Kipling with other 19<sup>th</sup> century white canonical writers like Lord Macaulay, John Ruskin and others (Please see Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Vintage, 1993, particularly the section "The Pleasures of Imperialism," pp.159-196). However, in his exploding the socio-cultural stereotypes (in *Kim* especially) about the East (particularly India) paddling in the West, Kipling transcends the Raj mantra.
4. It is further supported by the fact that Kipling adopted an anti-colonial stance vis-à-vis colonial educational system in India. In one of his articles, "A Little Morality," published in the *Pioneer* in January 1888, he strongly takes exception to the radical Evangelical agenda that succeeded in imposing English literary education on the Indians and treated culture as a "*deus ex machine*" to transform the 'natives' into the servants of Empire. It means Kipling was conscious of the dangers of such cultural impositions. Such an astute observation, from a writer like Kipling who was otherwise regarded as the spokesperson of the British Empire, is highly significant. It means his politics of Empire is too complex to be reduced to any simple postcolonial critique. It is also ironic that the curriculum of English literary education, devised by Lord Macaulay, and implemented in most former colonies, is almost the same even now. In his article, Kipling mentioned Milton, Shakespeare, Chaucer, Pope, Macaulay and others who are imposed upon the Indians as canonical writers. These writers are still part of the curriculum in English studies in most Pakistani universities that produce the culturally hybrid monsters that Kipling abhorred so much. For details of this article, please see Angus Wilson's biography of Kipling, *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling*, pp. 115-16.
5. Mikhail Bakhtin. *The Dialogic Imagination Four Essays*, (trans.) Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974, p. 358). This concept of interanimation of languages is also valid to explain the development of Urdu literature in India and American literature in the USA. Similar is the case of South Asian novelistic discourse as the Indian, Pakistani, Bengali and Sri Lankan novelists incorporate their respective local languages for cultural expression, thus paving the way for what Bakhtin terms as polyglossic writing. However, the evolution of such writings went through different stages as suggested above.
6. Alamgir Hashmi, "Prolegomena to the Study of Pakistani English and Pakistani Literature in English," in Radhika Mohanram and Gita Rajan, *English Postcoloniality: Literatures from Around the World*. London: Greenwood Press, 1996. P.110. Hashmi's paper was originally presented at the first International Conference on English in South Asia, held at Islamabad, Pakistan, January 4-9, 1989.

7. Rafat's observation is reminiscent of Bakhtin's notion of "intentional hybrid," commonly found in South Asian fiction. *God of Small Things* by Arandhati Roy, *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh, *The Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand, *The World of Nagaraj* by R. K. Narayan, *Family Matters* by Rohinton Mistry, and *Émigré Journeys* by Abdullah Hussain all abound in the use of a hybrid and syncretic language appropriated by the novelists for specific characters to orchestrate various themes.
8. For example, Furphy's *Such is Life*, 1903; Lisser's *Jane's Career*, 1913; Reid's *New Day*, 1949; Lamming's *The Emigrants*, 1954; Naipaul's *The Mystic Masseur*, 1957; Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*, 1963, Okara's *The Voice* 1964, Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* 1967, Harris' *Ascent To Omai* 1970, Eri's *Crocodile* 1970; Naipaul's *One out of many*, 1971; Selvon *Moses Ascending*, 1975; Stow's *Visitants*, 1979; Maniam's *The Cord*, 1984; Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, 1885; etc.)
9. Available at the official site of Kipling Society: [http://www.kipling.org.uk/facts\\_glossintro.htm](http://www.kipling.org.uk/facts_glossintro.htm). visited on 1/11/2005. From my own readings of various Kipling stories, I have gathered that Smith's glossary is by no means exhaustive. There are still many words and phrases which are not included in that list. Also, Margaret Pelley mentions in her excellent study of the manuscript of *Kim*, "Kim that Nobody Reads," that Kipling reduced the number of Hindustani words in order perhaps to make it more palatable to his European and American readers. It implies Kipling was much more rooted in the Indian cultures and languages than one may realize from the reading of *Kim*.
10. It does not mean that he knew all these languages. The fact is that Urdu is a language that emerged and evolved mainly as a result of interactions among the soldiers in the Mughal Indian army consisting of various linguistic and ethnic groups from Persia, Afghanistan, Central Asia, North and South India etc.
11. The novel is full of such constructions and expression. In fact, most of the book is written in this English in which vernacular plays the dominant part. An Urdu reader can perfectly translate it into Urdu while reading it. Here are a few more examples:
  - (i) he is very holy (p. 93)
  - (ii) They call me Kim Rishti ke. That is Kim of the Rishti.<sup>1</sup>  
What is that—"Rishti"?  
Eye-rishti—that was the regiment—my father's.<sup>1</sup>  
Irish, oh I see.  
Yess. That was how my father told me. (p. 92)
  - (iii) He is a chabuk sawai [a sharp chap]. (p.116)
  - (iv) But what is to pay me for this coming and re-coming? (p. 129)
  - (v) chup! [be still or be silent]. (p.161)
12. See for example, Yamuna Kachru and Cecil L. Nelson. *World Englishes in Asian Contexts*. Hong Kong University Press, 2006; Rajend Mesthrie and Rakesh M. Bhatt. *World Englishes: The Study of New Linguistic Varieties*. Cambridge University Press, 2008; Braj B. Kachru, Yamuna Kachru, Cecil L. Nelson (eds). *The handbook of world Englishes*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2006; and Yamuna Kachru, Larry E. Smith. *Cultures, contexts, and world Englishes*. Taylor & Francis, 2008.
13. In fact, Kipling too has used this very word in *Kim* (p.148), though with a different spelling.
14. See Bapsi Siddhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* (1988) for such numerous examples. Also see Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* (1941), and his short stories, particularly "Our Lane" in

Ahmed Ali (ed.) *Selected Short Stories from Pakistan*. Islamabad: Pakistan Academy of Letters, 1983. Sara Suleri in her *Meatless Days* and *Boys Will Be Boys* extensively uses Urdu words without bothering to translate them into English as those are culturally-specific words and their parallels in English are often not available.

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