

CHAPTER ONE

Orwell's *Burmese Days*

Introductory Outline of the Study

This study is a critical analysis of George Orwell's *Burmese Days* in the light of how the Westerners dominate and represent the East. The misrepresentation of the Burmese people is the central focus of the study. It concerns how Orwell presents the picture of colonial Burma in the novel *Burmese Days*. It explores how Orwell as a colonial writer misrepresents Burma and its people for his own Western taste. The novel reflects the conflict between the colonizers and the colonized. The conflict illustrates the hostility between these two cultural contestants. Through the presentation of the Burmese characters in different manners, Orwell misrepresents Burma and its people. Burmese characters are given trivial role. They are not independent to act with their own native identity. They are shown completely servile and subordinated to the European characters. This misrepresentation is characterized by the love-hate relationship between the white colonizers and the black colonized. Orwell's *Burmese Days* textualizes the colonial Burma as the land of barbarians. Similarly, it also textualizes the acute hatred of the white Europeans and the black Indians to each other.

Orwell is often depicted as an anti-imperialist, who always detested imperialism and its exploitation of the helpless and downtrodden colonized people. However, this research studies how he has expressed his colonial mentality as a superior white in the novel by misrepresenting the Burmese people as barbaric, uncivilized, inferior, sexually arrogant, childlike, the other and so on.

This study also helps to show how such colonial discourses have helped the Westerners to orientalize the East. It demonstrates their colonial nature as well. The

forthcoming chapters will attempt to justify the issue of representation in colonial discourse.

Burmese Days is Orwell's only novel to draw on his experience of Burma. Orwell has expressed his hatred of imperialism and at the same time his hatred of the native Burmese people. The critics have analyzed the novel from various perspectives but they have ignored the seemingly dominant aspect of the novel, i.e, love-hate relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. Gordon B. Beadle and other critics have criticized the novel differently, ignoring the dominant aspects, like representation, mothering, marginalization, and so on.

The critics have raised the issue of poverty but not of representation. So this study will help to dig out the inner or hidden colonial mentality of Orwell. The significance of this study is that it will enable the readers to comprehend how Orwell has expressed his mixed attitudes to the native people. This study also intends readers to understand the Westerner's concept about the Easterners and how they represent the Orientals as others to claim themselves superior. While many scholars have examined the other aspects of the novel, this study will explore the novel from postcolonial perspective, to fully recognize Orwell as a colonial writer.

***Burmese Days* and Orwell**

George Orwell in *Burmese Days* presents the Burmese people as the 'Others', 'inferior', 'barbarous', 'sexually arrogant' and so on. The presentation is characterized by love-hate relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. It deals with the complex relationship between the colonizers and the Burmese people. It has depicted the conflict between the white colonizers and the native people.

Colonial discourses represent non-western as inferior, barbaric, other, uncivilized, and so on. Behind every representation there lies the hidden motive of

colonization. Colonial discourses have always functioned as power to dominate the orient. A colonial discourse has shown how the West exercised institutionalized power over the other to rule the other. It is an instrument to create hierarchy of race and color that assist the colonizers to centralize them and inferiorize others. It provides an approach to project westerner's stereotype of the orient. It characterizes the hostility between the British Imperialists and the native subjects. Their sense of hatred, distrust and resentment to each other are the central focus of such discourse.

The native characters, such as, Dr. Veraswami, U Po Kyin, Ma Hla May, etc are represented as inferior, barbaric, uncivilized and the European characters, such as, Macgregor, Maxwell, Westfield, Ellis, Verall, Elizabeth, Lackstreens, are characterized as superior, educated, civilized, active, and so on. U Po Kyin and Veraswami are the natives of higher standards but the way Europeans treat them is not different from the way they treat the native servants. Kyin and Veraswami are presented as servile to the colonizers as the butlers are. Flory, the protagonist, seems to be sympathetic, loving and unbiased to the native people; however, he also has the feeling of hatred and distrust of the native people. He prefers Elizabeth to Ma HlaMay, and does not want to be insulted for the sake of his native friend Veraswami. Similarly, he is also shown to be corrupted and spoiled by Burma and its native people. Ellis and other white characters also have the similar prejudiced attitude towards the native people. They assume themselves as the superior, the powerful and the ruler. The native people too have the similar attitude towards the colonizers. They also think that the colonizers are exploiting them and their resources, and they want the colonizer to go away from their land. Orwell, in some contexts, has presented the white Europeans as corrupt, exploiter and thief but he has shown the colonial mentality as well. Even geographically, Burma is represented as an exotic, terrific,

barbaric and mysterious land.

George Orwell, the pseudonym of Eric Blair (1903-1950), was born in Motihari, Bengal, the then British colony of India, where his father Richard, worked for the opium department of the civil service. He was sent to a small Anglican Parish School in Henley and won a scholarship to Eton. He was relatively happy at Eton College. His academic performances at Eton vary. Some claim that he was a poor student, others deny this. His schooling at Eton played a vital role in moulding his awareness with regard to the financial gulf that separated him from the rest of his school mates. This clarifies that his childhood was poverty- stricken.

He was influenced by his poverty stricken life so much that he thought it better to take up some job rather than pursue his study. He was compelled to choose a different career because of his aversion for study. As a result, he joined the imperial police in Burma. He did not develop any liking for his service because of his hatred of Imperialism although he served in Burma for five years. He was depressed by the idea that he belongs to a force engaged in oppression. He was now determined to be a writer, and adopted a pseudonym as one way of escaping from the position in which his birth and education had placed him.

He went to Paris to try to make a living by teaching after he resigned his job from Burma. He made his first attempt at writing after he joined the new job. His first book *Down and out in Paris and London* (1933) recorded his experiences in Paris and in England. He wanted to learn the life of the poor at first hand; therefore, he voluntarily made a trial of destitution. He learned from actual experience what he felt like to be unemployed and hungry. In this sense Gordon B. Beadle argues, “The dehumanizing effects of poverty and the multiple consequences of economic injustice are the primary or secondary themes of nearly all of his books and occupy a sizable

portion of his political journalism” (188). So, Orwell’s selection of the theme of poverty as the initial outlet for his creative aspirations might also be viewed as a logical consequence of his early literacy interests. Similarly, *A Clergyman’s Daughter* (1935) describes a number of scenes of destitution of northern England.

The Road to Wigan Pier (1937) was the outcome of the couple of months that Orwell spent in north of England. The book reveals a profound insight into the squalor and demoralization of the working class life that he saw there. In this reportage, he further explains his experiences with the unemployed people. He experiences the suffering of destitution himself with other poverty stricken people.

Orwell left for Spain at the close of 1936 to fight for the Republican Cause. *Homage to Catalonia* (1938) describes his experiences during the Spanish Civil War. He went to Spain during the civil war of Spain as a reporter but he stayed to fight for the loyalists. This book was also the outcome of what he saw of the communist in Spain. In it he described his admiration for a class structure in the revolutionary areas of Spain he visited. He also depicts the betrayal of the workers’ revolution in Spain by Spanish Communist Party, abetted by the Soviet Union and its Secretary police after its militia attacked anarchist in Barcelona in May 1937. Along with his book the essay “Looking Back of the Spanish War” (1943) reveals that what he chiefly discovered in Spain was personal discomfort and political disillusionment.

George Orwell was down-to-Earth writer who chose to direct his intelligence and his literary skill to some of the things that matter to ordinary people as well as to bookish people: problems of war and peace, work and pleasure, and the politics of the time he lived in. Orwell’s works are directly connected to the events of his life. He wrote only about the things he has observed first hand. His works directly commented on the societies, times in which he lived, and his strong feelings about social injustice

and oppressions. These were the motivating forces behind all his writing. David Daiches makes the following remarks:

His autobiographical works, *Down and out in Paris and London*, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, and *Homage to Catalonia* cut through the sentimentalities of fashionable left wing reporting by stressing uncomfortable truths ignored by left as well as by right. There is an almost masochistic honesty in his works, for he insisted on living with ills exposed before exposing them. (1169)

The threat of the coming war hung over his novel *Coming up for Air* (1939). By this time, Orwell saw himself primarily as a political writer and democratic socialist who avoided party label, hated totalitarianism, and was to become progressively disillusioned with the methods of communism. Orwell never wavered in his belief that the so-called communism was a pre-version of socialism and a wicked tyranny.

Animal Farm (1945) is a popular novel of Orwell. This is a political allegory. It is a story of struggle of animals against exploitation and dictatorship of human beings. The animals of Manor Farm of Mr. Jones were underfed, the wise boar known as Old Major by his name calls the secret meeting of animals. They decide to revolt against their master. They formulate the seven commandments as the code of conduct. All of them start to work except the pigs that command and inspect the farm. At last the pigs start to disobey the commandments and take themselves as the leaders. So, it was an anti-Stalinist allegory. Orwell was widely criticized as an early anticommunist after the publication of this novel.

Nineteen Eighty Four is Orwell's prophetic vision of the results of totalitarianism. It is a reverse Utopia (or a dystopia) a vision of the future as nightmare rather than paradise. Orwell saw the dangers of brainwashing, rigid social

control and political bestiality, which had already been there in his contemporary situation. This book is both a prophecy and a warning of what life might be if individuals allow themselves to be coerced into conformity by the state. Orwell's concern over the power of language to shape reality is also reflected in his invention of Newspeak, the official language for the imaginary country of Oceania in his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. All his sympathies lay with common people, but he saw with complete clarity how their sloth could lead to a welfare state from there to the horrors of regimentation he attacked in 1984.

Jeffrey Meyers in his *A Reader's Guide to George Orwell* quotes many writers who have directly or indirectly come in contact with George Orwell. He says that apart from numerous book reviews, there was little written about Orwell during his life time. Cyril Connolly's "Enemies of Promise," which was published in 1938 when Orwell was not very well-known, describes him as a boy at St. Cyprian's and Eton. It contrasted with Orwell's own bitter memories when, *Such were the Joys* appeared posthumously in 1952.

After Orwell's death his major essays were collected and published as *Shooting an Elephant* (1950), *Such were the Joys* (1953), *England your England*. His collected *Essays, Journalism and Letters* (1968) have appeared in four volumes. Jeffrey Meyers opines that Orwell's essays form five major groups: autobiographical, literary, political, cultural and sociological. Some of his autobiographical essays are "Such were the Joys," "Shooting an Elephant," "A Hanging," "How the Poor Die," "Confession of a Book Reviewer" and "Why I Write". The political essays concern literature and totalitarianism and are closely connected to *Nineteen Eighty-four*. The essays like "The Prevention of Literature," "Politics and the English Language" and "Looking Back on the Spanish War" are his political essays. They are centered on the

discussion of the political issues of different countries. In his essay *Why I Write*, he says, “The Spanish war and other events in 1936-37 turned the scale and there after I knew where I stood. Every line of serious work that I have written, directly or indirectly against totalitarianism and democratic socialism as I understood it” (28). “England your England”, “The English People” and “Notes on Nationalism” are Orwell’s sociological essays. Likewise, his cultural essays include “Coming Up for Air” and “Decline of the English Murder.”

Orwell wrote an essay on Charles Dickens, which is the longest of all his essays. This essay explores Dickens’ attitudes to society, class, money, sex and politics. But the essay is also important for what it tells us about Orwell, for he says as much about what he is trying to do in his own work as about Dickens. “Inside the Whale” is another important essay in which he meant that writers should hide and write, they are always charged otherwise of encroaching into politician’s area and thus may find themselves at stake. The writers should not textualize the political issues and problems in their works. Orwell says that remaining inside the while and unaffected by tyranny and fear in the modern world is an attractive, comfortable declaration of irresponsibility.

Orwell does misrepresentation of the Burmese people as the Other. This study explores the misrepresentation of Burma, the native people and the Europeans in the novel *Burmese Days*.

Review of Literature

Burmese Days has received many critical appraisals since its publication. Graham Holderness, Bryan Loughrey and Nahem Yousaf, in *New Casebooks George Orwell: Contemporary Critical Essays* opine that Orwell was a controversial writer and has provoked numerous and diverse critical responses. They even find the

political nature of George Orwell. They hold that "In order to appreciate fully the political nature of George Orwell's writing one must return to those moments that shaped him and had a profound influence on both his fiction and his politics" (2).

However, the expression does not point to the type of politics he does.

George Orwell himself states his attitude towards imperialism, the oppressor and the oppressed as follows:

I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the better.

Theoretically and secretly, of course, I was always for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British. As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of empire at close quarters. (114)

This expression depicts that he is against imperialism and in support of the colonized. But the novel shows instances of misrepresentation of the Orient and the Occident.

As to Orwell's expression above Graham Holderness, Bryan Loughrey and Nahem Yousaf evaluate that this expression shows "Orwell's move toward self-definition against empire and against the ruling classes. He expressed his feelings for, and loyalties to, the oppressed and marginalized groups" (2). These lines refer to Orwell's notion of his feelings for the marginalized groups. But this study explores the opposite attitude of the writer.

Likewise, Stephen Ingle holds that Orwell reshapes his attitude of the working class: "Orwell's Burmese experience was formative in radically reshaping his views of the working class" (qtd in Holderness et al. 3). Ingle too holds Orwell's misconception as to the Orient and the Occident, as expressed in the novel.

Elleke Boehmer postulates that Orwell's novel *Burmese Days*:

Distinguished from earlier colonial writings by its knowings --its anti-adventure cynicism, its penetrating insights into the less than honourable mechanisms of empire... Orwell with *Burmese Days* signals the closing down of an entire genre of imperial heroics, as well as, by implication, the system that sustained it. (qtd in Holderness, et al. 4)

This expression holds truthful evaluation of the novel.

Similarly, Jan Mohamed views that Orwell has negated the individuality of the native. He observes that: "The European writer commodifies the native by negating his individuality, his subjectivity, so that he is now perceived as a generic being that can be exchanged for any other native (they all look alike, act alike and so on)" (qtd in Holderness, et al. 5). These lines express Orwell's attitude of commodification of native people of Burma.

Raymond Williams suggests that the novel concerns poverty and depression. He contends that "Orwell's reputation at this time, as a writer and journalist, was based mainly on his accounts of poverty and depression. His expeditions and then his convincing reports had given him a particular though limited identify in their literary world" (qtd in Holderness, et al. 7). This expression depicts Orwell's writing career supporting the world of the dispossessed and marginalized. However, Williams fails to do justice with the overall representation of the Orient and the Occident.

Patrick Reilly expresses that the novel concerns for meaning or money. He states that:

Flory in *Burmese Days* is troubled by a lack of meaning, not a lack of means; He slums imprisoning him are those of the spirit-on any spiritual means test he lines up with the wretched of the earth. Flory's

problem is not how but why to stay alive and his failure to solve it reveals a bankruptcy that is existential rather than financial. (qtd in Holderness et al. 125)

These lines show Orwell's concerns in spirituality rather than material perspective.

Michael Walzer contends that "*Burmese Days* turns a critical eye on English and Burmese alike" (qtd in Holderness, et al.186). It shows Orwell's controversial nature. Similarly, Stephen Ingle asserts that this novel shows the mendacity and social repression. He quotes "This is a story without heroes, a story of mendacity, treachery and hypocrisy, of racial and social repression and hatred" (qtd in Holderness, et al. 231). This expression depicts *Burmese Days* as an anti-heroic novel.

The expressions of the critics above do not reveal clearly how Orwell misrepresents the Occident or the Europeans as 'We' and the Orient or the Burmese as the 'Other'. This study seeks to explore how Orwell's *Burmese Days* distorts the Europeans or the Colonialists and the Burmese people and Burma.

Organization of the Study

This study is divided into three chapters. The First Chapter gives general outline of this study or the whole direction this study is going to take. To explain the issue of misrepresentation in the novel, the Second Chapter will outline the concept of Orientalism and the issue of representation and Othering in Postcolonial discourse. This study is based on the assumption that Orwell's representation of Burma is the outcome of his colonial mentality. Likewise, the Third Chapter, that makes the close reading of the text, reveals the misrepresentation of Burma, the Europeans and Burmese people. This chapter also analyses the representation of other in the novel on the basis of love-hate relationship between the colonizers and the colonized.

CHAPTER TWO

Postcolonial Discourse and Representation

Context of Orientalism

The emergence of multiple postcolonial literary theories has provided us numerous opportunities to interpret a text from various views and perspectives. Orientalism is also a recent postcolonial theory propounded by Edward Said, a Palestine born English writer. Orientalism is a discourse formed by West about the non-West. It is a created reality of the Orient by the Occident. It is a discourse which is made by the west to govern the non-Western countries. The authors who write such discourse are Orientalist, as Said defines it “Anyone who teaches, writes about or researches the orient is an orientalist and what he or researches the orient is an orientalist and what he or she does is orientalism” (*Orientalism 2*). Orientalism represents the first phase of colonialism i.e., generally later part of 14th century to early part of 16th century. The publication of this theory is regarded as the principal catalyst and reference point of postcolonial theory.

It is the Western experience of East or Western thought about the Orient. In this regard, Said defines it as a “style of thought based upon ontological and epistemological distinction made between the orient and the occident” (*Orientalism 2*). Here, Said clarifies that Orientalism is the western taste of the orient. It differentiates between the orient and the occident. While differentiating these two contestants, the former one is placed in inferior position and the latter is placed at superior position. It creates hierarchy between the whites and the non-whites. It marginalizes the orientals. During the colonial period, westerners visited the non-western countries for various purposes and later on they made discourse about those countries on the basis of their own understanding and own imagination. Orientalism,

according to Said, is not an airy European fantasy about the orient but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations, there has been considerable material investment. Said defines that “Orientalism is rather a distribution of geo-political awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical and philological texts” (11). In this context, postcolonial criticism like Orientalism attempts to reexamine the colonial relationship and colonial perspective employed in discourse of cultural representation and the text dealing with colonial relations. Raman Selden writes that “Western values and traditions of thought and literature, including versions of post-modernism, are guilty of repressive ethnocentrism because models of west thought and literature have dominated world culture, marginalizing or excluding non-western traditions and forms of cultural life and expressions” (189). The colonial critics and writers have deconstructed the reality of non western and produced colonizing myths about laziness, deceit and irrationality of the non-western people.

The postcolonial theory deals with the issues like images, representation, hybridity, diaspora, nationalism, problem of migration and so on. Regarding issues under the study of postcolonial theory, the editors of *Post colonial Studies Reader* mention, “migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race gender, place and responses to the influential master discourse imperial Europe... and the fundamental experiences of speaking and writing by which all these come into being” (2). This means that postcolonial theory is not a single index of linguistic, philosophy, literature and culture. It is, rather, a mixed identity of these items all together. So far as this research is concerned, it is based on the theoretical terms like ‘Representation’ and ‘Other.’ These terms are relevant to the theory Orientalism. That is why the common ideas and definitions of Orientalism have been discussed above.

The author under study of this research is mostly presented as the hater of imperialism but the research shows his misattitude to the colonized, especially to the Burmese people. It demonstrates the misrepresentation of the Burmese people and it also confirms author's Eurocentric prejudices. In this connection the relevant terms are discussed below:

Representation in Postcolonial Discourse

The concept of representation is connected with the basic issues of cultural theory. The concept of representation is always related to the notions of memory and interpretation which pervade each and every cultural phenomenon. The postcolonial theory, Orientalism, incorporates the problem of representation and promotion, the role played by content organization as well as by the use of specific techniques and forms of representation, is of great significance in the distinction between the "original" or the "authentic" and the 'copy' or the 'simulacrum.' Since the term is directly connected with culture, it signifies cultural identity. But the signification may not be the real one. So far as the importance of the term representation in this research is concerned, it is directly relevant to the hostility between the West and the East.

In the contemporary theory of postcolonialism, representation is connected to the Foucauldian concept of discourse as representation. According to Foucault, we can find the chain or network of power in discourse. Discourse is power. Every discourse bases on certain knowledge which helps to form power. The discourses by West about East is based on the knowledge they have gained about East during the period of colonization. Said shares similar attitude when he writes, "Orientalism is the generic term that I have been employing to describe the western approach to the orient; Orientalism is a discipline by which the orient was (and is) approached systematically as a topic of learning, discovery, and practice" (*Orientalism* 73). Here

also Said acknowledges Foucauldian concept and argues that western discourses always form images and stereotypes about the East and aim at ruling and dominating over the orient.

Orientalism is also meant the similar kind of discourse which attempts to represent orient from western perspectives. It always creates the hierarchy of superior and inferior or the creator and the created. The non-westerners get their identities only by the mercy of their creators, i.e. Westerners. The Easterners are not what they are but what the Westerners represent them. Edward Said in his *Orientalism* also explores how the East or the Orient is created through Western discursive, practices, which can, however, be known by the dominant discourse of the West and thus assimilated in practices pronounced as inferior or as 'the other' as it does not come up to representation. Said writes:

... orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as a corporate institution for dealing with orient by making statement about is describing it teaching it, setting it and ruling over it in short, orientalism, is Western style for domination restructuring and having authority over the orient.

(*Orientalism* 3)

Postcolonial criticism, which attempts to re-examine the colonial relationship, emerged in resistance to colonial perspectives employed in discourses of cultural representations and the text dealing with colonial relations.

The great writer Dante also used the same stereotypic images and representation in his work *Inferno*. Dante presented the prophet Mohammed being eternally chained from brain to anus in his book. The white authors of different centuries have been representing the Easterners, in the history, according to their taste. The modern American orientalists create the images of the Easterners as

terrorists and give them a new identity. Said writes, “My analysis of the orientalist texts therefore places emphasis on the evidence, which is by no means invisible for such representation as representations not as ‘natural’ depictions of the orient” (*Orientalism* 19). Since Greco-Roman period, the Westerners have been attempting to marginalize the non-westerners by creating the fictitious reality about the orient according to their own taste. They have been endeavoring to represent the Easterners through their imagination. In some context, they show sympathetic attitude towards the orient and exploit even their sentiments.

Edward Said explains that cultural discourse and exchange within a culture commonly circulated is not truth but representations. “The relation between occident and orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degree of a complex hegemony...” (*Orientalism* 5). There has always been an unequal distribution of power among cultures that ultimately affects representation of one culture by the other. There we can find the mingling of loving and hating attitude between the Eastern and Western in terms of representation. We can find inequalities in various modes and process of representation. Said unmasks the ideological disguises of imperialism’s reciprocal relationship between colonial power and knowledge.

In this regard, Padmini Mongia writes, “.....that cultural lands play a part in the great games of colony an empire, of race and its development, so that the last two hundred years of European imperialism had to be understood Vis a Vis the cultural texts that laid the ground work for the buttressed structure of imperialism” (4). The main mission of imperialism is to govern the countries geographically, politically, and culturally. For these reasons, they represent the colonized as they like. In other words, the representation means misrepresentation. The Easterners are always misrepresented by the Westerners to clarify that the latter have been always superior.

Some colonial writers try to express their loving or sympathetic attitude towards the subservient colonized people along with their sense of superiority which always resides in the core of their minds. For example, E.M. Foster, Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad, etc represented the East as the land of 'Other' in various manners. Foster in his novel *Passage to India* did misrepresentation of the Indian people. Indian people are represented as friendly, loving, and helpful on one hand and they are misrepresented as barbaric, uncivilized, and mysterious on the other hand. Such writers have made the romantic representation of the Orient as exotic locale.

Such representation of the East by the West is also the outcome of the colonizer's will to govern the colonized. The representation is just a created medium for colonization. They misrepresent the East in order to prove that they are not, in fact, willing to govern the Orient but it is mandatory for them. So, they exhibit colonial experiences and perception, and write from the imperial perspective. It is, as Boehmer writes, "informed by theories concerning the superiority of European culture and the rightness of empire" (Introduction II). Thus, colonial literatures have created channels for the exchange of colonial images and ideals.

During the time of the peak of imperialism, writers felt it necessary to write about new places and the people. They began writing about the people who inhabited the lands they (Colonizers) claimed the natives / the colonized. But the problem was that of truly understanding the native people, alien people, native culture, geography and the landscape. They were surprised to see the situations or the life styles of the native people. They found the behaviours and attitudes of people completely unreadable. Then after they commenced to represent these people and culture according to their own taste and with the use of their own familiar vocabularies, their own metaphors and tropes, as Boehmer argues, "Strangeness was made

comprehensible by using everyday names, dependable textual conventions, both rhetorical and Syntactic” (14). This process was continued by classifying them as barbaric and degenerate, either dangerous or alluring.

The most important function of the colonial writings is to reveal the ways in which the world is dichotomized in various manners. They represent the degradation of other human beings as natural, an innate part of their degenerate or barbarian state. The non-European people are represented as less human, less civilized, as child or savage or head-less mass or, as inferior only because they are different from the whites.

The writers and their works are centered only in the issue of justifying the mission of colonization. Their endeavours are only to cherish the idea of white superiority. Said argues that “It is Europe that articulates the Orient; this articulation is the prerogative, not of a puppet master, but of a genuine creator, whose life giving power represents, animates, constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries” (*Orientalism*56). Any process of colonial writing exposes the love hate relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. Colonial writings are centered on the power relation between the Occident and the Orient.

Boehmer reminds us the very idea when she writes, “Stereotypes of the Other as indolent malingers, shirkers, lay bouts, degenerate versions of the pastoral idler, were the stock in trade of colonialist writings. The white men represented themselves as the archetypal workers and provident profit maker” (39). Thus, colonialist writings always have represented the whites as intellectual, superior, civilizer, master of the world and apostle of light and the non whites as degenerate, barbaric and in need of European masters to civilize and to uplift them out of their filth. They also have created a hierarchy of race, which represents ‘we’ for the race belonging to the

superior position and 'they' for the race belonging to the inferior position. In this regard Edward Said clarifies about Conrad and his representation, as:

Conrad seems to be saying 'we' westerners will decide who is a good native or bad, because all natives has sufficient existence by Virtue of our recognition. We created them, we taught them to speak and think, and when they rebel they simply confirm our views of them as silly children duped by some of their western masters. (*Culture and Imperialism XX*)

The above quotation shows that Conrad is an imperialist and thinks that imperialism is a system since he is the product of his own time and brought up and educated from the Western colonial heritage. Thus, his representation of Africa is filtered through the stereotypes of Africanized discourse. He cannot see and believe that Africa has its own intact history and culture distinct from European one. Thus, the Orient must pass through the learned grids and codes provided by the orientalist.

The colonial writers always create binaries regarding the Orient as inferior, 'other', indigenous, uncivilized, female, patient; and placing Westerners as 'superior', universal, male, doctor, civilized, and so on. These epithets promote an awareness in the part of the non- westerners to create their own existence, These kinds of binary oppositions constitute a gap between what they do or write. Texts sometimes represent the unconscious bias of the writers as clarified by Said in *Orientalism*:

In any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as delivered presence, but a represent or a representation. The value efficacy, strength, apparent variety of a written statement about the orient therefore relies very little and cannot instruct mentally depend, on orient as such on the contrary, the written statement is a presence to

the render by virtue of the having excluded, displaced mode supererogatory any such real thing as “the orient”. Thus all of orientalism stands forth and away from the orient that orientalism makes sense at all depends more on the west than on orient. And these representation rely upon institution, traditions, agreed upon codes understanding for their effects, not upon a distant and amorphous orient. (21-22)

Said, in the above extract, demonstrates the gulf between the Orient actually is and the Orient that is represented in various genres of literature.

He further clarifies about misrepresentation of the Orient by the Westerners or the travelers who have never seen the Orient as it is. Further adds that the representations that are made by the Westerners are partially real and mostly these objects have only a fictional reality. In this connection, Said argues that “this universal practice of designating in one’s mind a familiar space which is “ours” and an unfamiliar space which is “theirs” is a way of making geographical distinction that can be entirely arbitrary” (Orientalism 53). These lines explain the hostile relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. The relationship is ambivalent because the colonized subject is never simple and completely opposed to the colonizer” (12). The process of acculturation is not simple, so both of these groups always have conflicting relation with each other. They represent the problems of establishing intimate and meaningful relationships between two social and cultural groups.

The colonial writers rarely present the non-Europeans or non-whites as the leading characters of their works. The indigenous characters are rejected to give any significant role. If any role is given, that is always a negative one. Joseph Conrad one of the Colonial writers is branded as ‘thorough racist’ by Chinua Achebe. Achebe has

made a severe critique of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in his paper entitled "An image of Africa: Conrad's Heart of Darkness" as:

Heart of Darkness projects the image of Africa as "the other world" the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by opens on the River Thames but the actual story will take place on the River Congo, the very antithesis of Thames. The River Congo quite decidedly no service and enjoys no old-age pension. We are told that going up river was like traveling back to the earliest beginning of the world. (1373)

In this above extract Conrad, as Achebe mentions, not only dichotomizes Thames and Congo; good and bad, but implies that Thames has overcome its darkness and bestiality, whereas Congo is still in darkness and bestiality and it needs guidance, help and light from European rational civilization to rescue its people from the barbaric situations.

Thus, the world represented in colonialist fiction shows the emptiness of indigenous characters. The European or white characters are demonstrated as adventurous and courageous. The European characters play important role. Boehmer also thinks similarly and she states that "The drama that there is in their drama. Almost without exception there is no narrative interest without European involvement and intervention (69). The natives are headless mass lacking individual identity as human beings. So, the colonial discourses, in fact, focuses on the love-hate relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. The colonized are always shown as inferior, barbarous, uncivilized and in need of leadership, incapable of self-governance and in managing their resources. The whites are always shown at the apex

of everything, and as source of every significant activities. Said presents 'canonical' view of orientalism that is supposed to have been existed even in the time of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope and Byron. Orientalists have certain stereotypes to represent land, people, culture and politics of the East.

Said's work on orientalism shows how the Western image produces myths about the laziness, and irrationality of the orientals. Colonial discourses present the Orient as the liar, suspicious and lethargic. In contrary, the white race is presented as clear, direct, noble mature, rational and virtuous. The West always represents oriental people as unruly, inscrutable or marginal. Orient is not what it is but how it is orientalized by the westerners. Said in "Crisis in orientalism" contends, "the political and cultural circumstances has flourished, draw attention to the debased position of the East or oriental as an object of study" (298).

So it carries out a fact that the Westerners do not represent the reality but they always represent the Easterners by the use of various unusual images. Though some of the writers pretend to show their sympathy to the Eastern people and their situations, they are in fact motivated by their will to dominate the orient. They express love and sympathy to the Eastern peoples as a new mode of power to govern them. So the multiple representations which are made in colonial discourses are only to justify their mission of colonization in various forms.

The Concept of "We" and "Other"

"Other" is an important theoretical term in relation to the postcolonial theory and specially to orientalism. It is a colonial term coined by the West to represent the East. It directly represents the third world which were once colonized by the West and those which have been still colonized. Since the beginning of the human civilization, Europe has put itself in the centre and the rest in the periphery. The term 'Other' is

created in relation to the term 'self' or 'we'. It is directly connected with the theory of exclusiveness. It elucidated the power relation between the Occident and the Orient. It is created just to dichotomize between the 'West' and the 'rest'.

A main theoretical source for the term lies in the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel and his commentary on the mutually defining relations of Master and Slave and then in psychoanalytical theory of Jacques Lacan, the 'other' is the image of a unified and co-ordinate self the child sees also other children with whom it is in a relation of recognition, rivalry and competition. The 'Other' is not a direct interlocutor but the symbolic place, the site upon which the subject is constituted; the something it lacks but must seek. I, therefore, directs the subject's desire and destiny. So far as the term is concerned with the postcolonial theory, it is the Western creation to govern or dominate over the 'Orient'. The Orient is always 'Other' of the Occident. It is to subjugate or subordinate the Orient. The term is also relevant to the culture. The western culture always tries to justify itself as the superior or the centre and the non-western culture as inferior or the other.

The Westerners always create binary opposition by representing the Orient as always away from mainstream in every aspect. So, the term is relevant with the cultural identity and power relation. We live our lives in the context of social relationships with others. The concept of other is related with political ideology. The colonial discourses helped to form the images and stereotypes of the orient. In this connection, Homi K. Bhaba writes:

An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of 'otherness'. Fixing as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism in a paradoxical mode of representation. It connotes

rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repletion. (449)

This above extract clarifies that the colonial writers always follow the fixed and stereotyped construction while representing the countries and people they had once colonized.

The discourse of West, representing everything non-western as inferior manifests West's desire to govern, to dominate and to control 'the other' and that, this attitude is at colonial heart. In this regard Boehmer in her studies of colonial literature and their process of othering remarks:

In orient, Africa or Latin America is consistently described as mysterious, grotesque, or margin and in general hostile to European understanding. It is an "awful lifelessness", or vast and stupefying, reminding the British observer as O. Douglas noted, of the uncertainty of all things.... It is a condition which appears to emerged in past out of the radical incongruity between the individual and the alien world in which he finds himself. (90)

Orientalists were characterized as passive, seductive and generally effeminate. Said opines that the colonial discourses serve this colonial purpose in an effective manner.

The colonialists attempt to design the fixed geographical, cultural and political concept about the orient in the mind of the readers. It produces a kind of stereotype of the orient describing as an object of study stamped with an "otherness" so as to make it easier to have power and authority over the orient. Said seems to be right in saying that "an unbroken arc of knowledge connects the European or the Western statesman and the Western orientalist; it forms the rim of stage containing the orient and that the scope of orientation exactly matched the scope of Empire" (Crisis in Orientalism

204). The Westerners believed that the Easterners were not able to govern themselves. They also meant that every scientific and technological discoveries were made in the West and the Eastern people were primitive, barbaric, lethargic, ignorant, childlike and effeminate.

The colonizers, with these fake evidences about the orient, tried to justify their mission of colonization. They thought that it was white man's burden to civilize them, to educate them and to make them human. In this manner they always created hierarchy between the colonizers and colonized as the superior race and inferior race respectively. They believed that the Orient would never change if they had not launched their mission to change it. The white colonizers thought that since they were the superior race, they had a right to punish the Easterners; and also that the former could give the latter even death punishment because 'they' mainly understood force and violence best beside, 'they' deserved to be ruled.

Said, expresses similar concept in his "Crisis in Orientalism" when he says, "when oriental struggle against colonial occupation, you must say...that orientals have never understood the meaning of self government in the way 'we' do (207). The colonizers mean to justify the colonization by claiming that the mission of colonization is not to possess the orient, not to practice the power or authority over the orient but to civilize, educate and to teach them the way to govern the state. In this connection, Said refers to Abdel Malek as Calling this situation, "The hegemonism of possessing minorities and anthropocentrism allied with Eurocentrism: a white middle class westerner believes it his human prerogative not only to manage the non-white world but also to own it, just because by definition, it is not quite as human as we are" (307). This research is also based on the similar issue as to how the colonial literature produced the stereotypical images of the non-west as 'the other' of Europe.

The Orient is governed and dominated by discourse produced by Orientalists rather than material, military or political power because discourse makes the orient as subject class. The colonial discourse, not only creates power to rule the other, but it also contains the possibility of resistance to it from the other. The production of otherness is a must for colonialism. In order to create its identity and, then, consolidate colonial power over 'the other'. Said, in his, *The World, the Text and the Critic*, rightly observes the methods and discourses of Western scholarship confine non-European cultures to a position of sub-ordination. Oriental texts come to inhabit a realm without development of power, one that exactly corresponds to be. Said, here, intensifies that the colonial relation is maintained and guided by colonial discourse, so much so, that such a discourse, licensed with power, becomes the sole force of colonialism.

The colonial discourses have created 'other' to institutionalize the power of the West over 'the other.' So, 'the other' always has the shifting position in colonial discourse. The identity of the orient as 'the other' always goes on changing in relation of it with the occident. Westerners think the source of Easterner's life is the West. They have been existing in the mercy of their creator and savior. i.e. 'the occident'. They acknowledge as if they know non-western world's regions, as Said puts in *Culture and Imperialism*, "have no life, history of culture to speak of, no independence or integrity worth representing without the west" (XIX). They have always ignored the fact that the non western worlds also have their own histories, lives and cultures with integrities equally worth representing as the Western one.

In this connection Said writes that "Most Americans have felt about their southern neighbors that independence is to be wished for them so long as it is the kind of independence we approve of" (XVIII). It means that the colonized ones never want

themselves to be independent, they always wait to be imposed by the authority of their master. If they want independence it is not a concern, but if 'we' (Westerners) want 'them' to be independent than it only concerns.

This research centers on the very issues of 'presentation' or 'Othering' or the misrepresentation of the Burmese people as 'the other' in the novel *Burmese Days* by George Orwell.

CHAPTER THREE

Distorted Representation of Burma, the Europeans and the Burmese

Burma

George Orwell, in his novel *Burmese Days*, represents Burma as exotic terrifying, barbaric, uncivilized and underdeveloped land. To justify the mission of colonization, he demonstrates Burma as untraveled, unvisited, and the unknown territory of the world. Edward Said in his *Orientalism* writes that “The orient was almost European invention and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences” (1). Orwell represents Burma as an alien world.

Similarly, Chinua Achebe illustrates, how Joseph Conrad distorts the geographical representation of Africa. For instance, Achebe writes:

Africa as setting and backdrop, which eliminates the African as human factor. Africa as a human factor. Africa as a metaphysical battlefield devoid of all wandering European enters at his peril can nobody see the preposterous and prefer arrogance in this reducing Africa. . . . The real point is the dehumanization of Africa and African, which this age-long attitude has fostered and continuous to foster in the word. (1376)

Conrad and Orwell have almost similar attitude to the orient.

Through Flory, Orwell describes the Burmese land as barren; “Last year we didn’t have a spot of rain till June. Look at that bloody sky, not a cloud in it like one of those damned great enamel saucepans. God! what’d you give to be in Piccadilly now, eh?” (16). To valorize the sense of othering, Orwell further writes “These natives don’t feel any uneasiness with this weather. They are habituated to it. They can easily endure the sharp heat of the sun” (204). Flory, commenting on the native

people adds: “For the native all well, their skulls are adamant. But for us sun stroke ever menaces. Very deadly is the sun upon European” (118). These remarks almost match with Said when he writes that “the westerners call the non-Western world as the land of barbarians. In other words they form a familiar space in their mind as “Ours” and an unfamiliar space beyond ‘ours’ is ‘their’. It is way of making geographical distinctions that can be entirely arbitrary” (*Orientalism* 54). We can find in *Burmese Days* the Burmese being represented as barbarians and Burma as a land of barbarians.

Said further points out that the whites always mask their faces to present the occident as democratic and the orient as despotic. These lines in the novel also share the same attitude:

It is a stifling, stultifying world in which to live. It is a world in which every word and every thought is censored. In England it is hard even to imagine such an atmosphere. Everyone is free in England; we sell our souls in public and buy them back in private among our friends. Free speech is unthinkable. All other kinds of freedom are permitted. You are free to be a drunkard, an idler, a coward, a backbiter, a fornicator; but you are not free to think for yourself. (65)

Here, Burma is presented as a country where there is no freedom and justice.

Everything is censored and in contrary England is presented as a free country. So by creating such images about the orient in their discourses, the westerners just mean to support their mission.

Orwell has presented Flory, the central white character, being corrupted, ruined, intoxicated and enchanted by the land of barbarians, i.e. Burma. Said remarks that the orientalist always represented Other’s land as magical lands, “they make

romantic representation of the orient as exotic locale, land of barbarians, enchanting land..." (118). The Westerners believe that they themselves have to undergo various sufferings and problems while civilizing, educating and enhancing the barbarians. The following lines about Flory help to support the Saidian concept of representation, Flory had dodged the War because the East had corrupted him and he did not want to exchange whisky ...and his Burmese girls for the boredom of the parade ground and the strain of cruel marches... Eight years of Eastern life, fever, loneliness and intermittent drinking, had set their mark on him" (64). These lines reveal that Flory has been ruined, diminished and disastered by Eastern culture and native people.

To escape himself from the feeling of loneliness in being away from his homeland, England, Flory takes to drinking and making love with Burmese girls. He has forgotten almost everything about England. He kills himself at the end of the novel and the reason behind his death is also his Burmese mistress Ma Hla May. She demands money from him in an open place and Elizabeth also hears her and leaves her alone. Consequently he shoots himself dead. This further implies that the Burmese people are responsible for his death. He is supposed to have ruined himself in his attempt of civilizing the native people.

The colonial writers have always dichotomized the non-Western world as the world of 'others' and the Western world as the center of everything. The sense of othering through geographical representation is an apparent style of the colonizers. Through the images of the land also they mean to establish a distinct kind of attitudes of the readers about the orient. Said further states, "It is enough for the readers to set up these boundaries in their minds, 'they' become they accordingly and both their territory and mentality are designate as different from 'ours' (54). Said here intensifies how the Westerners attempt to create the central position for them.

Orwell, as a colonial writer, demonstrates Burma as the land of Others or the land of barbarians in the novel: “O Western wind, when wilt thou blow, that the small rain down can rain?” (230). Even wind has been addressed as ‘Western’ wind. It has not been raining in Burma for a long time, so the narrator has called for Western wind. The colonizers deconstruct the geographical reality of the orient according to their own taste. They represent the orient as an alien world. They believe that the colonizers are charmed, attracted, fooled by the land Orwell cites in the novel, “Flory had dodged the War because the East had already corrupted him and he has been enchanted by this terrific and exotic land” (64). Flory, a white timber merchant in Burma, is thought to be hypnotized by whisky, girls and the geographical charm of Burma. In this way, as Orwell was an imperial police in Burma and though he had direct experience of Burma, he creates an imaginary geography of Burma to inferiorize Burma and the Burmese people in this novel.

The Europeans/Westerners

The novel *Burmese Days* presents Westerners as superior, universal, masculine, civilized, and so on. Similarly, everything connected with Europeans is taken as supreme and sacred. There is a European club, where only Europe is taken as supreme and as, “a spiritual Citadel, the real seat of the British power, the Nirvana for which native official and millionaires pine in vain” (14). As Said opines that the Europeans always keep themselves in the prior and ruling position and the non-Europeans in the secondary or subordinated position. The Burmese characters are marginalized in comparison to European characters. The Europeans are the power holders and the Burmese are shown to be longing to equalize themselves with those white colonizers. Flory also clarifies the same fact in the novel.

The mission of colonization is different from what the colonizers say. They are

the real hypocrites, they are not what they look. They are in the East not to upgrade the East but to degrade it. Another important white character Mr. Macgregor has also misattitude towards the natives. He is the deputy commissioner in Burma. The commissioner orders him to elect a native member in the European club. Though he proposes the subject in the club, he himself seems to be in dilemma. He is not as frank to the natives as he is to the whites. He also shares the similar nature of superiority as other whites. Dr. Veraswami rejects even Flory's opinion and becomes furious when Flory reveals the hidden reality of the white colonizers. Veraswami, disapproves Flory and says, "Your officials are civilizing us, elevating us to their level, from pure public spirit. It is a magnificent record of self- sacrifice" (36). The Europeans claim themselves to be the creator, like God, and think that they're the determiner. As Said, in his *Culture and Imperialism*, has put forth the idea, the Westerners think that independence is not to be awarded due to the Easterners' wish but it is approved by the Westerners.

But in reality, among the white characters, the sense of hatred is stronger than the loving and sympathetic attitude they show to the Burmese people. Through these characters, the author has dichotomized between the Western and Eastern people. As Said opines:

The idea of representation is a theatrical one: the orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined. On this stage will appear figures whose role is to represent the larger whole from which they emanate. The orient then seems to be, not an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe. (63)

Ellis, one of the European characters, expresses his acute hatred toward the native

when he hears the decision of recruiting the native member in the European club:

... it's a different matter when one talks of bringing nigger in here.

Here's that old fool Macgregor wanting to bring a nigger into this club

for no reason whatever, and you all sit down under it without a word.

Good God what are we supposed to be doing in this country? If we

aren't going to rule, why the devil don't we clear out? Here we are

supposed to be governing a set of damn black swine who have been

slaves since the beginning of history, and instead of ruling them in the

only way they understand, we go and treat them as equals. (20-21)

Ellis is a crazy white fellow who always ignores the identity of the other. He does not want the black Indians to be independent from their governance. He is a kind of European that Said explains in his theory, "There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate, the latter must be dominated, which means their land being occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled their blood and treasure put at the dispose of one or another western power" (36). Said writes that the westerners always want to lengthen their domination over the East in various form. But what they desire is only to impose their superiority over the Orientals.

Ellis is such an ill-mannered European that he does not like the native Christians. He does not think them to be appropriate to follow his religion and to shake hand with him. He says, "I can't stick the way these damned native Christians come shoving into our church" (23). Ellis reveals the colonial mentality which always resides in the mind of British people. At any cost, he is not ready to approve those 'outcast niggers' as the fellow Christian. Ellis reminds that though they are baptized as Christians they can never be similar to their masters. He never approves the membership of the native in the European club. He puts forward his opinion, as:

No natives in this club! It's by constantly giving way over. Small things like that we have ruined the Empire. This country's only rotten with sedition because we've been too soft with them. The only possible policy is to treat them like the dirt they are. This is a critical moment and we want every bit of prestige we can get. We've got to hang together and say, "We are the masters, and you beggars. (27-28)

This expression depicts the colonizer's feeling of superiority of the European's and their hatred of the non-western.

This above extract shares similarity with Said's comments on Joseph Conrad and his representation of the Eastern people:

Conrad seems to be saying 'we westerners will decide who is a good native or bad, because all the natives have sufficient existence by virtue of our recognition. We created them, we taught them to speak and think, and when they reveal they simply confirm our views of them as silly children, duped by some of their western masters.

(Cultural and Imperialism XX)

As the above extract shows Conrad as an imperialist, Ellis also seems to share the similar attitudes.

As Said says that the Europeans take for granted that their language is the only supreme language of the world, Ellis is such a proud fellow that he does not like the Burmese servants to use the English language perfectly. He uses vulgar words and scolds them when they speak English language. "We shall have to sack this fellow if he gets to talk English too well. I can't stick servants who talk English. D' you hear, butler" (22). He seems to be suffering from paranoia, as he feels inferior when he finds the native people using perfect English. He has an attitude that the native people

should not be allowed to behave as a white man does. There should be a gulf, a gap of master and slave. He thinks that the whites are born as masters and the non whites as slaves.

Elizabeth, Verall, Westfield, Mr. and Mrs Lackstreens are also instrumental to represent or misrepresent the native people. Elizabeth has arrived in Burma from France but her mind is pre-occupied with the feelings and ideas about the native people as irrational, barbaric, inferior, animal like, and so on. She shows her distaste of the natives. She thinks herself to be inferior being with the native people. It is clear when she says:

Surely it was not right to be sitting among the black people like this, almost touching them, in the scent of their garlic and their sweat? Why was she not beck at the club with the other white people? Why had he brought her here, among this horde of natives, to watch, this hideous and savage spectacles? (102)

As Said claims, Elizabeth has also biased attitude towards the native people. Said further says that in each cases the oriental is contained and represented by dominating frame works. The orientals are irrational, depraved, child like, different, whereas the Europeans are rational, virtuous, mature, and normal.

In certain colonial discourse the presence of native people was entirely erased from the land they occupy. In this novel, Elizabeth is filled up with doubt and fear to think that she will be highly criticized if the other Europeans know that she has been attending a cultural program of the natives. It does not mean that she is interested in the programmes of the natives but she is afraid, herself, does not like to be in touch with these 'untouchable creatures'. In fact, their identity as human is erased. The following lines present her distaste of the native people. Orwell describes:

Elizabeth sat down in a very uncomfortable frame of mind. She was perfectly certain that it could not be right to accept these people's hospitality. One of the Burmese girls had begun Flory and fanning Elizabeth... Elizabeth felt very foolish with the girl fanning the back of the neck and the Chinaman grinning in front of her. (127)

Elizabeth feels uneasy to stay in company with the native people. Her preoccupied concepts about the non-whites always trouble her.

The blacks were considered to be as less human, less civilized, as child or savage or headless mass or, they were depicted as inferiors only because they were different from the whites. She seems very rude to the natives she prefers Verall to Flory only because Verall hates the Burmese as much as she does. He does not have any sympathy towards the Burmese people and their poverty. Verall is a perfect racist. He says to Flory, "You ought to know these beggars are not to be trusted" (187). This indicates his hatred of the natives. He shows indifference not only to the natives but also to his fellow Europeans for being proud of a militant and dislike of the non-militant.

Elizabeth always represents the Burmese people as the others. Though she has just come from France living a downtrodden and very pathetic life, she marginalizes the Burmese people as untouchable and unbelievable. She breaks her relation with Flory only because she comes to know the relationship between Flory and Ma Hla May, a native woman. Said's points of misrepresentation match here when he says that the Westerners represent the Orient as the negative, underground image or impoverished other of Western rationality. So, the Burmese people are always the others of the westerners in the novel. No matter, either it is in the sense of civilization or sex or rationality or economy or education or politics but the Burmese are

stereotypic other of the Europeans. As Westfield dichotomizes these two races when he says to Elizabeth, "Remember laddie, always remember, we are *sahiblog* and they are dirt!" (190). Yes, this is how they mean to marginalize the Burmese race as their inferior other.

The terms "Sahiblog" and 'dirt' contrast with each other and create different identities. What they deliver, is the unchanging image of, in Said's words, "a subject race, dominated by a race that knows them and what is good of them better than they could possibly know themselves" (Orientalism 35). *Burmese Days* also reflects the very unchanging images of the subject race, i.e. the Indian race. In Ellis's words the subject race shouldn't be allowed to have any revolutionary spirit or they should not have any patriotic feeling: "these bloody nationalists should be boiled in oil" (65).

The Burmese

Burmese Days presents the Burmese as inferior, feminine, corrupt, uncivilized, and so on. U Po Kyin, a sub divisional magistrate and one of the Burmese characters, is represented as corrupt, servile, tricky and barbaric. The lines "His practice, a much safer one, was to take bribes from both side and then decide the case on strictly legal grounds. This won him a useful reputation for impartiality" (3) present him as a corrupt figure. Similarly, he is shown conspiring against his native people or the Burmese, to get promoted in the higher rank. The narrator writes, "To fight on the side of the British, to become a parasite upon them had been his ruling ambition, even as a child" (2). These lines add his servile nature to the colonizers.

The colonial writers create such images and characters to justify their mission. In this regard, Said asserts that: "Such "images" of the orient as this are images in that they represent or stand for a very large entity, otherwise impossibly diffuse, which they enable one to grasp or see. They are also characters related to such

types as the braggarts, misers or gluttons produced by Theophrastus, La Bruyere, or Selden” (56). The oriental characters are represented according to the Western taste.

The main Burmese characters, Dr. Veraswami and U Po Kyin, are endowed with the servile feeling or the feelings of inferiority. Dr. Veraswami puts his opinion to his European friend Flory: “My friend, my friend, you are forgetting the oriental character. How is it possible to have developed us with our apathy and superstition? At least you have brought to us law and order” (37). The Europeans always represent the Orientals as superstitious, powerless and desiring to acquire the power.

Veraswami is presented as a mimic man, showing his servile attitude to Flory. He praises the colonizers for bring law and order in Burma. And he says it is the Eurocentric belief of the Westerners to present themselves as superior and the orient as the inferior. Both Veraswami and U Po Kyin are enthusiastic to get themselves recruited in European club. They represent the Western production of the Orient. They always analogize the club and white skin with prestige and the yellow skin with barbarity.

Said opines, “It views the orient as something whose existence is not only displayed but has remained fixed in time and place for the west” (Orientalism 108). Said remarks that the orientals are known and represented as they have been asserted by the Europeans. They always pretend to be sympathizing with the weakness, helplessness and inferiority of the non-westerners. They always create the Eastern characters according to their desire and satisfy their inner desire as governor or creator. U Po Kyin is also one of them, he is plotting against Veraswami because he wants himself to be recruited in the European club. He also relates the club and the whites’ companion with prestige though Veraswami and U Po Kyin, are fellow natives, they have a great tussle of being elected to the European club. It shows that

their ultimate goal is to parallelize themselves with their white masters. They are careless about their native problems but more careful about their self-interests.

The following extract shows how U Po Kyin weaves an unimaginable conspiracy against Dr. Veraswami and says that:

I am tired of eating with my fingers and associating only with Burmans- poor, inferior people- and living, as you might say, like a miserable Township officer. Money is not enough; I should like to feel that I have risen in the world as well...And now I will tell you the real reason why I am intriguing against Dr. Veraswami... the Europeans are going to elect one native to their club if Veraswami, is disgraced. I shall be elected to the Club. (139-40)

Moreover, he tells his wife, “And now I will tell you the real reason why I am intriguing against Veraswsami. It is in my mind to do something that is really magnificent. Something noble, glorious!” (139). The Burmese are shown quarrelling and intriguing with each other in order to attain the so-called higher position. Their mentality is poisoned by the fake beliefs of the white colonizer. They are not really conscious and patriotic Burmese but they are the Western representation mimic men of the Burmese people, who want them to be governed by the white colonizer.

Apart from these vital Burmese characters, there are some minor characters who are also endowed with the feelings of inferiority. The servants always address their white masters as the holy god. Ma Hla May, Flory’s mistress, although she wants to boast of her position as a ‘bo-kadaw’—a white man’s wife but in fact she does not like Flory. It becomes clear when he puts his hand on her breast. Ba Pe, is her secret lover. This shows that Orwell has presented her as a fake lover and her belief on lechery is a form of witchcraft, giving a woman magical powers over a man,

until in the end she can weaken him to a half-idiotic slave.

None of the Burmese citizens is shown as independent. They directly or indirectly depend on the European characters. Ma Hla May thinks about Flory that “the whiteness of his skin had a fascination for her, because of its strangeness and the sense of power it gave her” (50). Veraswami gets ruined at the end of the novel because of the demise of his European friend and in contrary U Po Kyin is promoted to higher rank because of his complete servile nature to the colonizers. Both the ruin and the upgrading are relevant with European interest. The struggle between the West and the East is to achieve the power. The presentation of characters is influenced by the colonial mentality. The colonialists always fictionalize the social, economical, political, geographical and individual situation of the orient. They represent the Easterners how they want them to be not what they are in fact. They create the characters as the means to gratify their colonial longings.

Said in *Culture and Imperialism* assumes that the Europeans always characterize the non-white characters as inferior creatures who always aspire the white colonizers to govern them. The following remarks by Dr. Veraswami further supports the idea of Edward Said “Could the Burmese trade themselves? Can they make machineries, ships, railways, roads? They are helpless without you. What would happen to the Burmese forests if the English were not here” (36). Veraswami’s concept is not the real concept of a Burmese officer but the pre determined concept of the Westerners about the Orient. The Burmese are always represented as passive follower. They follow every principle of the white Europeans. They are mentally blank of their own thoughts and principles.

In this connection, Edward Said writes, “The West is the actor, the Orient a passive reactor. The West is the spectator, the judge and jury of every fact of Oriental

behavior” (Orientalism 109). The Burmese citizens are not free to think and act independently. The colonization has imposed the sense of inferiority in them that they always bow themselves in front of the supreme power of the Europeans. The role is already determined.

George Orwell the presents the Burmese people as ‘others’ by revealing the conflict between the white and the black characters. Said connects the issue of representation with the Foucauldian concept of power. Foucault takes every discourse as power. Every discourse creates certain knowledge about certain people or area and the very knowledge functions as power. Said acknowledges this Foucauldian concept and further writes that the Europeans also always represent the non-European characters as ‘Other’, ‘inferiors’, ‘barbaric’ childlike and so on. This helps to form a discourse which creates power and consequently they became successful to justify their false and tricky mission of civilization.

This novel also presents the Burmese as ‘murderers,’ ‘rapist,’ ‘prostitute,’ ‘plotter,’ ‘sexually arrogant,’ ‘animal like’ and so on. For instance, U Po Kyin is introduced as a conspirator and rapist in the beginning of the novel. He represents almost all the Burmese people as corrupt, servile, murderer and rapist. Later on, in the middle of the novel, the natives kill Maxwell, a white European, to avenge their relatives’ murder. The Europeans kill a native while suppressing the so-called native uprising. In fact, there is not any revolution it is just a rumor made by U Po Kyin in order to diminish the prestige of Dr. Veraswami.

When a white man is killed by the natives, the issue has been given great importance. The natives are tried to be justified as the real murderers. The Europeans want to avenge the murder at any rate. More than eight hundred Burmese are killed in Burma but they matter nothing but the murder of a white man is given great

importance. In this regard, Westfield tells Ellis in relation to the incident as; “Two corpses against their one--best we can do.”(240). Similarly, Ellis supporting Westfield about punishing the natives refers to how the Germans attacked the black people: “The good old Germans! they knew how to treat the niggers. Reprisals! Rhinoceros hide, whops! Raid their villages, kill their cattle, burn their crops! decimate them, blow them from the guns” (241). The conversation shows the hatred of the Europeans towards the natives and the servility of the Burmese.

Ellis wants the whites to kill 50 natives for killing one white. He turns furious with the boys who laugh at him and provoke him. He scolds then "You damned, dirty niggers!" he shouted down at them. ‘You got a surprise that time, didn’t you? Come up on this veranda and fight me, all four of you! You daren’t four to one and you daren’t face me! Do you call yourselves men? You sneaking, mangy little rats!’ (243). Ellis treats Burmese people as untouchable being. There are two Eurassians who are sons of a white father and a native mother. Flory is prejudiced toward them. He describes them to Elizabeth, as “They’re Eurassians---sons of white fathers and native mothers....there is nothing they can do except cadge, unless they chuck all pretension to being Europeans. And you can’t expect the poor devils to do that. Their drop of white blood is the sole asset they’ve got” (118-19). In this way they are taken as outcasts. They are represented as worthless foibles. They pretend as if they are whites but they are sharply hated by the whites. Ellis hates them too much, since he is a perfect racist who discriminates the other races except whites as non-humans.

The Europeans trademark the natives as criminal because of their physical structures as well. Elizabeth remarks to Flory “...a person with a sloping forehead is a criminal type”. Similarly, Elizabeth dislikes the native women because of their structure and color and says: “Aren’t they too simply dreadful? So coarse-looking;

like some kind of animal. Do you think anyone could think those women attractive?” (116). In this manner, almost every colonial discourse presents everything non-western as inferior and manifests the colonial desire to control, to govern and to dominate the non-westerners.

Love-Hate Relationship between the Colonizers and the Colonized

The novel *Burmese Days* also focuses on the subject of love-hate relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. Mostly the characters are White colonizers and the Burmese colonized. There is conflict between them in matters of politics, identity, culture and many other aspects. There is representation of the Burmese people as the ‘Other’ which is characterized by the love-hate relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. As other colonial writers, Orwell presents the Burmese people as inferior, barbaric, uncivilized, corrupt, uneducated, servile and animal like creature. Said in his *Orientalism* writes:

Finally, the very power and scope of Orientalism produced not only a fair amount of exact positive knowledge about the orient but also a kind of second-order knowledge-linking in such place as the “Oriental” tale, the mythology of the mysterious East, notions of Asian inscrutability-with life of its own. (52)

In this connection, Said clarifies that the colonialists create free-floating mythology of the Orient. George Orwell also creates imaginary reality of the Orient as the Other in various manners. Burma and its people are characterized by Western experience and thought. Burmese people are not, in fact, what they are but how they are presented by Orwell. As Said says “what the orientalist does is to confirm the orient in the readers’ eyes; he neither tries nor wants to unsettle already from convictions” (65). The readers are misguided about world represented in colonialist fiction. The colonialist fiction

misrepresents the indigenous characters as well as the European or white characters.

U Po Kyin expresses his complete servile and subservient nature and the superiority of the white masters. Here, in the lines given below he explains to his wife the European club as a sacred religious spot:

The European club, that remote, mysterious temple, that holy of holies far harder of entry than Nirvana! Po Kyin, the naked gutterboy of Mandalay, the thieving clerk and obscure official would enter that sacred place, call Europeans 'Old chap', drink whisky and soda and knock white balls to and fro on the green table!... It was a prospect that would have dazzled anybody. (140)

Even Kyin's wife has attraction to acquire the power. Earlier she opposes her husband and makes him aware but later on she is presented as listening to Kyin's intrigues without disapproval. Behind every representation there is the power motive.

The following lines expressed by Veraswami also confirm the colonizers' attitude towards the Indian people:

'... how discouraging is the work of a doctor in this country! These villagers –dirty, ignorant savages! Even to get them to come to hospital is all we can do, and they will die of gangrene or carry a tumor as large as a melon for ten years rather than face the knife. And such medicines as their own so-called doctors give to them! Herbs gathered under the new moon, tigers' whiskers, rhinoceros horn, urine, menstrual blood! How men can drink such compound is disgusting. (143-44)

The extract above expresses of how the non-Europeans are represented as conservative, superstitious, traditional, back-ward, unscientific, and so on. They are always inferiorized as interesting to attach themselves to pre-historic age. They are

unknown to the modern scientific invention of the world.

This concept is further justified by means of the two *chokras*, who work in European club. When they are ordered to go to call on the police they burst into tears thinking that they will be haunted by Maxwell's ghost, who has been murdered by the natives. The Burmese characters are presented to be more faithful to their so-called masters rather than to their fellow Burmese people. The discourse of the West, representing everything nonwestern as inferior, manifests the West's desire to govern, to dominate and to control the 'Other' and that attitude is colonial at heart. They focus on the sense of othering and marginalizing of the non Westerners, and sometimes this process is characterized by the love-hate relationship between them.

This novel also centers on the subject of conflict between these two cultural contestants. There are White Europeans and Burmese characters who share wrong attitude to each other. Such discourse assists the colonizer to govern the Easterners. They essentialize the Easterners as they like. U Po Kyin's lines justify this concept when he says, "No European cares anything about proofs when a man has a black face, suspicion is proof" (8). These lines are similar to Said's opinion. "In a sense the limitations of orientalism are, as I said earlier, the limitations that follow upon disregarding, essentializing, denuding the humanity of another culture, people or geographical region" (107). They determine the truth about East not in an actual form but by the superficial generalization of their own mind. As in the novel, the only black face of the Burmese characters is sufficient to understate them, to demoralize them and to inferiorize them.

The white characters hold misattitude towards the down trodden Indian people. Flory, the protagonist of the novel, has an attachment with Dr. Veraswami and other Burmese people as well. Europeans exploit even the sentiments of the Orientals.

In spite of the fact that Flory is a white man, he exhibits his dislike of imperialism partially. He shares almost similar attitude with Said, when he discusses about the colonial mission with Dr. Veraswami. He utters that they are living a lie to think that:

We're here to uplift our poor black brothers instead of to rob them. I suppose its natural enough lie. But it corrupt us, it corrupts us in ways you can't imagine. There's an everlasting sense of being a sneak and a liar that torments us and drives us to justify ourselves day and night. It's at the bottom of our beastliness to the natives...we're thieves and go on thieving without any humbug. (35)

The above extract oozes out the underlying intentions of the colonizers. As Said writes that the mission of civilization is just a fake one. They, in fact, intend to exploit every treasuries of the East.

Moreover, the remarks made by Flory expresses similar idea: "We'll have wrecked the whole Burmese national culture. But we're not civilizing them, we're only rubbing our dirt on-to them... all this will be gone--forest, villages, monasteries pagados all vanished...They build a prison and call it progress" (38). Said, in his theory Orientalism, says that the colonizers always pretend that they are colonizing not to fulfill their self-interest but to develop civilize and uplift the Orient. But, behind the bush of civilization and development, there always lies the intoxication of colonization.

Orwell has used very diplomatic way in this novel also. He endows the leading character, Flory, with such characteristics. Flory, sometimes, overstates Burma more than it is. He also expresses the Burmese people as more civilized, moral and cultured than the Europeans. For instance, Flory disagrees with Ellis in a context and says, "Oh no! They're so highly civilized; more civilized than we are, in my opinion. Beauty's

all matters of taste. There are people on this country called the Palaungs who admire long necks in women” (126-27). He means to glorify the native people and their belief. But at same time he has a different attitude about the Burmese people, as” These peoples’ whole outlook is so different from ours. One has to adjust oneself. Suppose, for instance, you were back in the Middle Ages” (129-30). Here, Flory describes Burmese people in different manner. He generalizes that natives are still adhering to the Middle Age. They are back-warded and uncivilized.

In this relation, Said seems to be perfectly right when he says:

Moreover, the affirmative stereotypes attached to this discourse were instrumental in fashioning the ‘East’ as a utopian alternative to Europe. Countless scholars, writers, polemicists, spiritualist, travelers and wanderers invoked Orientals idealization of India. This idealization is also limited to some extent as the orientalist think it to be appropriate. (*Culture and Imperialism XXI*)

This clarifies that even the idealization and glorification of the Orient is European generalization. The Europeans cannot conceive of indigenous society to be able to govern itself independently without Western guidance. Natives are perceived as below whites unable to govern themselves although they challenge them. So long as this novel and the author are concerned, the issue is quite appropriate to Saidian concept. Orwell tries to create his position in-between. He attempts to justify himself as an unbiased observer of the Imperialist’s exploitation in Burma. But he fails; he slips and cannot adjust his position in in-between.

Orwell reveals that at the inner core of his mind, there resides some sense of superiority of his race and the inferiority of the native people’s race. The characters are just his instruments to prove his thought. In one context when the narrator

describes Elizabeth's attitude about Flory's attitude towards the native people, he reveals the colonial mentality in the following words:

Flory, when he spoke of the natives, spoke nearly always in favour of them. He was forever praising Burmese customs and the Burmese characters; he even went so far as to contrast them favorably with the English. It disquieted her. After all, natives were natives-interesting, no doubt, but finally only a subject people, and inferior people with black faces. His attitude was little too tolerant. (115)

Thus, this extract also justifies Said's concept that the natives are, whatever their positions be, only subject race. Their black faces are sufficient enough to prove them as inferior race to the Westerners and in contrary, the only white skin of the colonizers is enough to superiorize them.

Dr. Veraswami's discussion with his European friend Flory also brings out the similar images of Burma:

Behold there the degeneracy of the East, said the doctor, pointing to Mattu, who was doubling himself up like a caterpillar and uttering grateful whines. 'Look at the wretchedness of his limbs. The calves of his legs are not so thick as an Englishman's wrists. Look at his abjectness and servility. Look at his ignorance—such ignorance as is not known in Europe outside a home for mental defectives. Once I asked Mattu to tell me his age. "Sahib," he said "I believe that I am ten years old." How can you pretend, Mr Flory, that you are not the natural superior of such creatures?' (40)

Here, Veraswami is an agent of the colonizer to speak out Burma according to European taste. Orwell presents Dr. Veraswami and U Po Kyin as the native helpers

of the European colonizers.

Veraswami, though known as decent Burmese man, is not satisfied with his native identity so he desires for higher success in life. He expresses his aspirations for higher status, as “My friend, how gratifying to me if I should become a member of European club! What an honor, to be the associate of European gentlemen!” (148). This shows how Veraswami longs for Sahibdom. And U Po Kyin calls him an agent himself, in his own words, “I am agent provocateur” (p. 136-37).

However, the native people show their hatred of the white colonizers for their imposed domination over them. The following lines concretize the inner hatred of the native people of the white colonizers:

Almost every day, when Westfield or Mr. Macgregor or even Maxwell went down the street, the High school boys, with their young, yellow faces---faces smooth as gold coins, full of that maddening contempt that sits so naturally on the Mongolian face---sneered at them as they went past, sometimes hooted after them with hyena-like laughter. The life of Anglo-Indian official is not all jam. In comfortless camps, in sweltering offices, in gloomy dak-bungalow, smelling of dust and earth oil, they earn, perhaps the right to be a little disagreeable. (30)

The above extract really concretizes the fact that it was not easy even to the colonizers to live in an alien and beastly world. They were not safe enough to walk alone in the street.

There was a fear of being attacked and murdered by the natives. Thus, they hate the colonizers from the time of the colonizers’ arrival in their country as the ruler. Even the small kids abhor the Europeans as their enemies. They even use mischievous language. In this context, Said, opines how the colonized think of their

freedom from the colonized:

Sooner or later they will leave our country, just as many people throughout history left many countries. The railways, ships, factories and schools will be ours and we will speak any language without any sense of guilt or a sense of gratitude. Once again we shall be as we were ordinary people—we will be free, free and free! (*Culture* 212)

This extract clarifies the longings of the native people to free themselves from the existing domination of the colonizer by possessing everything of their country by themselves.

So far the novel is taken as semi-autobiographical, Flory partially shares here the inner feelings of the author as well. Flory seems to be benevolent to the native people but he has some biased attitudes towards the native people as well. Though Flory is the best friend of Dr. Veraswami, he cannot propose his friend to recruit in the European club. The Europeans just use and exploit the native people as their instruments. They present the native people nothing more than commodities. Flory also uses Ma Hla May as he likes and ignores her when he sees Elizabeth in Burma. When he comes in contact with Elizabeth, he feels, “She had brought back to him the air of England, dear England where thought is free and one is not condemned...” (56). Yes, he has felt that he gets back England in her companionship and he starts neglecting his Burmese mistress. He marginalizes his Burmese mistress as ‘Other’.

In this way Orwell reconstructs the images and reality of Burma in his own Western manner. He uses many stereotypes to represent the Burmese people as inferior creatures. And such discourses help to justify the mission of colonization. As said says that these stereotypes confirm the necessity and desirability of colonial government, by endlessly confirming positional superiority of the West over the

positional inferiority of the East, Orwell expresses his misattitudes towards the Burmese people by doing misrepresentation of them. This representation is characterized by the love-hate relationship of the white Europeans and black Burmese people.

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