



DIAN NURRACHMAN

Imperial-Colonial Discourses and the Politics of English Language in the 19th Century English Novels: Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* (1992) and Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1993)

ABSTRACT: *The position of English literature, especially its novels in the 19th century as the proponent of English imperialism-colonialism, proved that literature – as another discipline as well – would not be an innocent discipline, and never has been. English literature was then placed as the hegemonic power, which manifested in the imperial-colonial discourses to sustain imperialism-colonialism, since the power of its content can leave an influence behind the colonized people. From this stance as well, then, the politics of English language appeared to accompany the imperial-colonial discourses. The politics of English language in English literature was the foremost notion of English language growth or expansion all over the world, which is nowadays known by several names, such as Global English(es), World English(es), and English as an International Language. The result of the research showed that the two novels, “Lord Jim” written by Joseph Conrad (1992) and “Kim” written by Rudyard Kipling (1993), were indeed the imperial-colonial texts which reflected and represented the imperial-colonial discourses and the politics of English language within their narratives. In the imperial-colonial discourses, the two novels represented the characteristics of hegemony and power, hybrid cultural identity, and politics of difference and racism which representatively existed there, as well as the ideological interests of their narratives to be a system of statements (theorizing knowledge) which theorizes the colonized (indigenous) people.*

KEY WORDS: *English Literature; Imperialism; Colonialism; Discourse; Politics of English Language.*

INTRODUCTION

In England, English teaching was constituted under nomenclature English Studies and academically established in 19th century. This is to be the subject aimed to acknowledge the new generation by the study of humane letters in the sense of an

“organic national tradition and identity” (Eagleton, 1996:24). The subject is also aimed to “develop self-expression”, a belief in the importance of the quality literature and a concern for the development of mind and character (Mallet, 2008:163).

Thus, the teaching of English in England at

About the Author: Dian Nurrachman, M.A. is a Lecturer at the Department of English, Faculty of Adab and Humanities UIN SGD (State Islamic University, Sunan Gunung Djati) Bandung, Jalan A.H. Nasution No.105 Cipadung, Bandung 40614, West Java, Indonesia. For academic interests, the author is able to be conducted via e-mail at: diannurrachman@gmail.com

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all levels, from the 19th century to nowadays, puts the proportions more to the study of language skills through its literature – both fictions and non-fictions – rather than to the grammatical rules (Eagleton, 1996; and Mallet, 2008:162-164).

Nevertheless, the establishment of English Studies as a means of literary study and the tradition of character building has had a great impact on the subject of imperial-colonial discourse. It means that the development of imperialism and colonialism is inseparable from English literary study (Sekhar, 2012). In the Victorian period of 19th century England, for instance, English literature was admitted to be the fit subject for Civil Service examination. In this sense, Chris Baldick (1987), as cited also in T. Eagleton (1996), has pointed out that:

[...] armed with this conveniently packaged version of their own cultural treasures, the servants of British imperialism could sally forth overseas secure in a sense of their national identity, and able to display that cultural superiority to their envying colonial peoples (Baldick, 1987; and Eagleton, 1996:25).

Gauri Viswanathan (1989),¹ emphasized it as well that there was a relationship between the institutionalization and the establishment of English studies and its ideological content which is developed in colonial context (*cf* Viswanathan, 1989; and Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003:xxiv). So, English literature, which becomes the ideological and political institution, can finally construct the ideology of the colonial aesthetics to maintain the power itself, to make the experiential nature of literature become convenient in constructing the ideology of the imperial-colonial discourses.

This kind of ideology is finally interwoven with the purposes of English colonizer, in which controlling the colonized people through language was the main thing. One of the main purposes to do this was the value of English for introducing natives (the colonized) to what they probably perceived to

be a “superior” culture and civilization. In this sense, A.S. Canagarajah (2000) and S. Chelliah (2001) explain this purpose that:

A leading object will be to give native youth of good promise a thorough knowledge of the English language. The great reason for this is, that it will open to them the treasures of European science and literature, and bring fully before the mind the evidences of Christianity. [...] Their minds cannot be so thoroughly enlightened by any other means (Canagarajah, 2000:63; and Chelliah, 2001).

Those statements bring together the second interesting matter to discuss. As I would like to show later on, they represent the politics of English language. By constructing the centers of English education, the imperial or colonial English created certain privilege norms of “standard English” through its literatures as a device for rejecting anything periphery, marginal, and non-canon (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003:xxv).

English literature, then, is created to be the authoritative center of Standard English, which is signifying the arrogant of “White-Men’s Best Civilization” (Sekhar, 2012). This is a vindication of the “English Language Education” in the first sense, ELT (English Language Teaching) as a means for the teaching of its “colonial” literature. So, “imperial-colonial discourse” is then constituted as the imaginary project to mirror, depicts, translate, and rule the colonies (Chelliah, 2001; Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003; and Sekhar, 2012).

Thus, this present research would show how such problems are so complicated but intriguing as well, since the novels which became the object of this research, they were *Lord Jim* written by Joseph Conrad (1992) and *Kim* written by Rudyard Kipling (1993), can tell us the experiential and imaginary world, in which their fictional power is needed to endure the power of imperialism and colonialism and the politics of language as well (Conrad, 1992; and Kipling, 1993).

The reason of why I chose *Lord Jim* and *Kim* as the object of this research is that the two novels were assumed as the ideologically convenient with the imperial-colonial discourses and the politics of English

¹See “Gauri Viswanathan”. Available online at: http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/4107/11/11_chapter%206.pdf [accessed in Bandung, Indonesia: December 27, 2016].

language, since Joseph Conrad (1992) and Rudyard Kipling (1993) were two authors who were often regarded as the imperialists-colonialists; and, therefore, made their works as the imperial-colonial texts (Conrad, 1992; and Kipling, 1993). In this sense, I follow E.W. Said (1993)'s argument that:

[...] imperialism and the novel fortified each other to such a degree that it is impossible, I would argue, to read one without in some way dealing with the other (Said, 1993:112).

Another reason for choosing *Lord Jim* and *Kim* is that both novels shared the similar characteristics of the typical 19th century English literature: glorifying imperialism and colonialism; and, at the same time, hybridizing their characters within by cultural contact between colonizer-colonized relationships (Conrad, 1992; and Kipling, 1993).

From such a background actually, then I proposed two research questions as follows: (1) How are the imperial-colonial discourses presented in the two novels?; and (2) How is the politics of English language presented in the two novels?

The objective of the study was certainly intended to answer the questions above. Meanwhile, the significance of this study can be divided into theoretical and practical significances. Theoretically, the answers to the research questions are expected to provide insights on and to support the existing theory of the colonial and post-colonial literary criticism (cf Appiah, 1991; Said, 1993; Chakrabarty, 2000; Young, 2001; Aschroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003; Chari & Verdery, 2009; and Hladík, 2013). Here, the insights are expected to posit the result of this research as part of the body of knowledge of literature. In that case, this research result is also expected to become a basis and/or background knowledge for further research, both in English literature and English education field.

Practically, this research is significant for teaching and learning process, especially in English Departments, for two things: in general, by reading and analyzing literary works, teachers and students of English Departments explore the best in the writing across cultures, and in so doing, they are

facilitated and encouraged to put literature as the authentic material in reading subjects; in specific, by knowing imperial-colonial discourses and the politics of English language presented in the two novels, teachers and students of English Departments are not presented only the blissful readings but also political, historical, and ideological subjects of knowledge; suggesting that the TEFL (Teaching of English as a Foreign Language/ Literature) should give the awareness of the partial and particular versions of knowledge, truth, and reason, or in short, what many educators termed as "critical pedagogy" (cf Freire, 1970 and 1994; Crawford, 1978; and Ohara, Saft & Crookes, 2000).

Here, the scope in studying imperialism and colonialism is very wide. This, for instance, includes a comprehensive English history and political system of British empire (Cain & Hopkins, 2001; Gamble, 2003; and Martell, 2008). Therefore, in order to focus on the discussion, this research was conducted and limited only to the problems of imperial-colonial discourses and the politics of English language in the 19th century, by scrutinizing the two novels that are considered as the grand narratives of 19th century English literature. The two novels are *Lord Jim* by Joseph Conrad (1992) and *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling (1993). These will be scrutinized through colonial and post-colonial theory of literary criticism, in which political, historical, and ideological subjects are included.

METHODS

This research takes Literary Criticism as the grand design, and there are five reasons for describing it (cf Hogan, 1990 and 2016; Frye, 1996; and James, 2010). Firstly, this research is a literary research of which the literary works are the particular contexts as the direct source of data; to explore such contexts means that the research needs me myself as the key instrument. So, as N. Frye (1996) argues, that:

[...] The first thing that literary critic has to do is to read literature, to make an inductive survey of his own field and let his critical principle shape themselves solely out of his knowledge of that field (Frye, 1996:37).

Secondly, because the particular contexts are literary works as text, the data collected are in the form of words, or as N. Frye (1996) says again that the organizing or containing forms of its conceptual framework (Frye, 1996:40). Thirdly, this kind of literary research deals with the process, because I need to get the “thick description” on the context being investigated (*cf* Geertz, 1973; and Frye, 1996). This is suited to N. Frye (1996), who argues that:

Research begins in what is known as “background” and one would expect it, as it goes on, to organize the foreground as well. The digging up of relevant information about a poet should lead to a steady consolidating progress in the criticism of his poetry (Frye, 1996:38).

Fourthly, the process of analyzing data is done inductively, because I originate the data from the specified contexts – based on the problems raised – then goes to the more generalized one in order to generate and/or develop a theory (Frye, 1996; and Lawrence & Tar, 2013). Again, N. Frye (1996) argues that criticism must be an examination of literature in terms of a conceptual framework derivable from inductive survey of the literary field (Frye, 1996:38).

Fifthly, this research of course concerns meaning; it means what the researcher seeks to discover is intended to make literary works meaningful for our lives. N. Frye (1996) argues again, as follows:

[...] literature exists in a verbal universe, which is not a commentary on life and reality, but contains life and reality in a system of verbal relationships. This conception of verbal universe, in which life and reality are inside literature, and not outside it and being described or represented or approached or symbolized by it, seems to me the first postulate of a properly organized criticism (Frye, 1996:43).

The design of such a literary criticism is to make this research attempts to arrive at a thick description of the problems raised; they are imperial-colonial discourses and the politics of English language as the particular contexts/conditions of the two novels being investigated.

Thus, this research takes literary works, especially the two novels being investigated

as the real data. According to N. Frye (1996), literary works are, for the critic, mute complexes of facts, like the data of science (Frye, 1996:35). And “the term data”, as for R.C. Bogdan & S.K. Biklen (1998), refers to the rough materials researchers collect from the world they are studying; they are the particulars that form the basis of analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998:106).

In light of this concern, the narratives of the two novels being investigated are, then, the objective and real data where the particular problems stand there for the basis of analysis. Following M.H. Abrams (1999), the narratives are stories themselves, whether told in prose or verse, involving events, characters, and what the characters say and do (Abrams, 1999:173). And for this research context, the chosen narratives are those which are related to imperial-colonial discourses and the politics of English language directly.

What I defined by data above, as commonly used in the literary research (literary criticism), are collected and selected through the activity of reading. Such activity requires me to collect and select the rough data materials of the research problem from the content of the novels. In effect, in this activity of reading and interpretation, we are performing what we are calling criticism itself (Davis & Schleifer eds., 1996:10).

The rough data materials are then collected and selected based on some criteria/aspects taken from the main theoretical books on colonial and post-colonial theories directly related to the research problems. The criteria are mainly based on E.W. Said (1993) and L. Gandhi (1998) for the problem of the politics of English language (textual politics and colonial semantic reference); and based on B. Aschroft, G. Griffiths & H. Tiffin (2003) for the problem of imperial-colonial discourses (hegemony and power, hybrid cultural identity, and politics of difference and racism).

The criteria above are then made to make data codification (coding and re-coding in technique of data analysis) easier. The coding technique itself is essentially used to categorize the data based on the research

problems (Hogan, 1990 and 2016; Frye, 1996; and James, 2010).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Imperial-colonial discourses are the complex narratives, statements, signs, and practices that organize social existence and social reproduction within imperial-colonial relationships (Aschroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003). Social existence refers to something existing and, usually, is taken for granted in social life; while social reproduction refers to any kinds of works that people produce in their social life. So, imperial-colonial discourses are for the first time related to social existence, since a set of statements on them appeared from the facts that imperial-colonial life was undoubtedly existed. To maintain the imperial-colonial life, imperialist-colonialist people tended to juggle, such “statements” into the perfect theorizing knowledge, which they produced in various products, including literature (Rosaldo, 1993; Gandhi, 1998; and Aschroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003).

Imperial-colonial discourses are then a system of statements that can be made about colonies and colonial peoples, about colonizing powers and about the relationship between these two. This is the theorizing knowledge and beliefs about the world within which acts of colonization take place. Such a theorizing knowledge operate on the assumption of the superiority of the colonizer’s culture, history, language, art, political structures, social conventions, and the assertion of the need for the colonized to be “raised up” through colonial contact. In particular, imperial-colonial discourses hinge on the notions of race that begin to emerge at the very beginning of European imperialism. Through such distinctions, it comes to represent the colonized, whatever the nature of their social structures and cultural histories, as “primitive” and the colonizers as “civilized” (Said, 1993; Gandhi, 1998; and Aschroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003).

In the two novels, that I had chosen to analyze, I found the imperial-colonial discourses within their narratives. The characteristics of hegemony and power,

hybrid cultural identity, and politics of difference and racism were representatively existed there, as well as the ideological interests of their narratives to be a system of statements (theorizing knowledge) which theorizes the colonized (indigenous) people. Both of them also viewed the native, the indigenous, and certainly the colonized as Others, as the people who did not any rights to speak up about themselves, because their destiny was theorized by Self – the European, the West, the English/British (Conrad, 1992; and Kipling, 1993).

In *Kim*, we were presented not only the intriguing story about Kim’s journey for searching the Holy River (in accompanying the Lama – a Buddhist-Tibetan Monk), but also the political statements within which the imperial-colonial discourses were included, such as viewing India as the country which its destiny to be ruled by England and, therefore, it was imperative to stress the superiority of the white men, whose colonial mission was to rule the dark and “inferior” races (Kipling, 1993).

Whereas in *Lord Jim*, we were presented not only the intriguing story about Jim’s experience of his voyage and his glory in ruling one of the islands in the far east, the Patusan, but also some perfect theorizing knowledge about the far east people, such as they were doubted to have “interior” or a centre of metropolis, like English people have England, they were speechless when they met the white men, and they loved to subordinate themselves to the white men (Conrad, 1992).

Another similarity between the two in terms of imperial-colonial discourses is that both novels are the story about the white men in the colonies, not the white men in their metropolis centre (Conrad, 1992; and Kipling, 1993). Different from the early 19th century novels, which tell the metropolis centre, for instance Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park* (2007) and Charles Dicken’s *Great Expectation* (2012), Joseph Conrad’s *Lord Jim* (1992) and Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* (1993) engaged with the context of imperialism in the colonies and became the sites for the contact between the white men (the colonizers) and the indigenous people (the colonized). Therefore, there were also some contexts of hybridity in

Kim and *Lord Jim*, whereby some characters were hybridized due to cultural contact between the colonizer upbringing culture and the colonized indigene one (Conrad, 1992; and Kipling, 1993).

However, there were some different points that I have to clarify between the two, especially in their presentation of narrative points of view. In Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1993), we were provided the story within which the main character, Kim himself, was not the white man from the metropolis who came to India with certain colonial mission. Kim, rather, became the part of India itself, since he was born in India and lived there from his early life (Kipling, 1993).

This kind of situation made Kim became more hybridized than Jim, due to his context as "the *Sahib* in the native clothes". This is indeed what made Kim as the ambiguous and/or ambivalent imperial-colonial text; by the existence of Kim as the *Sahib* which was born in the native land (India); on the one hand, we can fully understand the massive or the immense of English imperialism which had been powerfully established there for hundreds of years; on the other hand, it also questioned the English imperialism because the white man lost his power as the perfect race. Therefore, Kim can be included as the post-colonial literature as well, considering the post-colonial aspect of such ambivalences (cf Kipling, 1993; and Aschroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003).

Meanwhile, in *Lord Jim*, we are provided the context of the story within which the main character was the white man from the metropolis (Conrad, 1992). Even though Jim was also hybridized, but such a process of hybridization was more constituted as an influence of the inner conflict in his own personality than Jim's contact with the native (the colonized) people. Moreover, Jim's success in ruling Patusan proved that the white man from the metropolis centre, who deliberately came to the colonized land, was more powerful than the man who was partly white and partly native like Kim was (Conrad, 1992; and Kipling, 1993).

One thing that was interesting in *Lord Jim* was about its narrative technique. Different

from Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1993) which used common narrative technique (stories based on causal narrative), Joseph Conrad (1992), rather, used uncommon narrative which was based on some other characters' perspectives on Jim (cf Conrad, 1992; and Kipling, 1993). I have emphasized that this kind of narrative technique is one of the characteristics of modernist fiction which explore a fragmented forms and discontinuous narrative (Rosaldo, 1993; and Rezaei, 2010). Therefore, we can actually read *Lord Jim* partially in two different episodes: firstly, the Patna episode in which Marlow narrated Jim's historical background and Jim's first co-captained of the Patna Ship; and secondly, the Patusan episode in which Marlow and Jim himself narrated the story of Jim in ruling Patusan as a colony (Conrad, 1992).

Meanwhile, the politics of English language is the universal power of English language to make imperialism and colonialism more visible in the literary texts, especially in terms of textual politics and colonial semantic reference (Shomar, 2013). The discussion which has been presented can actually never be separated from imperial-colonial discourses, due to its link in expanding English as a world language through the power of imperialism-colonialism. Therefore, the discussion on the politics of English language was constituted as a continuation from the imperial-colonial discourses (cf Aschroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003; and Shomar, 2013).

In the two novels, that I have examined, I found the politics of English language also within their narratives, since the narratives are the sites for the construction of textual politics as well as colonial semantic reference (Conrad, 1992; and Kipling, 1993). With a little bit different from imperial-colonial discourses, I treated the politics of English language with some inclusions of linguistic analysis, though in critical perspective as well. In other words, the narratives were treated within their language use of common and special dictions (including some words, phrases, clauses, and sentences of various classes: noun, verbal, adjectival, and adverbial) which refer to the textual politics and colonial semantic reference (Rosaldo,

1993; Aschroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003; Rezaei, 2010; and Shomar, 2013).

In *Kim*, we were presented the narratives which constituted not only a global discourse about imperialism-colonialism, but also the real political facts of language use even within the common words (Kipling, 1993). In the textual politics, we saw how Rudyard Kipling (1993) contrasted the word “clothes”, as somewhat politically engaged with European dress, and “garb”, as somewhat politically engaged with the native one (Kipling, 1993). The contrast, therefore, put the first as something common, simple, modern, and importantly, civilized; while the second was put as something uncommon, complex, and barbaric (Aschroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003).

In one occasion, we also saw how Rudyard Kipling (1993) concerned politically with the historical fact of English language education in India, and made some narratives in *Kim* more reasonable for the issue of English linguistic imperialism (Kipling, 1993). In the context of colonial semantic reference, thus, we saw how in one occasion Rudyard Kipling made the simple word “I” (functioned as subject) become the centre of the world, which reflected the ego of the European, or in this case the English/British (Kipling, 1993).

However, since Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* (1993) was more hybridized, due to its cultural contact between the white men and the natives like in the real setting of India, its textual politics and colonial semantic reference seemed to be anomalous, or inconsistent (Kipling, 1993). On the one hand, Rudyard Kipling celebrated the pleasures of imperialism (for instance, the centre of the ego and racial differences); on the other hand, he also celebrated the context of hybridity, especially on the colonial semantic reference of “gray formless India” (Kipling, 1993). Such this was the anomalous in relation to the nature of the novel as one of the imperial-colonial texts. I found such an anomalous along with my practice of analysis within postmodernist-poststructuralist perspective (cf Appiah, 1991; Said, 1993; Chakrabarty, 2000; Young, 2001; Aschroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003; Chari & Verdery, 2009; and Hladík, 2013).

Furthermore, the case which was almost similar could be seen from the analysis on *Lord Jim* by Joseph Conrad (1992). In it, we were presented the real political facts of language use as well, even, reached its culmination in some narratives. In the textual politics, one of the important political facts of language use was the use of some diction, such as “outskirt”, “jungle”, “praus”, “campongs”, and “wilderness” to be politically engaged with imperialist-colonialist point of view in viewing the “strangeness” and the “otherness” of the indigenous or native people (Conrad, 1992).

Whereas in colonial semantic reference, the context of mistranslation from the Malay word “Tuan” into “Lord” in English became one of its important political facts of language use, besides the generalization of the Eastern people, especially the Javanese, who portrayed as “ghosts” (Aschroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003; and Paoliello, 2011).

Meanwhile, as an additional chapter, the relationship between the two discussions (of imperial-colonial discourses and the politics of English language) and English language education/teaching was presented in relation to my concern on the issue of English linguistic imperialism. In a more specific way, that was added as an emphasis that the growth of English language in nowadays context (with the English Departments around the world as its proponents) which is named by “Global English(es)” or “World English(es)” was for the first time closely related to the English imperialism-colonialism; and, therefore, made the growth itself strongly become the “English linguistic imperialism” (Aschroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003; Chari & Verdery, 2009; and Hladík, 2013).

However, such a crucial issue should not made us view the English language education/teaching as a negative one, since we could make it possible without any linguistic imperialism threats by an ethnographic orientation in the classroom, as A.S. Canagarajah (2000) suggested.

CONCLUSION

The result of the research showed that the two novels, *Lord Jim* written by Joseph Conrad

(1992) and *Kim* written by Rudyard Kipling (1993), were indeed the imperial-colonial texts which reflected and represented the imperial-colonial discourses and the politics of English language within their narratives. In the imperial-colonial discourses, the two novels represented the characteristics of hegemony and power, hybrid cultural identity, and politics of difference and racism which representatively existed there, as well as the ideological interests of their narratives to be a system of statements (theorizing knowledge) which theorizes the colonized (indigenous) people.

Both of them also viewed the native, the indigenous, and certainly the colonized as Others, as people who did not have any rights to speak up about themselves, because their destiny was theorized by Self – the European, the West, the English/British; while in the politics of English language, the two novels also represented the real political facts of language use, which was characterized by textual politics and colonial semantic reference. These two characteristics, then, could be considered as the foremost link to English linguistic imperialism in the context of the growth or the expansion of English language in nowadays context.

Some possible suggestions for further research, then, are: firstly, researching other novels of the same period was necessary to make comprehensive information on such problems for the sake of the contribution on literary knowledge. Secondly, due to the issue of English linguistic imperialism in nowadays contexts, therefore, going through the problems of imperial-colonial discourses and the politics of English language is still important to conduct, even now in our own age. Thirdly, echoing number 2, this research could become a basis and/or background knowledge, both in English literature and English language education field. The last, fourthly, it is now for English language teachers to be more open to English literature, in order to be able to use it as the authentic source, especially for reading materials, of course, with a critical perspective in mind.²

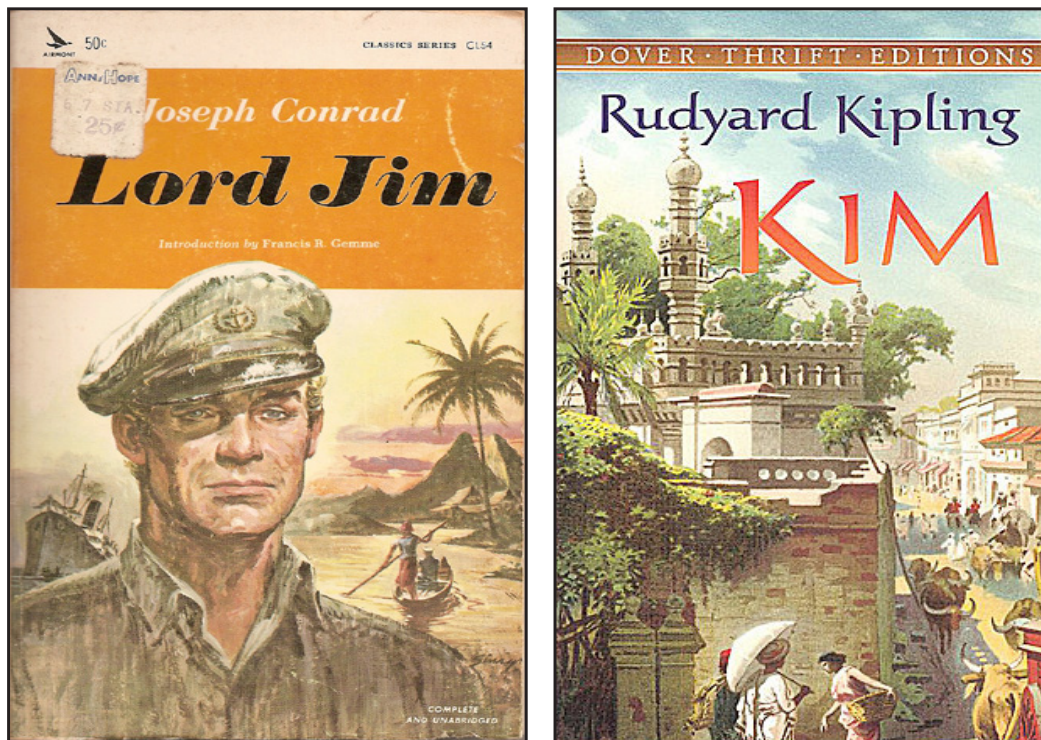
²**Statement:** I, hereby, declare that this article is my original academic work, it is not product of plagiarism, due to all sources used and cited in the analysis are showed clearly and available

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Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* (1992) and Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1993)

(Source: <http://www.dondamassa.com>, 15/1/2017)

The result of the research showed that the two novels, *Lord Jim* written by Joseph Conrad (1992) and *Kim* written by Rudyard Kipling (1993), were indeed the imperial-colonial texts which reflected and represented the imperial-colonial discourses and the politics of English language within their narratives. In the imperial-colonial discourses, the two novels represented the characteristics of hegemony and power, hybrid cultural identity, and politics of difference and racism which representatively existed there, as well as the ideological interests of their narratives to be a system of statements (theorizing knowledge) which theorizes the colonized (indigenous) people.