



## Children's Fiction as an Ideological State Apparatus: Analyzing Selected British Short Stories for Children as Works of Colonial Literature

Tayyaba Fatima Anwaar\*, Dr Amara Khan\*\*

\* Independent Researcher, [tayyabafatima87@gmail.com](mailto:tayyabafatima87@gmail.com)

\*\*Assistant Professor, Department of English, Lahore College for Women University, Punjab, Pakistan.  
[khanamara@gmail.com](mailto:khanamara@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

*Building upon select short stories by Enid Blyton and Rudyard Kipling, this research aims to explore propagation of the imperialist ideology through British short stories for children. The select stories are examined as part of the discourse developed to glorify Britain and depreciate its colonized subjects. The study discusses the stories as they explore colonization in light of the theories developed in the Metropole. Keeping in view that children's fiction promotes various ideologies, this research argues that short stories for children may become an immensely significant medium in fostering the imperialist ideology, thus functioning as Ideological State Apparatuses through the very important learning years of childhood. For this purpose, the theoretical framework of Ideological State Apparatuses by Louis Pierre Althusser has been employed. This incorporation serves to elucidate the role of educational ISAs in shaping the minds of children from early childhood. Children's indoctrination in such manner may produce new generations of people that might support the colonialist stance both knowingly or unknowingly. A useful strategy to counter this situation is writing back to the Empire by producing children's books that function as sights of decolonization. The real challenge, however, is to make de-colonial literature accessible to young minds around the globe.*



### Introduction

Before delving into the discussion on the select short stories and the underlying imperial ideology that is part of them, let us briefly take a look at the framework that defines this research. This paper uses qualitative research methodology to explore the dissemination of colonial discourse in children's literature. Many scholars and critics argue that *The Jungle Book* (1894) propagates the imperialist ideology and that it is an imperial narrative. Similarly, Blyton's works are also claimed to be racist and xenophobic which are two important components of the imperial ideology. Although Blyton's works seem children friendly in terms of their non-violent policy yet some of them do disseminate the dominant discourses of her time period which were part of the colonial discourse. When one critically analyzes her stories selected for this study, one might see recurrent motifs hinting at the idea of colonialism. This perusal attempts to explore this idea through Althusser's model of Ideological State Apparatuses. Althusser was a Marxist philosopher who believed that power functions through structures which are designed in favor of the ruling authorities of a state and in this way, state controls and oppresses its masses. He introduced these structures as either Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) or Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs). In his essay *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (1970), Althusser argues that the Repressive State Apparatuses are a means of

ideology that enforce behavior on people directly. These include the army, the police and the judicial system. Ideological State Apparatuses, on the other hand, are not involved in direct coercion like the Repressive State Apparatuses, rather they are subtly used to shape individuals' behavior. These apparatuses include the family system, religion, and school.

Relying on Althusser's model of Ideological State Apparatuses, the present study attempts to explore the role that educational ISAs play in shaping the world view of children. It discusses how the young and impressionable minds of children are indoctrinated with the imperial ideology through short stories written for them, thus leaving a mark on their ways of thinking. It also explores how the genre of short story is a suitable and convenient medium to school or embed a specific ideology in a child's mind.

Previously, the novel of the nineteenth and early twentieth century has received a decent amount of criticism as far as fostering and propagating the imperial ideology is concerned. This study attempts to explore how short stories can be an equally and even more efficient medium of perpetuating a particular discourse. Moreover, one might easily find studies on Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894) as a work of colonial literature, but there is a dearth of study on Blyton's select stories in this domain. In addition to it, both writers have been researched upon independently but there is lack of comparative research on them. Since both writers belong to the time period in the history of Britain when many works fostering the imperialist ideology were being produced, both are products of their time periods, and one of the most celebrated writers of their respective times, a comparative analysis on them could be a beneficial contribution to the field of literature and for those interested in exploring the role of educational ISAs like children's short stories.

The primary texts selected for this research are the short stories *Mowgli's Brothers*, *Kaa's Hunting*, *Tiger-Tiger!*, and *The White Seal* from Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894). From Blyton's stories *The Enchanted Shoes* (2002), *The Goblin Hat* (1987), and *The Old Toad and the Spider* (1985) have been selected. These are part of her short story collections *The Enchanted Shoes and Other Stories* (2002), *The Goblin Hat and Other Stories* (1987), and *The Flyaway Cottage and Other Stories* (1993) respectively. Views regarding the appropriate age groups for both Blyton's and Kipling's stories vary. Elsie Kipling, Rudyard Kipling's younger daughter, in a 1955 interview with Dr. A. W. Yeats stated that Kipling used to tell the stories of *The Jungle Books* (1894-5) to his children in a semi-dark room (Introduction to *The Jungle Books*, 2018). Where Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894) is believed to be suitable for children who are not too young due to violent episodes like Shere Khan's murder and display of his skin by Mowgli, Blyton's select stories can be read by a relatively younger audience as they do not contain bloodshed. Although there is much research done on Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894).

### **Short Stories for Children and the Propagation of Imperial Ideology**

Joseph Rudyard Kipling is a prominent name in the history of English literature. An English novelist, short story writer, poet, and journalist, Kipling was born in Bombay in 1865. His father was the curator of Lahore Museum and the family belonged to the highest Anglo-Indian society. Although Kipling wrote novels and poems along with short stories but it is the short story genre of which he is considered to be master by many critics. His short stories for children are immensely popular and he is a household name for his short story collections *The Jungle Book* (1894) and *The Second Jungle Book* (1895). In addition to it, he is the first British writer to receive the Nobel Prize for literature in 1907.

Kipling is often criticized for being a jingoist and a supporter of the imperialist ideology due to multiple works that he produced. Adrian Hunter notes how H.E. Bates "attacks Kipling as an apologist for empire who used his talent to make palatable both episodes and the creeds inspiring them, when otherwise they would have been wholly disgusting" (Hunter, 2007, pg. 20).

Enid Mary Blyton has been one of the best-selling children's author and her popularity remains intact till date. She was a British author of stories and poems for children who started writing at a very young age. Her first publication appeared in a children's magazine when she was 14 years old and she wrote more than 600 children's books. She is especially famous for her *Famous Five Series* (1942-63), *Little Noddy Series* (1949-63), *Malory Towers Series* (1946-51), and *The Secret Seven Series* (1949-63). Blyton's stories usually revolve around the same themes and ideas: A group of young children embarking on different adventures in faraway lands, a world full of magical beings such as elves and fairies, enchanted items, magic spells, and toys coming to life. Readers who claim to observe redundancy of ideas in her works have brought her criticism and she has also been criticized for lacking literary merit. Nonetheless, she remains one of the most popular and loved writers among children and her contribution to English Literature cannot be ignored. Being as famous as she is, Blyton is also charged with allegations labelling her as sexist, racist and xenophobic. In this regard Liesel Coetzee in her dissertation argues that "Blyton and Christie were both shaped by the same dominant patriarchal discourses, and exposed to similar emergent and alternative

discourses” (Coetzee, 2010, pg. 2). She further states:

Both Blyton and Christie lived through the First and Second World Wars and the influence of this political landscape on the dominant discourses in England to which Blyton and Christie were exposed cannot be overlooked. These influences included the imperialist attitudes and the colonialism that both promoted and resulted from the dominance of the British Empire. (Coetzee, 2010, pg. 2)

While referring to different children’s literature critics, Ayyildiz in her introduction to *British Children’s Adventure Novels in the Web of Colonialism* proposes that children’s books are not viewed as the products of children but as the products of adults who author them in a manner that prepare children to fulfill purposes of the adults. Children’s literature serves as a medium that satisfies the needs of the society that these children belong to, and reflect the point of view of the adult authors. This is testament to the fact that fiction is influential in shaping the future of society with its power of culturally and politically manipulating children (Ayyildiz, 2018, pg. 10). Moreover, she also states that the writers consciously produce children’s literature that is intended towards the transmitting of “the values of their time to the coming generations” (Ayyildiz, 2018, pg. 11). One such example can be observed in the work of Mary Earnest Ames titled *An ABC for Baby Patriots* (1899). In her illustrated text, she writes:

B stands for Battles  
By which England's name  
Has forever been covered  
With glory and fame.  
C is for Colonies.  
Rightly we boast,  
That of all the great nation  
Great Britain has most. (Ames, 1899, pg. 4)  
And,  
E is for Empire  
Where sun never sets;  
The larger we make it  
The bigger it gets. (Ames, 1899, pg. 6)

From this example it is revealed that the author provides an effective learning tool for young readers to impart them with the colonialist ideology.

Let us now move towards the factors that shaped Rudyard Kipling and Enid Blyton and which are reflected in their writings since “The ‘Literary World’ does not exist in isolation of the events which happen outside it” (Ahmed, 2022, pg. 3). During the time when Kipling and Blyton were writing, a heightened sense of nationalism was part of the dominant discourse prevalent in Britain. Much of nineteenth and twentieth century literature produced for children reflect the widespread imperialist attitudes of the time. As Clare Bradford puts it, “To read children’s books of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is to read texts produced within a pattern of imperial culture” (Bradford, 2001). Ayyildiz argues how “There is a close relationship between imperialist ideology and the literary products of the nineteenth century. Children’s Literature of this period is noteworthy in that it is both the product and perpetuator of the imperialist ideology” (Ayyildiz, 2018, pg. 1). Being products of their societies, it is then inevitable that both the writers be exposed to the prevailing imperialist ideology which was the dominant discourse at the time. However, as Clare Bradford argues in her book chapter “Race, Ethnicity and Colonialism”, it is a common fallacy in children’s literature criticism that the authors of children’s texts- where the value of human beings was determined by their race- were no more than the products of their societies (Bradford, 2010). Furthermore, she also insists that individuals and groups have the ability to resist the dominant discourses of their time periods (Bradford, 2010).

Both Enid Blyton and Rudyard Kipling were born and raised during that time in the history of Britain when factors like the First World War and colonialism contributed in booming nationalism. Children were raised with a sense of superiority of the English race and trained in English values. This could be one reason why Kipling was sent to England during his childhood to complete his formal education. After coming back with a sense of English superiority, he started writing and his works especially for children became immensely popular. In this regard Ayyildiz asserts, “As products of imperialist ideology, children’s literature authors are also perpetuators of this ideology. They appeal to the colonizing society’s children who were regarded as promising British colonizers of the future” (Ayyildiz, 2018, pg. 1). Also, “Children’s literature has been an inherently didactic genre right from the start” (Pesold, 2017), and “A strong dialogue between educational theories and writing for children runs throughout the history of children’s literature” (Reynolds, 2011, pg. 25). It therefore, becomes an easier task to essay these values in children by works

published and targeted towards children through children's literature. Kipling and Blyton, too, being products of nineteenth and twentieth centuries, consciously or unconsciously, played a role in the dissemination of the imperial ideology which will be explored in this research.

Where Kipling is often times referred to as an 'apologist for empire', Blyton is charged with being a racist. "English Heritage has acknowledged the "racism, xenophobia and lack of literary merit" in Enid Blyton's writing, and the "racist and imperialist sentiments" of Rudyard Kipling" (*The Guardian*, 2021), where racism and xenophobia are essential parts of the imperial ideology.

Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894) is claimed to reflect imperialist ideas by many researchers and critics. The colonial motifs mentioned earlier in the discussion can also be observed in the short story collection. *The Jungle Book* (1894) follows the story of a boy named Mowgli in the form of three consecutive short stories where he is shown to be superior to the animals of the jungle in every way. He is not only intellectually superior to them, but brave enough to kill Shere Khan. He, too, is presented as the savior of animals when he gets rid of the beast for good. In addition to it, *The White Seal* (1894) from the same short story collection deals with similar thematic concerns. A seal named Kotick sets on a journey to find a new place for the seals which could become their abode and where they would live comfortably. What grabs the reader's interest here is the color of the seal. Among many other seals with grey coats, Kotick is the only one with white fur. When his mother tells father seal that their son is going to grow up having a white coat, his father remarks in astonishment that no seal has ever grown up to be white. This obvious demarcation between the colors of Kotick and rest of the seals which gives Kotick an upper hand and ultimately glorifies him as a hero is noteworthy. Being the white one, it is his burden to guide them, explore a new space for them to live in, and rule upon them. Hence, one might be able to infer through these adventure stories that "the framework of this genre is a suitable vehicle for propagating colonial discourse" (Ayyildiz, 2018, pg. 1-2).

Other than children's literature and adventure stories the genre of the short story itself is a conducive tool for children to learn and memorize things for a long time. Parkinson and Thomas in their book chapter "Teaching short stories" accentuate how "short stories are probably regarded by both teachers and learners as the most straightforward" (Parkinson and Thomas, 2000, pg. 80). This may imply that the medium of short stories is a crisp form of work which is saturated in the theme that it follows. It helps to directly clasp the theme of the story and revolves around the motives induced in it. It is carefully woven to convey a message in a simple format that grasps the attention of readers without costing them much time. Parkinson and Thomas further argue that they are "short and self-contained", "require less contextualization than longer fiction like drama" and are "generally less linguistically complex than poetry" (Parkinson and Thomas, 2000, pg. 80). Short stories are also easier for children to read as compared to the novel since novel requires more time and attention by the reader. They are an easier medium for children not only because they are short and they can easily be read anytime, but also because they can be read by the children's parents as bed time stories. Bed time story culture makes it more convenient for children to understand them because they usually listen to stories read by their parents attentively due to which they remember them for a long time. Also, parents act as supervisors and they can instruct children and make them understand things that they would otherwise be unable to understand. Moreover, what a novel might take a couple of days or a week to convey depending upon the reading time, the short story communicates in a very short span of time. What is trying to be argued here is not that novels do not impact in a way short stories do, but that short stories can be a quicker and efficient way to convey a message. As Nadine Gordimer puts it, "Short story writers see by the light of the flash; theirs is the art of the only one thing one can be sure of – the present moment" (*The Guardian*, 2008).

Establishing that children's literature has always been didactic and short stories are an easier way, especially to convey a message to children, one might argue that short stories for children may become an effective way to teach and instruct. Having a direct approach, they are more aggressive in terms of building perception. They can leave a mark on the reader's mind in the long term since children in a young age are highly impressionable. Therefore, children start absorbing ideas and beliefs taught to them. So, when a child has been continuously exposed to stories hinting at the idea of colonialism and stories embedded with the imperialist ideology, it could unconsciously affect their decision making even after they grow up. On part of the children who are faced with the repercussions of colonization, the stories in which white race is hinted at being superior could unconsciously prepare children to unwillingly consent to the discourse or even willingly agree to the idea. Glorifying the oppressor as the hero in stories can be detrimental for children as in some cases they might not be able to distinguish between the oppressors and the oppressed at all. Let us take a simple example from a very famous English fairy tale. The fairytale is not from the primary texts used for this study but is just being used as a reference to support the above mentioned argument. *Jack and the*



*Beanstalk* is a very famous English fairytale retold by a number of authors since it first appeared in 1734 as *Jack Spriggins and the Enchanted Bean*. The main story, however, remains same in all versions. It follows the story of a boy named Jack and his mother living in poverty. One day, the mother asks the boy to sell their only cow so that they can have some money. Instead of selling the cow for money, Jack exchanges it for some magic beans given to him by an old man. Enraged, his mother throws the beans out where they grow to become a giant beanstalk. It is from here that the story gets interesting. Jack climbs up to find out that the beanstalk is inhabited by an enormous giant who then comes to the front as the villain of the story. He asks the giant's wife to give him something to eat. The kind wife gives him some food and Jack hides when the giant shows up. The giant senses a man and sings a hymn-like chant that is especially noteworthy: "Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive or be dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread!" In order to save the boy, the wife lies that there is nobody there and so, Jack is saved. Here the giant's chant reflects contempt especially for Englishmen. In this way, the story establishes the giant as an enemy to Jack, where the giant wants to eat him and he is afraid of the former. Establishing a fear of the colonized in an attempt to justify the colonization is very common to Western epistemology where it all starts with creating a discourse about the former being savage and brutal. In contemporary times, one might see this in the form of what many call neo-colonialism. In order to evade several countries, knowledge was created about them being a threat to Western civilization.

Going back to the story, Jack's fear of the giant does not stop him from visiting the beanstalk. He turns out to be a young adventurer exploring an exotic place. When he first visits the beanstalk, he brings down with him a bag full of gold while in his second and third visits, he steals the giant's golden-egg laying hen and his singing harp. In the course of the story, Jack's actions go unquestioned and he is not presented as a boy who steals but the one who 'takes'. What should be noted here is that the harp cries for the giant's help when Jack is taking him down the beanstalk. This shows that the harp does not want to go with Jack, rather it wants to stay with the giant. Nonetheless, Jack continues to carry it down the beanstalk. When the giant hears his harp crying, he runs after Jack but he lands down to bring an axe from his house and cuts the beanstalk, thus killing the giant. After that, Jack and his mother live happily ever after. Despite being someone who kills and steals, Jack is presented as a brave hero while the giant is presented as a villain. The question that arises here is: Is the giant loathsome only because of his huge size? He has been presented as an enemy to Jack right from the beginning in his hatred for the 'Englishman' and the boy's fear for the giant makes him appear as a xenophobic. The awe and fear of the colonized, along with trespassing of a land which is new for the explorer is a recurrent motif in fiction entertaining the imperialist ideology. Furthermore, the giant's wife's continuous help for the boy which encourages him makes her a symbol of weak resistance. This motif can be clearly seen in stories entertaining imperial ideas in which characters do not resist the protagonists despite their questionable actions. Such characters are always shown in a positive light and so, the giant's wife is also presented in the same manner.

In the moralized version of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, a fairy tells Jack that the giant had killed his father and so, Jack's acts are made to be justified. The problem that remains unresolved is that Jack is a kid and the story is written for children where Jack could remain the unchallenged hero in the readers' minds even after they grow up to become adults. Stealing and killing, and that too by a child, are two episodes that cannot be overlooked in the story even while reading the moralized version.

### **Short Stories by Enid Blyton and Rudyard Kipling as Works of Colonial Literature**

As discussed previously, Both Enid Blyton (1897-1968) and Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) were exposed to the dominant discourses of their time periods. While reading Blyton's and Kipling's short stories for children, one might encounter these discourses which were predominant in both the writers' times. This discussion focuses on how both Kipling's and Blyton's short stories for children may serve to function as texts promoting the imperial ideology owing to the writers' exposure to the prevalent imperial discourse during their time periods. Along with the idea of superiority of the white race resulting in expansionism and colonialism, the imperial discourse also includes the stereotyping of the East by the West where the East is judged as a single indivisible unit which is treated with "hostility and fear" (Said, 1979, pg. 4).

In both Kipling's and Blyton's short stories, one might come across recurrent motifs hinting at the idea of colonialism. "Colonialism which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory" (Said, 1979, pg. 8). In Blyton's *The Enchanted Shoes* (2002)-first published as *The Enchanted Slippers* in the magazine *Sunny Stories for Little Folks* in 1934- from the short story collection *The Enchanted Shoes and Other Stories* (2002), a young boy named William sets on an adventure to explore the hillside that is feared and, therefore, considered to be dangerous since it is comprised of the non-human and the other i.e. witches, giants, brownies, and nasty dwarfs. By the end of the story, not only does William succeed in ousting the nasty dwarf, Trimble, and consequently, all the other dwarfs but is also

welcomed by the friendly brownies who thank him for his act. Hence, William becomes the savior of these brownies and walks unafraid over the hillside along with his friends. William is the rescuer, the brave and upright human. However, if one deconstructs these binaries, one may clearly see that the perspective regarding the dwarfs comes to the front only through Trimble the dwarf, or William and the omniscient narrator. According to this perspective, William is right and the dwarfs are all presented as evil although all of them are deprived of their residing space without giving them a voice.

A similar representation of characters can be seen in Kipling's short stories *Mowgli's Brothers*, *kaa's Hunting* and *Tiger-Tiger* from *The Jungle Book* (1894). In all three stories, Mowgli is presented as a hero and Shere Khan is shown in a negative light. The name Shere Khan itself is very significant as the surname Khan is one of the most widely used surnames among Muslims. It also indicates "an honorific traditionally bestowed upon Muslim notables, leaders and warriors" (Asghar & Butt, 2017, pg. 150). Likewise, Shere was also an honorary title given to rulers of the Subcontinent. The title of "Sher" has been bestowed upon various people across the history of South Asia to represent bravery, victory, and honor. The freedom fighters who actively and fiercely fought for independence including the likes of Tipu Sultan (1751-1799), Maharaja Ranjeet Singh (1780-1839), Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928) and others were popularly known as "Sher" among the masses. The recurrent use of the word "Sher" together with the word "Khan" is symbolic. It hints at the deliberate vilification of these historical figures and their struggle for independence. Since Shere (lions) are also considered to be kings of jungles generally, a contemplation upon the tiger's name might leave the readers thinking Shere Khan to be the real king of the Jungle, who is in fact presented as a villain in the stories mentioned above. In the stories Mowgli does not belong to the jungle but he masters the law of the jungle in the strict supervision of Baloo-the brown bear, and friendly assistance of Bagheera-the black panther. Both Baloo and Bagheera are the ones who are responsible for making sure that the law is reinforced. The ones who do not obey the law are either portrayed as evil like Shere Khan or made into outcasts like the Bandar-log. The importance of the law is highlighted throughout the stories, even through short chants like:

Oh hear the call! Good hunting all

That keep the Jungle Law! (Kipling, 1897, pg. 1)

And

Now this is the law of the jungle, as old and as true as the sky,

And the wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the wolf that shall break it must die. (Kipling, 1897, pg. 140)

In Sujit Mukherjee's work "Tigers in fiction: An aspect of the Colonial Encounter" the tiger is described to be the white Indo-Aryan or Caucasian from the North that conquered the Subcontinent before the British Conquests (Mukherjee, 1987, p. 11). In the light of this development, another name comes to the surface from the history of the political landscape of the Subcontinent; the sixteenth century Afghan chieftain known as Sher Shah Suri. The ruler Farid Khan (1472-1545) was the founder of the Sur Empire and is credited for providing the essential administrative framework that laid the foundations for the future Mughal Empire. In popular culture, Farid Khan was conferred the title of "Sher" for reportedly defeating a lion in order to save the life of the Governor of Bihar - Bahar Khan Lohani. He later became known as Sher Shah or Sher Khan owing to his bravery where Khan referred to his original surname and Pakhtun identity. Likewise, in Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894), Shere Khan represents conquest and the consolidation of empire where the tiger is an outlaw and outsider from whom another outsider (Mowgli) snatches power with the killing of the archaic beast and establishing himself as the modern imperial protagonist (Randall, 1998, p. 111).

Just like Blyton's William, Kipling's Mowgli is also a human among the other non-humans and, therefore, has an upper hand over them. Mowgli has power over the animals due to his ability to scare them by just staring into their eyes. He is also not afraid of the fire like them. He has intellect unlike Shere Khan who comes in running when Mowgli challenges him to a duet, and that too, much without thinking that he has a full stomach. Shere Khan loses to Mowgli owing to the ferociousness and haste common to beasts. Mowgli, on the other hand, wins on account of his smart work and intelligence. Like Kipling's Mowgli, Blyton's William is also presented to be more knowledgeable and smart as compared to the hillside dwelling folks. This is evident where the giant has trouble doing some basic calculation and William helps him with it. In exchange of the mathematical knowledge given to him by William, the giant pays William back by disclosing to him a trick that might help him in getting rid of Trimble's slavery. In other words, he gives William the knowledge of sorcery. It is his intellect and knowledge due to which he is able to overcome Trimble and rest of the dwarfs.

If the ones who live on the hillside have any sort of knowledge, that is only limited to sorcery. It is the 'unknown' knowledge of the exotic, the knowledge of the 'other' that is to be explored. The hillside is a

perfect manifestation of a land filled with feared species. It is a sunny place where wild berries grow and William plans on going up the hill because he wants to get some wild strawberries. In this case, William appears to be a true prototype of children from young adult fiction and children's fiction who embark on adventurous journeys to explore exotic islands and who are presented as heroic figures to the young impressionable minds. William is the brave hero who extrudes Trimble, and fearing Trimble's fate the other nasty dwarfs flee as well. In both Mowgli's and William's case, they become the rescuers of the ones who are not human. Where William comes to the forefront as rescuer of the little brownies and rest of the hillside folk, Mowgli is delineated as someone who kills Shere Khan and sets all the other animals free from Shere Khan's malice.

According to Jacquelynne S. Eccles, "the years between 6 and 14--middle childhood and early adolescence—are a time of important developmental advances that establish children's sense of identity" (Eccles, 1999, pg. 30). So if children are introduced to such literature that propagates the imperialist discourse in an age when they can be molded and shaped easily, it leaves a mark on their personalities and the ideas they are exposed to become their 'universal truth' (Coetzee, 2010). In this way, the text becomes the major source of propagating the imperial ideology in children's mind from early childhood.

In the same way that institutions classify individuals, they also classify things and produce meaning. In terms of the production of meaning, power resides with those producing cultural artefacts- those who control culture are those who produce cultural artefacts. Literature can be defined as a cultural artefact. (Coetzee, 2010, pg. 19)

Referring to John Stephens, Perry Nodelman argues:

Texts forcefully manipulate readers into espousing socially acceptable ideas about who and what they individually are by offering specific positions or points of view from which fictional events are perceived and understood and then encouraging readers to occupy those positions themselves. (Nodelman, 1994, pg. 176)

The above mentioned idea holds true with texts that promote the dominant discourses of their respective times. In both Kipling's and Blyton's short stories for children mentioned above, the protagonists are children which might be an enticing factor for children since they would start looking up to them to occupy their positions in an attempt to become like them.

Apart from the art of characterization of the apparent protagonists, another common denominator between the previously discussed Mowgli stories (1894) by Rudyard Kipling and *The Enchanted Shoes* (2002) by Enid Blyton is that both introduce the readers to exotic lands. The landscape and setting is rich, fertile and exuberant in both the cases. In *The Jungle Book's* (1894) Mowgli Stories, Mowgli moves from the village to the jungle that is replete with natural imagery, the animals adding up to the natural setting. Mowgli is the only human there and does not belong to the jungle. He is trained in the jungle law by the bear Baloo and is constantly reminded that the man devouring Shere Khan is his enemy. In this case, power lies with those who make and reinforce the law whereas animals like Shere Khan, Tabaqui, and the Bandar-log are pushed to the peripheries. Thus, the jungle may stand as a microcosmic representation of one of the colonies of the British Empire and the ones who follow the law and make sure its reinforcement could symbolize those schooled in British values. It is the ones trained in the jungle law who are shown to be knowledgeable, intellectual, smart, and upright.

In comparison with the above mentioned characters, the Bandar-log, Shere Khan, and Tabaqui are rash and lack cerebral prowess. Tabaqui the jackal moves around Shere Khan as his ally. He is despised and mistreated by the wolves of the jungle both because of his affiliation with Shere Khan and also of his mischievous nature. Tabaqui's character is introduced with the voice of the omniscient narrator. The narrator states how Tabaqui is apt to go mad: "for madness is the most disgraceful thing that can over-take a wild creature. We call it hydrophobia but they call it dewanee-the madness-and run" (Kipling 2). This voice creates a schism between wild creatures and humans, thereby establishing its own authority and eliding the perspective of wild animals. The idea of creating a discourse that is based solely on the West's understanding of the eastern world, marked by racial profiling and stereotyping is very common to nineteenth and early twentieth century British literature, where binaries of 'Us' and 'them' operate as essential parts of the discourse (Said, 1978). Kipling creates binaries of 'We' and 'they' (2) by bringing in the all-knowing voice of the omniscient narrator. Where the narrator establishes himself as 'We' that has knowledge, wild beasts like Tabaqui stand as 'They' who are unable to identify their ailment due to lack of knowledge. Considering that Kipling used to narrate these stories to his children as bed-time stories (Introduction to *The Jungle Books*, 2018), one might take the voice of the omniscient narrator to be his own voice. Building upon this argument, we may say that the voice of the narrator is that of the human who distinguishes the humans from animals as having the power of knowledge. If 'We' represent the humans and 'they' are the wild creatures,

then Mowgli, being human is superior to the wild beasts since ‘we’ have knowledge and wisdom. Where the beasts of the jungle call hydrophobia dewanee i.e. madness, humans have a scientific or medical explanation for that madness which is hydrophobia. Although one might argue that Mowgli would have no access to medical knowledge on account of being raised in the jungle, he is shown to learn things like human beings (such as the use of fire) and behave like them throughout the stories under discussion. It is due to this reason that he is superior to the animals. Therefore, these subtle metaphors showcase the binaries of ‘Us’ and ‘them’.

The Bandar-log are also among the disinherited jungle animals. No jungle animal likes to talk or even look at them. Baloo and Bagheera bade Mowgli strict orders not to talk to the Bandar-log. The Bandar-log have forgotten who they are. They promise they would do great things but get distracted the next moment and start wasting their times in frivolous activities such as laughing on the falling of a nut (Kipling, 1897, p. 44). The monkey-king wants to be like Mowgli. According to him, human beings are superior because they know the use of fire. Fire has always been considered to be an important element of civilization which means that the monkey-king wants to be as civilized as Mowgli and the humans but the bandar-log tend to forget easily and are shown to be lawless, henceforth, they can never be civilized like Mowgli. Asghar and Butt argue how “in the jungle following the ‘Law’ is the measure of one’s dignity but here the ‘Law’ stands for British imperial law which the mutinous (monkeys) tend to trample upon” (Asghar & Butt, 2017, pg. 148).

Shere Khan is another character who does not obey the law. If one deconstructs these binaries projecting some characters as the upright keepers of jungle laws and Shere Khan as outrageous, one might be able to see that Shere Khan is loathed by the animals merely because he does not subscribe to ‘their’ laws.

In Blyton’s *The Enchanted Shoes* (2002), William visits the exotic hillside in search of some wild strawberries and just like Mowgli becomes the master of the jungle by killing Shere Khan, William becomes the master of the hillside by getting rid of the dwarfs. Although both characters do not permanently reside in those respective spaces yet they do succeed in establishing themselves as heroes to be looked upon by children who read the stories. In *The Enchanted Shoes* (2002), the hillside is elusive to the ones who live down the hill. It is a land to be explored and William does not only explore the hillside, but he is also able to maintain his autonomy over the hill folk as a savior and hero- a trope found in nineteenth and twentieth century young adult and children’s literature. The much feared hill creatures are different from William. They are well versed in magic and sorcery which is new to William.

Trimble tricks William into enslavement when the latter goes up the hill looking for wild strawberries. Here Trimble appears to be the oppressor and William becomes oppressed for the time being. These master slave dialects end only once William is helped by the giant. Trimble- a hostile force- who seemed to be in control of the hillside is eradicated by William when he commands the magic shoes to take Trimble up to the moon. The giant could stand as a symbol of weak resistance as he helps William break Trimble’s spell. He has no objection with William’s trespassing. Similar is the case with the friendly little brownies who thank William for throwing Trimble out since they were tired of Trimble’s evil ways.

In Kipling’s stories, too, the wolves, Bagheera, and Baloo are on Mowgli’s side. Where Baloo and Bagheera train Mowgli in the jungle’s laws, the wolves, and especially father wolf along with mother wolf take care of Mowgli. As the British colonizers were able to win the support of the local warlords and tribal heads, Mowgli is also able to win the support and protection of the wolves (Asghar and Butt, 2017, pg. 150). Observing the brownies and the giant from Blyton’s short story in a similar light, it becomes evident that these characters appear to be the supporters of the imperial rule and show weak or no resistance at all. On the other hand Trimble and Shere Khan are portrayed as evil tyrants who do not deserve to operate or even stay within their own territories where both are deprived off their dwelling spaces.

Having discussed these stories in detail, let us move on to another story by Blyton titled *The Goblin Hat* (1987) from *The Goblin Hat and Other Stories* (1987). This particular story opens with Tiresome the goblin stealing food from the baker and balloons from the balloon woman. He is introduced as someone who steals but his act of stealing is not questioned by the narrator throughout the story. In fact, he gets away with it very easily by the help of his magic spells. This could convey a message to young readers where they might assume that stealing does not bring about serious consequences. By the end of the story, the goblin tricks Mister Stamp-about in getting his bag of gold and running away. He flees from the place he used to steal from, saying that he has got nothing to do with them now that he is rich. He gets rich by usurping the resource within that space and once he has achieved what he wants, he runs away without a second thought. This particular episode can be lined with another trope in colonial literature. After exploiting the material resource, the colonizer always returns to the Metropolis. Despite Tiresome’s questionable act, the adjective used to describe him is ‘mischievous’ (Blyton, 1987, pg. 45). He is not called ‘nasty’ (*The Enchanted Shoes*, 2002, pg. 25) and ‘horrible’ (*The Enchanted Shoes*, 2002, pg. 20) like Trimble. In the denouement, readers



come across the voice of the omniscient narrator according to whom no one really cared that the goblin had run away with Stamp-about's bag of gold because no one really liked him. The question, then, is whether Tiresome's stealing of the bag full of gold justified only because no one really liked Mr. Stamp-about and the latter thought he was smart. The omniscient narrator also discloses by the end of the story how it is very difficult that Tiresome will ever get caught but presents an exceptional scenario by stating "but you never know" (Blyton, 1987, pg. 55), and giving the policeman Mr. Plod's telephone number. There is no explanation to why the goblin will almost never get caught. Readers might assume that the high probability of this scenario arises from Tiresome's strength of invisibility. If he cannot be seen, he cannot be caught. Unless there is someone possessing the knowledge that he does, he will move freely forever, and in the course of the story, no one is shown as smart as he is. Since, he is the one who comes to the front as having the knowledge of sorcery and the intellect to outwit the folks in the setting of the story, he wins over them.

*The White Seal* from Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894) is another short story replete with colonial allusions such as the dichotomy between the brave seal protagonist, and the not-so brave seals that he ultimately rules upon. Kotick-the white seal sets on adventurous journeys to far-off places for exploration. He is the only seal with white fur among the other gray seals. The word white is accentuated throughout the story where the fact that 'white' is equivalent to progress is brought home. This will become evident as we move forward with the discussion.

Kotick is the only seal who questions while the other seals are presented as lacking the quality of inquisitiveness. This is revealed when he embarks on journeys to explore a new place for the seals to live in and questions Sea Vitch about any new lands that he knows of, while the other seals remain unaware of the need to do so, fighting to make room for themselves and their families in Novastoshnah beach alone. Where the rest of the seals are stagnant and do not want to step out of their comfort zone, Kotick is bold enough to look for new lands. He is also brave and daring unlike the other non-white seals. When the seal catchers are looking for them, he is not afraid and starts following them until both of them start running, thinking him to be a ghost since they have never seen a white seal before. By the end of the story, he wins a duet with a seal who does not want to leave his current residence, fighting other seals too who are opposed by the idea of leaving the place. He then leads those seals who want to go with him to a newly found island beyond Sea-Cow's tunnel, only to grow fatter, stronger, and bigger each year. Kotick getting even fatter and stronger could allude towards the richness and fertility of the land where the seals move. The land is not also conducive to the seals in accommodating all of them. No other man comes towards those "quiet, sheltered beaches" (Kipling, 1897, pg. 149) and even the seals who initially called Kotick and his companions 'idiots' (Kipling, 1897, pg. 149) gradually move towards those beaches. "Of course it was not all done at once, for the seals are not very clever, and they need a long time to turn things over in their minds" (Kipling, 1897, pg. 150). In this scenario, they need a daring, bold and smart leader like Kotick and the 'White Seal' does seem to rule over all of them in his newly found territory. He is not only smarter than the gray seals, he is also superior to the Sea-Cows. According to Kotick, The Sea-Cows are the only creatures uglier than Sea Vitch-the Walrus.

In the story, Kipling describes the Sea-Vitch as an old "big, ugly, bloated, pimpled, fat-necked, long-tusked Walrus of the North Pacific, who has no manners except when he is asleep" (Kipling, 1897, pg. 134), and the Sea-Cows as creatures who do not look like any other sea creature such as the "walrus, sea-lion, seal, bear, whale, shark, fish, squid or scallop" (Kipling, 1897, pg. 141). In addition to it their heads are "foolish-looking" (Kipling, 1897, pg. 141).

The Sea-Cows are alienated in a place that is unexplored and are unlike any sea creature he has ever seen before. Kotick's awe and disgust for these creatures may push the readers to recall the equation of the colonizer's amazement and disgust for the colonized. The cows' split lips and their eating style is new to him. When he asks them questions they do not reply because they are not blessed with the power of speech. Their only response to his questions is through graceful bowing. Kotick, without understanding and trying to know them labels the Sea-Cows as having worse manners than Sea Vitch. They have no speech of their own. In this regard, they resemble the Bandar-log from the Mowgli stories but are far more harmless as compared to them. They do not retaliate when tons of seals come in to stay on an island only known to them of which Kotick then becomes master. "People who are such idiots as these are, would have been killed long ago if they hadn't found out some safe island; and what is good enough for the Sea Cow is good enough for the Sea Catch" (Kipling, 1897, pg. 143). By referring to the seals as Sea Catch, Kotick decides on his own that the seals deserve to live on the island and that the Sea Cows are idiots. Furthermore, the fact that being white equals to being superior is accentuated through an episode featuring a conversation between Kotick and a sea lion at the Sea-Lion's Neck. There Kotick tells the sea lion how men are killing the seals. The sea lion suggests Kotick that the seals should find a quiet place for them to live in where no man can find them. He

advises the white seal to go and find Sea Vitch at Walrus Islet. When Kotick returns back to Novastoshnah and informs the other seals about his adventure to Walrus Islet, he learns that “no one sympathized with him in his little attempt to discover a quiet place for the seals” (Kipling, 1897, pg. 136). Instead, they say that Kotick should never have gone to the killing grounds where the men were killing the seals. Here the narrator of the story dives in to tell that “none of the other seals had seen the killing, and that made the difference between him and his friends. Besides, Kotick was a white seal” (Kipling, 1897, pg. 136). This shows that being a white seal, it is his burden to save the rest of the seals. This can also be seen when an old seal tells Kotick, “in the days when men killed us by the hundred thousand there was a story on the beaches that someday a white seal would come out of the North and lead the seal-people to a quiet place” (Kipling, 1897, pg. 139). These episodes make the readers recall Kipling’s poem *The White Man’s Burden* (1899) that catered the same thematic concern as mentioned above.

Both Kotick and the goblin are shown in a positive light. Although Tiresome is not necessarily represented a hero yet he is shown to be smart and clever which are both positive attributes and Kotick is showcased as the hero and leader of the seals. Moreover, both of them are smart among idiots. This justifies white Kotick’s rule over the less cerebrally developed gray seals, and Tiresome’s act of stealing from the ones who lack smartness. He steals from the people on account of his skill i.e. sorcery and witticism. Both these attributes help him fool the people around him. In the denouement, he succeeds in tricking Stamp-about in getting his bag of gold and running away. This act, too, does not come about as evil or is rather whitewashed by Stamp-about’s foolishness, where he thinks he is smart when he is not. To sum up, the representation of these characters resemble William and Mowgli in different ways. Both of them are presented as heroes despite some of their morally questionable acts. They are also shown as intelligent where the other characters like the sea cows, gray seals, and the folks where Tiresome lives are presented as lagging behind in cognitive abilities in comparison to them.

Blyton’s *The Old Toad and the Spider* (1985) from the short story collection *Twelve Silver Cups* (1985) features a story where a sly old toad moves to a green orchard and makes the wet grass beneath an apple tree his dwelling after his ditch dries up. The toad thinks to himself “I shall grow fat and comfortable” (Blyton, 1985, pg. 47). This same place has been inhabited by a big old spider for years where she has spun her web and hunted for flies every summer. The arrival of the toad is not welcomed by the spider and she makes it clear to the frog that he will have to find another hunting ground to which the toad replies “I shall stay here” (Blyton 48) and exclaims that there were plenty of resources for the both of them. The spider is adamant and thinks to herself “it is my place, not his” (Blyton, 1985, pg. 47). Quickly the frog starts stealing the spider’s prey and boasts of his latent, innate and better hunting skills where the spider is destined to the leftover prey. Wet days are marked by the scarcity of prey and the toad becomes thinner. The spider acts sympathetic towards the frog but cunningly sends him to the pond where ducks would swim every day, delighted by the thought that the ducks might eat him. In this manner the spider would be able to get rid of him. The toad has to run for his life from the pond ducks and decides to repay the spider by breaking her web and eat her. The spider pretends to be dead laying under a piece of loose bark and the toad leaves her exclaiming “Dead Ha! And a good thing too! ... I don’t eat dead spiders, so I’ll leave her there” (Blyton, 1985, pg. 53). The frog breaks the spider’s lovely web and finds for himself a stone to hibernate underneath during winters. At this, the spider quickly weaves her web right above it. When the toad wakes up in the autumn to catch a fly or two he sees the spider swinging to and fro in her web. He exclaims to the spider in astonishment that she were dead to which the spider replies “Not really!” (Blyton, 1985, pg. 55). The story closes as the winter season is approaching and both the animals are preparing for hibernation. When spring comes both will continue with their feud as the winner is yet to be decided.

The toad sets on a journey to a geographical location that is new to him leaving his other toad fellows back in the old residence where he used to play with them by the pond. This place that the toad discovers is an orchard. It is rich in terms of food and natural imagery. There are fruit trees and grass in the orchard, along with many flies that can be fed upon. This symbolism relates to the colonizer embarking on an adventure in a foreign land, leaving their own fellow countrymen behind. The colony as always, is a rich faraway land that is abundant in resources and has a lot to offer to her inhabitants. The spider is not happy that the toad has invaded her space and is feeding upon her flies. She asks him to leave but the toad does not. Instead, he flaunts that he is fitter for predation, thereby, insisting on the Survival of the fittest as presented by Charles Darwin in his work *On the origin of species* (1859). The inhabitants of this faraway land do not fully accept the arrival of an outsider and a series of hostile events await the unwelcomed newcomer such as the white ducks by the ponds that try to eat the toad, and the cunning spider that plots and plans against this outsider. The colonizer always has to face hostility in the colony. The “other” in this appears to be cunning and someone possessing the art of trickery that wants the foreign element to be removed from this new

dwelling of the outsider. Therefore, this story, too, lines with some of the recurrent colonial motifs of colonialist literature. All these colonial motifs leave a huge impact on children's minds. Where the children of the colonizer are taught to be superior, the children of the colonized are also instilled with the idea of the colonizer's superiority when they are exposed to such books. Although children might not be able to observe the subtle references to the idea of colonialism, they may still unconsciously absorb some of the references and the overall message of the story. Since young minds are highly impressionable, this might leave a long lasting impact on them even as adults. In his article, "My Nostalgia for Enid Blyton is Complicated" Pranay Somayajula states how he thought he subconsciously had to whiten himself in order to fit in the world of stories created by Blyton (Somayajula).

Where children from the colonized world may develop a sense of inferiority, perceive things from the perspective as presented to them in the texts, and dream to enjoy the perks and privileges so easily available to child characters in the stories, children from the colonizer's side may also create a reality where they shape the world view around them through a unified lens i.e. only their own perspective and thrive to become like the standard child protagonist in the stories they read. For instance, while reading Enid Blyton's *The Goblin Hat* (1987), children from both sides might believe that Tiresome is in fact 'clever' as opposed to the foolish people where he stays. Moreover, they might also not be able to see him as a thief.

The marginalization and xenophobia in many Western countries for immigrant communities and people belonging to other races can be a cause arising due to early exposure of children to the imperialist ideology along with fierce media campaigning against these communities. In this case, these stories could serve as examples of how children are exposed to the dominant discourses of their time periods, colonialism being one of them. Short stories, along with nursery rhymes have always been an important genre in schooling children. They are easy to read and even easy to remember since they are short. Therefore, short stories are important tools if a certain ideology or discourse needs to be propagated to young children. Where novels are lengthy and difficult for children to read, short stories may play the role.

Although many postcolonial writers write back to the empire in an attempt to decolonize children's literature, "colonialism is never over and done with" (Bradford 216). Colonial literature such as the short stories selected for this study are re-circulated and still widely consumed all over the world by children who read English literature. Furthermore, children are now fed with the colonial discourse through media such as popular films, animated movies and cartoons. That is why, it is necessary to keep on revisiting the events of colonization (Bradford 217) in order to create a greater understanding of colonial and de-colonial discourse to the readers so that it may also be imparted to young children. Furthermore, de-colonial literature should be made more accessible to them. In this way, children can be more inclusive in their approach while reading texts and in their consumption of digital media even if the material they consume hints toward elements that are part of imperialist ideology.

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