The Muslim "Hajji" as a Catalyst of Unraveling Imperialist Discursive Laundering in Rudyard Kipling's "A Deal in Cotton"

DOI:https://doi.org/10.33806/ijaes.v25i2.906

Haitham M. Talafha
The Hashemite University, Jordan

Hussein A. Alhawamdeh
The University of Jordan, Jordan

Received: 23.9.2024 Accepted: 8.1.2025 Published: 2.6.2025

Abstract: The current study aims to investigate the discursive dynamics that account for prolonging the imperial enterprise in one of Kipling's usually overlooked texts, "A Deal in Cotton" (1907). The uniqueness of this tale lies in exhibiting the ideological basis whereby the imperial practices in African colonies are rationalized. This ideology is exhaustively materialistic as imperial officials do not refrain from commercializing all that is at their disposal. However, drawing on a Foucauldian theoretical framework, the study unveils the intricate processes wherein such imperial practices become intertwined with the enigmatic character of Ibn Makarrah, whose presence exclusively enables the imperialists to proceed in their imperial undertaking. Because Ibn Makarrah happens to be their perilous, powerful adversary, imperial officials tend to discursively obliterate, recycle, and reintroduce him as a painstakingly different character who is simply dubbed the "Hajji" and whose ensuing characterization is discursively permissible. This shadowy process, which the study labels "discursive laundering," allows Adam to springboard into securing the funds, land, and labor power required for his materialist project. The importance of the study's findings lies in uncovering the narrative mechanisms whereby anti-discursive constructs are converted into discursively legitimate ones in a way that reinforces imperialism in the story.

Keywords: discursive laundering, imperialism, materialism, Muslims, Rudyard Kipling

1. Introduction: Kipling's imperialism and the unremitting debate

It would not be an exaggeration to claim that Rudyard Kipling's imperialist inscriptions have been among the most intensely debated issues in the history of the English literary tradition. This problematized controversy had been sparked even since Kipling's works started to find their path to publication. For more than a century, Kipling's works grabbed the attention of literary critics, historians, political activists, and canonical authors. Many of these have not only appraised Kipling's works but also found in his imperialist prose and verse a suitable platform for crystallizing their ideological convictions and aspirations. When having a panoramic glance at the bulk of criticism of Kipling's imperialism (outlined below), one may become overwhelmed by the divergent perspectives aiming to categorize Kipling within certain cultural, geopolitical, or historical constructs. This condition is understandable when dealing with an eminent figure who is dubbed, by specialists

and renowned authors, "the prophet of British Imperialism" (Orwell 1942/1964: 72) and the prophet of "[t]he progress of English Society" (Carrington 1955: xxi). Indeed, the bewilderment caused by Kipling's criticism was pointed out over half a century ago, when Elliot Gilbert claimed, while attempting to collect and categorize critical essays on Kipling, that "a compiler of literary reputation studies could not choose a more perplexing subject" (1965: v).

However, a careful survey of the history of such critical views would exhibit how they have been steadily polarized into two main opposing camps apropos of Kipling's imperialism. In the first, Kipling's fictionalized world is hailed as displaying the imperial pride of leading the world's civilization, while in the second, Kipling's presumed ideology and enthusiasts are bitterly attacked. As this recapitulatory introduction intends to outline, this polarization has undergone three distinct waves of intensification, and it has survived into the present without reaching a synthesizing ground that would disentangle this dialectical impediment. Importantly, while tracing these pivotal stages, there are two imperatives that we mean to address. First, those who celebrate/denounce Kipling's literary output share a consensus that Kipling is decidedly an imperialist. Thus, this paper asserts that the complexities of Kipling's texts ward off such black-and-white critical taxonomies. Second, and more fundamentally, Kipling's imperialist discourse has been examined in each stage by contextualizing it against continually expanded historical, political, and literary structures that take his presumed imperialism further away from Kipling's texts. What our investigation aims to achieve is to precisely *reverse* this structuralist trend. That is, the basic tenet upon which the current study is premised is our suggestion that the mass of research established thus far on Kipling is growingly oriented towards dealing with Kipling's imperialism *outside* rather than *inside* his fictional world. Our intention, therefore, is to examine the discursive functioning, layers, and construction of imperialism inside one of Kipling's rarely considered texts. To spell out more plainly the specifics of this objective, a rapid sketching of the key stages in the history of Kipling's critical tradition is indispensable at this point.

Critical dichotomy in the reception of Kipling's works started during Kipling's lifetime in two polemical lines of thinking represented by two contemporary authors: Robert Buchanan and Sir Walter Besant. In his scathing disapproval of what he calls "Kiplingism," Buchanan attacks Kipling's role in promoting a vulgar, frivolous, and barbarian ethos in his fiction. With the publication of the "Barrack-Room Ballads," according to Buchanan, Kipling thought too highly of himself and thus experienced the "delusion and hallucination" of being the poet of the British Empire (1900/1965: 22). Although Buchanan acknowledges a few artistic aspects in Kipling's verse, he dismisses the "absolute vulgarity and the triviality" (1900/1965: 24) with which Kipling renders the British soldier, portraying him as a barbaric hooligan. In direct response to Buchanan, Besant contends that his views "are exactly opposite to those of Mr. Buchanan" (1900/1971: 251), and he advocates Kipling on the basis of form and content, suggesting that Kipling's language is simple and vigorous, and his works are

intended to enlighten people about the Empire, which is a compelling concern that correlates with "the most profound sense of responsibility" (Besant 1900/1971: 256). This debate was joined by other contemporaneous writers like Oscar Wilde (1890) and Andrew Lang (1891) who rejoiced over Kipling's artistic abilities, especially in documenting the British imperial feats in Anglo-India. Consequently, what marks the tone and subject of the voices in this early stage is their liberal humanist tendency, for their focus is primarily on Kipling's artistic skills, and Kipling's imperialism is approached from a creative perspective. In a nutshell, during this stage Kipling's art is foregrounded while his imperialist sentiment is pushed into the background. What is equally notable is the type of commentators who engaged in this debate as all of them are canonical authors (poets, novelists, and dramatists) whose outlooks are purely literary.

The second phase, we argue, saw a transformation in the sharpness, tone, and focus of Kipling's reception. The onset of this alteration can be spotted in the early 1940s, just after Kipling's death, when it became viable to have a thorough re-evaluation of Kipling's literary output. While the vogue of the early phase is liberal humanist, that of the second is political, with the focal point being shifted from Kipling's art to his relationship with the British Empire. The most far-famed voices in this phase are those of T. S. Eliot and George Orwell, whose heated debate and emotionally charged deliberations mark the investigative approach to Kipling's works in this period. Eliot avers that Kipling's imperialist inscriptions are never at odds with the principles of civilization and impartiality, claiming that Kipling at no time advocated racial hierarchy (in the sense that Europeans are superior). Overall, Eliot could not but express his admiration for Kipling's imperialist mindset and appreciate his skill in conveying the British colonial experience. This apologia on Eliot's part was deplored by Orwell, who suggests that "[i]t was a pity that Mr Eliot should be so much on the defensive" (1942/1964: 70). Orwell asserts that Kipling's imperialist jingoism and depiction of Anglo-India exhibit clear instances of appalling viciousness and a sense of superiority that are far from the values of civilization. There are those violent scenes in Kipling's fiction that instigate much distress for Orwell to the point of arguing that "Kipling *is* a jingo imperialist; he *is* morally insensitive and aesthetically disgusting" (1942/1964: 70).

The Eliot-Orwell debate inaugurated a series of polemical responses that, for the most part, were on the offensive. Such critical attacks accusing Kipling of being a propagandist of the Empire and of supporting imperial figures—like Joseph Chamberlain, Cecil Rhodes, and Lord Milner[1]—continued to have a bearing on the next few decades, all the way through the early 1990s.[2] Nevertheless, few commentators in this phase followed the example of Eliot, contending that Kipling wholeheartedly cherished the British Empire, and this sincere sentiment is not jingoistic but rather deeply rooted in his faith in the moral and mystical motives that inspire the imperial idea.[3] Importantly, what all these views boil down to, we posit, is the prioritization of Kipling's affinity with the Empire, for even those who undertook to historicize Kipling's work during this phase and were neither defensive nor on the offensive, they did so while foregrounding this pivotal theme.[4]

The third and last stage in this history is initiated by Edward Said, whose outlook on Kipling's imperialism is voiced in his introduction (1987) to Kipling's *Kim*, which was reproduced yet again in his *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). However, since the publication of his *Orientalism* (1978), Said's views about Orientalist inscriptions had consistently persisted within his invariable theoretical framework, which is inhered in his postulation that the Orientalist discourse "views the Orient as something whose existence is not only displayed but has remained fixed in time and place for the West" (1978: 108). While mainly focusing on *Kim*, Said (1993) maintains that Kipling's imperialism cannot be examined apart from the grater backdrop of the whole European imperialist design and that Kipling's fictional Anglo-India is necessarily modeled by the historical circumstances of the British colonial undertaking in the East. Nevertheless, Said's theoretical frame is challenged by B. J. Moore-Gilbert (1986), whose investigation is intended to mainly subvert the suggestion that Orientalism is characterized by fixed tropes that do not reflect the complexity of Eastern cultures. Moore-Gilbert's detailed historical assessment emphasizes the contradictions of Said's approach when it comes to Kipling's Anglo-India. For Moore-Gilbert differentiates between two forms of Orientalism: metropolitan and Anglo-Indian. The former, according to Moore-Gilbert, is premised upon fantasized and ignorant literary creations that are disconnected from true imperial conditions. However, Moore-Gilbert contends that Anglo-Indian authors like Kipling reflect a much more nuanced cultural identity and interaction with Eastern cultures that in no way can be simply cornered in one theoretical paradigm as suggested by Said.[5] What is being stressed in the third wave is neither Kipling's works nor his imperialist ideology but rather his being a product of a greater discourse that characterizes Kipling's depiction of the Empire and typifies the ideology and practices of British imperialists, European colonists, Anglo-Indians, etc. Therefore, during this stage, Kipling's imperialist work is only intelligible when seen within the more sophisticated, (inter)continental structure that ideologized and made Kipling's art possible.

This short survey on Kipling's scholarship is by no means all-encompassing; instead, it is first and foremost reframed here to pin down the problematic challenges that the current study undertakes to address. First, the critical scene sketched above reveals the way the debate about Kipling's imperialism has veered—in a structuralist fashion—away from Kipling's texts towards macro critical issues. This is clear in the second and third stages, where Kipling's imperialism is taken to further levels, eventually becoming detached from Kipling's texts. What the current study aims to do is quite the contrary: to reverse this tradition by re-engaging with the text, and to do so is by no means to be back to square one, that is, to align with the studies in the first wave because such views then debated Kipling's imperialism from an artistic point of view, focusing on Kipling's literariness, not imperialism. Rather, this study concentrates on Kipling's text with the aim of examining the nature of the imperialist discourse and, more importantly, how this discourse is established, reconditioned, and reintroduced yet again in a series of processes that take place on different levels *within* Kipling's text.

Second, previous studies on Kipling's imperialism tried to establish a static and totalized stance towards imperialism and, importantly, ascribe that stance to Kipling. They confined Kipling's writings to a specific imperialist category, as seen in the cases of Orwell (1942/1964), Boris Ford (1942/1965), Vivian Pinto (1951), Said (1993), and Benita Parry (1993). One of the challenges that arise in this practice is addressing the changes and development of Kipling's attitudes during his literary career, for Kipling's outlook matured over time. Some even speak of a multiplicity 'Kiplings' that correspond to the stages and political turns of his outlook, which can clearly be observed in the drastic transformation he underwent after his American experience.[6] For that reason, establishing overarching generalizations that singularize Kipling's imperialist stance is an oversight that the current study intends to invalidate.

The third concern about the previous studies outlined above has to do with their geopolitical scope, for they emphasized mainly Kipling's Indian fiction and poetry. As someone who is far from unwisely establishing generalizations about one, essentialized Orient, Kipling is not only familiar but well-versed in distinguishing between the different histories, locales, and peoples of the East. Therefore, in terms of the geopolitical scope, the primary emphasis in this study is not on Kipling's Anglo-India but rather on Kipling's Africa, which has rarely been examined. Emphasis will primarily be on "A Deal in Cotton" (1907) to uncover one aspect of how the imperial discourse within Kipling's fiction is sustained by an implicit discursive mechanism that the current study shall term *discourse laundering*.

2. Methodology: Foucault's discourse mechanisms

"A Deal in Cotton," we argue, is unique in its treatment of the internal dynamics of the imperialist discourse. One may still perform a probing of the imperialist discourse in Kipling's Anglo-Indian novels, such as *The Naulahka* (1892) and *Kim* (1901), or his much-quoted, ideologically charged poems like "Loot" (1890), "The White Man's Burden" (1899), among others, yet the specific processes of the materialist discourse, the laundering technique, and the tools used to uncover such processes and technique are never available, we claim, in any of Kipling's other writings. This story, which has largely been overlooked and whose imperialist discourse has never been discussed, truly permits an in-depth analysis of how imperialism functions inside Kipling's fiction. This analysis is undertaken in the current study within a Foucauldian framework, as Michel Foucault's concept of discourse offers a critical tool for grasping how certain imperialist aims and practices in "A Deal in Cotton" are constructed, legitimized, and sustained within a certain socio-political system.

According to Foucault (1970; 1972; 1980; 1981), discourse is not merely a linguistic practice that reflects reality; it is rather a system of producing knowledge that regulates what may (or may not) be said. Discourse is conditioned by socio-political forces that control how certain types of "truth" are created in societies. Foucault suggests that "in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures"

(1981: 52). Such "procedures," according to Foucault, govern how "statements" are generated within discursive systems, for there are "exclusions, limits, or gaps that divide up their [statements] referential, validate only one series of modalities, enclose groups of coexistence, and prevent certain forms of use" (1972: 110). Drawing on this theoretical framework, the current study shows how the imperialist enterprise in "A Deal in Cotton" is rooted in a specific discourse whose functioning is governed by the same processes of discursive inclusion and exclusion theorized by Foucault. Importantly, the imperialist aims and practices in the story could be materialized and maintained *only* through discursively illegitimate elements that must be excluded. Therefore, the story discursively obliterates, reshapes, and reintroduces such elements as totally different constructs that are discursively true and legitimate. The present study uncovers this process by examining the different narrative layers that facilitate the disguising mechanisms of such anti-discursive forms.

3. Imperialist discourse conditioned by materialist sway

The ideology that not only pulls together the chain of events in "A Deal in Cotton" but also engrosses the main characters' intellect and shapes their actions is purely materialistic. Indeed, the world of the story is awfully troubled by inexorable materialism that lurks in all aspects of the narrative. Perhaps this is the barely and only evident feature of the story at first glance despite its intricately woven plot, which is—to use the words of a Kipling critic—"so convoluted" (Crook 1989: 47). The tale's knotty construction, however, necessitates at this point a simplified synopsis that may help grasp the materialistic practices and, most importantly, the nature of the imperialistic discourse that governs them.

Featuring characters who appear in many of Kipling's Indian tales, "A Deal in Cotton" revolves around the material pursuits of young Adam Strickland in a British colonial territory in Africa that is namelessly fictionalized as a "Centro-Euro-Africo Protectorate" (Kipling 1907/1909: 188),[7] where Adam serves as an Assistant-Commissioner at the imaginary city of Dupé. The tale is recounted in a retrospective fashion while Adam is on six-month leave in England, showing signs of recovery after a bout of fever. Adam, his father, and mother are invited to a gathering at the Infant's baronial mansion, where they meet one of their old acquaintances, Stalky, as well as the unnamed narrator. During the gathering, Adam imparts details of the enduring warfare between their colony and Ibn Makarrah, one of the Arab leaders in the neighboring regions. Amid this conflict, Adam was busy attempting to obtain the funds necessary to bring his cotton project to fruition. One day, a mysterious learned *Hajji*, or a Muslim pilgrim, is brought by a bounty hunter, believing the Hajji is one of Ibn Makarrah's men. The Hajji, poisoned and unconscious, is nursed back to life by Adam and his servant, Imam Din, which results in great camaraderie between the Hajji and Adam. Later, Adam falls seriously ill while striving to make progress in his cotton venture, which only shapes up well after they capture a slave dealer who, under the colony's law, is tried and

sentenced by Adam to pay fines of the exact sum required for his project. After Adam concludes his story and turns in for the night, Imam Din throws additional light on some shadowy gaps in Adam's story. To the surprise of those being addressed in the tale, as well as the readers, the Hajji eventually turns out to be Ibn Makarrah himself, who secretively becomes an ally of Adam and his Chief, and who covertly contrives the slave-dealer incident to provide material support for Adam's cotton plan.

To understand the imperialistic discourse of the Empire's agents in the story, one may simply check over the materialistic foundation of this discourse, which is manifested through the vast commercial processes that prevail over the world of the story. The language of Adam and his Chief are mainly rationalized on the grounds of ownership, commodification, and material gain. The tale is indeed replete with market terminology and a long list of business expressions like "profits," "money," "sale," "calculate," "revenue," "expenditure," "tax," "fines," and "surplus." Likewise, the colonial practices of these agents make them appear as though they are not in charge of a colony but more like CEOs of commercial companies.[8] Importantly, the story displays three types of commercialization: the commodification of native land, human beings, and the legal system, as outlined in the following discussion.

To begin with, Adam's mind is always preoccupied with usurping native lands and utilizing them for his project. Details about appropriating the land are scattered across different passages where Adam communicates his experience in developing the cotton venture. When pieced together, however, these passages demonstrate how annexing aboriginal lands is carried out in accordance with an imperial blueprint. Specifically, this process entails at first the most peaceful and least coercive measures, but if such measures do not work out well, the conflict gets escalated by degrees as more violent means are implemented. A definitive example is the way Adam expropriates the strip of land that belongs to the Sheshahelis, which he subsequently incorporates into his cotton project. As a first step, Adam locates the property in the Sheshaheli territory and estimates the nature of the obstacles. Because he could not foresee the Sheshaheli reaction should he come close to their land, he endeavors to take a step forward: "They chivied me out of it when I went to take soil for analysis" (194). As Adam's attempt is met with violent backlash from the natives, Adam takes the issue to the next level, trying this time to essentialize the Sheshahelis, attributing to them stereotypical manners to *legally* confiscate their land through the courts, yet this effort initially proves unsuccessful. However, he later makes baseless claims about their cannibalism to illegally "burn the villages" (194), but he does not have the necessary military forces to materialize this aim. When Adam could not overcome this challenge, he consults his Chief, whose proposition aggravates the conflict to an alarming degree: "he said we must wait till they chopped a white man. He advised me if ever I felt like it not to commit a—a barren *felo de se*, but to let the Sheshaheli do it. Then he could report, and then we could mop 'em up!" (194). The Chief's suggestion involves a perilous deterioration as Adam and his Chief never falter to consciously scapegoat one of their fellow Europeans at the hands of the natives to attain their goal. What is more

atrocious is to have the slaying of their companion undertaken not by the Sheshahelis but by Adam himself, rendering him the true cannibal of the story. Despite such relentless exertions, Adam falls far short of achieving his aim, which becomes later peacefully possible at the hands of Ibn Makarrah *only*, as the study will elucidate in the next section.

This cannibalistic act on the part of Adam and his Chief ushers us into the second level of commercialization: that of humans. In the above-mentioned incident, a white man is stipulated as the price for Adam's desired commodity. The white man, in short, is turned into a commercial asset. This recapitulated commercial formula is not simply a blanket statement; it is rather a defining tenet of their ideology, which is evident in Stalky's retort immediately after Adam admits his propensity for giving up one of his fellows to the Sheshahelis. Having served in numerous colonies, Stalky proclaims, "Most immoral! That's how we got" (194). The narrator explains that "Stalky quoted the name of a province won by just such a sacrifice" (194). These acts are known to most agents of colonization as they are practiced widely along different places of the empire.

In fact, the way Adam equates slaves with commercial commodities was a common imperial practice documented by contemporary historians like H. G. Wells, who asserts that "the chief commodities that had attracted the European powers into unsettled and barbaric regions had been gold or other metals, spices, ivory, or slaves" (1921: 984). As such, commercializing the native Sheshahelis and forcing them to provide free labor for his project are taken for granted by Adam. When Strickland asks Adam about the cost of his cotton project, Adam replies, "With seed and machinery—about two hundred pounds. I had the labour done by cannibals" (192). Adam includes only material instruments in the total cost, yet he excludes labor because it could be stolen. Alongside commercializing the Sheshahelis, there emerges also the capitalization of their stereotyped qualities as Adam always insists on attributing cannibalistic tendencies to the Sheshahelis. If we assume hypothetically that they are "cannibals," it is ironic how Adam is ready to deal with them for the sake of his materialistic plans. However, this irony becomes challenging even to the European addressees in the story, as Strickland wonders: "How did you get your cannibals to work for you?" (195). Adam promptly replies, "They got converted to civilization" (196). This claim further substantiates Said's (1978) reflections about the rhetoric of the *civilizing mission* disseminated by colonists as a pretext for the colonial enterprise.

The third and last level of commercialization manifests in the privatization of the legal apparatus, whose functioning in the colony is tailor-made to serve the materialistic agendas of Adam and his Chief. A clear example is Adam's attempt to prove the Sheshahelis' cannibalism by manipulating the courts. However, exploiting the legal system is more evident in the incident when Ibn Makarrah impersonates the slave trader and gets eventually fined by Adam for violating British law. Though the narrative is fragmented—since both Adam and Imam Din separately recount the events—the underlying truth of what happened can be pieced together, revealing the dangerous consequences of legal exploitation. Ibn Makarrah

and Imam Din devise a scheme, whereby Ibn Makarrah is presented as a slave dealer, with the Sheshaheli posed as slaves for sale, while the Angari men serve as witnesses to this deceptive show, given the unwavering loyalty of the Sheshaheli and Angari men to Ibn Makarrah. This scheme provides Adam with the necessary funds "in all respects conformable with the English Law" (203). Imam Din explains how the case was calculated to make the slave dealer (i.e. the disguised Ibn Makarrah) pay fines with the exact amount of funds required for the cotton project: "We had fore-arranged all this with Bulaki Ram, who knows the English Law" (206). Likewise, the trial scene, which takes place in Adam's bedroom, symbolizes the privatization of the whole legal procedure.

Having established the three types of commodification noted above, it is essential to recognize that the depiction of this commercialist sentiment is not confined solely to this story. Many of Kipling's works exhibit obvious examples of material exploitation.[9] The appropriation of native lands and resources, for instance, is evident in *The Naulakha*. One may also easily see how human beings are dealt with as commodities in stories like "Without Benefit of Clergy," where Ameera, a 16-year-old girl, faces Holden with the bitter truth of her being "bought with silver" (Kipling 1890/1915b: 178), presenting herself as his slave throughout the tale. Exploiting the law, moreover, is displayed in "The Mark of The Beast," where Strickland stands by his friend, Fleete, after the latter insults Hanuman (the monkey-god of the natives), expressing his willingness to twist the law to his own benefit: "I shall take the law into my own hands" (Kipling 1890/1915a: 49). However, the uniqueness of "A Deal in Cotton" lies in the way these commercial processes are detailed systematically and comprehensively, while the works just pointed out merely allude to these issues in a cursory manner without deeper exploration. What also holds greater significance is the fact that nowhere does any of Kipling's other works describe how such commercial processes are sustained and converted into normalized elements of the imperial discourse, as elucidated in the subsequent section.

4. Safeguarding the discourse through discursive laundering

The European materialistic agenda in the story is exclusively reified through the character of Ibn Makarrah. In the three levels of commercialization outlined above, Ibn Makarrah functions as a mediator that smooths out any obstacles in the attainment of acquisitive objectives. It is only through Ibn Makarrah that Adam could use the Sheshaheli land in his cotton project. Likewise, only through Ibn Makarrah's power could Adam obtain the labor force required for the same project. It is also within Ibn Makarrah's orchestrated play-acting that Adam could manipulate the law to his advantage and secure the funds for his venture. In essence, then, it is through Ibn Makarrah's presence *only* that Adam could springboard toward the realization of his aims. Without Ibn Makarrah, the entire narrative—with all the discursive practices therein—would not exist. Accordingly, the very survival of the materialist/imperialist discourse is fundamentally dependent upon the Ibn Makarrah, and that is why the imperial officials must ensure Ibn Makarrah's

survival. However, "survival" in this context does not entail Ibn Makarrah's physical existence but rather his being condoned discursively in their imperialist practices. Nevertheless, because Ibn Makarrah is a powerful, dangerous enemy, the imperial officials cannot have any collaborative relationship with him *within* their imperial discourse. At the same time, again, he must be part of this discourse if they want to sustain their imperial enterprise, and this challenge must necessarily be addressed on a discursive level.

Importantly, to understand how this setback is surmounted, we need to consider how Ibn Makarrah is characterized. He is first mentioned while Adam recounts the colony's conflict with slave-dealers. The compact briefing he imparts about Ibn Makarrah is notably consequential:

> [M]y Chief had taken all the troops to hammer a gang of slave kings up north. Did you ever hear of our war against Ibn Makarrah? He precious nearly lost us the Protectorate at one time, though he's an ally of ours now."
>
> "Wasn't he rather a pernicious brute, even as they go?" said Stalky. "Wade told me about him last year."
>
> "Well, his nickname all through the country was 'The Merciful,' and he didn't get *that* for nothing. None of our people ever breathed his proper name. They said 'He' or 'That One,' and they didn't say it aloud, either. He fought us for eight months."
>
> "I remember. There was a paragraph about it in one of the papers," I said.
>
> "We broke him, though" (194-195).

Notwithstanding its condensed nature, the above conversation unfolds several insights. First, Ibn Makarrah confronted them in relentless combat for a substantial period, which is more than enough to make his name well-known not only to British authorities but also to the media as his name is featured in the newspapers. The way Adam inquires whether they have heard of their struggle against him denotes that he has a notable status, which is confirmed by Stalky who admits that Ibn Makarrah was the topic of Wade's remarks. Second, this long period of enmity turns Ibn Makarrah into a fearsome opponent to the extent of jeopardizing the British control of their protectorate. Ibn Makarrah's power is further exhibited later in Imam Din's account of his visit with him to the land of the Sheshahelis, where Ibn Makarrah is tremendously revered by not only the Sheshaheli but also the Angari men who demonstrate blind obedience to him and ceaselessly address to him as their "Lord."

Third, Ibn Makarrah's name is taboo in the discourse of the colonists as he is invariably identified as "He" or "That One." Not only they can't mention his name, but they can't even "breathe" it, which shows the extreme degree to which his name is excluded from their discourse. As such, the prohibition of Ibn Makarrah's name in their discourse is an accurate enactment of Foucault's (1970; 1972; 1980; 1981) theory of the discursive rules of exclusion, whereby certain utterances and statements are precluded in the production of discourse. In his discussion of the effects of "doctrinal allegiance," Foucault posits that "the procedures of exclusion

and the mechanisms of rejection […] come into action when a speaking subject has formulated one or several unassimilable statements" (1981: 63-64). In the light of this theoretical framework, Ibn Makarrah's name is thoroughly "unassimilable." The threat posed by the mere utterance of his name explains why the bounty hunter brought the salve dealer to the colony, driven by his belief that the dealer is an affiliate of Ibn Makarrah and expecting a reward for his capture.

If Ibn Makarrah's name is impermissible in the imperialists' discourse, and if he is indispensable to their commercializing practices, the imperialists tend pragmatically to solve this impasse by finding a viable stratagem that does not contravene the discursive rules of exclusion and concurrently safeguard their interests through a sustained rapprochement with Ibn Makarrah. This stratagem, though hardly noticeable in the story, can be discerned in a dangerous discursive detour, whereby Ibn Makarrah's character is obliterated, recycled, and restored in a totally different shape. This process shall be called *discursive laundering*, and prior to probing its junctures—provided below—it is necessary at this stage to briefly juxtapose its upshot, which is the Hajji figure, with that of the original copy, Ibn Makarrah. The Hajji is a discursively rehabilitated shape of Ibn Makarrah that is compatible with the imperialist discourse and has a facilitative role in their materialist agenda. It is indeed interesting to see how the Hajji is characterized indirectly by a series of favorable attributes. He is, for instance, dubbed "the best type of a Mohammedan gentleman" (198), "awfully open-minded" (198), "wonderful man" (198), "[m]arvellous" (198), and "[m]ost marvellous" (198). Adam presents the Hajji as an honest man, and when Strickland questions him whether he places faith in the Hajji, Adam answers, "There was no reason I shouldn't" (198). In addition, "his nickname all through the country," according to Adam, is "The Merciful" (195), and this is confirmed later by the Sheshaheli and Angari men when Ibn Makarrah calls on them with Imam Din. Most significantly, contrary to the portrayal of Ibn Makarrah as a notorious slave dealer, Adam asserts that the Hajji "quite saw that it [slavery] would have to die out" (198).

These attributes render the Hajji a personage who not only can be discursively established as an ally of Adam but also fits well in their presumed civilizing mission. Only then, after this complimentary characterization, Adam discloses the aim behind this discursive reformation: "he agreed with me about developing the resources of the district—by cotton-growing" (198). They deliberated on this issue "for hours" (198), and thus the Hajji is presented as a sacrificial figure who is ready to offer the necessary funds and risk his reputation for the sake of Adam. The Hajji is cast as a paternal figure, and this is directly expressed in his words: "God has given me as it were a son in my old age" (208-209). It is to this extent that the bond between Adam and the Hajji solidified, and their demonstrative parting scene, toward the end of the narrative, discloses an unbreakable relationship as the Hajji bestows upon Adam a golden gift, and Adam, in turn, informs him that his name "is already engraved on my heart" (209). The ensuing, laundered character of Ibn Makarrah (i.e. the Hajji) bears thus no resemblance to Ibn Makarrah whatsoever as they embody two divergent extremes. Ibn Makarrah's character is associated with

violence, enmity, slavery, and intimidation, yet the Hajji's image typifies compassion, peace, knowledge, and sacrifice. Once more, this twofold characterization is an inherent outcome of the covert discursive laundering that purposely introduces, dissolves, redesigns, and reintroduces the character of Ibn Makarrah within a twisted narrative strategy.

The pressing question that must be addressed at this juncture is: how is this discursive laundering implemented in the narrative? As a matter of fact, the stages of discursive laundering in the narrative are equivalent in every respect to those of money laundering processes, whose progression has conventionally been understood—among specialists—to encompass three key phases: "placement," "layering," and "integration" (Hopton 2009: 2-3; Lessambo 2023: 3-4; Sullivan 2023: 10-15). In the placement stage, "the individual participating in criminal activity places cash proceeds into the financial system" (Lessambo 2023: 3), while layering means a "process of separating criminal proceeds from their source by using complex layers of financial transactions designed to hide the audit trail and provide anonymity" (Hopton 2009: 2). The last stage, integration, entails putting the "laundered proceeds back into the legitimate economy in such a way that they appear to be normal business funds" (Hopton 2009: 3). These measures parallel exactly the stages of laundering Ibn Makarrah. The first and the last stages can clearly be spotted in the difference between Ibn Makarrah and the Hajji discussed above. The placement of Ibn Makarrah into the story echoes that of illegitimate funds, and the integration of the Hajji into the imperial discourse is analogous to reintroducing the laundered funds in the economic structure.[10]

However, what remains obscured in the story is the "layering," which requires further probing. It is in this stage that the link between Ibn Makarrah and the Hajji gets dissolved. The gap between Ibn Makarrah and the Hajji is engineered via the discursive fabric of the story, for there are three narratives told by Adam, Imam Din, and the unnamed narrator of the frame story. Upon examining how these narratives are structured, it becomes evident that the narrative of the less experienced is embedded within that of the more informed about imperialist praxes. This structure ensures that the narrative of the inexperienced is subjected to discursive filtering so that discursive elements are maintained, whereas anti-discursive ones are excluded.

Adam is the least conversant with discursive rules and practices, and his representation is deliberately crafted in this way. Throughout the story, Adam is depicted as a young amateur who is guided by his seniors in Africa and Europe. According to the Infant, Adam could not have this position in the Empire without the help of his father, who "got him into the Centro-Euro-Africo Protectorate" (188). In Africa, without the support of Imam Din, his Chief, and Ibn Makarrah, Adam could not proceed with his cotton project. Besides, when Adam first appears at the outset of the story, we observe him "leaning heavily" (189) on Imam Din's shoulder, symbolizing his total reliance on Imam Din. Adam's immaturity is also manifested in an array of terms and expressions designating his juvenile character: "boy" (188), "little fellow" (188) "shadow of a young man" (189), "child" (189), and "Little Sahib" (189). In addition to his limited experience, Adam has been a

rash character since his childhood, and his reckless behavior is clearly showcased in "The Son of His Father," where he wants to throw himself in a well because he is beaten by his father. Toward the end of this story, after Adam avenges himself upon his father, Strickland tells him, "[T]hou hast put me to shame […] and broken my honour" (Kipling 1893/1923: 251).

Adam's inexperience and impetuous behavior are the reason why his narrative is engulfed by Imam Din's and is subjected to discursive monitoring. This reality is apprehended by Adam's interlocutors who are well attuned to the fact that Adam's knowledge is subordinate to that of Imam Din, and this is why Strickland, after Adam leaves, asks Imam Din to "tell us what truly befell" (202). The word "truly" can only be understood in the Foucauldian distinction between "true" and "false," whereby those statements that adhere to discursive rules are deemed true, while those that deviate from these rules are excluded as false. Within this Foucauldian configuration, furthermore, "one is 'in the true' only by obeying the rules of a discursive 'policing' which one has to reactivate in each of one's discourses" (Foucault 1981: 61). Consequently, when integrated into the tale of Imam Din, Adam's statements about Ibn Makarrah are sifted out and converted into ones that are compatible with the rules of imperialist discourse. Because Adam is not yet well-versed in such rules, his tale must go through the discursive "policing" of Imam Din's narrative.

It is without doubt that Imam Din is qualified to perform this role as he is displayed as a more experienced agent of the Empire. He is older than Adam, and his longstanding service in the Empire and loyalty date back to the time when Adam was a child. As he figures in many of Kipling's Indian tales, he comes from a family deeply rooted in the service of the Empire, and he takes great pride in claiming that his "father's uncle […] was Ressaldar [commander of the cavalry] of the Long Coat Horse; and the Empress called him to Europe in the year that she had accomplished fifty years of rule" (Kipling 1893/1923: 220). Despite his Punjabi origin, Imam Din aligns himself with the "white men" (189), and this is confirmed by the Infant who dubs him "quite European" (188). Imam Din's tale represents the voice of the imperialists solely because he is accorded this important role, which would have never been given to him had he been represented otherwise. Notably, Imam Din assumes the position of what Gayatri Spivak (1999) terms the "native informant," whose main role lies in serving the epistemological and ideological interests of imperialist figures like Adam. In this regard, moreover, the role performed by Imam Din is reminiscent of Thomas Macaulay's call "to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (1835/1871: 102). Imam Din represents precisely this ideological class theorized by Macaulay.

Moreover, a third layer is added to discursively exclude not only Ibn Makarrah's character but also all other anti-discursive components. This level is administered by the narrator of the frame story. Among the three narrators, that of the frame story is the most capable in overseeing the discursive procession of the

inner two tales, and he functions thus as a discursive valve allocated to sustain the coherence of the imperialist discourse. To show us unequivocally that the frame narrator is the most knowledgeable, he is presented concurrently as a first-person and omniscient narrator. Although he is a character in the tale with predictably limited knowledge, he does strangely have access to the intellect and emotions of other characters, which rarely happens in fiction. Examples that prove the narrator's omniscient knowledge include statements like Stalky "fell to thinking of his Sikhs" (190) and "smell [is] in our nostrils" (190). The narrator possesses comprehensive knowledge but cautiously filters and discloses those parts that are compatible with the imperial discourse.

Importantly, it is because of this multilayered filtering that nowhere does the text directly state that Ibn Makarrah is the Hajji. The relationship between Ibn Makarrah and the Hajji is dissolved and stated rather indirectly on different levels of the narrative. Specifically, the relationship can be traced in the two narratives of Adam and Imam Din. When Adam first mentions Ibn Makarrah, he says, "None of our people ever breathed his proper name. They said 'He' or 'That One.'" (195). The connection between Ibn Makarrah and "That One" is obliquely made yet again in the story when Imam Din later recounts the conversation between Adam and his Chief: "They talked a long while and the Great Sahib said: 'What didst thou think of *That* One?' (*We* do not say Ibn Makarrah yonder.)" (210). Nevertheless, "That One" is shown by Imam Din to be the very character of the Hajji, and this is obvious when the Hajji intends to leave after the trial. Imam Din asks him, "'Thou art then *That* One?' The Hajji said: 'I am ten thousand rupees reward into thy hand'" (208). What all this boils down to is the following: The Hajji is "*That* One," and "*That* One" is Ibn Makarrah. Therefore, the Hajji is Ibn Makarrah. The story takes the reader on a narrative detour, or rather a discursive labyrinth, whose layers are recounted by the three narrators with the aim of obliterating this link, upon whose climactic role the whole commercialization processes in the story are structured. Having established this conclusive finding, however, it is important to note that while the aim of the current study is to externalize how Ibn Makarrah is discursively secreted, this should not entail the impossibility of reconstructing the truth about who Ibn Makarrah is although such an aim requires an entirely separate study.

5. Conclusion: Power, knowledge, and the imperial scheme

The three-layered structure of the story is unveiled to the direct addressees before being subsequently unfolded to the reader. While the important role of the three narrators in laundering any anti-discursive element is visible, that of the interlocutors in the tale is not. Strickland, Stalky, and the Infant have a hand in what might be labeled textual montage in accordance with the discursive rules of exclusion. These three characters belong to what John McClure terms "the imperial service elite [who] are both licensed and relatively unrepressed" (1981: 23). McClure's remark applies to the three characters as their power and history of unspeakable deeds in the Empire shed further light on how the imperial discourse is generated. Strickland is the District Superintendent of Police in Kipling's early

Indian tales. Stalky (or Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Lionel Corkran) and the Infant have a long history of imperial service and appear in various stories by Kipling, especially the "Stalky" ones.

The imperial background of these figures illustrates how their expertise is deeply rooted in an impactful linkage between power and knowledge. Their profound knowledge enables them to exert power over individuals in their immediate sphere, and their power as senior executives allow them to engender the type of knowledge that is discursively "true." Therefore, power conditions the production of knowledge and generates, in Foucault's terms, "the laws of a certain code of knowledge" (1970: ix). Importantly, the place where they meet in "A Deal in Cotton" is the Infant's baronial mansion, which—as recounted in "Slaves of the Lamp part II"—becomes like a place for imperial instruction, for the gatherings held there are meant to teach future generations: "'I've had to cut the service,' said the Infant; 'but that's no reason why my vast stores of experience should be lost to posterity'" (Kipling 1897/1910: 247). For that reason, this place is intended not only to generate the kind of knowledge that abides by the discursive codes of the imperial enterprise but also to discursively monitor the imperial narratives recounted by inexperienced agents like Adam.

While engrossed in the unfolding tale of Adam and Imam Din, these characters appear to serve no other purpose than being surveillors of the narrative's discourse, and their surveillance is evident in the incessant inquiries they raise throughout the story. This explains further how the correlation between Ibn Makarrah and his laundered alter ego is deliberately melted away. The surveillance conducted by Strickland, Stalky, and the Infant clears up the discursive mechanisms whereby materialistic practices, manipulating the legal system, baseless claims about native cannibalism, enslaving the natives, stealing their labor, and similar illegal, inhuman, and immoral acts are all discursively eliminated and converted into laundered constructs. Even Imam Din seems to be aware of this game as he declares, "I have observed in my life that Great Ones employ words very little between each other in their dealings […] they profit by silence" (211-212). This relationship (or "interplay") between "words" and "dealings" can help us understand the functioning of the whole discourse. Their "dealings" (or actions) exist outside the boundaries of the discourse (or "words"), and such actions, along with their illegality and immorality, cannot be said to ontologically exist.

Endnotes

[1] Kipling's support of these figures is mainly pointed out by Orwell (1942/1964) and Parry (1993).
[2] See, for example, Bates (1941), Ford (1942/1965), Pinto (1951), and Parry (1993).
[3] Critics who advocated this idea include Dobrée (1964), Sandison (1967; 972), and Wilson (1941/1964).
[4] A notable instance is Edmund Wilson who explains how Kipling "elected as his lifework the defence of the British Empire" (1941/1964: 32).
[5] Moore-Gilbert's view is substantiated by David Scott (2011), who further takes issue with Said over the latter's monolithic pattern of Orientalism.
[6] This is stressed by Eliot who could identify three main periods in Kipling's development and who admits that "what is not so obvious is the development of his [i.e. Kipling's] view of empire" (Eliot 1941: 27).
[7] Subsequent citations from "A Deal in Cotton" will be given as page numbers only.
[8] Imperialists are typically portrayed as exploitative figures. In this regard, Adam and his Chief are like Kurtz in Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness," who is described as a "primal father" with a "primitive urge to dominate and exploit others" (Krunz and Neimneh 2021: 147).
[9] The world of the story is indeed afflicted with possessiveness and material gains, and this conclusion contradicts Orwell's claim that "Kipling does not seem to realise […] that an empire is primarily a money-making concern" (1942/1964: 72). To be sure, the commercialization in the story embodies the capitalist spirit that was exported from Europe in that era. In this regard, it has been asserted that, during the nineteenth century, "[t]he dissemination of capitalist ideology and the rise of imperialist rivalry eventuated a global system of imperialist capitalism, whereby Europe's 'others' were positioned in unequal power relationships with those in the center of the system" (Talafha 2011: 1).
[10] While the idea of discursive laundering in the story has never been pointed out, Nora Crook suggests that Adam "seeks to launder the money [obtained for his venture] by persuading his father's friends to invest" (1989: 49). This argument, though presented without further elaboration on Crook's part, falls short of accuracy as the funds of Adam's project have already been laundered. Crook's suggestion is based on her belief that Adam is cheated by Ibn Makarrah, with whom he "has unwittingly made friends" (Crook 1989: 48), which is exactly the contrary of what the current study suggests.

Haitham M. Talafha (PhD) Assistant Professor – Corresponding Author
Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts,
The Hashemite University, Zarqa, Jordan
ORCID Number: 0000-0002-0249-7554
Email: talafha@hu.edu.jo

Hussein A. Alhawamdeh (PhD) Professor
Department of English Language and Literature
The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan
ORCID Number: 0000-0003-3335-553X
Email: h.hawamdeh@ju.edu.jo

References

Bates, Herbert E. (1941). *The Modern Short Story: A Critical Survey*. Boston: The Writer, Inc.

Besant, Sir W. (1971). 'Is it the voice of the hooligan?' In Roger Lancelyn Green (ed.), *Kipling: The Critical Heritage*, 250-259. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. (Original work published 1900).

Buchanan, Robert. (1965). 'From *the voice of the hooligan*'. In Elliot L. Gilbert (ed.), *Kipling and the Critics*, 20-32. New York: New York UP. (Original work published 1900).

Carrington, Charles. (1955). *Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Work*. London: Macmillan.

Crook, Nora. (1989). *Kipling's Myths of Love and Death*. New York: Plagrave Macmillan.

Dobrée, Bonamy. (1964). *The Lamp and the Lute: Studies in Seven Authors*. London: Frank Cass.

Eliot, Thomas S. (1941). *A Choice of Kipling's Verse*. London: Faber.

Ford, Boris. (1965). 'A case for Kipling?' In Elliot L. Gilbert (ed.), *Kipling and the Critics*, 59-73. New York: New York UP. (Original work published 1942).

Foucault, Michel. (1970). *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Random House.

Foucault, Michel. (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). New York: Vintage.

Foucault, Michel. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* (Colin Gordon, Ed.; Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper, Trans.). New York: Vintage.

Foucault, Michel. (1981). 'The order of discourse'. In Robert Young (ed.), *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, 48-78. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Gilbert, Elliot L. (1965). 'Introduction'. In Elliot L. Gilbert (ed.), *Kipling and the Critics*, v-xviii. New York: New York UP.

Hopton, Doug. (2009). *Money Laundering: A Concise Guide for All Business*. London: Routledge.

Kipling, Rudyard. (1909). 'A deal in cotton'. In Rudyard Kipling, *Actions and Reactions*, 187-212. New York: Doubleday. (Original work published 1907).

Kipling, Rudyard. (1910). 'Slaves of the lamp part II'. In Rudyard Kipling, *Stalky & Co*, 246-272. London: Macmillan. (Original work published 1897).

Kipling, Rudyard. (1915a). 'The mark of the beast'. In Rudyard Kipling, *Life's Handicap* (Vol.2), 33-55. London: Macmillan. (Original work published 1890).

Kipling, Rudyard. (1915b). 'Without benefit of clergy'. In Rudyard Kipling, *Life's Handicap* (Vol.1), 177-215. London: Macmillan. (Original work published 1890).

Kipling, Rudyard. (1923). 'The son of his father'. In Rudyard Kipling, *Land and Sea Tales*, 219-251. London: Macmillan. (Original work published 1893).

Krunz, Fida' I. and Shadi S. Neimneh. (2021). 'The return of the primal father: A comparative Freudian reading of two novels'. *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies*, 21 (2): 147-164. https://doi.org/10.33806/ijaes2000.21.2.8

Lang, Andrew. (1891). 'Mr. Kipling's stories'. In Andrew Lang (ed.), *Essays in Little*, 198-205. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Lessambo, Felix I. (2023). *Anti-Money Laundering, Counter Financing Terrorism and Cybersecurity in the Banking Industry: A Comparative Study Within the G-20*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Macaulay, Thomas B. (1871). 'Lord Macaulay's minute'. In W. Nassau Lees, *Indian Musalmáns: Being Three Letters Reprinted from the "Times," with an Article on the Late Prince Consort and Four Articles on Education, Reprinted from the "Calcutta Englishman,"* 87-104. London: Williams and Norgate. (Original work published 1835).

McClure, John A. (1981). *Kipling and Conrad: The Colonial Fiction*. Cambridge: Harvard UP.

Moore-Gilbert, Bart J. (1986). *Kipling and "Orientalism."* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Orwell, George. (1964). 'Rudyard Kipling'. In Andrew Rutherford (ed.), *Kipling's Mind and Art*, 70-84. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd. (Original work published 1942).

Parry, Benita. (1993). 'The content and discontents of Kipling's imperialism'. In Erica Carter, James Donald, and Judith Squires (eds.), *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location*, 221-240. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Pinto, Vivian de Sola. (1951). *Crisis in English Poetry 1880-1940*. London: Hutchinson's University Library.

Said, Edward W. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.

Said, Edward W. (1993). *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage.

Sandison, Alan. (1967). *The Wheel of Empire: A Study of the Imperial Idea in Some Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Fiction*. London: Macmillan.

Sandison, Alan. (1972). 'A matter of vision: Rudyard Kipling and Rider Haggard'. In John Gross (ed.), *Rudyard Kipling: The Man, his Work and his World*, 127-134. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Scott, David. (2011). 'Kipling, the Orient, and Orientals: "Orientalism" reoriented?' *Journal of World History*, 22 (2): 299-328. https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jwh.2011.0036

Spivak, Gayatri Ch. (1999). *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge: Harvard UP.

Sullivan, Kevin. (2023). *Anti-Money Laundering in a Nutshell: Awareness and Compliance for Financial Personnel and Business Managers*. Flowery Branch: Apress.

Talafha, Haitham M. A. (2011). Ghosts, madness, and dementia: The failure of the global capitalist enterprise in Joseph Conrad's geopolitical peripheries.

Unpublished PhD Thesis, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USA.

Wells, Herbert G. (1921). *The Outline of History: Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind*. New York: Macmillan.

Wilde, Oscar. (1890). 'The true function and value of criticism'. *The Nineteenth Century*, 28 (July-Dec.): 435- 459.

Wilson, Edmund. (1964). 'The Kipling that nobody read'. In Andrew Rutherford (ed.), *Kipling's Mind and Art*, 17-69. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd. (Original work published 1941).