A Passage Through Amorphous Lahore of the Colonial Era

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses Lahore as an amorphous city as it emerged in the last decade of the 19th and the first decade of 20th centuries under the British Raj. The emphasis, undoubtedly, falls upon the study of those diverse and diversified forces, social, political, cultural and religious that shaped Lahore as an amorphous city. It was the interaction and intermingling of the similar and the dissimilar, the colonizer and the colonized, the indigenous and the foreign elements, concepts, thoughts and ethos that contributed to make both the city and its inhabitants amorphous. For this purpose I have chosen Dina Nath’s *The Two Friends: A Descriptive Story of Lahore Life* (1899) and Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* (1901) which to me are true representative novels of their time as they take to the narrow and winding interior of the walled city and also to the modern colonial Lahore which the British designed in accordance with the colonial desire. These novels also give us two contrasting perspectives of Lahore and its amorphousness.
This article does not claim to put forward any amorphous theory or to link amorphous with some other colonial and postcolonial theories. It aims at highlighting the amorphous nature of Lahore resulting from the intertwining of the opposite, dissimilar and contradictory ideas, concepts and worlds, the world of the colonizer and the colonized. Their interaction had far reaching and deeply profound influence and impact upon every aspect of the Lahori life. It gave birth to a new life style which combined within it, both the eastern and the western ethos. In order to focus the amorphous features of Lahore in the last decade of the 19th and the first decade of the 20th centuries, I have picked on Dina Nath’s novel *The Two Friends: A Descriptive Story of Lahore Life* (1899) and Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* (1901) for analysis to emphasize my idea of Lahore being amorphous. Moreover, Nath being Indian and Kipling being British provide us with two contrasting perspectives of looking at Lahore in the colonial era. Kipling is more focused on how colonialism established its domination and supremacy over the Indians in general and the Lahoris in particular. Whereas, the action of Nath’s novel *The Two Friends: A Descriptive Story of the Lahore Life* is set in Lahore. It covers both, the colonial and the walled city of Lahore, juxtaposing the ancient with the modern. Moreover, he remains focused on the changing scenario zooming in on the religious, cultural, social and political forces and factors creating and transforming Lahore from an ancient city to a modern cosmopolitan one.

The main characters of the novel shuttle between the colonial Lahore and the old Lahore fascinated and awed by the former and dismayed by the latter part of the city. It is interesting to note that Nath does not refer to this new development, the clash of interests between the British and the Russians and the building up of tensions between the two powers. Instead, he remains focused on the local and indigenous changes which were taking place in the domain of politics, culture and religious beliefs of the Lahoris and in the process awarded and added an amorphous feature to the city of Lahore. He had a great fascination for the new city, colonial Lahore. And like a renaissance man he was over-excited and spell-bound to discover it and to portray it with unspeakable and inexplicable enthusiasm. Although, Kipling makes the conflict between the British and the Russians as the backdrop of his book *Kim* (1901), yet
in so many ways, he portrays Lahori culture of his time as Kim, the protagonist of the book carries with him the typical features and characteristics of a Lahori character. And in doing so, Kipling brings into focus the amorphous nature of the city of Lahore.

Both, Nath and Kipling were contemporaries but it is interesting to note that both treat Lahore differently in their novels under discussion in this article. In Nath Lahore is the locale where political, social, cultural and religious differences and clashes amongst the major communities, the Muslims, the Hindus and the Sikhs were beginning to manifest themselves. As a result disintegrating forces found their way in the social and cultural fabric of the Lahori society bringing about an amorphousness of relationship amongst the various communities residing in Lahore. Kipling, on the other hand, has confined himself to the Great Game\textsuperscript{1} being played between the British and the Russians. Furthermore, he looks at Lahore from the point of view of an orientlist. However, a distinctive feature of Kipling’s *Kim* that my research discovers is that the novel portrays the Lahori characters as amorphous human beings, such human beings who live, inhabit and move simultaneously in two diametrically opposite social set ups, the ancient and the modern, the colonial and the colonized. In fact, Kipling himself may be called an amorphous character as he was born in India, received his education in England and came back to Bombay and Lahore to work as a journalist. He, therefore, imbibed and assimilated the cultural opposites of both, the west and the east. Lahore as a city comes alive before us when Kim, the main character of the book takes us beyond the walls of the city into its narrow and dark *muhalas*, and localities, stingy and winding streets, penetrating deeper and deeper into the marrow of the city. One can sense a different kind of amorphousness of relationship in Kipling’s *Kim*. It is an amorphousness of relationship between the

\textsuperscript{1}The term is applied for the strategic rivalry and conflict between the British Empire and the Russian Empire for supremacy in Central Asia. The period from 1885 to 1888 was the culminating point of this conflict
colonizer and the colonized that was the result of colonial education which “form a class who may be interpreters between us, with and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indians in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.” (qtd.in Suleri 67). In this way Kipling and his Kim emerge as a new species of amorphous Indians who came into being during this time period.

It was in 1899 that Nath wrote *The Two Friends: A Descriptive Story of the Lahore Life*. Lahore is the locale of his book. The novel very graphically depicts Lahore with its social, religious, cultural and intellectual life which had by that time come to full bloom. This way Lahore had been amorphozised into a cosmopolitan city opening its gates to so many diverse and different communities and peoples with multitude cultural, religious and social patterns. With the influx of such a great variety of people the demography of Lahore also changed. This change in the demography of the city contributes towards its amorphousness.

After the annexation of the Punjab in 1849, the British had set up a new administrative structure at Lahore, making it the provincial headquarter of the province of the Punjab. Since there was dearth of discreet and competent officials to run the administration, they encouraged the people with administrative skill and knowledge to come to Lahore from across the Punjab and northern India and even from Bengal. Punjabi nobility, the Bengalis and the literati hailing from the United Provinces were the most prominent communities in the 1880s. A social intercourse and cultural interaction amongst these peoples had added an element of newness to the Lahori life. According to historian Kenneth Jones, “of all the cities of the Punjab (recorded in the 1881 census), Lahore had the highest percentage of strangers, of citizens born outside of the city and district” (qtd in Glover). Referring to the presence of various communities and peoples with disparate cultural backdrop, Grover in his unpublished article “The City in Colonial Modernity: Living the Lahore Life” states:

> The scions of Punjabi nobility were prominent in Lahore’s society, but so were Bengalis and literati from the United Provinces, people whose fathers had followed the British Raj to
Punjab to occupy key positions in the new administration. Over time, their descendants and those of the upwardly-mobile fractions of Punjabi society formed an elite administrative cadre, one whose reputation for intellectual achievement extended beyond the geographical limits of the province. Their presence lent the city an ealing luster in the minds of many, one that lingers on nostalgically, for some, up to the present. (3)

The social and cultural interaction amongst these communities added newness to the city and consequently, the city assumed the true color of an amorphousness cosmopolitan city.

Nath’s novel primarily focuses on the two Lahori characters, Rama and Nath and it is through them that we discover the true divisions of Lahori life of that time, with all its miscellaneous and diverse signs, symbols and sounds of the city. Their regular meetings and long walks through the Lawrence Gardens, on the Mall Road to Gol Bagh, the Hide Park of those days provide us with the opportunity of knowing what Lahore was a century ago. Possessed with keen observation, wit and penetrating eye, they pass apt remarks and “giving to every passerby a suitable certificate according to his or her credentials, gossiping over all those topics which enjoyed public attention, now thoughtful, the next moment hilarious, in short making merry in a tremendous method” (4). The Gol Bagh which is now called the Nasir Bagh where a literary club called Chopal, a literary club, has recently been established for men of letters and creative writers to give went to their literary ideas and thoughts, has been a place for the students and the scholars to sit and gossip over topics light and serious. This tradition dates back to the time when the British had set up educational institutions in Lahore after the annexation of the Punjab in 1849.

Immediately after its annexation, there came a team of dedicated and devoted Christian missionaries with a burning desire and simmering ambition to convert the Indians to Christianity. They set to their task by establishing educational institutions and churches in the nock and corner of the Punjab. Lahore being the provincial headquarter became their centre of educational and religious activities. As the time rolled on the missionary institutions began to churn out an exclusive class of students,
endowed with the rare qualities of perception and analytical reasoning, which could be seen gathered in the gardens or roaming on the roads discussing a variety of topics ranging from politics to religion, also having delight in gossip and foul jokes. Nath’s characters Rama and Nath embody the culture of discussion and gossip. It was not only the Gol Bagh but also various roadside hotels which were fast becoming students’ rendezvous where students of Lahore in groups big and small would “hover like fairies in celestial regions” (Nath111). Small roadside hotels serving tea and snacks sprang up at the Mall Road near Anarkali where students would cluster up in the evening for a session of “cracking immoral jokes, using the first rate slang, discussing all impious topics, ridiculing their betters, fighting hand to hand, and in fact what not” (Aziz 33). This was the beginning of a vibrant culture of literary discussion and a wide range of social, political and religious issues. The intellectuals and men of letters of Lahore made various tea houses and roadside hotels as their habitats where they spent their evenings over a hot cup of tea and heated literary and cultural discussions would start. K.K. Aziz has highlighted the culture of coffee house in Lahore:

As coming to a coffee house was a habit rather than a necessity, the habitués spent a lot of time on their cups and talked and gossiped with their friends. In this way the coffee house emerged as an urban, public, radical and egalitarian club where middle and upper middle classes congregated and discussed the affairs of the world. (2)

The emergence of coffee house culture and the thronging habitués was a distinctive feature of Lahore which in fact had surpassed the other centers of culture and civilization of the Sub-continent such as Delhi, Aligarh and Lucknow. In many ways Lahore in the 1920s was even ahead of Paris of the 1930s in the field of literary and cultural activity. If Paris could boast of having Jean Paul Sartre, Simone Beauvoir, Charles Dullin, Andre Breton and many other French and Continental intellectuals, Lahore could also claim to have such literary giants as Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Noon Meem Rashid, Hafeez Jullunderi Akhtar Shirani, M.D. Taseer, Sufi Tabassum and many others. Most of the tea houses were situated at the Mall Road near Anarkali. But for the westernized elite class there were cosmopolitan
clubs and Gymkhana where the members discussed, danced and drank. Mention may be made of some of the tea houses frequently visited by the intellectuals of Lahore. The Arab Hotel, Nagina Bakery, Muhkam Din’s teashop, India Teahouse and India Coffee House were some of the literary dens for men of letters poets and painters. In addition to that there were some baithaks inside the walled city which were the gathering places of the musicians, singers, poets and writers of great merits. Referring to the vibrant culture of Lahore Aziz states:

From the 1920s onwards, perhaps even earlier, Lahore was the most highly cultured city of north India. From here appeared the largest number of Urdu literary journals, newspapers and books and two of the best English language dailies. The Mayo School of Arts were flourishing. The Young Men Christian Association was active and its premises and halls were used by all communities for literary and social activities. The Government College was a distinguished intellectual centre whose teachers were respected and students considered to be the best representatives of modern Western education. The Oriental College was engaged in first class research. The annual plays staged at Government College and Dyal Singh College were awaited by the city’s elite with high expectations. Eminent journalists and columnists wrote for newspapers and graced literary gatherings. (5)

It was during those days that a figure of an impressive student, confident and proud emerged. Charismatic and imperial, this figure commanded respect and reverence. People would lend him their hears and would sit spell bound and enthralled by the authoritative, eloquent and persuasive voice whose resonance would leave an indelible impact upon the minds of the listeners:

Go where you will in this religious assembly or that, in all social conferences, in patriotic meetings, in political institutions, in private clubs or in public entertainments, the same singular youth of a talkative nature is visible. He seems all-pervading. No subject or critical importance but he puts his opinion about it, no question of even the least moment where he neither fails or
argue... nor again is his enthusiasm lost, for people seem to hear him with relish. There is a curious magic about him. (Nath 58)

Referring to the emergence of such a talkative student figure during those days Glover has quoted Iqbal Kishen’s article that appeared in “The Punjab Magazine” in 1890 which describes a trip through the civil station’s Anarkali Bazaar, where he noticed several clusters of students “at a little distance from each other” discussing “topics of vital importance, such as the transmigration of soul, the existence of God, Christianity, the so-called Aryanism, and a number of other similar questions” (qtd. in Glover 4-5). So with the advent of modern education and the untiring efforts of the Christian missionaries aiming at the spread of Christianity, there emerged a specific culture of discussion and debate on religious issues among the literati of Lahore. At the same time the natives were also stirred to launch counter movements of religious revival when they felt threatened by the onslaught of Christianity. Their motivation and determination to safeguard their religion against the impurities matched with the zest and zeal of the Christian missionaries to preach Christianity amongst the poverty-stricken natives. Taking advantage of the poverty and rapidly deteriorating economic conditions of the natives, the missionaries had doubled their endeavors to convert the poor natives luring them to new religion by providing them with the necessities of life and promise for a better future and an improved standard of life. Lahore, then, witnessed the emergence of a new culture, the priests and the clergy of all the main religious communities, the Muslims, the Hindus and the Christians throwing challenges to one another for an exchange of religious dialogue, manazara, to establish the supremacy of their respective religions. Lahore in the first decade of the 20th century, in fact, had become a battle ground and a theatre for acting out the exchange of religious ideas amongst the various communities, each aiming at establishing the supremacy of their respective religion on the one hand, and on the other, purifying their respective religious ideologies.

Replacing Delhi after the Mutiny of 1857 as the centre of literary and cultural activities, Lahore had initiated a cultural and literary ‘renaissance’ inviting the literati of other Indian cities to Lahore in great numbers who brought cultural, religious and literary traditions along
with them. Coming from other areas of the Punjab and North-West, Ludhiana, which had already gained importance as a center of Christian missionaries “when the American Presbyterian Mission established its new headquarters there,” (Jones 87) to Lahore the leaders and Gurus of socio-religious reform movements of Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism took to their task of defending their respective religions against the avalanche of Christianity. The missionaries focused on translating their Scriptures in Punjabi, Urdu, Persian, Hindi and Kashmiri languages. They had the printing press at their disposal. So, they printed books of grammar and dictionaries in the languages of the natives to facilitate their preaching. Jones states:

Theirs was an aggressive and uncompromising Christianity, which was expressed in print and through open preaching in the streets. During the second half of the nineteenth century, Christian converts rose from 3,912 in 1881 to 37,980 by 1901 – small numbers for Punjab but percentage increased that frightened indigenous religious leaders. The Christian missionaries were seen as part of government machine that first defeated the Punjab, next sought to govern him, and then to convert him. (87)

Consequently, there emerged quite a few religious reformation movements amongst the various communities and peoples inhabiting the Punjab, adumbrating to go back to the original and pure form of religion in order to stop the march of Christianity. These movements focused on the reforms not only in the domain of religion but also in social and moral fields. Amongst the Sikhs the movement of Nirankaris in the 19th century was a movement of purification and return to the Sikhism of Guru Nanuk. Baba Dayal (1783-1855) who initiated this movement declared that Sikhism had become decadent and impure filled with falsehood and superstitions. He, therefore, emphasized the need of returning to its origin and further stressed “the worship of God as nirankar (formless). Such an approach meant a rejection of idols, rituals associated with idolatry, and the Brahman priests who conducted these rituals” (88). The founder of this movement also chalked out a strict social code and moral doctrine for his followers. According to Jones Dayal Das, the founder:
taught that women should not be treated as unclean at childbirth; disciples should not use astrology or horoscopes in setting the time for ceremonies; the dowry should not be displayed at marriages; neither lighted lamps nor blessed sweets, prasad, should not be placed in the rivers; and no one should feed Brahmans as payment for conducting rituals. Eating meat, drinking liquor, lying, cheating, using false weights – all were forbidden. Each should follow a strict moral code and use only the proper life-cycle rituals as taught by Dayal Das. (88)

The denunciation of the Brahmans by the Nirankaris on the one hand, broke their hold and domination over Sikhism and on the other, demarcated a line indicating Sikhism as a distinct religion from Hinduism. Nirankaris were wise enough not to clash with the rulers, the British. They rather flourished and thrived under them. Baba Ram Singh (1816-85) of Ludhiana laid the foundation of another reformation movement aiming at purification of Sikhism called the Namdharis which differed from the Nirankaris movement on certain religious points while sharing with it some of the social and moral doctrines. Baba Ram Singh, himself a soldier in the army of Ranjit Singh till the year 1845, shaped and modeled his movement on the teachings and precedents set by Guru Gobind Singh and his Khalsa. In order to become a member of this community, the new entrant had to observe some rituals, the wearing of “five symbols with exception of the kirpan (sword)” (91). As the British had banned the carrying of kirpan, the Namdharis were expected to carry a lathi. In order to distinguish themselves from the other Sikhs, “they wore white clothes with a white turban and carried a rosary…” (91).

The impact of such reform movements on the Lahori society was so deep and profound as the writers like Dinna Nath were greatly influenced by them. Nath’s The Two Friends is one such example.

*The Two Friends*, undoubtedly, highlights the inclusive and thorough picture of Lahore’s quasi-religious and social institutions of civil society in the late nineteenth and early 20th century. It was the impact of colonial rule and the influence of western education that there emerged a new educated middle class comprising of professionals, lawyers, traders,
merchants, teachers and doctors with new sensibility and the desire for adjustment with the new colonial milieu. This new class found itself on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, it was swept away and shaken by the colonial situation and by a strong wind of modernism and on the other, it did not want to lose its hold on its religious faith. Consequently, there emerged a strong and unassailable desire to reform religion in accordance with the changing situation. These professionals “sought to reform the inherited religious tradition in the light of the new notions of rationality, justice and progress which they had imbibed from western education and which also accorded with their own class aspirations and goals” (Tuteja, Grewal 5).

It is through Nath, one of the main characters of the book *The Two Friends* that the novelist has very dexterously captured the new colonial cultural milieu. Nath in the novel is a member of Lahore’s Arya Samaj founded by Swami Dayanand aiming at the purgation of those elements of Hinduism which came into clash with progressive and rational ideals upheld by the newly emergent class. With its emphasis on Indianess and indigenousness and the purity of Vedic culture, establishing the superiority of Hindu identity and Hinduism (Hinduism was considered superior to all other foreign faiths, Christianity and Islam), “the revivalism of the Arya Smaj played a role not only in demarcating the religious particularism of Hinduism but also heightened a sense of pride among the Hindus” (Mir 6). The novelist Nath by giving a realistic description of some of the social issues, the question of widow remarriage, which were also the concern of Arya Samaj, has revealed the quasi-religious atmosphere rent with religious conflicts as the Samajists were fast becoming violent and aggressive in their approach towards the contemporary social, political and religious issues. They targeted the Muslims as their arch opponents, “… As the sentiment gained momentum, it became increasingly venomous towards the Muslims who as their past rulers needed to be painted black and, as modern rivals, deserved to be suppressed” (24). They were very active in politics as well and began to influence The Indian National Congress on national issues of grave significance through their leader, Lajpat Rai. “Through him the Samajists captured the Punjab Congress, in fact, the whole of the nationalist movement… Extremism appealed most to the emerging western-educated class which swelled the ranks of the Arya Samaj” (24).
It was their political extremism and sense of social and religious superiority that led the Muslims to think in terms of demarcating a different political course for themselves, “Anyhow, the constant hymns of hate against the Muslims completely vitiated the intercommunity climate” (24). These cracks and complete collapse of mutual confidence and the idea of tolerating each other reached its culminating point in 1947 in the division of the Sub-continent into Bharat and Pakistan. Arya Samaj immediately attracted the educated class in Lahore, “In Lahore Dayananda quickly attracted a group of dedicated disciples, many of whom were students and graduates of the Lahore colleges” (Jones 97).

After the annexation of the Punjab in 1849, Lahore was made the provincial headquarter by the British. Consequently, the setting up of a civil secretariat to provide the newly annexed areas with an elaborate and efficient administrative system was the need of the hour. Initially the spacious buildings, the mosques, the tombs and the havalis of the ancient Lahore were utilized. But gradually, the new rulers laid the foundation of a new Lahore, a colonial Lahore set up outside the walled city with new building structures, an elaborate road network, educational institutions and they also built for themselves what was called the Civil Station for residential purposes, away from the hum drum of the city life.

As a result of the British rule the Lahori society began to manifest a new face, a new social structure and social etiquettes. Spatially also the old and the colonial Lahore presented two different realms. Nath’s The Two Friends is a vivid and realistic description and portrayal of the colonial era which is an inseparable part of our history. The novel describes the old city as enclosed by the high wall around it, narrow and winding streets, in some of them the sun had never shone and the cold wind cut through the bones. The walled city has also been described as the city of gutters ejecting out a damp stink coming in greater gusts and with heaps of offal and waste material in its streets. The old mohallahs and quarters of the old city are “poisonous as the deadliest herb yet untested by medical criticism,”(Nath 58) and polluted as the dangerous effervescence from a marshy ground” (58). The city does not present a pleasant look:

Why! With its dirty and dingy streets where sunlight is conspicuous by entire absence, with its baffling and crooked lanes defiant to remembrances of memory, with its ‘bazaars’
where none but men of stout physique and stouter heart can manage way and lastly enough not leastly with the shrew typical ‘Lahori’, sly of look, cunning by temper and sloth of movement— with all these sights Lahore is wonderful ... It has roads whereupon sanitation is totally prohibited, it has gates with entrances guarded by huge masses of filth enough to frighten away every body (provided though he be with the most Indifferent nasal organ), it has wretched streets, ruined houses, tottered walls and in fact what not. (112)

The description of the Civil Station in the novel presents a complete contrast with that of the old city. This is the area inhabited by the British inclusively. A number of government institutions, shops, clubs, bungalows and markets sprang up. The Mall Road, connecting Mian Mir, the British cantonment, situated several miles to the east, to the civil offices “lying just beyond the western boundary of the city” (Glover 6). “At one end of the developed portion of the Mall, in the direction of Mian Mir, were the Botanical gardens and Zoo. The Lawrence and Montgomery Halls fronted onto the Mall at the northern edge of the Garden, forming an important nucleus of European social life” (6). The area between the Garden at the one end on the Mall Road and the secretariat at its other, housed the colonial offices and the educational and religious institutions. The Mall Road, therefore, serves an important link between the institutions of political power, the secretariat, and the educational institutions, producing a class of educated young men whose loyalty with the British Raj was an indisputable fact. The novelist is so fascinated and enthralled by the beauty of the road, “I dare not depict the multifarious charms of this exquisite road----the ‘Upper Mall.’ Its beauty is indescribable ... It is verily a road for the European community. All sorts of White people can be had here” (Nath 115). The exclusiveness of the road has been described very vividly. The natives are rarely seen traveling on that road as it links the English military cantonment with the civil offices of the British ruling elite. But even in the colonial part of the city there are some places where all and sundry, people hailing from a diverse social and religious background get their chance to mingle together. One such place is the famous Anarkali bazaar:
It is a good ‘bazaar’ out and out. The shops are clean and respectable. In the evening time when the student folks give up their studies for a little recreation, it presents an extremely busy aspect. Even the dry-as-dust Lahori yields to the temptation of an evening ramble. Side by side with the spirited Native student, giving vent to his English in a very destructive fashion, may be seen the Herculean rustic who has come to see the metropolis from the adjacent village. There again we see the N.W.P {North West Provinces} man whose tongue runs with a locomotive velocity, so fluently, so hurriedly as to leave the audience in a dilemma whether the speaker was using Latin or his own vernacular. Here and there the red coated, bare-legged Highlander soldier from {Lahore’s} cantonment can be seen walking always and invariably in a tipsy but wherewithal a strutting mode. Amongst this variety of people may also the famous Lahori ‘goonda’ (lit. Scoundrel) with his pick-pocket looks and sullen scowling cut-throat face—a hated bully. 

In contrast with the Mall Road and the Civil Station, where it is the prerogative of the white community to ramble and roam about the Anarkali bazaar presents somewhat a different spectacle. In the bazaar one finds God’s plenty in terms of the diversity and variety of people. Here the intermingling of the natives, the pathans, the rustics, who even today come to see Lahore, its hue and color and light, and the typical Lahori vagabond with the highland stout Scottish soldier gives us a picture of a motley group of characters and of a culture, an amorphous culture, which was and still is the distinctive characteristic of Lahore. Even today people visit the Anarkali bazaar for various purposes. Some go for real shopping, others just for window shopping and to cut remarks on women. Students from University of the Punjab, National College of Arts and Govt. College University are seen roaming through the bazaar with agility and the frankness of young souls. They are also the custodians of one of the oldest Lahori culture and tradition of having a chit chat sitting in small cafes and tea houses situated on the Mall Road and even on the footpaths:

Do you see those girls, walking there, in jeans speckled with paint? Yes they are attractive. And how different they look from
the women of that family sitting at the table beside ours, in their traditional dress. The National College of Arts is not far – it is, as a matter of fact, only around the corner – and its students often come here for a cup of tea, just as we are doing now. (Hamid 10)

Nath makes another significant observation regarding the exclusiveness of the Civil Station by describing the area where the white community, young and old, male and female is seen in great numbers roaming about fearlessly. Nath, the writer observes that, “old folks bent double on the account of the ravages of age,” (Nath 7) and “stout gentlemen superfluously red but often very handsome … grown up misses barely on the verge of womanhood but already looking wise and serious” (114). Montgomery Hall was the rendezvous of the white community, “verily a talismanic lodge” where all around us we see civilization and excellence” (115). In an unambiguous language Dina Nath is full of praise for the white community whom he considers the embodiment of wisdom and power and the paragon of beauty.

So we see the ancient and the colonial Lahore from the perspective of a native writer who is fascinated by that part of Lahore which the British built. It was in 1901 that Rudyard Kipling wrote *Kim*, the novel’s initial setting was in the colonial part of Lahore, the famous Mall Road and from that part of the city the central character, Kim, takes us to the walled city whose narrow and winding streets have a great attraction for him. It is through him that we come across the amorphous nature of the city of Lahore. The novel also reveals the strategy of the British to hold the Russians at bay. For this purpose, the British used Lahore as a centre of espionage to check the Russians’ march against the British colonial interests in India. Unlike Nath, Kipling neither glorifies nor idealizes the colonial part of the city of Lahore. He rather remains focused on the walled city of Lahore. Kipling, in fact, was using the walled city for the stereotypical presentation of the natives. He saw the walled Lahore as a typical oriental city and used it to put forward his own colonial discourse. In Nath the amorphousness is of socio-religious nature, whereas, in Kipling it is of socio-political nature.

*Kim* holds a unique place in the colonial literature of the British Raj in the Subcontinent. The novel was published in 1901, twelve years after its
author had left India. Kipling, the future “Poet of the Empire”, who’s name has become synonymous with India, was born in 1865 at Calcutta and spent most of his time in Lahore. Nobody could better understand India than Kipling who also worked as a journalist in the Civil and Military Gazette, a Lahore based newspaper. Sir David Masson, the then managing proprietor of that journal, the Civil and Military Gazette, recalls the incident of appointing Kipling on the staff of the journal by saying that “he gave the youthful Kipling his first appointment, at the request of his father, Mr. Lockwood Kipling, then Principal of the Lahore School of Art” as the boy was “disqualified for any of the public services by reason of his defective eyesight” (Goulding 32). The book *Kim* is lure of the Empire and the Orient seen through a westerner’s eyes. According to Said Kipling believed that “it was India’s best destiny to be ruled by England” (176).

The book is about Kim, who “knew the wonderful walled city of Lahore from the Delhi Gate to the outer Fort Ditch; was hand in glove with men who led lives stranger than anything Haroun al Rashid dreamed of; and lived in a life wild as that of the Arabian Nights,…” (Kipling 6-7). And a ‘Friend of the World’, who becomes a disciple of a Tibetan lama, on a holy pilgrimage to see the Four Holy Places before he dies. He, then, along with the lama embarks upon a holy journey to find a holy River. Their journey starts from Lahore on a train and after facing numerous situations and encountering motley of Indians along the Grand Trunk Road ends in the mountains.

It has been argued that some Mr. F. Beaty who retired from the police service in Quetta (1922) was the original of Kim. But the unromantic and uneventful career of the “Beauty of Baluchistan” does not support this suggestion or argument. Tracing the origin of Kim Goulding states that:

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2 Founded in 1872, it was a daily English Newspaper in British India. It was published from Simla and Lahore until its closure in 1963.
There is, however, substantial reason to believe that when Kipling created Kim, he took for this model a European boy, named B….., who was a familiar yet unusual figure in the streets of the Anarkali bazaar. The market crossing, where the Zamzammah then stood, was one of his favorite haunts. Hatless and barefooted, with all the cunning of a typical street Arab, this boy roamed about at will, and anything he did not know about bazaar and serai life was not worth knowing. For some time, when he was about13 or 14 years old, he was to be seen driving a tikka gharr owned by an Indian who had married one of his sisters. This boy’s father was a clerk in one of the local Government office’s, but was believed to have been a soldier in early life. After his death, his widow and children lived in the bazaar near Kapurthala House where young B…. reigned supreme over his youthful inhabitants. (34)

The identity of Kim along with his original has baffled the readers and the critics alike. Kim, in fact, contains within his character all those elements, contrary, contradictory, paradoxical which make him an amorphous character, a blend, an amalgamation of the local and the foreign:

…and Kim was white. Though he was burned black as any native; though he spoke the vernacular by preference, and his mother-tongue in a clipped , uncertain sing-song; though he consorted on terms of perfect equality with the small boys of the bazaar; Kim was white-a poor white of the very poorest. (Kipling 5)

This quality, feature and characteristic of his physical appearance, the appearance of a native had underneath, hidden, invisible, a white man, a colonizer. The camouflage was complete, disguise was skillfully performed and mask was put on successfully and masterly. Like a true colonizer he had many tricks under his sleeve. He would put on any identity, the identity of a Muslim or a Hindu so conveniently and easily. It is because of this quality of his that the British used him as a spy in their Great Game against the Russians: “The woman who looked after him insisted with tears that he should wear European clothes-trousers, a
shirt, and a battered hat. Kim found it easier to slip into Hindu or Muhammadan garb when engaged on certain business” (7). Along with Kim, Mahbub Ali also fulfills the features and characteristics of an amorphous character, visibly a horse dealer but invisibly a spy. He is a character, a person and a personality, yet given a number, a non-person, a non personality.

Kipling initiates the action of the novel in that part of the historical city of Lahore which the British had built after the annexation of the Punjab in the year of 1849. Kim, the main character is sitting on the Zam-Zamma, a cannon placed on a platform on the Mall road where the Lahore Museum, the Lahore School of Arts (now the National College of Arts) and University of the Punjab face each other. The Tolenton market and the Town Hall are the other buildings of the colonial era reminding us of the British Raj, situated a few yards away from the cannon. The Mall Road just in front of the National College of Arts where the famous Kim’s Gun (Zam-Zamma) is placed takes a right turn and along with the Gol Bagh now popularly called the Nasir Bagh, on the left side and the Govt. College Lahore (now Govt. College University Lahore) on the right, leads towards the tomb of Data Ganj Baghs and to the walled city. From the colonial Lahore the writer takes us to the narrow and winding streets of the old pre-colonial walled city through his main character, Kim:

the stealthy prowl through the dark gullies and lanes, the crawl up a water pipe, the sights and sounds of the women’s world on the flat roofs and the head-long flight from the house top to house top under cover of the hot dark. Then there were holy men, ash-smear ed faquirs by their brick shrines under the trees at the riverside, with whom he was familiar—greeting them as they returned from begging-tours and, when no one was by, eating from the same dish. (7)

The description, therefore, puts up the picture of a city whose streets are narrow, dark and overcrowded, the buildings are constructed so close as they share each other’s roofs blocking the sun light and creating an unhealthy atmosphere of dampness and foul smell. There is no privacy and even the world of women is conveniently accessible and exposed to gaze and openness. The city is largely inhabited by the beggars, the holy
men who roamed about the city begging the whole day. Nights are highly unsafe as ‘thieves are abroad.’ Along with the beggars the animals tread the streets with the freedom and boldness of a fearless colonizer stealing and robbing people of their belongings. “Thou hast as much grace as the holy bull of Shiv. He has taken the best of a basket of onion already, this morn; and forsooth, I must fill thy bowl. He comes here again” (17).

Moreover, they are unashamed of their begging always pestering the people with their clamor for alms and food. According to a native proverb, “those who beg in silence starve in silence” (17). Kim looks at the walled city of Lahore as a city where the beggars wander freely in the “cramped and crowded Lahore streets” (64). He also refers to the various castes of faquir and their disciples wearing their peculiar outfits. Some of the faquirs would roam in the streets at their fixed time both in the morning and in the evening and they would go from one street to another knocking at the doors of the houses asking for alms. Every faquir or beggar had his own unique way of begging, some would sing a holy verse, or a ghazal of a classical Urdu poet, still others would sing some bujhan blessing the people in anticipation of alms. Kim was well acquainted with all kinds of faquirs and beggars, “He knew what the faquirs of the Taksali Gate were like when they talked among themselves, and copied the very inflection of their lewd disciples” (52). He also took delight in telling tales about them, “carried away by enthusiasm, he volunteered to show Lurgan Sahib one evening how the disciples of a certain caste of faquir, old Lahore acquaintances, and begged doles by the road side…” (160).

In addition to the city of beggars as Kipling perceives it, Lahore was also a commercial centre, a city of trade and commerce, a prosperous and thriving city. The traders came to Lahore on business trips from as far of places as the Central Asian cities and to accommodate those traders many serais had been constructed just outside the gates of Lahore. Delhi gate was the busiest of all the thirteen gates of Lahore. The merchants and traders used that gate to enter the walled city. Muhammad Sultan, the famous contractor built a grand and specious serai outside the Delhi gate where thousands of travelers would stay along with their camels and horses. In the north of the serai there sprang up a bazaar popularly called
the Landa Bazaar with shops of concrete verandas in front of them on either side of the bazaar. Adjacent to the bazaar, Lahore Railway Station was built which further increased the pace of commercial activities and soon Lahore became one of the famous commercial centres in the whole Sub-continent. Another serai called the serai of Dewan Rattan Chand had been built outside the Shah Allam gate. A distinctive feature of the serai was the construction of a huge water pool in the centre of it. Traders and grain dealers used to sojourn here. Another philanthropist, and constructor, Rai Mela Ram built a serai and a palatial bungalow outside the Bhatti gate. Kim mentions Lahore as a busy manufacturing city with rest houses to accommodate the visitors:

It was his first experience of a large manufacturing city, and the crowded tram-car with its continually squealing breaks frightened him. Half pushed, half towed, he arrived at the high gate of the Kashmir Serai: that huge open square over against the railway station, surrounded with arched cloisters where the camels and horse caravans put up on their return from Central Asia. Here were all manner of Northern folk, tending tethered ponies and kneeling camels; loading and unloading bales and bundles; drawing water for the evening meal at the creaking well-windlasses; piling grass before the shrieking, wild-eyed stallions; cuffing the surly caravan dogs; paying off camel-drivers; taking on new grooms; swearing shouting, arguing, and chaffering in the pack square. (21)

Kim, therefore, projects Lahore in the last decade of the 19th century and in the first decade of the 20th as a city of contrasts, beggars, vagabonds, poor Lahoris, the new emerging commercial class, the English men and the locals, all inhabiting Lahore producing an amorphous culture of a unique kind. In the novel the walled city is a noisy city, beggars, some of them are poor and needy and some are professionals, begging, clamoring, singing for alms and traders, shopkeepers and their customers are involved in a noisy bargain. The modern Lahore, on the other hand, is calm and quiet, the roads are spacious, properly aliened having footpaths for the pedestrians. The buildings on the Mall Road are built in accordance with the modern trends in architecture and building designing. This contrast and contradiction between the ancient and the
modern Lahore gives a great shock to the lama on his visit to Lahore. He is also fascinated by the amorphousness of the city.

Kipling wrote *Kim* at a specific moment in his career. It was the time when the relationship between the British and the Indian people had undergone a marked change. The British had dominated India for three hundred years but now at that time their rule was beginning to exhibit the increasing unrest which would culminate in decolonization and independence” (Suleri 114). The forces of amorphousness of relationship between the colonizer and the colonized had set in. Referring to the events determining the nature of relationship between the ruler and the ruled in the Sub-continent Edward Said in his book *Culture and Imperialism* says:

> In both Indian and British history, the Mutiny was a clear demarcation…We can say that to the British, who brutally and severely put the Mutiny down, all their actions were retaliatory; the mutineers murdered Europeans, they said and such actions proved, as if proof were necessary, that Indians deserved subjugation by the higher civilization of European Britain; after 1857 the East India Company was replaced by the much more formal Government of India. (177)

As a result of the Mutiny of 1857, there occurred a marked and discernable change in the attitude of both the military and the civil British officials towards the Indians. Suspicion and hatred replaced sympathy and understanding. The breach between the two communities had become unbridgeable. The emergence of the native rapist figure in the fiction and other stories written after the Mutiny in 1857 is important to note. It indicates the extent to which the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized had deteriorated and that the administrative polices and the attitude of the British officials towards the natives had stiffened to a large extent: “Jenny Sharp (1993) demonstrates that the dark skinned rapist is not an essential feature at all but discursively produced within a set of historically specific conditions and that such a figure had become a commonplace during and after what the British called the Mutiny” (qtd. in Loomba 78). This image of the native brought a sea change in the existing stereotype; from a mild native into a savage
rapist of white woman. A critical analysis of various reports, memoirs and fictional narratives of the Mutiny year brings out the fact that the British administration had been completely shaken and left “without a script on which they could rely” (qtd. in Loomba 80). Even though there was no evidence of systematic violence of this sort, she suggests that the “fear provoking stories have the same effect as an actual rape, which is to say, they violently reproduce gender roles in the demonstration that women’s bodies can be sexually appropriated” (qtd. in Loomba 80). This lead them to believe that they should consolidate their authority on the one hand, and on the other, present themselves as a part of ‘civilizing mission.’ Therefore, “a crisis in the British Authority is managed through the circulation of the violated bodies of English women as a sign for the violation of the colonialism” (qtd. in Loomba 80).

In Kim, there is an ‘old withered man’ who rendered yeoman service in the Mutiny as “a native officer in a newly raised cavalry regiment and in return of his services received a good holding in the village” (Kipling 54) as a reward, while recalling that ‘dark year’ says that:

A madness ate into all the Army and they turned against their officers. That was the first evil, but not passed remedy if they had then held their hands. But they chose to kill the ‘Sahibs’ wives and children. Then came the Sahibs from over the see and called them to most strict account…So they turned against women and children? That was a bad deed, for which the punishment cannot be avoided. (55)

So Kipling like a true westerner holds the natives responsible for the Mutiny by calling it an act of madness, therefore, justifying the brutal punishment they deserved and received. The War of Independence of 1857 which the British termed as Mutiny, in fact, started over the issue of cartridges used by the Indian army. It was rumored that the skin of cow (cow is a sacred animal for the Hindus) and that of pig (pig is haram for the Muslim) had been used to manufacture the covering of the cartridges which had to be removed by mouth before its use. The soldiers refused to use such cartridges and rose in open rebellion at Meerath
cantonment against the British commanding officers. Soon it spilled over to other areas of the Sub-continent. In Delhi the Indians killed the British officers and made their families hostage. In Delhi and in some other Indian cities the wives and children of the British officers were killed. Consequently, the British fell upon the Indians with a vengeance and indulged in carnage, killing them mercilessly. Although, the Hindus along with the Muslims took part in the war, yet the wrath of the British fell on the Muslims. Ahmad Ali has drawn our attention to the massacre of the Muslims in his novel *Twilight in Delhi*:

And she began to relate how ruthlessly Delhi had been looted by them at the time of the ‘Mutiny’ and the Mussalmans had been turned out of the city, their houses demolished and destroyed and their property looted and usurped by the ‘Prize Agency’; and the city was dyed red with the blood of princes and nobles, poor and rich alike who had happened to be Mussalmans… (143)

*Kim* brings into focus a very pertinent issue of Kipling’s portrayal of the Indians. Have they been portrayed as inferior, or as somehow equal but different? For this purpose he has used Lahore as a locale. Edward Said is of the view that “Obviously, an Indian reader will give an answer that focuses on some factors more than others (for example, Kipling’s stereotypical views-some would call them racialist- on the Oriental character), Whereas English and American readers will stress his affection for Indian life on the Grand Trunk Road” (163-4). Jan Mohamed in his recent article on colonial fiction, “The Economy of Manichean Allegory: the Function of Racial Difference in Colonist Literature” has called *Kim* a novel aiming at exploring the possibilities of bridging the chasm which sets the colonizer and the colonized apart. He goes further than this, “We are thus introduced to a positive, detailed and non-stereotypic portrait of the colonized that is unique in colonist literature… What may initially seem like a rapt aesthetic appreciation of Indian culture turns out, on closer examination, to be a positive acceptance and celebration of difference” (qtd. in Loomba 481). Undoubtedly, the Indians occupy much space in *Kim* as compared to other novels written on the Sub-continent under the British Raj and we do find some derogatory remarks about the white men and that the Indians deserve a fair treatment. But all this should not lead us to believe
that the book reflects the Indian in a sympathetic light and that the rulers were eager to treat the natives with equality. On the very first page of the novel, Kim is shown sitting, “in defiance of municipal orders, astride the gun zam-Zammah on her brick platform opposite the old Ajaib Gher-the Wonder House as the natives called the Lahore Museum” (Kipling 5). Being white, though with Irish background, Kim has the privilege and the prerogative to defy the order or any law to occupy the ‘fire breathing dragon’, the Zam-Zammah as who holds the cannon holds the Punjab. He, therefore, is justified in frustrating the efforts of his Muslim and Hindu playmates to climb up to equal right and claim to the cannon, a symbol of power and domination, by kicking them off it. Since the British were holding the Punjab, so Kim had every right to sit alone on the Zam- Zammah, and there is little possibility of sharing it with the natives. They are always kept at arms length. Kim, therefore, is determined to safeguard his right to possess the cannon. To Abdullah’s pleadings to sit on the cannon, Kim’s stern reply smacks of his sense of superiority, “Thy father was a pastry cook. Thy mother stole the ghi… All Mussalmans fell off Zam-Zammah long ago” (8). Although, little Chota Lal whose “father was worth perhaps half a million sterling is also kept at bay;” The Hindus fell off Zam-Zammah too. The Mussalmans pushed them off” (8). The novel, therefore, from the very outset, establishes the legitimate right of the white to rule over the natives. The division between the white and the non-white in the novel is absolute and is of racial in nature: “The division between white and non-white, in India and elsewhere, was absolute, and is illuded to throughout Kim as well as the rest of Kipling’s works; a Sahib is a Sahib and no amount of friendship or camaraderie can change the rudiments of racial difference” (Said 162 ). “Once a Sahib is always a Sahib…” (Kipling 91). This pattern of power and rule continued till the time the British had to leave the Sub-continent in 1947. A young Englishman coming to India to be a part of the much coveted Indian civil service would invariably consider himself belonging to a specific and inclusive group whose aim and objective was to have dominance and control over each and every Indian, irrespective of his social status or class.

It is said that Kipling has displayed great regard for the Indian religions in Kim. Noel Annan claims that “Kipling…implied that the Indians were as superior to the British in matters of religion as the British were to
them in material power” (qtd. in Williams 483). It is true that the priests in the book have not been portrayed in the positive light as selfless and dedicated missionaries. Reverend Bennett is even insulted by Kim in the book and in comparison with the Lama, Reverend Bennett and Father Victor show dearth of honor and probity. Despite the fact that the Lama is the most sympathetic of all the holy men depicted in the book, yet “none of the characters seems to have the slightest qualms about abusing his spiritual quest by turning it into the cover for a counter espionage mission, and, moreover keeping him in the dark about the fact” (Williams 484). The book *Kim* unambiguously establishes the domination and superiority of the white man over the natives. Even Lama the holy man has to fall back upon a white man, the curator in the Lahore Museum and later on Kim in his search for truth: “A white-bearded Englishman was looking at the Lama” (Kipling 11) who then lead him to the main hall of the museum. The wonder struck lama saw with an air of unbelief the whole panorama of the world of Buddhism. The curator began with the images of the Christian religion, setting up the superiority of Christianity over the native religions:

Here was the devout Asita, the pendant of Simeon in the Christian story, holding the Holy Child on his knee in the legend of the cousin Devadatta. Here was the wicked woman who accused the master of impurity, all confounded; here was the teaching in the Deer-park; the miracle that stunned the fire-worshippers; here was the Bodhisat in royal state as a prince; the miraculous birth; the death at Kusinagara, where the weak disciple fainted; while there were almost countless repetitions of the meditation under the Bodhi tree; and the adoration of the alms bowl was everywhere. (12)

The museum in *Kim*, therefore, emerges as a miniature Lahore so far as the religious amorphousness of the city is concerned. The symbols and signs of various religions which the Lahoris possessed were found in the museum. It is also interesting to note how deeply the lama depends upon the museum curator, a white man, for his search of truth is symbolized by his giving of spectacles to the holy man. This act of kindness elevates lama’s spiritual prestige and honor, on the one hand and on the other, legitimizes British control, domination and benevolence. The white man
becomes lama’s guide even in his own religion. The lama also acknowledges his indebtedness to Kim for the realization of his spiritual journey and the parable in Chapter 9 of the book which the lama tells also reveals the fact beyond any doubt that the lama regards Kim as his ‘savior’: “Child I have lived on thy strength as an old tree lives on the lime of an old wall” (271).

*Kim* also spotlights Kipling’s views on Orientalism. Edward Said has defined Orientalism as “the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it; in short, Orientalism is a Western style for domination, restructuring and having authority over the orient” (qtd. in Williams 482). So it is concerned with various strategies of projecting, controlling and dominating the Orient. One of the strategies is to paint the “Orient and its inhabitants as static, unchanging, incapable of change” (482). The Orient is invariably conceived and constructed as:

wanting accuracy, which easily degenerates into untruthfulness…His explanation will generally be lengthy, and wanting in lucidity. He will probably contradict himself half-a-dozen times before he has finished his story. He will often breakdown under the mildest process of cross-examination… The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, “different.” (Said 40)

In *Kim* there are numerous references to the fact that the Indians have been represented stereotypically. They do not have a proper sense of time: “All hours of the twenty-four are alike to Orientals, and there passenger traffic is regulated accordingly” (Kipling 30). “Even an Oriental, with an Oriental’s views of the value of time, could see that the sooner it was in the proper hands the better” (26); of motion: “Swiftly – as Orientals understand speed” (143); of order: “the happy Asiatic disorder” (142); of sound: “he had all the Oriental’s indifference to mere noise” (141). They are unable to recall or remember the important dates and years, hardly following the calendar; so the date of birth of the children or their marriages are invariably associated with some major event or upheaval: ‘I do not know; but upon the hour that I cried first
fell the great earthquake in Srinagar which is in Kashmir.”… The earthquake had been felt in India and for long stood a leading date in the Punjab” (43). They are irrational, superstitious and “gullible in matters of religion and its cognate, magic” (Williams 484). The Jat in Kim whose child is cured by Kim reveals this characteristic of the Indians. He is credulous and highly superstitious. Kim very conveniently presents himself as:

A most holy man at the temple of the Tirthankers.” “They are all most holy and most—greedy,” said the Jat with bitterness. “I walked the pillars and trodden the temples till my feet are flayed, and the child is no whit better. And the mother being sick too…Hush, then, little one... We changed his name when the fever came. We put him into girls clothes. There was nothing we did not do, except—I said to his mother when she bundled me off to Benares—she should have come with me—I said Sakhi Sarwar Sultan would serve us best. (Kipling 187)

His visits to various tombs of holy saints, the charms and the magic of the Indian holy men could not cure the child of his fever. Only a few tablets of Quinine which Kim gives to the boy to take subsides his fever. Indian women had surpassed their men in having faith in the miraculous effect of charms: “She liked charms with plenty of ink that one could wash off in water, swallow, and be done with” (227). The men had their own remedies or cure of various maladies: “He believed that the dung of a black horse, mixed with sulphur, and carried in a snake-skin, was a sound remedy for cholera…” (226).

In her article on “Kim and Orientalism” Williams has defined orientalism “as adjunct of colonial control, is pre-eminently involved in the production of various categories of knowledge about the ‘native’: historical, linguistic, religious, moral, and political” (486). This knowledge is reflected in the fixed notions and concepts which the West had formed over the last so many centuries making the orientalists and their society highly predictable. It further tells us that they do not have the capacity and intelligence to change and develop positively. Consequently, this kind of knowledge over the years has formed some unassailable stereotypes regarding the colonized which also crept into
colonial literature. India in *Kim* has been painted as eternally untruthful. Interestingly Kipling tells us that Kim has also been corrupted and infected by this Indian disease: “Kim could lie like an Oriental” (Kipling 27) and that “Kim found it easier to slip into Hindu or Mohammedan garb when engaged on certain business” (7). He has also picked up the unpleasant manners of the natives: “Mechanically Kim squatted beside him,—squatted as only the natives can, in spite of the abominable clinging trousers” (103). In contrast with the natives who have the permanent habit of telling lies, “the English do eternally tell the truth” (141). The image of “Gorah-log (white-folk) or Sahib is the dominant image of the book: “Kim looked him over out of the corners of his eyes. He was a Sahib in that he wore Sahib’s clothes; the accent of his Urdu, the intonation of his English, showed that he was anything but a sahib” (130). “Kim was white – a poor white of the very poorest” (5) of an Irish background, whose mother “had been a nursemaid in a colonel’s family and had married Kimball O’Hara, a young colored-sergeant of the Mavericks, an Irish regiment” (5). It is interesting to note that:

Along with the working class The Irish were most frequently conflated with the Blacks by the imperialists as, for example, Lord Salisbury, three times Prime Minister between 1886 and 1902, remarked that the Irish were as fitted for self-government as the Hottentots. Both the Irish and the working class were held to be responsible for the worst excesses of racism, but they also showed the greatest solidarity with other oppressed groups – as when Irish people working in Scotland Yard helped Indian nationalists to smuggle documents. (Williams 494)

Kim, therefore, needs to be educated and reformed so that he must wash himself of his Indianess in order to become a true Sahib: “They’ll make you a man o’ you, O’Hara, at St. Xavier’s—a white man an’, I hope, a good man” (Kipling119). A white man, therefore, is the embodiment of all the good qualities of a gentleman. He is truthful, civilized, and honest and a true leader of men: “Sahibs never grow old. They dance and they play like children when they are grandfathers. A strong-backed breeds “piped the voice inside the palanquin” (218). Kim is sent to the best of all the institutions in India to learn “all the wisdom of the sahibs” (218) and a great care is taken regarding his education:
The regiment would pay for you all the time you are at the Military orphanage; or you might go on the Punjab Masonic orphanage’s list (not that he or you ‘ud understand what that means); but the best schooling a boy can get in India is, of course, at St. Xavier’s in Partibus at Lucknow. (96)

St. Xavier as a renowned institution for its rarefied academic atmosphere and discipline “looks down on boys who “go native altogether.” One must never forget that one is a Sahib, and that some day, when examinations are passed, one will command natives” (126). His academic record and report at the St. Xavier School, sent to Colonel Creighton and Father Victor, his patrons who kept a vigilant eye on him, reveals his activities, performance, interests, punishment and reward at the school. He took keen interest in mathematical studies and in map-making and also won a prize in these subjects. He also excelled himself in sports and was a member of the school eleven against the Allyghur Mohammedan College when he was fourteen years of age. In order to discipline him in the ways of a Sahib, he was punished “several times for “conversing with improper persons,” and for “absenting himself for a day in the company of a street beggar” (165). His academic record is silent after revealing the fact that he passed the elementary examination in elementary surveying “with great credit” and then was “removed on appointment” from the institution. In contrast to the image of the Gorah Sahib, Kim projects the image of the blacks: “What was you bukkin, to that nigger about?” (104) said the drummer-boy when Kim returned to the verandah:

“I was watching you.”
“I was only talkin’ to him.”
“You talk the same as a nigger, don’t you?” (104)

The word nigger in fact, is a word of humiliation and a mark of disgrace for the Blacks of African origin and is used to dehumanize them. Father Victor who had been entrusted with the task of supervising Kim’s education “styled all natives as “niggers”” (108). Fed up with the rigorous routine of instructions in the school, Kim decided to run away. His abortive effort at escape is immediately reported to Father Victor:
Kim “hailed a scarlet-bearded nigger on horseback; that the nigger had then and there laid into him with a peculiarly adhesive quirt, picked up young O’Hara, and borne him off a full gallop” (108). This takes us to a very important colonial concept of ‘Negritude’. Loomba writes, “For Cesaire was also one of the founders of the Negritude movement, which emphasized the cultural antagonism between Europe and its ‘others.’ If, in Kipling’s’ words, East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet’, then negritude angrily endorsed this conceptual concept” (23). Kim clearly indicates that the gape between the white and the black, the ruler and the ruled and the colonizer and the colonized is permanent and unbridgeable: “… once a Sahib, always a Sahib…” (Kipling109).

It is clear from the text that Kim’s services were hired by the Secret Service for an espionage mission against the Russians who were hovering over Afghanistan to undermine the British interests in the Sub-continent. The British espionage system to gather any information underpinning the British interests in India was rather an elaborate one: “But recently, five confederated kings, who had no business to confederate, had been informed by a kindly Northern Power that there was a leakage of news from their territories into British India” (25). The locals or the natives belonging to various races had been hired as informers to do the most dangerous assignment of collecting the information under the guidance and command of Colonel Creighton “of the Ethnological Survey” (111), “who is a Colonel Sahib without a regiment” (118). He is mysterious and enigmatic enough to puzzle the people who come into contact with him: “He is always buying horses which he cannot ride and asking riddles about the works of God— such as plants and stones and the customs of people” (118). The Survey as a spy network is a part of overall British strategy of dominating the natives, and the information gathered about India would place the British in an advantageous position and further consolidate their position both against the internal threat and the external menace. The whole novel smacks of spying, “… Mahbub Ali probably spied for the Colonel as much as Kim had spied for Mahbub Ali…” (118). Even Kim:

\[\text{did not suspect that Mahbub Ali, known as one of the best horse-dealers in the Punjab, a wealthy and enterprising trader, whose caravans penetrated far and far into the Back of Beyond, was}\]
registered in one of the locked books of the Indian Survey Department as C. 25. I B.Twice or thrice yearly C.25 would send in a little story, badly told but most interesting, and generally—it was checked by the statements of R. 17 and M. 4—quite true. (25)

They had also devised a code language to do the job secretly and successfully: “Send off those telegrams at once, ---the new code, not the old.--mime and Wharton’s” (41). So it was through a very effective and efficient system of espionage that the British could hold the Russians at bay.

It is interesting to note that in *Kim* Kipling has given us a detailed and graphic picture of the Indians belonging to various races, castes and communities. He has also described their peculiar and specific features, habits and customs and dialects. The panoramic description of India life along with the Grand Trunk Road is really amazing: “All castes and kinds of men move here. Look Brahmins and chumars, bankers and tinkers, barbers and bunnias, pilgrims and potters—all the world going and coming… And truly the Grand Trunk Road is a wonderful spectacle… such a river of life as nowhere else exists in the world” (60). Here is a portrayal of the Indians belonging to the known and the oldest Indian professions, a picture gallery. These professions in fact determine their caste and role in the society. How exact is the stratification and gradation of the inhabitants, the hierarchy, the Brahmins, highly respectable religious community, with all the prerogatives, are at the top and the Chumars, the untouchables at the bottom having no rights as human beings, living in abject misery and poverty. There are Sikhs, Hindu Jats, Gorkhas and Pathans, the martial races who were the bulwark in the Indian army which served the British Raj to its glory and splendour in various wars within India and outside it. The British raised the Indian military regiments on racial basis, the Sikh regiment, the Gorkha regiment, the Dogra regiment and the Muhammandan regiment, each regiment determined to excel and surpass the other in the display of valour and bravery in the battlefield. It was considered a matter of honor to serve in the Indian army even in the subaltern ranks: “My sister’s brother’s son is *naik* corporal) in that regiment “…There are also some Dogra companies there “… “My brother is in a Jat regiment” (32-3).
All these characters, the English men, the Irish men, the Hindus, the Sikhs, and the Muslims with varied social, cultural, religious and linguistic background, intermingling, interacting and commingling together to create what my research discovers and I call amorphousness. Even the British army of those days of the British Raj is the true reflection of amorphousness. It consisted of soldiers hailing from disparate and distinct castes, cultures and creeds speaking different dialects, yet woven into a single unit or group of British army involved in the Great Game being played by the British with skill, dexterity and intelligence.

That the Great Game is the dominant theme of *Kim* is further confirmed by the fact that the world of the novel is dominantly inhabited by men. It is a masculine world, a world of masculine potency and energy, a world of adventures, of perilous travels, a world of intrigues and the world of war: “I saw the Jang-i-Lat Sahib come to a bib dinner. I saw him in Creighton Sahib’s office. I saw the two read the white stallion’s pedigree. I heard the very orders given for the opening of a great war” (135). Since it is a world of war women hardly matter; they are rather stumbling block in the way of winning the Great Game. In comparison with men, Kim, the Lama, Mahbub Ali, the Pathan horse dealer, Lurgan Sahib, the great Babu and the old Indian soldier, and above all Colonel Creighton the women are fewer and are debased or unattractive. There are prostitutes, elderly widows like the widow of Shamlegh and lusty women who do not have any role to play in the Great Game, a game only men are qualified to play. The novel, in fact, portrays a masculine world, a world of trade and travel, adventure and intrigue.

Undoubtedly, the backdrop of *Kim* is war: “For there is always war along the border---as I know” (49). The British were determined to fight, no matter how strong the enemy was to safeguard their vested interests and the preparations had been made: “… I saw the Jang-i-Lat Sahib come to a big dinner… I heard the very orders given for the opening of a great war” (135). The British after winning each battle consolidated their domination over the conquered people not only through a well-planned military strategy but also through cunning diplomacy and political expediency, but above all through a well-thought and equally
successfully carried out ruthless repression of culture of the dominated people and also made them believe that the British rule in fact, was a great blessing for the Indians: “… Gramsci argued that the ruling classes achieve domination not by force and fraud or coercion and intimidation alone, but also by creating subjects who ‘willingly’ submit to being ruled” (qtd. in Loomba 29). So they followed a well-planned strategy to create subjects who willingly submitted to be ruled by introducing an education system well suited to their needs and requirements, administrative and judicial system, canal system land reforms, road and railway network and job opportunities. Each system facilitated and strengthened their rule. The railway and road network made it possible to deploy the troops on the Northern boarder to check the Russian plan to infiltrate the Sub-continent, on the one hand, and on the other, to bring under control the unruly Pathans:

The Lama, not so well used to trains as he had pretended, started as the 3.25 A.M. south bound roared in. The sleepers sprung to life, and the station filled with clamor and shouting, cries of water and sweetmeat vendors, shouts of native policemen, and shrill yells of women gathering up their baskets, their families, and their husbands. (Kipling 30)

This is a stereotypical depiction of a railway station scene of an oriental city with all the hustle and bustle, the chaos and confusion, the noise and clarion of women preparing themselves to leave the train but in the process not forgetting to collect and gather their children and husbands. In addition to that the talk of the soldiers boasting and bragging about the heroics of their respective companies in various battlefields, displaying complete solidarity and comradeship with their companies, and the enthusiasm to serve the Union Jack even at the risk of their precious lives, unambiguously and unassailably indicates how successfully the British had motivated the locals to be ruled by a foreign power and to strengthen its military hold over the conquered land. The train had separate compartments in accordance with the social status the travelers had, the emphasis was on the stratification of the Indian society and the hierarchy the British had deliberately created. The whites had a separate compartment to travel, and then there were first class, second class and third class compartments. The goods trains were used to carry the
military equipment and soldiers to the war fronts and their number of carriages outnumbered the passenger carriages.

The British after physical occupation of the land even did not feel satisfied by having an iron grip over the dominated people and filling their minds with ideas of servitude, they rather embarked upon a systematic strategy of disfiguring, distorting and destroying the past of the natives. Pre-colonial history came to be equated with the Dark Ages, the period of barbarity and savagery. It was also emphasized that the colonizer had come as a savior to redeem the people from backwardness and that it was only through the colonizer that the contact with the light of civilization was possible, to the West civilization has always meant Christianity. King Leopold II of Belgium while addressing a conference in Brussels in 1876 on the issue of Africa and the Congo made a very interesting statement. He urged “to open to civilization the only part of our globe where Christianity has not penetrated and to pierce the darkness which envelops the entire population” (Hennessy 87). His statement, in fact, epitomizes the western mind with reference to the non-western and non-Christian world. It was also inculcated in the mind of colonized that if the colonizer retreats the natives would again be driven back to the forces of degeneration and bestiality. The British soon managed to disrupt in a spectacular fashion the cultural life of the dominated people in the Punjab. Its history, traditions and social customs were tagged as signs and symbols of backwardness and were painted as stumbling block in the way of progress. The people were pushed toward the periphery and were classed as the ‘other.’ The old patterns of social relationships were transformed and replaced with the new patterns of social behavior creating hierarchy and stratification of human relationship. In order to achieve their objectives of colonizing the culture of the Punjab they created a wedge amongst the natives by promoting and patronizing a part of the population. Consequently, a reasonable chunk of the people particularly the urban class assimilated the colonizer’s mentality and began to consider itself culturally superior to its own people. The social prestige of this elite group was further strengthened and consolidated by the increase in their social and economic privileges. Following this strategy the British succeeded in splitting the people apart, consequently, weakened their culture.
In the rural areas of the Punjab, in the name of land reforms, the British granted land to those who supported them in their war effort against the Sikhs, Afghanistan and the local elements. Sardar Mangle Sing Ram Gharya, Sardar Hayyat Khan, the Tawana family, the Dyya family of Multan, Shah Mahmud khan and his son Khan Karam Khan, Sarfraz Ahmad Khan who betrayed Ahmad Khan Kharral to the English captain, Sayyad Hussein Shah of Battala and his grand son Muhauddin, Mukkdum Shah Muhammad of Multan are such examples which can be quoted in this regard. Judicial reforms were also introduced to further strengthen feudalism in the Punjab. In 1906 The Legislative Council of the Punjab passed a bill granting the feudal lords and sardars the right to nominate their heir in their life time so that after their death the land should not be divided among their heirs. Because the division of land would weaken their power and prestige and ultimately the whole feudal system would degenerate. They were also encouraged to send their children to educational institutions exclusively established for them. Aitcheson College was one such institution. They were made honorary magistrates, members of legislative Councils and the District Boards etc.

The British were aware of the fact that the domination over the people should not necessarily be gained by physical control only, but they must control the mind as well. This objective can very conveniently be achieved through the colonial education system. Such education is aimed at distancing the colonized people from their own culture and learning structures towards the colonial ideas of learning. It further expedited the assimilation process. For this purpose English Literature had been introduced as a subject to be taught at the Indian institutions: “There were marks to be gained by due attention to … Wordsworth’s *Excursion*… by strict attention to plays called *Lear* and *Julius Caesar*, both much in demand by examiners. In these branches--- for which by the way, there were no cramp books---” (Kipling163-4).

It was, therefore, not a matter of co-incidence that the official machinery in Lahore and the missionary establishment shared their thinking on the very important issue of education. The missionaries were already in the business of translating the New Testament into regional languages to facilitate the process of conversion. Soon there sprang up a chain of missionary schools at Lahore to expedite the process of the
amorphousness of the native mind. Missionary Society was another prominent institution where the native Christians were trained for ordination. Thus these missionary institutions soon brought about a sea change in the culture of Lahore and the city was amorphoused in terms of western traditions, culture and ideas.

Missionary or colonial education has always been used for social control and to hammer in the minds of the colonized attitude of subservience towards the colonizer. The idea of assimilation is also significant so far as colonial education is concerned. It is through assimilation that the colonized are compelled to follow the cultural patterns and traditions of the colonizers. Cultural assimilation, therefore, turns out to be a very effective tool for political control. The colonizer soon realizes that he can control and dominate the natives effectively not through physical control but through mental control. In order to accomplish his goal, the colonizer establishes a new educational set up and school system. Commenting on this new school system, Kelly and Altbach say that “colonial schools…sought to extend foreign domination and economic exploitation of the colony” (2). They further say that “education in…colonies seems directed at absorption into the metropole and not separate and independent development of the colonized in their own society and culture” (4). In this way the colonized are driven away from their own local and indigenous learning patterns and pulled towards the structures of the colonizers. Ngugi, the famous Kenyan writer while criticizing such education asserts that it:

annihilates a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities in them. It makes them see their past as wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves. (3)

The colonizer further blurs and distorts their history and the colonized are made to believe that their history is nothing but a bundle of lies and a few savage rituals. On being colonized, the natives are separated and distanced from their own history. In Lahore, the aim of the colonial education was, therefore, to repress the local culture and to promote the
cultural hegemony of the colonizer and to produce subjects willing to be ruled by the British, the kind of species I have already called amorphous Lahoris in particular and Indians in general.

The novels analyzed in this article, therefore, open up a window into the colonial Lahore of the last decade of the 19th and the first decade of the 20th centuries for us to look for and discover the lost Lahore with all its cultural diversity, social humdrum, religious and literary activity. The intermingling of the opposites, the colonial and the colonized had created an amorphous city with all its splendour and beauty which is lost, yet an inseparable part of our history.
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