Abstract

The present study comprises of seven chapters. The chapters of this thesis are arranged thematically. The researcher has clubbed together the short stories having similar themes for the analysis. Each chapter covers the prominent parts of Kipling’s work. The researcher has taken into consideration around one hundred and fifty stories of Kipling for the present study.

Chapter I : Introduction

This chapter is divided into four sections. It gives an introduction to the life and works of Rudyard Kipling. The first section focuses on different stages of his life, the people and places which shaped his development as a writer. A survey of Kipling’s major works is done in the second section of the chapter. It traces his progress as a short story writer, a poet and a novelist. In spite of having a great literary output of quality Kipling was often ignored by the critics. The third section in this chapter reviews the criticism of Kipling’s works. In the last section the plan of research of this thesis is briefly discussed by the researcher. The themes of the short stories of Kipling are broadly divided in five categories and are analysed in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter II : Tales of India

The second chapter is Indian tales. Kipling spent a considerable span of his life in India as a child and later as a journalist. This chapter deals with his tales of India presented through his collections like Plain Tales from the Hills. This chapter is divided into three sections. I) The Simla Tales ii) Anglo-Indian Tales iii) Native Indian Tales.

In the first section, Kipling presents a picture of the gay life of Anglo-India as it centered around Simla, the government’s summer capital. As the century advanced and methods of transport improved. Simla became increasingly crowded with summer visitors and with ambitious women wanting to be associated with influential men. Getting to Simla was therefore the be-all and end-all of Anglo-Indian existence the innumerable maneuveres, strategies, conflicts, and disappointments that followed in the wake of this struggle for survival in Simla, marital relationships provide the themes for a number of
short stories in *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888) and elsewhere. The stories of Simla are also mainly the stories of socialite Mrs. Hauksbee.

The second section Anglo-Indian tale one can see that there existed for Kipling two India's first, there was the personal India of his liking, which provided him with material comforts and literary fame. Then there was colonial India. this was the India that provided Kipling with tales, for he was the chronicler of colonial India. In such writing he had a specific purpose-to impress upon the minds of Englishmen at home the almost divine necessity of maintaining the British empire. In his writings he interpreted with greater zeal the heroism and self-sacrifice of Englishmen working in India for the empire. He wanted to show that theirs was not an easy task, for they had to battle against superstition and violence and had to deal with a race without the law. Duty, hard work and commitment to work are the major themes dealt with in this section.

The third section is about native Indian tales-the short stories dealt with in this section revolve around Indian life. They are to be found mainly, in the early volumes, and are considerable in number. Some of them rank amongst the best short stories of Kipling. Kipling had tremendous interest in Indian life. His father's influence and his own inherent curiosity brought him much nearer to the real India. So his sketches of Indian life were remarkable, they did strike the imagination of the west in a unique manner. To the people in India they may have appeared familiar stuff brilliantly executed, but to the English at home the stories had the strangeness, the colour, the variety and the perfume of the east.

**Chapter III : Tales of Soldiers**

The third chapter tales of soldiers is divided into two sections. I) Tales of Three Soldiers ii) Pyecroft Stories

The first section deals with deals with Kipling’s famous soldier stories involving three soldiers--Mulvaney, Ortheris and Learoyd. these stories revolve around the life of the common soldier in the barracks. Kipling portrayed every phase of the soldier’s life inside and outside the barrack room in the peacetime stories. The peacetime life set particularly against the background of Indian climate and disease. It has its own comedy and tragedy, its own humour and pathos. Kipling’s sympathetic study leads to a better understanding of the soldier. These stories display Kipling’s mastery over the device of
multiple narration and the beginning of his progress towards the technical and emotional subtlities.

The second section examines the stories which relate to the royal navy and the royal naval men. The naval stories were written around captain Emmanuel Pyecroft and the famous Mrs. Bathurst have been analysed in this section the Pyecroft stories show Kipling’s longing to find a private world to match his own privacy, his longing to find a secret society that would match his own freemasonry, his longing to find a loneliness that would match his own creative isolation.

Chapter IV: Tales of Mystery and the Supernatural

The fourth chapter is supernatural tales. India has always appeared to the west as a land of mysteries, of secret cults, of dark underworlds, and unfathomable riddles. There are many Kipling stories which deal with the eerie, the mysterious and the supernatural in Indian life. In these stories, he noted some of the things that bewitched and puzzled the white man. In this chapter, the researcher has studied a group of ten stories that Kipling wrote at various intervals which deal with the themes of marvelous, of ghosts, the supernatural and the psychic experiences.

Chapter V: Tales for Children

The fifth chapter is ‘Tales for Children’. This chapter has three sections. The researcher has considered the children’s tales which Kipling began to write in Vermont when he was under thirty and continued for some fifteen years (1894-1910). There are three sections in this chapter. I) Animal tales ii) School tales iii) Historical tales.

The first section is animal tales- animal tales are the tales in *Jungle Books* and in *Just So Stories* which were primarily written for the children. The *Jungle Books* could be considered as books in the line of *Aesop’s Fables*, *Jataka and Panchatantra* Tales. The concept of law appears in the form of fable in the *Jungle Books*. It consists of rules of conduct like keeping the promises, loyalty to friends, bravery, generosity and respect for the elders. It exemplifies a code of honour based on hard facts, with tooth and claw for its practical sanctions and necessity of courage, endurance, observation, good faith, dexterity, physical and mental fitness. *Just So Stories* are fables about how things came to
be as we see them, the whale’s throat and the armadillo’s scales. The *Just So Stories* are little myths solving little riddles like how the camel got something so strange as a hump and the elephant anything as strange as a trunk.

School tales are dealt with in the second section. The stories *Stalky & Co.* Concern adolescence and make their greatest appeal to adolescents. Kipling appears to have regarded them as addressed as much to educators as to those suffering education. It’s a story of Stalky and his friends M’turk and Beetle studying at the Coll (based on Kipling’s United Services College) the constant theme of *Stalky & Co.* Is that ours is a world in which we are lucky if even the roughest justice comes our way.

The third section deals with the historical tales-the stories written by Kipling in *Puck of the Pook’s Hill* and *Rewards and Fairies* are considered in this section. Kipling’s approach, as a writer, to the past, and especially to the English past is presented in *Puck of Pook's Hill* and its sequel, *Rewards and Fairies*. He tried to give children a taste for the past. The central chapters of *Puck of Pook's Hill* devoted to the Tale of Parnesius the centurion, is the most popular portion among readers.

**Chapter VI : Science Fiction Tales**

The sixth chapter science fiction tales has two sections. I) Sci-Fi tales ii) Narrative Techniques.

The first section deals with the sci-fi tales of Kipling. It includes thematic analysis of his nine science fiction tales. Kipling’s science fiction stories are studied with particular attention to those aspects that place them in the science fiction category.

The second section deals with the narrative techniques used by Rudyard Kipling in his short stories. It is not an approach central to this study. Methods such as the frame-story, the "limited" narrator and the suppressed narrative have contributed towards the success of some of Kipling’s early short stories. These methods are studied with reference to some of his early short stories.
Chapter VII: Conclusion

The seventh chapter is that of the conclusion. The conclusions are drawn from the thematic analysis of around one hundred and fifty short stories are noted down in this chapter. The objective of this research is to make a comprehensive thematic study of Kipling’s short stories and underline the great literary value of his works. The principal conclusions are on the following lines:

The first quality that strikes the reader in Kipling’s wide and intimate knowledge of the people, places, the flora and the fauna and culture of India Kipling simply gets out of India the maximum of literary effect as a teller of tales. His idea is to escape into a region where life is simple and intense. In Simla stories, he finds much to condemn in the day to day administration. He notices three most glaring defects-favouratism, red tape and nepotism. Kipling’s Anglo-Indian tales are the tales talking about the encounters between the Indians and the English. Here two India’s seem to emerge out of Kipling’s writings. The first India is the personal one which he liked as it provided him with the material comforts and literary fame. The other India is the colonial one which provided him with the tales.

Kipling’s treatment of the Indian soldier is an interesting one. He admires the British soldier and he does like the Indian soldier for his courage and fortitude and admires him even more for his loyalty and his determination to be true to his salt. His naval tales show his longing to find a private world to match his own interests and privacy.

Kipling is often drawn to certain favourite themes. In the British imagination India has appeared as a land of mysteries and strange things. In his supernatural tales, Kipling draws a thin line between the real and the unreal, or the true and the untrue. It hardly seems to matter whether the ghost is empirically disproved or not.

When Kipling turns to children, he opens a different world. The children are fantastically romantic and entirely false to life. In every Anglo-Indian child he sees a future administrator who is rehearsing the part he is likely to play in India of his generation. On the other hand, Indian children are mostly shown as living a life of extreme poverty. Kipling’s love of English history is also demonstrated through his
children’s stories. The stories are woven into the continuing texture of English history. The concept of law appears to be central in nearly everything that Kipling wrote. The principle of law dominated his life. The projection of law in his Mowgli stories expresses some of Kipling intimate convictions about life.

Kipling in his stories of English in India shows the man of action is omnipresent in his work. He is building bridges, fighting famines; a subaltern or an employee of the forest department. He despises the men who only talk.

Writing about women, Kipling doesn’t get fascinated by the oriental begums and gorgeously decked maharanis. His women belong to the classes for which Indian society has little tolerance and less respect.

The union between the English and the Indians brought about a hybrid race known as Euracians. Kipling approaches this race with greater understanding. Kipling chose not to hear one voice - that of educated India. This educated class was rival class. This class was a potential threat to English empire.

He has used more Hindustani words in his Indian works than any other Anglo-Indian writer. But this is no proof of the fact that he really knew Hindustani or was familiar with its usage and idiom. It can, however, be claimed for him that he knew more Hindustani than the average Englishman of his day. Anglo-Indians generally picked up Hindustani words and phrases from their Indian servants.

With the changing world Kipling turned his interests to modern scientific inventions. He wrote about the new phenomenon that the world mused about and the new scientific inventions. Though his later tales became more popular it can be seen that he had achieved the technical mastery over the short story form very early in his writing career. Kipling is most concerned with the human virtues like courage, duty, honour, decency, commitment and grit. He is quick to recognize these virtues in men and women from all classes and races.

These stories light up both the Indian and colonial sides of an important period of our history. The present analysis reveals that these short stories not only give us pleasure but instruct us about a significant era in the history of India and Anglo-Indian writings.