

Victor: english language and white community

[Sociology](#), [Community](#)



Victor's Last Wish Victor's Last Wish " Victor's Last Wish" is a realistic fiction by Kris Jitab who describes in depth the pain and hardship endured by the main character, Vickramadas Gopal who was an Indian immigrant to Malaysia. Vickramadas was known as Victor throughout the short story. He made great efforts to transform himself to be like whites who he thought were the best. " Anything and everything related to the whites was beautiful to Vickramadas. " The author has painted a dramatic picture of sufferings and challenges of Victor in his course to attain a new identity - an Englishman.

But, his efforts did not help him to be recognised by the white men as a part of them. He was rejected by Miss Cunningham and insulted by Miss da Gama because his skin was dark in colour. He also thought that his failure to be promoted to Junior Accountant was due to his dark skin. Thus, Victor was so desperate to have his skin colour changed. He was very disappointed for not getting what he had striven so hard to achieve. As a result, he lost his hope and direction in his life. Consequently, he indulged in heavy smoking, drinking, gambling. At last, he became a thief to steal in order to pay his debt.

In one stealing, he was caught red-handed together with his accomplices. He tried to escape but unfortunately, in his escape, he fell into a tank of formic acid where his skin was turned white all over by the acid. His wish to change his skin into white was therefore realised but ironically he had lost his life. In this paper, two concepts of post colonial theory will be involved in the discussion of several issues and concerns raised by the author. The two

concepts are mimicry and othering. Mimicry is best annotated through the main character, Vickramadas in the short story.

He aspired to be an Englishman. He imitated the dress, manners and language of the whites. The othering is expressed through some characters, Miss da Gama and Miss Cunningham, who assumed that they were superior to Vickramadas who had different skin colour from them. In the short story, Kris Jitab raised a colonial ideology that white men are the best and superior through Victor. Victor who obtained his tertiary education in King George College was greatly influenced by the English. He believed that the white men were gentlemen. In the very beginning of the short story, Victor paid his full respect to Mr.

Riley who was a white man. " He felt a little self-conscious-which is understandable, for he was inside the office of a white man," indicated that Victor had a sense of inferiority in him towards the white men. When Mr. Riley pronounced his name " Vickramadas Gopal" in a way that it did not sound like Indian anymore, Vickramadas said it was very correctly pronounced. " Vickramadas beamed. He loved the way Mr. Riley pronounced his name. " He had no will to tell Mr. Riley the correct way to pronounce his name. Everything Mr. Riley did was great and correct to Victor because he was a white man.

He told himself that there was no reason to doubt the white men. In firm thought that the white men were the best, Victor set out with the aims to be like the white and emulate them. The first thing he decided to do to make him similar to a white man was changing his Indian name into an English name. Name is the most basic element that can represent or symbolise

one's culture and tradition. But, Victor had ignored the importance of his name to claim himself as an Indian. He was willing to sacrifice his name in order to fit into the white community. Beside his name, he was willing to abandon his religion.

He was an educated person but the educated mind of his could not help him to think rationally. He wanted to be converted to Christianity because he thought being a Christian would make him the same as the whites. He was actually using the religion as a stepping-stone to his goal. However, Victor failed to realise that the white men would never accept him as a part of them for his skin was dark in colour. In the short story, English was viewed as an important language to success. When Malaya was colonised by the English, English language was used as medium of instruction in Education and Politic.

Victor could sense a need to master the English language as he was working for the white. In order to bring about his aim to emulate the white man, Victor concluded that all he needed to pay attention to was his speech. He attempted to improve his English speaking. He eliminated his Indian ways of speaking, which were shaking head and rolling his tongue while speaking, to speak like a white man. Victor viewed English as a powerful tool for him to advance in his career. If he could speak English fluently, he would gain confidence and deserved to be respected by the others.

Moreover, he knew that not all of the Englishmen spoke good English. Thus, if he could master the language, he could prove that he was actually better than the white man. He could also be a gentleman like the white man. Besides the language, Victor also followed the ways the white men dress and dine. He was now a chameleon that had transformed his outward

appearance to adapt himself to the white man's lifestyle and culture. He was in an illusion that he was a white man when he spoke, dressed and dined like a white man. He refused to admit that he was an Indian anymore. "I'm a Christian" is Victor's answer to the question, "what are you?" which was asked by his acquaintance. He even behaved like a white man and started to correct others who were not behaving like him. For instance, when his friends did not eat their soup properly like gentlemen, he volunteered to give advices to them on how to eat the soup. "First of all, you shouldn't slurp" and next "You hold your bowl by the edge facing you, and as you spoon your soup move your spoon away from you." Author also indicates that pursuing one's dream blindly will cause one to lose himself or herself gradually.

Victor who was too possessed with his quest to attain a new identity lost himself as the story progresses. The rejection of the white man towards Victor to be part of them forced him to wander and seek companionship among the tappers as well as others outside the estate. He had tried so hard to improve his English and behave like a white man but now he had to go down to the tappers' level, speak their kind of language and indulge in the type of activities that they preferred. He was repeating the action that he did to adapt himself to the white community.

He was confused and led a strange dual-role life. His mind was in turmoil. He did not know where he was heading towards. Initially, Victor was a happy person. He thanked all his Hindu Gods for helping him to get the job. But he changed when he failed twice to be promoted to Junior Accountant. He lost all his will to strive anymore. He even cursed the Almighty for failing him to

achieve his ultimate goal-marrying Miss Cunningham. All his unfulfilled desires caused him to lose his own personality. At the end of the short story, Victor totally changed.

He indulged in smoking, drinking, gambling and even stealing from his own company. Victor used to believe that "the white men are gentlemen" in the beginning of the short story. This perspective of his changed. His respect towards the white men also deteriorated when he received unfair treatment from them. Mr. Hemming had promised to promote Victor to Junior Accountant after Mr. George left the post. But, this promise had made to be broken when Mr. Gross came to replace Mr. George as the Junior Accountant. After this incident, Victor stopped to admire the white men.

He started to not dress like a white man anymore. He even talked harshly to Mr. Hemming who asked about his new mode of dressing. "What happened to all your white clothes?" "I shoved them all up my arsehole." Victor no longer treated Mr. Hemming, a white man, as a gentleman. He had lost his desire to be an Englishman as he abandoned their dress and manners of speech. From the main character, Victor, the author tried to tell the readers that humans have limited ability. There is something which is out of our control. For an example, we are unable to change other people's perspective on us.

Though Victor had tried his very best to speak, dress and behave like a white man, the white men's perspective on him remained unchanged. They still saw Victor as an inferior whose skin was dark in colour. Miss Cunningham could not accept Victor's proposal for he had dark colour skin. Victor was so frustrated when Miss da Gama insulted him as a stinking "black ape". His

anger caused him to slap Miss da Gama. Consequently, he was beaten up by the white men. No white man or any Eurasian club members was willing to stand at the same side as Victor.

All the white men formed a judgement that Victor was wrong. Victor was perceived as an inferior who had no right to fight back. This caused Victor to feel so helpless. He understood that he would never be accepted as a part of white men despite his great effort. He had sacrificed most of his time and money in order to get the membership of the Eurasian Club. But, the membership had been revoked due to a single deed, which was fighting back after he was insulted badly. Lastly, minority groups of any community will suffer from indiscernible oppression.

In the short story, Victor felt that he had been oppressed. He had not been upgraded for ages although he performed pretty well in his job. When he entered the company- Hancock Doherty Plantation, Mr. Hemming told him that the company rewarded capable staff and virtually the sky was the limit. But Victor discovered that it was not true. Two raw white men instead of Victor, who was more experienced, were promoted to Junior Accountant before him caused him to be subjected to unfairness. "The sky's the limit" was now a lie to him. In his opinion, his dark skin was the limitation in his career advancement.

In "Victor's Last Wish", the main character, Victor had put in his full effort to transform himself to be like the whites who he perceived as superiors. He imitated the whites' language, dress and manners. Unfortunately, his efforts to transform himself were not recognised by the white men. He was still perceived as a dark skin Indian who was inferior to the white men. Victor was

so disappointed for not getting what he had striven so hard to achieve. He had abandoned his culture and religion to adapt himself to the white community but he received nothing in return.

He was oppressed and discriminated by the white men due to his dark skin. Finally, Victor lost himself and indulged in sins as well as crimes. At the end of the story, Victor's wish to have his skin colour changed was realised when he fell into a tank of formic acid. But, ironically he had lost his life. The sense of inferiority in Victor had urged him to transform himself to be like his superiors. Unfortunately, he lost himself and his own identity in the process of transforming. It is not worth to sacrifice our own self and identity to achieve something that will never belongs to us.