Chapter 2

Imperial Dream Checked: The Select Novels of Kipling

The Light That Failed (1891)

Widely regarded as an artistic failure, *The Light That Failed* made its debut in *Lovell's Westminster Series* in 1890 and reappeared in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* in the next year[1]. The standard version is also dated 1891 containing fifteen chapters. As this is a less familiar novel of Kipling it would not be impertinent to give a sketch of the happenings before concentrating on the hidden motif of the failure of imperial enterprise. The novel revolves around Dick Heldar and his childhood playmate Maisie — both being English children living under the care of Mrs. Jennett, a stern, puritanical and frustrated woman. The autobiographical note is unmistakable as in his childhood Kipling himself was under the supervision of Mrs. Holloway in Lorne Lodge, his first residence in England and recollected as 'House of Desolation' in his memoirs. Grown up, both Maisie and Dick take art as profession and the latter became famous by means of his illustrations based on Britain's 1885 Sudan campaign. It is in Sudan that Dick comes to be acquainted with Gilbert Torpenhow, a fellow war correspondent who played a significant part in determining Dick's career. It is also in Sudan that Dick is wounded on the forehead by the spear of an Arab. Although the wound is outwardly healed his optic nerve gets severely impaired. Already established as an artist, Dick returns to London and meets Maisie all on a sudden. But Maisie, a thinly veiled portrait of Florence Garrard who rejected Kipling's suit, is moulded in the cult of 'New Woman' and is entirely devoted to her own career. Her cold response to Dick's ardent passion is encouraged by her anonymous companion— a red-haired girl who is secretly in love with Dick. The red-haired girl, again a portrayal of the real-life Mabel Price, makes a drawing of Dick's head, and out of petty jealousy let it fall into the ashes of the stove to get smudged. Although Dick put up with these psychological torments, he could not reconcile with Maisie's decision to go to France to finish 'Melancolia'— an intended portrait based upon James Thompson's poem "The City of Dreadful Night". Outraged, Dick begins to draw his own version of 'Melancolia' intending to show Maisie her lack of inspiration and zeal. But his long dormant wound wakes up

and begins to severely trouble his eyesight. Just after the completion of his masterpiece under the influence of liquor Dick goes blind. Taking advantage of this situation his model Bessie Broke completely defaced the picture for sheer vindictiveness as Dick put an abrupt end to her affair with Torpenhow. Hearing Dick's raving in blindness Torpenhow came to know about Maisie, tracked her in France and returned with her to Dick. But Maisie, although immensely sorry for Dick, was "not sorry enough" to sacrifice her career and ambition by tying up with a man "down and done for" (*LTF* 174). At this point Maisie departs from the story never to return again. Torpenhow too heads for Egypt. Bessie re-enters and Dick is on the verge of taking her as a concubine. But knowing the truth about his 'Melancolia', Dick gives her up and goes to the battlefield of Sudan. He finds Torpenhow again and dies in his arms struck by a stray bullet.

A cursory glance at Dick's life and career would make any critic assume that he was a powerful weapon to champion the idea— "Rule, Britannia! rule the waves"[2]. Adhering to the dictum of dominance, Dick is allowed to parade courage, gallantry, deceit and even cruelty at home and abroad. One can never forget the implication of Torpenhow's act of blinding an Arab in the battlefield of Egypt as recollected by Dick: "D'you remember that nigger you gouged in the square? Pity you didn't keep the odd eye" (151). The jubilant attitude at the carnage and excitement of war becomes vividly manifest in one of his conversations with Maisie presumably upon the nature of art:

> Once when I was out in the Sudan I went over some ground that we had been fighting on for three days. There were twelve hundred dead; and we hadn't time to bury them**…**The sight of that field taught me a good deal. It looked just like a bed of horrible toadstools in all colours, and — I'd never seen men in bulk go back to their beginnings before. So I began to understand that men and women were only material to work with, and that what they said or did was of no consequence (85-86, Cited also in Paffard 114).

Little wonder that the idea of deriving artistic inspiration out of things which smell of "tobacco and blood" would baffle Maisie who is wholly concerned with

immediate success (66). Thus, according to Dick's advice, Maisie should concentrate on real life objects and must not pay too much heed to fame as it would mar the spontaneity and impulse necessary for any artistic output. But J. M. S. Tompkins is careful to point out the colonizer's dubious attitude towards life and art:

> …he [Dick] insists that to think of success is to produce bad work, but admits remorsefully to pleasure in the praise that even bad work brings him. He considers the ignorance of his audience, which yet it is suicidal to cheat or despise, and offsets his perception of the infinitesimal proportion of the world's population that cares for art as art by the pleasure of the untaught admirers…The sarcastic definition of art—'find out what the public likes and give it them again'—which marks the nadir of Dick's wilful debasement of his work for money, shows that Kipling had already accepted the clause in his contract with his Daemon,… (10).

This unscrupulous attitude towards art and life is again visible in Dick's affair with a non-White woman during his voyage from Lima to Auckland. In Dick's memoir the woman appears as "Negroid-Jewess-Cuban; with morals to match" (*LTF* 104). It also appears that the woman is deprived of the skills of reading or writing thereby becoming a perfect bodily domain ready to be possessed by any White. In explaining the submissiveness of a non-White female to a representative of the Whites, Edward Said in his pioneering text *Orientalism* (1978) writes:

> …Flaubert's encounter with an Egyptian courtesan produced a widely influential model of the Oriental woman; she never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence, or history. *He* spoke for and represented her. He was foreign, comparatively wealthy, male, and these were historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess Kuchuk Hanem physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was "typically Oriental" (6, italics author's).

Apart from the derogatory racial epithet and illiteracy the only other identity which Dick's one time mistress is allowed to have is that she is the woman of the captain.

Thus in accordance with Said's critique of the popular Western conception of Oriental female she is rendered speechless. It is Dick who speaks for her. It is Dick's stature as an independent, White male in a colonial period which empowers him to possess the body of a female of non-White world. The jealousy of her former master only fans the popular Western imagination of the effete Oriental male. Just as for Flaubert Kuchuk Hanem "is a disturbing symbol of fecundity, peculiarly Oriental in her luxuriant and seemingly unbounded sexuality", (Said 187) Kipling's Dick simply squeezed every moment of the opportunity to "unlimited love-making" inside the cabin (*LTF* 105). When their love is physically consummated, Kuchuk Hanem, to resort to Said again, becomes Flaubert's prototype of "Salammbô and Salomé" (187). Likewise Dick's mistress, notes Robert F. Moss, "supplies Dick with the inspiration and conviction he needs to light up and make meaningful his craftsmanlike rigours" (104). On the metaphorical level the process of colonization comes a full circle when the opulence of the colonized enriches the colonizer but most importantly it is done with the consent of the colonized people. Besides catering to the Western imperial hegemony the other subtle purpose served by Kipling is to confer an ethical and moral right upon the Occidental domination of the Orient.

When we concentrate upon Dick's encounter with his fellow men at Home we find that he does not fall short of betraying courage when the need arises. Like his creator, Dick too, nurtured a lifelong aversion to the Decadent society of the late nineteenth century London. "Half a dozen epicene young pagans", the expression with which Dick gives vent to his rage against the Decadent artists, were not just ready to accept Dick's painting as works of art (*LTF* 38). Kipling's biographer David Gilmour informs the reader that the attack was aimed at the pioneer of 'art for art's sake' movement — "the late Mr. Oscar Wilde" (94). As expected, the inability to pay back the snobbery, deceit, hypocrisy of the London society in its own coin makes Dick resort to primitive measures. In the third chapter of the novel when the head of the Central Southern Syndicate (the firm for which Dick works) claims Dick's paintings as the property of the Syndicate, Dick chose to elicit justice for himself by means of threat to physical violence. Thus piercing the Syndicate man,

his one-time employer, with his gaze Dick runs his rough hand over the sleek body of the former:

> This thing's soft all over — like a woman…The head of the syndicate began to breathe heavily. Dick walked round him, pawing him, as a cat paws a soft hearth-rug. Then he traced with his forefinger the leaden pouches underneath the eyes, and shook his head. 'You were going to steal my things — mine, mine, mine! — you, who don't know when you may die**…**this will be a lesson to you; and if you worry me when I have settled down to work with any nonsense about actions for assault, believe me, I'll catch you and manhandle you, and you'll die. You haven't very long to live, anyhow. Go! *Imshi, Vootsak* — get out'! (*LTF* 33-34, italics author's).

Evidently Dick's treatment of this unfortunate rogue endows both of them with the roles of the colonizer and the colonized. Invested with the power of imperial gaze Dick assigns this new role to his butt of attack. The humiliation of Dick's prey becomes more poignant because Dick does not challenge him as an equal but rescued all the pictures before the very eyes of his opponent, treating the same as an abject, subhuman creature. The changing identity of Dick as a master/colonizer is reinforced by his using, observes Robert Hampson, Arabic and African imperatives apart from the English ones (Booth 13)[3]. The same logic explains how Dick champions the traditional male/female binary in treating his adversary in terms of the other sex. To cast light upon this more than unusual behaviour we have to take recourse to double colonization of women and Dick's behaviour with them — White and non-White alike. In explaining 'the double colonization of women' in a colonized society John McLeod writes that this fact refers "to the ways in which women have *simultaneously* experienced the oppression of colonialism and patriarchy**…**women are twice colonized — by *colonialist* realities and representations, and by *patriarchal* ones too" (175, italics author's). When we keep in mind Dick's relationship with women the appropriateness of this analogy strikes us at once. The text itself tells us that except for Maisie the only other woman who really cared for Dick with an almost maternal touch is Madame Binat. In her role as a governess to Dick and Maisie, Mrs. Jennett is a total failure because of her

priggishness and tyranny. Bessie Broke, "a dissolute little scarecrow — a gutter-snippet" in Dick's jibe, gave Dick physical intimacy in lieu of money (*LTF* 126-127). Like Kipling, Dick too, never felt at ease with women of his own class. His experience with the women in Cairo, Alexandria, Ismailia and Port Said taught him that like the land of the non-Whites their females deserve and await possession by White men. The vices that Dick experiences at Home made him identify them as Oriental and deserve suppression by righteous Occidental domination. This explains Dick's manhandling of the Syndicate man and his initial derogatory remarks at Bessie Broke. Andrew Hagiioannu informs the readers that like the Syndicate in Dick's case, the London literary society expressed poor critical opinion of the novel which came to be known as 'The Book That Failed' and like his protagonist, Kipling too, "needed to escape London to recapture the essence of the frontier" (66).

Again, in keeping parity with the egotistic masculinity of his hero, Kipling gives Dick reason to believe, albeit momentarily, that his suit of Maisie will meet a successful end. Indeed in the alternative *Lippincott* version of the text, informs Geoffrey Annis, Kipling provided a tragicomedy by bringing Dick and Maisie happily together (n.pag.). Even in his childhood the least encouragement from Maisie, either to defy Mrs. Jennett or an escape to the seashore, used to make Dick build castle in the air. After their chance meeting in London when Dick accompanies Maisie to their childhood place at Fort Keeling, the reader is almost tempted to believe that a happy union is awaiting both of them. Dick is not cured of his illusions even after the blatant confession of Maisie of her inability to enter into a conjugal life:

> I know what you want perfectly well, but I can't give it you, Dick. It isn't my fault, indeed it isn't. If I felt that I could care for anyone — But I don't feel that I care. I simply don't understand what the feeling means (*LTF* 77).

What Maisie really does care for is her mediocre stature as an artist and she will go on her own way. She will neither come in Dick's life to help him through his career nor has she the potentiality to excel Dick. All the attempts of Dick to portray the world beyond the English Channel in glowing terms — constituting a source of

artistic inspiration — came to no avail. An exact reflection of this can be traced back in real life when we consider that Kipling's career as a Nobel Laureate far outshines that of the moderately successful Florence Garrard. It is true that during her sojourn at Vitry-sur-Marne Maisie thought of Dick as "mine-mine-mine" and again the readers are supposed to build faith upon their tender attachment (166). But this seemingly passionate avowal of love emanates from a mind obsessed with possession and success. One can see through the grotesqueness of the situation when as a child Maisie spoke of Amomma, their pet goat, as "mine, mine, mine!" (3). Yet Dick gets so enamoured that he forgets to pursue his own career by virtually stopping painting and indulging in day-dream. It is only after Maisie's desertion of him after his blindness that Dick could be cured of his illusions.

But if Kipling allows Dick to taste the bliss of being a White man with all desirable possessions, the subsequent events of his life and their outcomes certainly put all his achievements in question. Himself being a widely travelled man Kipling was well aware of the fate of the British soldiers slain on foreign soil. In the Introduction I have shown how colonial India used to form a curious amalgamation of races and tribes making the job of British administrators all the more difficult. To administer this huge population, in other words, to keep a largely unwilling people under control the British had to pay a heavy price. The price namely losing the lives of many yet-to-bloom youths like Dick would severely affect the mother country's economy and human resource. It is easy to praise the exploits of these hapless youths effusively. But a glance at their sheer number is enough to make the reader feel that they would probably do far better work had they been allowed to live. In this context James K. Lyon reminds us that Dick, otherwise all praise for army life, could not produce his 'Melancolia' during wartime: "…[The Light That Failed]", notes Lyon "can also be read as a powerful argument that great art, which in some cases arises out of human suffering, cannot emerge from the senseless slaughter of modern war" (115).

It is in this excruciating physical and psychological torment — pain in ailing eyes and the trauma by Maisie's wounding indifference — that Dick accomplished his masterpiece 'Melancolia'. Like his failing eyesight the work itself is doomed to

the petty spite of Bessie. On the surface level the very act of completion of the work may embody the motto of the work itself:

> …Baffled and beaten back she works on still,
> Weary and sick of soul she works the more,
> Sustained by her indomitable will: …
> Till Death the friend-foe piercing with his sabre
> That mighty heart of hearts ends bitter war (qtd. in Annis n.pag.).

As Thompson's poem, writes Annis, is about a woman, a reversal of gender is necessary to understand the heroic aspect of Dick's work (n.pag.). But taking it as a metaphor of the imperial enterprise one can see through the hardship required to build up an Empire. But this enterprise remains in the danger of getting dismantled by the degenerate elements— enemies within and outside. In the first chapter I have already mentioned Kipling's lifelong aversion to the Liberal politicians, a near paranoia matched by his detestation of the aesthetes in the literary field. It is this temper which makes Kipling defend the Empire from the attack of the Liberals in the lines: "And what should they know of England who only England know? —" (*CV* 221). In keeping with this imperialistic fervour Kipling allows Dick warmth, success and victory on foreign soil. But the scenario alters when Dick confronts the self-centred, snobbish, hypocritical London society. Thus to Kipling it is not the belligerent subjects who pose the real threat to the Empire. But the danger lies within the heart of the Empire, in her own unworthy children who can drain the vitality and morale of the Empire builder so much that they may fall easy victim to their enemies.

The act of sapping the Empire builder of his strength is done almost by every Londoner— the Syndicate man, Bessie Broke, Mr. Beeton, even the insignificant side character, who according to Dick's version did not pay his due, a sum of meagre threepence to Dick. But none of them could make so deep a gush as Maisie. It is true that she does not covet Dick's financial security or let him give reason to believe that she is going to be his mistress in order to play upon his love thereby securing her artistic career and finance. But "her depredations", explains Robert F. Moss, "are at once subtler and more devastating, for they are emotional, spiritual

and aesthetic" (99). She does not even hide her intention of siphoning Dick: "…there is so much in my work that you could help me in. You know things and the ways of doing things. You must" (*LTF* 55). True to her nature Maisie could not make up her mind as what to do after hearing the news of Dick's blindness. Although persuaded to come to see Dick by the insistence of the anonymous 'red-haired' girl, Maisie finally shrinks from the responsibilities expected of her — namely nursing Dick back to health and become his wife. For her present inconvenience — a rush from Vitry-sur-Marne to London with a stranger — she aptly blames Dick in the words: "It was all Dick's fault for being so stupid as to go blind" (172). Kipling's too harsh censure of Maisie perhaps is excusable when the readers are reminded of Florence Garrard's icy unresponsiveness towards young Rudyard. Noticing her brother's failing health and emotional breakdown Trix, Kipling's sister, charged Florence as "naturally cold" and as one obsessed with "her very ineffective little pictures" (qtd. in Wilson 154). What Kipling/Dick could not accept is the repeated failure in his attempt to assign a stereotyped role of fiancée upon Florence/Maisie. The moment Maisie breaks away from all her attachment to Dick, she becomes 'destructive' in Kipling's favoured pattern of homosocial world where men and women must abide by their respective roles. Maisie's transgression of her predestined sphere, can be traced back to her early childhood, when she accidentally injures Dick with pistol. This incident, to cite Hampson, "ironically foreshadows what the novel presents as Maisie's ultimate role in Dick's life: Dick's final journey to the battlefield can be read as suicide, but it is also the suicide to which Maisie has driven him" (qtd. in Booth 18).

The fact which makes Dick's agony prolonged and intensely acute is that he tries to cling to one hope after another before his final exodus from the English soil. The company of Torpenhow which Dick valued next only to Maisie was to terminate as the former was shortly rejoining the army. Just when Dick was considering Bessie as a future mistress from whom any gratification is purchasable the latter confessed her terrible retribution leaving Dick virtually alone in the hand of Providence. Bessie is unforgivable because, according to Kipling's ethical code, "a man may forgive those who ruin the love of his life, but he will never forgive the destruction of his work" (*LTF* 200). Along with this human complicity in

dispossessing Dick of all that he craves for, the impenetrable gloom and inertia of London life is a fitting background for shattering his dream — to be lionized in the field of painting with Maisie as lifelong companion. Arrived fresh from Sudan and beaming with boyish enthusiasm, Dick takes London as won over, casts glimpses upon a row of semi-detached residential quarters triumphantly: "Oh, you rabbit-hutches!**...**'Do you know what you've got to do later on? You have to supply me with men-servants and maid-servants' — here he smacked his lips **—** 'and the peculiar treasure of kings'" (27). Even the first Reunion with Maisie is not without its accompanying unreality and transitory bliss:

> The fog was driven apart for a moment, and the sun shone, a blood-red wafer, on the water. Dick watched the spot till he heard the voice of the tide between the piers die down like the wash of the sea at low tide**…**a shift of the same wind that had opened the fog drove across Dick's face**…**He was blinded for the moment, then spun round and found himself face to face with — Maisie (44-45).

Little did it occur to Dick that the tiny "rabbit-hutches" bore the potential to impose upon him ''the damnation of the 'cheque-book'" (40). On the other hand, the adorable vision of the beloved emerging out of the fog would ultimately melt away in the fog. Thus he will be powerless to prosper in either course — building up a successful career which he was quite capable of and securing Maisie forever.

It is in this context that the reader may resort to Freudian interpretation of melancholia resulting in the sufferer's diminishing capacity for love. In his seminal essay "Mourning And Melancholia" (1917) Freud argues:

> The distinguishing mental features of melancholia are a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment (XIV: 244).

Citing Freud David Bolt points out that Dick's complete dejection is manifest in Maisie's thought about him after his blindness (276). For Maisie, no matter how sorry she feels for him, Dick is now "down and done for — masterful no longer, but rather a little abject; neither an artist stronger than she, nor a man to be looked up to — only some blind one that sat in a chair and seemed on the point of crying" (*LTF* 174). But Dick's melancholia is not just a consequence of his blindness. It started even before his blindness and continues long after Maisie's desertion of him. The root of this melancholia lies embedded in the reason narrated by Freud:

> …melancholia…..may be the reaction to the loss of a loved object. Where the exciting causes are different one can recognize that there is a loss of a more ideal kind. The object has not perhaps actually died, but has been lost as an object of love (e.g. in the case of a betrothed girl who has been jilted) (XIV: 245).

Once again a change of gender in the abovementioned example will help the reader to understand how after being jilted by Maisie, just before her journey to Vitry-sur-Marne, Dick is doomed to be cast into the pitfalls of melancholia. It is only on the verge of the completion of his masterpiece that Dick is allowed, albeit for a brief span of time, to overcome melancholia only to be trapped by 'mania'. A maniac who represents the reversal of a melancholic, explains Freud, "finds such delight in movement and action because he is so 'cheerful' " (XIV: 254). Just before his blindness there is no mistaking the note of the 'purgatory' phase through which Dick passed. His frantic attempt to complete the picture under the impulse of whisky which let loose his pent up energy is also imbued with Freudian assumption. At last he is the possessor of something higher than 'blood and bone' which can elevate his stature in the eyes of Maisie. No matter how cruel the irony of fate is, Dick attempted to present himself agreeable to Maisie until the last. His bid to Maisie to leave him alone does not merit more than wounded pride of a lover. Had Maisie been moulded into the traditional clay of beloved the readers would perhaps see that all the agony and pain of Dick was worth bearing. But himself a sufferer from the apathy amounting to unnatural cruelty, Kipling reserves more torture and degradation for Dick.

Dick's abjection — both physical and psychological — reaches its nadir when even Bessie was moved to pity:

> There were droppings of food all down the front of his coat; the mouth, under the ragged ill-grown beard, drooped sullenly; the forehead was lined and contracted; and on the lean temples the hair was a dusty, indeterminate colour that might or might not have been called grey. The utter misery and self-abandonment of the man appealed to her,…(*LTF* 193-194).

In explaining the inseparable link between the vision and masculine role, which Dick is now unable to perform, David Bolt brings forth the notion of Bentham's 'Panopticon' as propounded by Foucault (277). In his seminal text *Discipline and Punish* (1975) Foucault defines the nature and function of 'Panopticon' thus:

> The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen. It is an important mechanism, for it automatizes and disindividualizes power. Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes;…Consequently, it does not matter who exercises power (201-202).

In absence of the male gaze by which Bessie could be rendered passive, it is now Bessie who is allowed to exercise authority upon Dick; a reversal of the role of which she was acutely aware: "…at the bottom of her heart lay the wicked feeling that he was humbled and brought low who had once humbled her" (*LTF* 194). Confined to the peripheric ring before the female gaze of Bessie, Dick is now forced to act, to quote Foucault again, as an "object of information", a little better than his former mistress, the Negroid-Jewess-Cuban woman (*Discipline and Punish* 200). Symbolically this loss of authority is analogous to castration as in his blindness Dick thinks of Maisie "being won by another man, stronger than himself" (*LTF* 152). In keeping parity with his gradual loss of potency, observes David Bolt, Dick betrays

an increasing dependency upon Bessie to accomplish his daily affairs until his final journey to Sudan (281).

Famished and worn out in body and soul, Dick makes a final campaign to Sudan to receive "the crowning mercy of a kindly bullet through his head" (*LTF* 227). Oscillating between hope and despair and finally rendered as destitute at home, Dick is allowed to enjoy the bliss of life once again on foreign soil. Arriving first at Port Said, he chose to put himself in the loving care of Madame Binat, who, as had been mentioned before, nurtured a motherly feeling for Dick. The first sight of her "filled [Dick's] nostrils with the well-remembered smell of the East" and he almost made a peremptory claim upon her:

> They have forgotten me across the water by this time. Madame, I want a long talk with you when you're at liberty. It is good to be back again (210-211).

It is Madame Binat who cheered Dick's gloomy heart a little, promised a safe passage to the front and on that night literally lulled him to sleep as if she was there to ward off any trouble that might torment his soul. In this connection one may agree with Kaori Nagai's opinion that "There is something essentially egoistical about [Dick's] attitude to women — the egoism of a spoiled and needy child, who needs to keep all the maternal care and attention for himself" (qtd. in Booth 69)[4]. Denied love and care throughout his life, Dick remains a needy child and his exposure to meanness at Home and opulence and brutality abroad had made him corrupt. The much needed care and consolation arrived at last to grace the last moments of the defeated child of the Empire. In the dedicatory verse to the novel Kipling writes, "If I were damned of body and soul, / I know whose prayers would make me whole, / *Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!*" (*LTF* n.pag., italics author's). Speaking about this Phillip Mallett states that when Torpenhow holds the corpse of Dick, he actually performs the role of mother: "the story ends with Torpenhow on his knees, holding Dick's body in his arms, in a presumably unintended parody of the Pietà" (*Rudyard Kipling* 58). After shedding all the inessential layers of self a return to the womb in the form of soul, which the novel epitomizes as a man's eternal craving, is fully achieved. This redemption of soul, achieved in battlefield surely exempts Dick from

too obvious charges of brutality. Such brutality, is intended to ward off those prying into the public and private life of a reserved, egotistical and perhaps not unjustly imposing artist turned warrior. Here is how Professor Eric Solomon defends Dick's and hence his creator's view on warfare[5]:

> In THE LIGHT THAT FAILED war provides both the nostalgic, good life of fellowship and manly virtues, and a symbolic life that is cleaner and more honorable than the death-in-life of the Bohemian art world of the city. Kipling raises war to a purifying, quasi-religious symbol. War, by bringing Dick his desired death, saves him from a life of quiet desperation. The religious note need[s] not be stressed, but battle provides Dick's salvation, and, according to the Christian paradox, he dies to live (31).

In defying the prevalent fin de siècle atmosphere of London literary society Kipling's hero proves that like Mary in Eliot's *The Family Reunion* (1939) he can refuse to belong to any, particularly present generation.

Fulfilling all the criteria of a personal tragedy, *The Light That Failed* literally failed to court the favourable opinion of the critics, a majority of whom were reluctant to bestow more than an honour like "a book with a backbone" or "novel of the year" upon it (qtd. in Falls 152). But in his major fictional works — novels and shorter fictions alike — Kipling's Empire builders, *the men with backbone*, are usually left alone in the warmer part of the globe to accomplish the duty assigned to them by the imperial ideals. While the hostility from outside world is expected and even desired to mythologize the enterprise, resistance and deprivation from within may implant the seed of perdition in distant future. Nearly five decades later, Dick's personal suffering and loss turns to be a national catastrophe when the trauma of the aftermath of the Second World War made a wearied Britain keep her Empire within the domain of the English Channel.

The Naulahka: A Story of West and East (1892)

Cast in the mould of a Stevensonian adventure novel *The Naulahka: A Story of West and East* (1892) may safely be designated as the author's first successful attempt to portray the unknown horror of the East encroaching upon the apparently civilized Westerner in the genre of novel. This rather multifaceted work of fiction coincides with the publication of Kipling's travelogue *Letters of Marque* a year earlier where the theme of shock and bafflement of the White man has a strong undercurrent. However both works use the same locale — princely Rajputana. In the course of the discussion that follows there will be occasional references to the travelogue which I propose to deal with in the fifth chapter of my thesis.

The novel is co-authored by Kipling's brother-in-law Wolcott Balestier. The title of the novel *The Naulahka* suggests in Urdu nine lakhs. The plot revolves around a necklace worth nine lakhs Indian rupees which was believed to be the possession of the Peshwas[6] of Maharashtra (Ames 5). Through a long series of events this jewel of fabulous worth becomes the prized possession of the royal family of Nepal. However in his novel Kipling chooses to place the necklace under the custody of Rhatore[7] royal family in Rajputana. The protagonist of the novel, Nicholas Tarvin, a Colorado engineer, sets out to get the necklace all the way from the wild American west to Rajputana. He intends to bring in the railway network to his home town Topaz and for that explicit purpose cuts a deal with the wife of the President of the Railroad Construction — 'Colorado and California Central'. Tarvin will present her the peerless necklace and in turn she will persuade her husband to make the proposed railroad pass through Topaz. Meantime, Tarvin's fiancée Kate Sheriff, a woman modelled after the cult of the New Woman like the character of Maisie dealt with in the previous novel, comes to know the plight of the Indian women by the account of Pundita Ramabai[8]. Like Maisie, she too decides her future course of action, viz. to go to India as a medical missionary and serve the poor and the afflicted. Much against the wish of her parents and Nicholas Tarvin, Kate sets foot on Rhatore and has herself placed in the local hospital. Now, armed with double motives to visit India, Tarvin also reaches Rhatore and soon becomes a favourite of the Maharajah, a selfish and vain parasite upon the toil of the subjects of the state. Under the pretext of constructing a dam over the river Amet, he continues to search

secretly for the necklace. In course of time both the hero and the heroine grow wary regarding the security of the heir-apparent whose life is at stake due to the machination of his step mother — Sitabhai, a nomadic gipsy but favourite wife of Maharajah. The movement of the newly arrived White man is rightly suspected by the gipsy queen, anxious to enthrone her own son. In a bid to win Tarvin over she unfolds her dark desire to assassinate the Prince Maharaj Kunwar with Tarvin as an accomplice. When Tarvin refuses both her love and her nefarious design she allures him further by letting him pluck out the coveted ornament from her waist but in the next moment attempts to stab Tarvin who in turn foils it with the quick movement of his supple limbs. The queen flees the scene but from now on trouble begins to mount on Kate. At first an attempt has been made to poison both Kate and Maharaj Kunwar the Prince, then a wandering priest starts to agitate the relatives of the patients of the hospital against Kate. As a result of this slandering campaign every female patient is taken away by her male relatives save for a single woman whose husband, now deceased, was treated by Kate. Along with this visible upsetting outcome of her whole-hearted endeavour, Kate also has a glimpse of the native women's mindset from the advice of the Chief Queen, the lawful wife of the Maharajah. The latter condescends to inform Kate that in order to serve women she must have the status of being married and having issues. Only then she will be able to win the trust of her native patients. Kate, now completely disillusioned with the nobility of her mission and exasperated in body and spirit, decides to leave India with Tarvin. One last scruple remains regarding the fate of the necklace which was still in the possession of Tarvin. Due to the insistence of Kate Tarvin returns it to Sitabhai and leaves with Kate never to come back again.

Manifestly the missions of both Kate and Tarvin come to nought as Kate remains unable to serve the Indian women in the long run and Tarvin has to abandon his ambition of bringing railway line to Topaz. The failure of both moral and personal ambition is darkly hinted in the verse headings for chapter five:

> Now, it is not good for the Christian's health to
> hustle the Aryan brown,
> For the Christian riles, and the Aryan smiles, and he
> weareth the Christian down;

> And the end of the light is a tombstone white, with
> the name of the late deceased,
> And the epitaph drear: 'A fool lies here who tried to
> hustle the East' (*N* 42).

During their stay in India both the hero and the heroine are able to save their necks several times by the freak of chance and appear little better than scapegrace. In an attempt to steal the necklace of the titular novel Tarvin sneaks into the shrine of 'Gau-Mukh'[9] at the ruined town of Gunnaur. The shrine is dedicated to the legendary Queen of Chitor — Pudmini who along with her handmaidens embraced self-immolation to defend honour from the victorious Khilji Emperor[10]. When he reaches the town in moonlit night he is uneasy with the feeling that "…the temples and the palaces,…were not ruined, but dead — empty, swept, and garnished, with the seven devils of loneliness in riotous possession" (127). This monophobia tells on his nerve as he gets into an underground chamber of rock to approach 'Gau-Mukh' which is "a thin stream of water that spurted fitfully from the rudely carved head of a cow, and dripped along a stone spout into the heavy blue pool" (128). Unable to check the racial instinct of curiosity" he furthers his step only to find himself stamping a human skull in the dim light of a match-stick. In the flicker of another match he is confronted with "pale emerald eyes watching him fixedly, and perceived that there was deep breathing in the place other than his own" (130). The beast is nothing but a huge crocodile with eyelids open and layered with green slime. It is held sacred by the natives for the habit of taking intruders like Tarvin as morning meal. Literally taking life in his hands Tarvin becomes witless for a few moments. To frustrate Tarvin's quest the menacing resistance of the East takes the shape of that very animal, which, notes Bhabha "assumed by Mother Kali, the female deity, and is referred to by Kipling in 'The Bridge-Builders'" (227). Significantly the temple of Kalika Mata is just near the Palace of Pudmini in Chittorgarh Fort. Worthwhile also to consider is Tarvin's dizzying sensation at hearing "*Ao, Bhai! Ao!*" which is nothing but an old man's address to his grandson (*N* 131). Jan Montefiore is quick to compare the bafflement of Tarvin with that of the anonymous Englishman in *Letters of Marque* (167). Standing near the tank of 'Jeypore Palace — Gardens' the latter protagonist also notices the appearance of crocodiles on the

surface of water at the call of 'Bhai' — the address is associated with the time of feeding. In the subterranean vault of Gau-Mukh the sound reverberates as if to entice the crocodile to make haste with its fugitive prey. No wonder that when Tarvin at last drags his body out of the dismal dungeon he had had "all the agonies of pure physical terror" (*N* 130-131).

Stanley Cooperman in his 1963 essay "The Imperial Posture and the Shrine of Darkness: Kipling's *The Naulahka* and E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*" sheds light upon some interesting points of comparison between the two texts. In pointing out the terrible psychological impact that both Marabar caves and Gau-Mukh cast upon their respective protagonists he writes:

> …Kipling's hero — man of action though he is — confronts the very same ultimate nada in the shrine of the "Cow's Mouth" as Forster's Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested do in the Marabar Caves; in both books there is the sudden intrusion of timelessness, the horror of absolute vacuum in which human ambition, love, hate, even religion vanish as undifferentiated particles down an eternal drain (9).

However, the lucid mind of the critic does not fail to notice the very difference which Marabar Caves and Gau-Mukh impose upon the White victims:

> …Tarvin,…after facing the shrine of negation — nevertheless affirms the justice of his own cause, the superiority of his human action,…Tarvin, no less than Mrs. Moore or Miss Quested, feels the horror of futility, but unlike either of Forster's characters he refuses to break under it or submit to it. On the contrary, he turns away from it altogether; his nightmarish tour of the decayed city, for example, does not cause him to reject as puerile his ambitions for his home town, but rather increases his determination to act on its behalf (11).

The course of the novel proves that Tarvin's momentary existential crisis in this primeval rocky vault is going to have a strong undercurrent until the act of his giving up claim on 'Naulahka' forever. But the author never lets this experience appear all pervading lest it renders Tarvin's and hence Kate's respective activities colourless

and doomed. Thus Professor D. A. Shankar is quite reasonable in belittling the suffering of Tarvin by confining it on pure physical level because "metaphysics, it appears, is something alien to Kipling's imagination"[11] (76).

Whatever may be the reason, the author asserts in no uncertain terms in the following chapter that the experience in the Gau-Mukh "only sharpened [Tarvin's] determination…" (*N* 134). One visible proof of this is Tarvin's dalliance with the gypsy queen with an eye to obtaining Naulahka. But the latter in fact startles him by letting him know that all his fateful adventures in the Gau-Mukh are no news to her. Yet urged by a strong racial desire to make her son an heir to the throne and also enamoured with Tarvin's physical charm the queen tries to barter the necklace for the death of the legal heir. Tarvin proves himself only too efficient when the question of possession comes — woman or wealth:

> She turned a little in his embrace, and Tarvin's arm brushed against one, and another, and then another, strand of the girdle, studded like the first with irregular bosses, till under his elbow he felt a great square stone…He disengaged himself from her arms with a quick movement, and rose to his feet. She was very lovely as she stretched her arms appealingly out to him in the half-light; but he was there for other things (189-190).

Tarvin's careful exploitation of the queen's carnal desire echoes Dick's exploitation of the anonymous Oriental woman as shown in the discussion of *The Light That Failed*. But the queen refuses to be a docile body awaiting possession by the colonizer. Despite her initial crush for the White man she is bent on assassinating him when it is apparent that Tarvin will not be a party to her machination:

> She cursed the miserable weakness of liking for him which had prevented her from killing him just now as he lay in her arms. She had meant to kill him from the first moment of their interview; she had let herself toy too long with the fascination of being dominated by a will stronger than her own, but there was still time (192).

Even after the thwarted attempt to kill her would be paramour the queen is determined to frustrate Tarvin's design of securing both Naulahka and Kate. In the very next chapter the gypsy shows her unwavering determination by attempting to poison Maharaj Kunwar. Acting as a governess of the Prince along with her hospital duties Kate can only thank her lucky stars as the poisonous food is devoured by two pets who die instantly. Recovering slowly from the shock of the attack Kate reflects:

> The audacity of the attack daunted her as much as its design. If this might be done in open day, under cover of friendship, immediately after the visit of the King, what might not the gypsy in the palace dare next? She and the Maharaj Kunwar were under the same roof; if Tarvin was right in supposing that Sitabhai could wish her harm, the fruit was evidently intended for them both. She shuddered to think how she herself might have given the fruit to the Maharaj innocently (210).

Although the credit of retaining the necklace till the penultimate chapter is attributed to Tarvin, neither he nor Kate can have any sense of lasting security during their stay in Rhatore. Evidently the East has more to inflict upon the swashbuckling young adventurer other than the ancient relics of the Gau-Mukh.

The reader may wonder how the audacity of Tarvin or the scheming queen goes unpunished even when the motive of the latter was confided to Maharajah by Tarvin himself. The answer lies in the nature of internal affairs at Rhatore. Although a British Political Resident namely Colonel Nolan, was allowed to stay, the same would not intervene in any domestic issue until it affected the relation of the state with the British Government. The nature of this semi-independent status under a tenfold strong foreign rule conniving at any crime and injustice is dealt with at length by the eminent historian and novelist K. M. Panikkar in his 1927 book *An Introduction to the Study of the Relations of Indian States with the Government of India* (106-131), and is summed up by Professor K. Bhaskara Rao in the following words:

> Though [the native states] vary in size, population, revenue, and the extent of the rights they enjoy, there is one fact which is common to

> them, that is, their territory is not British and their people are not subjects of the British Crown. British Indian Courts have no jurisdiction inside even the smallest States and the laws passed by the Indian Legislature do not, except in certain cases, in relation to British subjects, extend to the States. Legally, they are foreign territory (104).

It is quite likely that confronted by the *femme fatale* of a queen's design and a people essentially hostile to the Westerners, even though sometimes not without reason, Kate will have little reason to cheer. Had Kate insight into the affairs of native states or at least been wise enough to learn from the fruitless endeavour of Estes couple, the representatives of American Presbyterian Mission, she would have thought twice about her mission even after arriving in Rhatore. The intimidating and claustrophobic air that permeates her workplace and the royal court is reflected in the nature of acclimatization which the clergyman has gone through: "Estes,…knew Rajputana as a prisoner knows the bricks of his cell,…" (*N* 119). The Chief Queen, too, otherwise full of sympathy for Kate, instructs her on the values of getting married and motherhood which the latter never endorses in her life. Because like Maisie Kate too believes that:

> Marriage means…to be absorbed into another's life: to live your own, not as your own but another's. It is a good life. It's a woman's life. I can like it; I can believe in it. But I can't see myself in it. A woman gives the whole of herself in marriage — in all happy marriages. I haven't the whole of myself to give. It belongs to something else. And I couldn't offer you a part; it is all the best men give to women, but from a woman it would do no man any good (201).

It is no wonder that Kate's subsequent failure to stick to her own ideals and surrender to a demanding lover is condemned by critics alike as yet another instance of Kipling's anti-feminist jibe. There is no denying that by accepting Tarvin's offer of marriage Kate becomes what Maisie falls short of becoming in Kipling's ideal code of conduct for women. But at the same breath the author offers a glimpse on the pain and loneliness through the representation of three suffering women — the

Chief Queen, Kate and her female attendant — through the mouth of the first: "Forget that thou art white, and I black, and remember only that we three be sisters" (232). This very common and yet deep reflection from a native woman, much inferior to Kate in formal education and knowledge of the world, shows "…all three women are conscious of a common gendered bond of suffering womanhood which momentarily cuts across race and class divisions"[12] (Sen 170). While debating over the validity of the alleged anti-feminism, it can also be argued, as has been hinted before, that Kate's failure is not so much the failure of her ideal but that she cannot cope herself with her newfound situation. This shortcoming is aptly summarized by Bhaskara Rao thus: "…what Kate lacks is not marriage and a child, but the ability to be patient, and understanding, and get into the tempo of Indian life rather than walk about like an "angel of the Lord" with a stern, puritanical face" (118). It is this impatience with the native ways of life coupled with her fiancé's sole, selfish motive of possessing woman and wealth that eventually makes the reconciliation between East and West impossible on a material plane.

Yet, despite this failure, the novel parts ways with Forster's masterpiece in a significant manner. In the last chapter of *A Passage to India* (1924) the reader is given to understand that any viable bond between Dr. Aziz and Mr. Fielding is opposed not only by the socio-political structure of colonial India but also by the animal world suggested in the parting ways of the horses thereby rendering any lasting attachment an impossibility. In her final letter to Tarvin, Sitabhai addresses herself as a friend to the latter, a relationship denied to Fielding by Dr. Aziz. Even before the relationship with Sitabhai gets soured Tarvin cannot help admire her for her personal achievements in the royal palace. One should also not forget Kate's female attendant, the woman of the desert who during the brainwashing of the mob by the mad priest saves Kate from almost getting manhandled. In this respect the woman's role is like Dunnoo, the valet of Morrowbie Jukes[13], who endangers his life to save his master's. Even otherwise dull, incompetent and opium-addict Maharajah is able to discern the physical improvement of his heir-apparent under the medical supervision of Kate. In a gloomy colonial world all these circumstances point toward a streak of silver lining where people can think and act even momentarily, forgetting their racial and cultural differences.

Stalky & Co. (1899)

Tagged rather infamously by George Sampson as "an unpleasant book about unpleasant boys at an unpleasant school" (qtd. in the Introduction to *Stalky and Co*. by Isabel Quigly, Kipling Society, n.pag.). *Stalky & Co*. provides an opportunity to the reader to probe deep into the boyhood and adolescent psyche of the author occupied in foreseeing his futuristic career of writing and journalism. Set in the backdrop of prevailing public school tradition, Kipling viewed this work to be a tract on contemporaneous school education as he wrote in a dedicatory letter to his former teacher Cormell Price, Headmaster of United Services College at Westward Ho[14]:

> *When* the Schoolboy tales come out I'm going to dedicate the book to you and it will cover (incidentally) the whole question of modern education…I get the wildest sort of letters from school-masters, denying or confirming my simple narratives (Pinney 2: 359, italics author's).

Thus it is no wonder for the reader to come to terms with the fact that the author's recollections, often interspersed with fictional elements, constitute a first-hand account of his bygone days in the United Services College under the tutelage of Cormell Price represented in the persona of Mr. Bates. Likewise, Kipling's two lifelong friends, Lionel Charles Dunsterville and G.C. Beresford, are represented in the figures of Arthur Lionel Corkran alias Stalky and William M' Turk while the author hides his own identity behind the portrait of Beetle[15]. Now to explore Kipling's nascent vision of the Empire in his earlier years it is necessary to understand the specific nature of learning imparted to the boys in and outside the classroom.

The chief purpose of establishing the School in 1874 was to train the boys for entrance in the army by parents who could not afford an education at Harrow or Eton. Charles Carrington has drawn a very telling picture of how the desire for entry into the army gets a boost from the financial instability of the inhabitants:

> … [The School] was Anglo-Indian in tradition. Most of the boys were soldiers' sons, and many had been born in India. *But in spite of*

> *its name and its martial origins the United Services College was as unlike a 'Military Academy' as a school could be*. In the first place it was cheap, the boys lived in Spartan simplicity, and the management was conducted with parsimony. There were no parades, no uniforms, no bands or flags, no school cadet corps, no patriotic propaganda,…It was a training ground for youths…for entrance to *an army whose officers changed into plain clothes at the instant of coming off duty* (*Rudyard Kipling* 24-25, italics mine).

It is chiefly the 'unlikelihood' of the martial institution which is accountable for Kipling's growing literary sensitivity and his later vision of the Empire at Home and abroad. To explore this 'unlikelihood' it is necessary to have a foreknowledge of the nature of the Head, who is the chief motivation for the youngsters. Unlike the cane-wielding administrator of the novel, Cormell Price was, in real life, a Russophile and a Francophile having association with some of the Pre-Raphaelites. Essentially a liberal at heart and a family friend of the author, he recognises in Beetle/Kipling an avid taste for literature and gives his disciple a free access to his library, a privilege which the author reminisces thus:

> [The Head] gave Beetle the run of his brown-bound, tobacco-scented library; prohibiting nothing, recommending nothing…There were scores and scores of ancient dramatists; there were Hakluyt, his voyages; French translations of Muscovite authors called Pushkin and Lermontoff; little tales of a heady and bewildering nature, interspersed with unusual songs — Peacock was that writer's name; there was Borrow's *Lavengro*;…purporting to be a translation of something called a "Rubáiyát", which the Head said was a poem not yet come to its own;…(*S & C* 171).

From the list of Occidental and Oriental as well as British and non-British literary pieces of merit, it is clear that whatever may be the author's socio-political allegiance in later life, he had had ample opportunity to broaden his experience and enhance his taste in the field he was later to shine. So great was his addiction to the world of books that immediately before leaving for India in 1882, Kipling playfully

confessed to Beresford alias M' Turk that he was toying with the idea of dispatching cable to his father: "I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come" (qtd. in Carrington 38-39). This exposure to world literature, to some extent, refrains him from accepting whole-heartedly the superiority of the 'single shelf of a good European library'. Incidentally, Kipling's mentor also takes with William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, as observes Phillip Mallett, a firm stance of opposition to the aggressive imperialist policy of Disraeli as manifested in the Crimean War (1853-1856) (11).

This trait of non-conformism on the part of the Head of a military School, who is supposed to be a conformist par excellence, has its impact on his pupils and especially the trio — Stalky, M'Turk and Beetle. Now, the boys' playful disobedience of the authority, and persecution inflicted by them on some fellow students throughout the book, need a deeper analysis to understand their future roles in the service of the Empire in and outside the bounds of any institution. In the first chapter[16], "In Ambush", the three boys take delight in occasional escapes to the surroundings of their School, 'furze-hill' in Kipling's pen. Secure in the knowledge of not being watched upon they build little huts to ensure some private space for enjoying themselves. In this way once they sneak into the territory of one retired Colonel Dabney and narrowly escape the shotgun fire of the gentleman's gamekeeper. Instead of beating hasty retreat to the School they decide to confront their new acquaintance. Within a short space of time M' Turk impresses him so much with his Irish dialect and noble birth that the old gentleman feels compelled to let the boys have a free run in his estate. Although precocious for his age M' Turk's conversation with the old Colonel is worth what Kipling calls: "It was the landed man speaking to his equal — deep calling to deep — and the old gentleman acknowledged the cry" (*S & C* 8). Thus at the very outset of the novel the author transforms the heroes' role from trespassers to lawful visitors. In a way this transformation of role and their activities outside the School mimics colonization of yet untamed nature. Thus Don Randall comments:

> …to establish oneself out of bounds is to take up empire-building on a small scale: opportunistic and industrious, the boys venture out to discover and appropriate alien space as their own, submitting

> untamed, virgin land — the 'furze-hill'— to the rule of domestication and utility. Yet if…boys appear in the guise of little imperialists, they also appear as little savages: their 'palaces of delight' are decidedly primitive structures, 'huts' or 'little lairs', barely more hospitable than the original landscape;…Evidently, *the wild space of the furze, …imposes itself on the boys as much as they impose themselves on it. The characters dominate space but, at the same time, discover themselves in creative relation with it*; space impacts upon character in such a way as to create indeterminacies and ambivalences in the coding of identities…(93, italics mine).

This slowly acquiring familiarity with the wild and the untamed nature will be of help in their colonial career in the East with a more unruly universe inhabited largely by a hostile population. Their present mutual correlation with the furze, the vast expanse of English countryside will give way to a more complicated correlation with still vaster expanse of African Savanna, the jungle of Burma or Central India. The reader can instantly remember how in the last chapter "Slaves of the Lamp" (Part II) this familiarity with the wilderness, be it in Devon or Afghanistan, comes in handy when Stalky manages to pit one sect of Afghan tribe against another while himself was virtually cornered. However, Professor Randall's reading of the text underpins the assumption that in Kipling's code of imperial dictum non-formal learning holds a far superior place of prominence to the process of 'cramming' performed daily upon less fortunate boys in the classroom. The very opening sentence of the novel justifies this inference: "In summer all *right-minded boys* built huts in the furze-hill behind the College…(*S & C* 1, italics mine).

It is not unlikely that the boys who entertain themselves out of bounds of School regulation would find little entertainment in the sports prescribed by the authority. The prevailing tradition of aggressive athleticism and its inseparable connection with imperial enterprise is evident in Reverend J.E.C. Welldon's [17] address to the Royal Colonial Institute:

> Englishmen are not superior to Frenchmen or Germans in brains or industry or the science and apparatus of war; but they are superior in

> the health and temper which games impart…The pluck, the energy, the perseverance, the good temper, the self-control, the discipline, the co-operation, the esprit de corps, which merit success in cricket or football, are the very qualities which win the day in peace or war. The men who possessed these qualities,…are the men who conquered at Plassey and Quebec. In the history of the British Empire it is written that England has owed her sovereignty to her sports (qtd. in Mangan 35-36).

Naturally the mischievous trio who are not attuned to the motto of "Play up! Play up! and play the game!"[18] disappoint their house masters and peers in this regard. Their house master Prout's, M. H. Pugh in real life, attempt to bring them to the playground reaches to the point of exhaustion which he flings at them: "I don't want to order you to do what a right-thinking boy should do gladly. I'm sorry" (*S & C* 53).

But if the purpose of game encompasses camaraderie, self-esteem, checking of emotion, resilience and to put it in a nutshell, channelizing the energy to a creative purpose, the 'right-thinking boys' do not fall short of achieving that. Themselves, having suffered bullying at the hands of seniors, they come to know the torture inflicted on little Clewer by two of the older pupils. Taking the trio into confidence, Reverend John, again a veiled portrayal for Reverend George Willes, entrusts upon them the task of teaching the wrongdoers a befitting lesson. Thus, virtually commissioned by the authority, the boys set out to restore justice for the poor 'Clewer' and soon finds out the culprits — Sefton and Campbell — two newcomer and senior pupils. By making Beetle feign weeping and being bullied in a cock-fighting posture the boys persuade their would be victims to have the said fighting with Beetle and M' Turk. Accordingly, the two credulous chaps let themselves trussed up and are soon entrapped in a chain of physical and psychological abuse tenfold more intense than what they inflicted on Clewer. The leader Stalky, at the interval of inflicting comeuppance upon the duo, makes clear the purpose of the three musketeers:

> Now we're goin' to show you what real bullyin' is. What I don't like about you, Sefton, is, you come to the Coll. with your stick-up collars an patent-leather boots, an' you think you can teach us something about bullying. *Do* you think you can teach us anything about bullying? (115, italics author's).

At the end of this session of justice — 'licking' in Kipling's phraseology — Stalky and his peers go to bed with the assurance that their names will never come up. The reader can easily guess the impending public humiliation for Sefton and Campbell which such exposure is likely to create, and can feel relieved about the future of Clewer in the School. Although principally driven by the spirit of schoolboy pranks, it is their ingenuity and empathy with little Clewer that the desired result is achieved which even a public flogging could hardly have done.

Nonetheless, descriptions of this kind, profusely interspersed with Kipling's use of slangs, prove to be an eyesore for late-Victorian writers and critics. Famed for coining the phrase — 'fleshly school of poetry' to vilify the Pre-Raphaelites, Robert Buchanan writes in his article titled "The Voice of the Hooligan" (1899):

> In *Stalky & Co.* … the picture [Kipling] draws is at any rate repulsive and disgusting enough to be true; yet I trust for England's sake that it is not…Only the spoiled child of an utterly brutalized public could possibly have written *Stalky & Co.* or, having written it, have dared to publish it…The heroes of this deplorable book…are leagued together for purposes of offence and defence against their comrades; they join in no honest play or manly sports, they lounge about, they drink, they smoke, they curse and swear, not like boys at all, but like hideous little men… It is simply impossible to show…the horrible vileness of the book describing the lives of these three small fiends in human likeness; only a perusal of the whole work would convey to the reader its truly repulsive character, and to read the pages through,…would sorely test the stomach of any sensitive reader (qtd. in Green 244-245)[19].

The citation bears evidence to the fact that even in the heyday of colonialism a section of the British intelligentsia was doggedly averse to the glorification of colonial enterprise. Also we can experience how Kipling was widely misunderstood when read by an average reader likely to judge the author by an assemblage of colloquial words and phrases used to describe boyish pranks. Even acknowledging that 'Kiplingism' being his forte during his undergraduate years, H. G. Wells is no less censorious in denigrating the novel in these words: "In [*Stalky & Co*.] we have the key to the ugliest, most retrogressive, and finally fatal idea of modern imperialism; the idea of a *tacit conspiracy between the law and illegal violence*…"(qtd. in Green 307, italics author's)[20]. But if being manhandled and the excessive use of colloquial language is the butt of attack then one may be inquisitive as to what purpose is achieved by it and more importantly whether boys are always at the receiving end. The first part of the question is, to some extent, answered a while ago when the reader sees that the two miscreants, Sefton and Campbell, have been taught a good lesson. At the same time they are allowed to retain their dignity before the outside world. To answer the second and more problematic issue one should carefully analyze the behavior of the Head with respect to the trio. In the chapter "The Impressionists" the three boys are rather unwittingly turned out of their room and made to join the younger boys in the form-room by Prout who has specific information about their helping each other in studies. In response the three imps falsely create the impression of the long-standing usurious practice of money-lending in the School and egg the junior boys to sing satirical pieces of verse, penned by Beetle about their house master. They are eventually caned by the Head, who instead of giving vent to fury, cautiously draws a line between pranks and serious offence and articulates the inevitable outcome of the latter:

> You should be more grateful for your — privileges than you are. There is a limit — one finds it by experience, … beyond which it is never safe to pursue private vendettas, because…sooner or later one comes — into collision with the — higher authority, who has studied the animal…*There's a certain flagrant injustice about this that ought to appeal to — your temperament* (*S & C* 101-102, italics mine).

After the flogging the boys, though exhausted do not lose their pluck and take their way back to their room when Beetle, almost reflectively asks: "…why aren't we wrathy with the Head? He said it was *a flagrant injustice*. So it is!" (102, italics mine).

The answer, perhaps, lies in the Head's deeper understanding of the boys than any house master or prefect can have and whose follies and foibles the trio relentlessly exploits. At the same time they are aware of the fact that the Head can easily see through their ploy of teasing their house master with a forgiving eye. Consequently he has to make a great effort to bring himself to punish 'the chosen three', in other words to commit 'a flagrant injustice'. This intuition of the mind of the boys about the omniscient nature of the Head becomes a conviction in the chapter "The Moral Reformers" when Reverend John says: "He understands you perfectly" (104). The distinguishing trait of the gentleman is brought before the reader by John Kucich in the following words:

> This omniscient comprehension — even if it guarantees inescapable punishment — also suggests that the Head might possess an omnipotent capacity for empathy. In sadomasochistic fantasy, the omnipotent bully is always potentially an omnipotent rescuer, in the sense that victims of abuse often wish to see in the abuser at least the possibility of infinitely sympathetic understanding…an abusive parent's seeming omnipotence is often idealized by abused children as a potential source of redemptive love,…*submission to abuse protects the abuser's omnipotence from the victim's own repressed rage and aggression*, thus preserving the abuser in fantasy as an omnipotent figure strong enough to offer the prospect of safety and protection…*Within the logic of omnipotent fantasy, the victim of punishment magically controls the punishment by imagining it as having been done for his or her benefit* (39-40, italics mine).

This illuminating exploration of the complex child psychology enables one to see why it is impossible to be angry with the Head for the boys. Their psychological submission to the autocratic and benevolent authority of the Head serves twofold

purpose: there is hardly any chance of repression for the boys and they can sense the remorse and unwillingness which the Head himself has to hide while caning. Viewed thus, H.G. Wells' inference that the novel betrays *a tacit conspiracy between the law and illegal violence* holds some credence. But instead of any unholy nexus and co-existence the two sides — that of the Head and the boys — come to know each other's mind. Implicit in the explanation is the fact that the act of caning does not leave the mind of the executor wholesome.

This new phenomenon, the process of torturing affecting the torturer, acquires a more poignant dimension in the chapter "The Satisfaction of a Gentleman"[21]. Stalky's group gets embroiled in a skirmish with another group of boys. The strife also involves burning golf balls and near the end Beetle accidentally finds himself confronted by an elderly gentleman, later identified as Colonel Curthwen. In no time Beetle swears at him and escapes the scene. After the infuriated Colonel brings the matter to the attention of the Head both groups are summoned and given a sound thrashing. All this while the Colonel, for whom the Head has once again to undertake the ordeal, sits in the adjoining room and appeases his anger at the expense of his victims. Later the Head reflects and analyzes his own role like that of a frightened and revengeful ape, coerced to perform a job. Again the observation of Professor Kucich casts light upon the moral dilemma of the Head, much like what happened to Orwell's Englishman in Burma in the story "Shooting an Elephant" (1936):

> This scene, in which the Head, in the act of bullying, feels himself to be bullied by an unjust bystander, and in which he becomes the helpless bystander of both himself-as-bully and himself-as-victim when he glimpses his own face in the mirror, captures an ambivalence that is always part of the Head's authority. While ruling the school despotically, as its center of power, the Head is always profoundly alienated from the actual practices of the school, as carried out by his own house-masters, and stipulated by the Directors. In this sense, the Head's omnipotence, like the gang's, always harbors an aura of "injured innocence" (44).

The superficial castigation of tacit conspiracy between the law and illegal violence appears unconvincing when it is apparent before the reader that the Head imparts imperial lesson to the boys through sympathy and empathy. The influence of this remarkable gentleman is not altogether lost on his pupils when one sees that as a military officer Stalky commingles with the Sikhs as 'Koran Sahib' and recruits men for the army. Significantly at this stage his sojourn is at 'doab', Jalandhar. The implication of the place name is explained by Professor Randall thus:

> Stalky in India is represented as one who has discovered a place *between* cultures, a place of intercultural *confluence*, as is suggested by his final location 'in the Jullunder *doab*' — a *doab* being 'a tongue of land between two rivers'. Yet his 'becoming' a Sikh apparently provokes no 'identity crisis';… Stalky, in this respect,… represents 'a successful acclimatization', a partial and strategic cross-cultural identification that enables the British colonizer 'to know and control the native Other' (107, italics author's).

Thus far from suffering identity crisis Stalky puts into practice one of his School's teachings as narrated earlier in the discussion: being in plain cloth while off duty yet taking the natives in his fold. On the other hand, Beetle/Kipling in later life composed a vast number of verse and fictional works, a large section of which bears evidence to his keen knowledge of non-European customs and cultures.

To refute Buchanan's charge of the book's being vile and the creation of an utterly insensitive writer it is necessary to have a close look on the chapter — "The Flag of Their Country". School sergeant Foxy, impersonated by the real-life George Schofield, makes Stalky's group and several other boys perform punishment drill as defaulters for lateness. During the activity they fall into the notice of one distinguished visitor, General Collinson who suggests and plays a key role in establishing a volunteer cadet corps. Realising the requirements of Sandhurst or Woolwich[22] the boys acquiesce but insist on its being only on private sphere. As chance will have it, a Tory M. P. of jingoistic temperament pays a visit and addresses the boys about patriotism and imperial legacy in such a pompous rhetoric that his audience becomes deeply offended. At the end of his speech when a public

humiliation was imminent on him, the Head saves the situation by instigating the boys to burst into a furious clapping, so much so that the speaker has no doubt about the success of his speech: "Without vanity, I think my few words went to their hearts. I never knew boys could cheer like that" (*S & C* 168). On the next day of the drill the boys find that Foxy cannot get away from the hangover of the harangue and suggests that henceforth a Union Jack should be placed at the front of the corps. Realising a gross violation of the promise of privacy made earlier, the boys leave causing an immediate downfall of the corps. Kipling's excessive concern with 'privacy' is manifestly to retain the idea of 'patriotism' solemn and haloed, not to be vulgarized at a public speech, as Raymond Martin, the M. P. does:

> In a raucous voice he cried aloud little matters, like the hope of Honour and the dream of Glory, that boys do not discuss even with their most intimate equals; cheerfully assuming that, till he spoke, they had never considered these possibilities. He pointed them to shining goals, with fingers which smudged out all radiance on all horizons. He profaned the most secret places of their souls with outcries and gesticulations…Their years forbade them even to shape their thoughts clearly to themselves. They felt savagely that they were being outraged by a fat man…After many many words, he reached for the cloth-wrapped stick and thrust one hand in his bosom…Let no boy look on this flag who did not purpose to worthily add to its imperishable lustre (166-167).

The righteous indignation of the boys at this self-congratulating show of patriotism may appear incongruous to any reader. But the morality behind such an attitude is defended by Steven Marcus:

> The complexity and sophistication of the moral life which Kipling depicts in *Stalky & Co*. has to do with the fact that the values which inform it are precisely those which are never to be explicitly referred to — like the true name of God, they are too sacred to be spoken — except in parody, joke, or absolute understatement (160)[23].

Following this logic it is no wonder that boys, most of whom hailed from family of soldiers, feel particularly violated at this abject parade of flag waving:

> They looked in silence. They had certainly seen the thing before…But the College never displayed it; it was no part of the scheme of their lives; the Head had never alluded to it; their fathers had not declared it unto them. It was a matter shut up, sacred and apart. What,…was [Raymond Martin] driving at, *who waved that horror before their eyes*? (*S & C* 167-168, italics mine).

However, the relief comes immediately after the speech when a prefect rolls the Flag and puts it into locker. Professor Dillingham rightly points out that the incident looks as if the Flag is spared further profanation: "That is where the flag of their country belongs, out of sight, on the inside, cherished in silence and secrecy" (227).

What Buchanan or H. G. Wells fail to observe is the subtle nuance of attitude that differentiates Kipling's imperial ideal from the prevalent jingoistic outlook. The said attitude is multifaceted in nature of which one facet, namely 'reserve' is shown in this episode. The quality and implication of this trait can be understood in the explanation of Dillingham:

> Those characters in Kipling's works who are devoted to the ideal of reserve are not committing the high sin of modern psychiatry, repression. That is, they are not engaged in the psychologically destructive practice of avoiding self-confrontation…Those special characters who may be termed his creedists,…are not…the psychologically troubled or damaged. On the contrary, *they are marked by self-knowledge in combination with remarkable self-control*. That is, their refusal to show certain emotions does not mean that they force impulses or feelings (especially those painful to them) out of the conscious mind into the unconscious. They remain fully conscious of what it is that moves them in one way or the other, but by an act of self-denial, that is, of resisting the temptation of human nature to reveal and expound on or to groan about everything they feel,… (224, italics mine).

Apart from the trio this remarkable combination of self-knowledge and self-control also surfaces the character of their mentor, i.e. the Head. In the chapter "A Little Prep", Stalky comes to know that the Head literally sucked the poisonous stuff from the throat of a diphtheria afflicted thereby saving the boy's life at the peril of his own. But having no penchant for self-advertisement this towering figure remains silent all along. Had it not been for Stalky's calculating disclosure of the fact the whole School would have remained ignorant of this heroic feat. It is this kind of camaraderie and oneness of spirit that binds the teachers and pupils together and which, if seen from outside the circle of students or teachers, will certainly appear as *tacit conspiracy*. To understand this very humane and intimate bonding one needs to see through the epidermis of caning and verbal abuse which can lead astray even the finest of literary connoisseur. Remembering the teachings and examples of this father figure the pupils are inspired and serve their Empire in every adverse situation and not prodded by the rigmorale of any 'jelly-bellied flag-flapper' as Stalky chooses to call Mr. Martin. Not surprisingly in 1894 when Cornell Price was to retire after twenty long years of service as Headmaster, Kipling showers praise upon his former teacher in the following line: "…[The school's] tone, for good or evil, it takes from its Head" (qtd. in Carpenter 17).

What interests the reader most is the fact that throughout the book the author delineates his own idea of building up good and efficient administrators and soldiers for colonies. In doing this Kipling champions none of the prevailing ideas to achieve the same purpose such as stressing of jingo-imperialism. Keeping in mind that liberal Humanism was not of Kipling's taste, it can be deduced that the United Services College, in the pen of its most illustrious alumnus, best exemplifies the model of an ideal training ground for future children of Empire where they can remain free of either vices — liberalism and jingoism.

Kim (1901)

Hailed from the colonial era of British India Rudyard Kipling's fictional masterpiece *Kim* (1901) offers an introspective study of ambivalence and mimicry. On first reading the reader faces little difficulty in detecting the ambivalence which lies at the core of the boy's identity. The author makes his most acclaimed boy-hero born to White parents — a sergeant of the Irish regiment and a nursemaid — "a poor white of the very poorest" (*KM* 1). It is also a poor half-caste woman who takes it upon herself to rear up the boy. Thus the boy remains white in skin and native in spirit — virtually living in a 'liminal space' or 'somewhere in between' as propounded by Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994). Yet unlike the traditional postcolonial discourse this 'in-betweenness' does not turn him radical in thought and action let alone violent or schizophrenic. On the contrary it is this curious juxtaposition of traditionally opposed races which makes Kim blessed with an identity at the end of the novel that is distinctly one's own, a *sui generis*. The novel of Kipling has its great successor *Gora* (1910) by Rabindranath Tagore. Both fin de siècle novels feature protagonists that are of Irish descent, but are orphaned in India and raised by Indians. Examining the similarities both in *Kim* and *Gora* and also the coincidental similarities in the lives of their respective authors — both were born in the bourgeois families in Indian metropolises, both had the same fascination for the Grand Trunk Road, both suffered the loss of their several children and to crown all both refused Knighthood — Rukmini Nair reflects that "…Kipling and Tagore seem to have studiously ignored each other in the course of their long and concurrent lifetimes, which was also…roughly the lifetime of the empire,…" (44-45). But Kipling's text differs from Tagore's in terms of confrontation with and renunciation of radical outlooks. When at the end Gora becomes aware of his true lineage his life-long cherished illusion of Brahminical birth shatters miserably. With it also perishes his orthodox views on race, class and gender. By contrast Kipling avoids any revolutionary changes and allows his protagonist through small trials and tribulations of life acquire a vision that is essentially humane and anti-apartheid in nature. Keeping parity with the above stated views in the analysis that follows *Kim* is to be understood as an example of the great assimilating power of India which goes on making foreigners native in spirit through centuries and a conviction that the

present British rule will eventually bring up order and discipline among a people otherwise divided on the basis of race, class, religion and language.

It is worthwhile to note that in some respects Kim's story is related to Kipling's childhood. Like Kim, Kipling too was born in India as the son of an Englishman although their upbringings were radically different. As a toddler Kipling was raised in his parents' home with Indian servants and nannies to look after him while Kim virtually spent his days on the streets and around the bazars of Lahore and could speak Urdu better than English. Although he travelled around on duty as a journalist in India, Britain, South Africa and United States Kipling never mixed or interacted with Indians the way Kim did. But this staying abroad made Kipling feel at ease equally in the imperial expansiveness of the Indian subcontinent and Sussex, his long term residence in England. Thus even a cursory glance at Kipling's complete works will demonstrate that he belongs not only to Britain but to a larger conception of Empire.

In portraying the character of Kim, Kipling has made him assimilate Indian culture in some respects and yet made him feel alienated from this culture. But before probing into the complex socio-political and racial implications of Kim's interaction with the Empire, it is advisable to understand whether Kipling's famous boy-hero – is totally an invention or whether there is a more solid basis to him. Peter Hopkirk in his *Quest For Kim: In Search of Kipling's Great Game* (1996) suggests at least three possible candidates who might have provided the model (20-24). The first is a young man called Durie, the son of a British soldier and an Indian woman. He was sent to Afghanistan on intelligence service. After successfully fulfilling his mission he took shelter at the bungalow of a British political officer, Mountstuart Elphinstone. Elphinstone had Durie put pen to paper every minute details that he could recall about his journey which took a residence of several months in both Kabul and Kandahar. But placed in an otherwise comfortable and secure situation Elphinstone himself could not proceed further than Peshawar four years earlier. He narrated this incident in a twenty page appendix to his work *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, and Its Dependencies in Persia, Tartary, and India: Comprising a View of the Afghaun Nation, and a History of the Dooraunee Monarch* in 1815. The immense success of this clandestine operation prompted Elphinstone to

offer him a job at a salary of £150 a year which however he refused and instead set out for Bombay. The second story which Hopkirk relates in his pleasant reading book is that of Tim Doolan, a child of an Irish sergeant and a Tibetan woman. A little afterwards the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the Irishman deserted his regiment and eloped with a Tibetan girl to Tibet. He was never heard of again. But many years later a strange youth made appearance in Darjeeling bazar having blue eyes and fair complexion but no knowledge of English. However, an amulet case hanging from his neck shows that he is the son of the absconding soldier. This story is said to have appeared in a Darjeeling newspaper called *Pall Mall* although Hopkirk acknowledges that Kipling scholars across the globe remained unable to find out any trace of that newspaper. Nor is there any authentic proof to establish the truth of the report first cited by an Indian scholar in 1914 and subsequently by others. Unless this story is wholly an invention after the publication of *Kim* in 1901 the amulet case containing the fateless youth's story suggests that Kipling was not unaware of the story while writing the book. But unlike the second story the third story appeared in *The Globe,* a London newspaper on August 8, 1889. This story is about a wounded Tibetan soldier with distinctly European bearings. When questioned through an interpreter he gave himself as Namgay Doola, son of Timlay Doola who was of the same colour as himself while his mother was Tibetan. Attracted by the man's story, the doctor who treated him took it upon himself to make enquiries among the local population to extract more details about Timlay Doola. After some initial failure he came into contact with an old Lama who informed that years ago a strongly built European clad in a red tunic with a gun entered Sikkim from Darjeeling. He there settled down with a local woman until the British invasion in Sikkim in 1860. Meanwhile Namgay was sent to his home in search of his father's possessions. When he returned, he took with him a small brass crucifix, an old tobacco stopper and also a metal breastplate bearing a regimental number. Almost at the same time a search of the records at Darjeeling disclosed that a red-headed Irish soldier named Tim Doolan, eloped with a Tibetan girl into Sikkim. Although a small search party had been sent after Doolan he opened fired on them thereby making them return empty-handed. This was the last that had been heard or seen of Doolan. The doctor now became convinced that Namgay Doola was the son of the deserter Timlay Doola or Tim Doolan. In the end Namgay's wound was healed and he was released.

Hopkirk asserts that even if "the precise character of Kim himself is not to be found in these real life stories, it is fairly clear that Kipling obtained from at least one of them some of the inspiration and details for his narrative, …" (24).

On the surface, it may appear that Kipling's purpose is to create binary opposition between the dangerous, dark, native populated India that threatens to swallow Kim and the White, cold, controlled world of the Europeans. Viewed from this angle the entire novel displays a series of attempts to place Occidental values with those of the Orient and to see the victory of the former. The very opening lines of the novel bear testimony to this statement:

> He sat, 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. *Who hold Zam-Zammah, that 'fire breathing dragon,' hold the Punjab; for the great green-bronze piece is always first of the conqueror's loot* (*KM* 1, italics mine).

This particular emphasis on the fire-breathing cannon[24] and its inseparable association with conquest and possession serves as a fitting resonance of the hero-worship during the days of Mutiny. John Lawrence[25], the then Commissioner of Punjab, was attributed almost a superhuman stature for his part in quelling the rebel sepoys (John 73). Apparently Kim's sitting posture on the gun hints his supremacy as his creator argues, "the English held the Punjab and Kim was English" (*KM* 1). But this apparent gesture of racial supremacy, explains Ambreen Hai, simultaneously carries a defiance of that very English racial authority (58). Professor Hai's endeavour to read between the lines reveals that the boy-hero "also sits in defiance of colonial government and authority, occupying a position all his own, straddling the gun, in a position of in-betweenness" (58). Thus Kim's sitting posture indicates both his act of exerting power over the natives and subversion of that very power before the English augmenting his in-betweenness. In addition to this Kipling also mentions Kim's father who used to hold a post in an Irish regiment. It is not presumptuous to find the existence of an 'other' in Kim underneath his all encompassing white skin. Joseph Bristow notices how this slippage between his

'Englishness' and 'Irishness' makes Kim reflect English superiority and Irish subordination at once (201). This logic of Bristow's naturally leads the reader to think of a Great Britain incorporating England, Scotland, Welsh and Ireland. Geography bears testimony to Great Britain's being larger than any of the four territories within it. But history reminds the unpalatable truth that it is England which has annexed the other three races. Thus for the well being of the Crown wielding dominance upon diverse nations and cultures in Asia and Africa it is feasible to unite all the four races — English, Scotch, Irish and Welsh — under the great banner of Britain. This is precisely what the author has done, opines Kaori Nagai, in representing Kim as Irish thereby containing Irish rebellion and reclaiming the Irish as loyal subjects[26] (10). That Kim will ultimately be proved to be loyal to the Raj is the inevitability of the work which its author intends. But the journey from his in-between position — superior to natives and inferior to English — towards a reconciliation with both races is not that easy. Himself bearing an identity always subject to construction and reconstruction Kim has to learn and unlearn many things from his native and White teachers to look beyond the periphery of any rigid national identity.

In order to rise above the confines of racial/national identity, as it appears, the narrative often gets troubled when the question of Kim's identity keeps returning. As the novel progresses the reader sees that Kim is very much able to cross cultural lines and barriers. The half-caste woman who looks after him insisted with tears that Kim should wear European clothes – trousers, a shirt and a battered hat while Kim found it easier to slip into Hindu or Mohammedan garb whenever the need arises. Throughout the course of his journey the boy-hero faces no difficulty in dressing whichever way he likes whenever he needs to. Thus his natural aptitude to impersonate native Indians helps him to survive. In other words, Kim's racial superiority needs inferior qualities to prove itself superior. This 'Little Friend of all the World,' as Kipling defines Kim, finds no one or group to whom he can feel he truly belongs. Lacking a sense of group identity, he is very much alone and his sense of self is extremely difficult to define. Apparently, it seems that Kim's world can only be a world of fantasy where the Red Bull and the nine hundred devils will attend to him on some day so that he may become prosperous:

> Nine hundred first-class devils, whose god was a Red Bull on a green field, would attend to Kim, if they had not forgotten O'Hara — poor O'Hara that was gang-foreman on the Ferozepore line (*KM* 2).

As long as Kim is content to wait for the materialization of his dream, he is satisfied. But then he sets out to find his dream world against all the oddities of the world and the question of his identity first becomes a problem then a crisis. From his earliest childhood Kim has scrupulously avoided his English heritage. The world of missionaries and school cannot captivate him — a trap which he wants to escape. There is no denying the fact that Kim has done well in school but this momentary life gives few clues to his destiny. He does not share his schoolmates' ambitions and cannot feel that he is completely one of them. He sees school as a limited and transient part of his life. When vacation comes he is off to the road again to enjoy his old life with Mahbub Ali who can teach him things "*not known to those who eat with forks*" (128, italics author's). When he is near to finish training under the indulgent and yet wary gaze of Mahbub Ali, the latter presents him with a dress of honour and a revolver. But when Kim informs him that it is impossible to get into St. Xavier's with firearms, Ali regretfully observes that madrissahs (i.e. schools) take the best years of a man to teach him what he can only learn on the road. In discussing strategy of spying with Mahbub Ali Kim ejaculates his particular contempt for Eurasian school fellows at St. Xavier's in Lucknow:

> Their eyes are blued and their nails are blackened with low-caste blood, many of them. Sons of *metheeranees* – brothers-in-law to the *bhungi* (sweeper).
>
> We need not follow the rest of the pedigree; but Kim made his little point clearly and without heat, chewing a piece of sugar-cane the while (144, italics author's).

It is this repulsive world of the school which he whole-heartedly wanted to reject and it was the same world which he found in the army camp in Umballa (now Ambala). W. J. Lohman in *The Culture Shocks of Rudyard Kipling* (1990) observes that in this society "Kim suffers culture shock" (271). He speaks poor English and is utterly ignorant of the ways and assumptions of Sahibs, his own clan. Badly

frightened and confused, Kim is almost revolted by the customs of these people and their stupid ignorance of Indian life around them.

One should remember that Kim does this at a time when he knows that new recruits or going-to-be-recruits in the Great Game should never betray their contempt for the natives. Perhaps this has also aroused his contempt for the fat and freckled drummer boys "from the soles of his boots to his cap-ribbons" (*KM* 99). He complains to Mahbub Ali that "*The clothes are very heavy, but I am a Sahib and my heart is heavy too. They send me to a school and beat me. I do not like the air and water here. Come then and help me, Mahbub Ali,…*" (102, italics author's). Thus Kim despises the meals, the boys, the routine and above all the loneliness of his new life. But in spite of himself continues the process of slowly getting used to the ways of the Sahibs and after seeing Colonel Creighton Kim was contented. Indeed no man could be a fool who knew the native language so intimately, moved so silently and whose eyes were so different from the dull eyes of other Sahibs. However Mahbub Ali also insists on Kim's travelling alone using the basic knowledge of espionage because "The jackal that lives in the wilds of Mazanderan can only be caught by the hounds of Mazanderan" (129). A native born Sahib, like Kim, is destined to control the native jackal. Mahabub Ali also insists that Kim should join the regiment after the manner of his late father: "Be patient. Once a Sahib, always a Sahib" (107).

Here a Victorian reader prone to racial prejudice will obviously be tempted to assume that Kim willingly submits to colonial training. Under the tutelage of Colonel Creighton and Mahbub Ali, Kim has no choice but to accept the discontents which will accompany him in his journey from his own self to the full time Sahibhood or in other words the imperial culture. But the yearn for his previous life, a fascination with an imaginary homeland not shackled by the intrigues and officialdom of the Raj, continues to haunt Kim. This dichotomy is unfolded by Sullivan: "it is this aspect of Kipling's narrative that provides its energizing and oppositional dimension" (167-168). Kim remained attentive and industrious as a pupil but cannot make himself detached from all the sensual pleasure he used to enjoy as a street urchin in Lahore:

> Kim yearned for the caress of soft mud squishing up between the toes, as his mouth watered for mutton stewed with butter and cabbages, for rice speckled with strong-scented cardamoms, for the saffron-tinted rice, garlic and onions, and the forbidden greasy sweetmeats of the bazars. They would feed him raw beef on a platter at the barrack school, and he must smoke by stealth (*KM* 125).

Again citing Sullivan it may be argued that these contradictions in Kim's activities aptly parallel the ideological contradiction in Kipling's presentation of India (168). In some scenes natives like Mahbub Ali praise the Sahibs and are eager to present themselves as good-natured and efficient. The Lama, it appears, will be exposed to all sorts of worldly hazards without a constantly caring Kim. But in some other scenes just the opposite impression is created. The personal tragedy of the Shamlegh woman in Kulu is a notable reminder of Kipling's unforgiving attitude towards the moral lapses of the White man and an exposure of the hollowness of loudmouthed proclamation of White superiority. Kipling also shows his readers that it is the Lama, otherwise so ethereal-tempered and dependent upon his 'chela' for all worldly affairs ("All earth would have picked thy bones within ten mile of Lahore city if I had not guarded thee"), who actually pays the fees for Kim's admission in St. Xavier's (*KM* 61). He even managed to fend for himself quite well during Kim's stay in St. Xavier's. Even the brave hearts like Mahbub Ali and Kim have had their moment of alertness as in the Kashmir Serai, when Mahbub Ali pretending to get drunk on wine against the law of the Prophet, finally collapsed unconscious among the cushions where two assassins search him thoroughly. Although unaware of the value of Mahbub Ali's possession entrusted to him, Kim realises in no time that those "who search bags with knives may presently search bellies with knives" (25).

But most worthwhile in the ideological contradiction is the almost rhythmic alteration of Kim's opposing desires, of the discrepancy between his love for freedom and conforming to authority. Once freed of the constraints of the Sahibhood, Kipling tells his readers "In all India that night was no human being so joyful as Kim" (127). Again he begins to enjoy his journey on the road with pure delight. Against the sterile memory of the "neat white cots of St. Xavier's", the panoramic view of India made Kim's heart sing within him. And yet Kipling will

not allow his boy-hero getting overwhelmed by native chaos. He will have to learn both in school and outside the school English 'orderliness' and to sacrifice his desire for power. The hated multiplication table will be the one which will redeem him at the end of his final test for the service. At this point it is pertinent to note that Kim's formal studies involved little which will not be of any use to him in his profession as a spy. Thus Kim's education is apparently made up of formal classroom instruction, private tutorials but most importantly independent study and an apprenticeship under the immediate eye of a master. But unlike the public schools in England or the army school where Reverend Mr. Bennett wished to send Kim, St. Xavier's was created for the sole purpose of preparing the native born Eurasians for civil service. After Kim gets acclimatized in the school, as he was previously acclimatized in native surroundings, Kim is again master of himself. The gradual reduction of the culture shock, or in other words, the expansion of the scope of mimicry is explained by W. J. Lohman thus:

> [The atmosphere of St. Xavier's] inflicts very little culture shock because it does not require Kim to deny his first world in order to accommodate himself to the demands of the newer. For the same reason, there is no second shock when he leaves school and returns to the old life. Reading and writing are magic to Kim, but he specializes in mathematics and surveying, both practical subjects directly related to his future work (266).

Both Colonel Creighton and Mahbub Ali were so eager to have Kim in the 'Great Game' that when they saw him in the army camp at Umballa, Ali suggested and Creighton agreed that they should not let the army have Kim: "That boy mustn't be wasted if he is as advertised (*KM* 110). Thus in spite of the prophecy of the Red Bull in a green field the army is a false destiny and the soldiers are not his rightful brethren. The army may be able to turn him into a pukka Sahib but will inevitably cripple his lively temperament in doing so.

The disillusionment which Kim now faces on not fulfilling the prophecy makes him crestfallen from his dream world. When he boards the train for school he says to himself:

> … and I am a Sahib… 'No; I am Kim. This is the great world, and I am only Kim. Who is Kim?' He considered his own identity, a thing he had never done before, till his head swam. He was one insignificant person in all this roaring whirl of India, going southward to he knew not what fate (117-118).

Kim's playfulness with regard to his identity evaporates and assumes a serious note before he accepts the tutelage of Lurgan. The more Kim becomes conscious of his identity, of its shades and nuances the more he becomes adept in shading identity through secrecy and anonymity. It is this skill of remaining anonymous which will help the reader to put Kim's actions in a wider context. Citing Hannah Arendt, Zohreh T. Sullivan tells us that the process of imperial expansion is not stimulated by the specific appetite for a specific country but should be regarded as an endless process in which every country would serve only as a 'stepping-stone' for further expansion (165). Sullivan's observation entails the assumption that imperial expansion in a colonial era is not the mere record of conquering and possessing a foreign territory for the sake of conqueror's race. Once a person enters the vortex of this unending process of espionage and counter-espionage he will cease to remain within his own self. In other words he will become a part of the spy-network and will obviously identify himself with anonymous forces that he is supposed to serve. He will think of himself as a cog in the wheel and the motion of the wheel would be his highest achievement. These secret and anonymous agents of the force of expansion will feel no obligation to man-made laws. The only law, which becomes their watchword henceforth is the law of 'expansion' and the only proof of their law abiding functions was 'success'. This notion of carrying forward the mission of imperial expansion through agents or scouts is faithfully documented in Lord Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship* (1908). Illustrating examples from Baden Powell's book Joseph Bristow thoroughly explores the scopes and activities of the scouts (170-213). The writer of *Scouting for Boys*, beyond doubt, intends to champion a patriotism that borders on megalomaniac grabbing of Brown/Black territories. Such megalomania is fuelled by the prevalent Occidental practice of upholding the superiority of race, class and gender. Quite naturally such racial and gender biased moral platitudes are instilled in a man in his

early boyhood — the ideal time for becoming a scout. The capabilities which a scout is to attain are required both during war and armistice. Kipling's hero is one who falls into the category of peace scouts like the famed 'trappers' of North America, 'hunters' of Central Africa, 'missionaries' of Asia and all the wild parts of the world, the 'bushmen' and 'drovers' of Australia. Like them Kim has to learn deciphering meanings from smallest signs and foot-tracks, looking after their health in a hostile terrain and is ready to pay the ultimate sacrifice of life when the situation demands so. Kipling's act of retaining the 'Great Game' as merely a decorative background cannot remove the dangerous and often inhuman aspects of espionage activities. Another interesting point of similarity between Kim and the born scouts is that both are unconscious or purposefully made unconscious about the social inequality and injustice. In *Kim* the reader nowhere finds that Kim is complaining about his poverty or blaming the imperial institutions for using him for espionage. It is also this willingness to take an active role in espionage that anticipates a feasible solution to the crisis of his identity stated in the opening of this paragraph. The solution to the boy-hero's contemplation regarding his identity lies in, notes Professor David Sergeant, "Kim's ability to transfer between different identities, between the Great Game and the lama" (180). This extraordinary capability stems from, observes Ambreen Hai, in the apparent absence of the protagonist's name:

> [Kim's] lack of a name is… quite significant. Nicknames such as "The Friend of the World" and "The Friend of the Stars" *suggest his lack of geographical identification*. No one (except the narrator) until his capture calls him Kim. *He names himself when it suits him, as the lama's "chela", but we are left in no doubt of the fictiveness and transience of that name*. In Althusserian terms, we are given names, or labels, placed in the world, so that we can be interpellated through our given identities. By evading the signification that,... is tied around his neck,… Kim is free from the fixity of identity, for no one knows his name (72, italics mine).

This capacity of remaining nearly anonymous/insignificant/ one among many others paves the path for assuming different identities as the situation/geographical location demands. This in turn helps him slowly but surely to become a perfect 'scout'. And

to become a perfect scout Kim now has to undergo the training of Lurgan Sahib in Shimla.

Lurgan Sahib, who represents a worse version of policeman Strickland in *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888), has an uncanny skill of detecting the smallest flaw in the make-up of a spy. He can explain to a novice spy within half an hour the specific manner of camouflaging like any particular community involved in the Great Game. Like Colonel Creighton his knowledge of native language and culture makes him indispensable to the Great Game. On entering Lurgan Sahib's house, led by a small Hindu boy he had encountered in the Mall, Kim removed a heavy-bead curtain to find himself face to face with a black-bearded man. Wearing a green eyeshade, seated on a table, the mysterious Lurgan was threading pearls on a silken string. Apart from being an agent in the Great Game Lurgan Sahib also deals in precious stones and Oriental antiques from his home which also served as a shop. Among the peculiar gifts he possessed was the secret of restoring life and lustre to dead or discoloured pearls. Because of this rare gift he was known as 'the healer of sick pearls.' The pages which now follow are among the most unforgettable and fascinating in the novel, to quote Hopkirk "a wonderful mixture of the exotic and the mysterious – heady, seductive stuff to a teenager in love with the East, …" (154). Angus Wilson compares the goings-on in Lurgan's shop to the kitchen of Fagin in *Oliver Twist* and Lurgan's instructions to Kim to Fagin's instructions of Oliver in the art of thieving. (129) But Hopkirk is careful to point out that although it may serve as a clever comparison "it excludes some of the most beguiling and fantastic elements that Kipling, himself fascinated by Eastern mysticism and the supernatural, wove into his tale" (155). The shop of Lurgan, narrates Kipling, "was full of things that smelt like all the temples of all the East. A whiff of musk, a puff of sandal-wood, and a breath of sickly jessamine-oil caught his opened nostrils" (*KM* 149). Taking Kim to this bizarre and yet indispensable man is indication of trusting him with deeper secrets. Kim makes no mistake to sense this beforehand and asks Mahbub Ali " 'Is he by chance' — he lowered his voice — 'one of us' "? (147). The answer to Lurgan's being *one of us*, however, is left for Kim to decide. For Kipling makes Lurgan appear as a European only in attire but makes him indigenous in thought and words:

> [Lurgan] 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. He seemed to understand what moved in Kim's mind ere the boy opened his mouth,… (151).

The training of Kim under the guidance of Lurgan, writes Sullivan, "dramatizes a paradigmatic colonial situation: the demonstration of power through knowledge …" (169) In the artificially created occult ambience of the room Lurgan imparts to Kim besides worldly wisdom a few slight-of-hand tricks thereby making himself powerful and enigmatic before his pupil. But Kim's capacity to learn and the fact of his being duped only a few times not only proves his suitability for espionage but also shows an apparent breakdown of the layers of fantasy with which Lurgan used to shroud the mind of trainees. Yet, in spite of all, before this extraordinary young novice this queer man assumes the role of master colonialist. It is possible to see Lurgan's activities as a summation of unacknowledged contradictions. He is coldly calculating on one level but on another is vulnerable to the hysteria of his young Hindu assistant with whom to quote Sullivan again, Lurgan:

> reenacts a sinister and homoerotic drama. He appears at first to undermine his own function in the text. But read within the theoretical problems raised by colonial discourse (and articulated most recently by Said and Bhabha) he reproduces an ambivalent strategy that creates a space that is both a site of learning and discovery and a site of dreams, of fear, and of desire (169-170).

The workshop of Lurgan Sahib too is a curious combination of toyshop, a magic and jewelry shop, a school to train new recruits and also a family home. Lurgan's show of mastery in sorcery and espionage aptly serves to conceal a disturbing inner family drama as evinced in Kim's reflection: "Ah! He is jealous, so jealous. I wonder if he will try to poison me again in my breakfast, and make me cook it twice" (*KM* 155).

Even the small Hindu boy who had led Kim to Lurgan's house performs a somewhat ambiguous role in Lurgan's household. To quote Peter Hopkirk "[the boy] seems to have been half servant and half guinea-pig for Lurgan's mysterious experiments, a kind of sorcerer's apprentice" (157). It is interesting to note that apart

from the fictional Lurgan, the real man on whom the character of Lurgan is modelled, was no less extraordinary. Alexander M. Jacob, Kipling's model for Lurgan Sahib was in real life a gem-dealer and believed to be in possession of supernatural power like Lurgan (160-161). Evidence of Jacob having been involved in the Great Game, or some kind of espionage activities can be found, observes Hopkirk, "in Edward Buck's much respected *Simla: Past and Present*, first written, on Lord Curzon's suggestion, in 1904" (167). In more recent times the career of Jacob/Lurgan is further explored by Pamela Kanwar. She must be credited with drawing the readers' attention to this nearly forgotten character:

> A. M. Jacob was a trader with a difference. He became a celebrity as an antique dealer. ..He could speak English, French, Urdu, Persian and Arabic fluently. A handsome man with a compelling and magnetic personality, he has also been described as having occult powers, being a conjurer, a mesmerist and having achieved levitation. In addition, he was said to be an invaluable aide to the political secret service (83).

Although the narrative retains the air of Lurgan's being a colonizer, Dr. Kanwar's labelling of him as either a Polish or an American Jew places him way apart from the category of traditional Sahib (83). Subsequently his activities have the least trace of the role expected from a colonizer. Like Hurree and Mahbub Ali, Lurgan is satisfied with Kim only for a short while after their acquaintance, and treated him "as an equal on the Asiatic side" (*KM* 151). Ultimately Lurgan presents his disciple in the guise of a holy man to Hurree for examination.

When Kim has attained this maturity, Lurgan is able to tell him who the Babu is. The Babu gradually reveals something of his very secret craft and brotherhood:

> "Son of the Charm" means that you may be member of the *Sat Bhai* — the Seven Brothers, which is Hindi *and* Tantric … *Sat Bhai* has many members, and perhaps before they jolly-well-cut-your-throat they may give you just a chance for life. … You say then when you

> are in tight place, “I am Son of the Charm,” and you get — perhaps — ah — your second wind (183, italics author’s).

The members of ‘Sat Bhai’ are known to each other by a letter and a number, they gather news at the peril of their lives and have prices on their heads. True, that they make salaries by doing so but at the cost of being a part of an enterprise so enormous that it can freeze the heart of a Bengali, a stock character for Kipling readers. Kim, pondering over what he has learnt, is satisfied. All he now requires is a letter, and a number and a price on his head. Hurree Babu accompanies Kim back to his school and instructs the new brother in the subjects he must study before he can proceed further. But even more important is the art and science of mensuration. Hurree Babu also tells Kim that a boy who has mastered that art can carry away a map of a strange country in his head that would be worth much if converted to currency. As a token of his having passed the last test, Hurree awards him a betel-box filled with good departmental drugs. Kim returns to school and studies his map-making. But it is Mahbub Ali who now takes his charge and teaches him the art of spying out in a city. When his apprenticeship is completed to Ali’s satisfaction the latter, as has been pointed out before, dresses him in the rich formal attire of his own people and presents him with a .450 revolver. When Kim has attained this degree, the higher ones come quickly. Hurree takes him to a sorceress, Huneefa, who performs secret rites to protect him from evil (this too had been Ali’s wish) and it is here where the Babu initiates Kim into the ‘Sat Bhai’ – the brotherhood of the ‘Sons of the Charm’. By so doing, Hurree accepts Kim as a native. “The society”, notes W. J. Lohman, “is Hurree’s invention and is based on a real society of that name” (269). Hurree, too, is not totally an invention. Hopkirk tells us that his real name was Sarat Chandra Das and it is quite possible that the fictional Babu’s middle name of ‘Chunder’ is Kipling’s way of acknowledging his debt to the real-life Bengali spy (224-225). Born in 1849, at the age of twenty-five he was appointed headmaster of a British funded boarding school in the hill-station of Darjeeling for Tibetan and half-Tibetan boys living in northern India. Among them only a few were trained “as surveyors against the hoped-for day when Tibet opened its frontiers to outsiders” (225). Sarat Chandra Das who also visited Tibet twice brought back a wealth of political, economic and other information, mostly confided to him by unsuspecting Tibetan

officials. Clearly he was no ordinary spy. Trained in Montgomerie's (the figure on whom Colonel Creighton is based) unique map-making techniques and the use of disguise, he had performed splendidly as a secret service agent (225-226).

It is a well known fact that Kipling had a lifelong dislike for Indian and especially Bengali intellectuals. Such an attitude was prevalent among Raj officials and other Europeans living in India who tended to admire those races and tribes with martial qualities such as the Pathans in the then North-West Frontier Province, the Rajputs and Sikhs in Rajputana and Punjab. With the establishment of Indian National Congress in 1885 educated Bengalis were increasingly held in suspicion as they refused to toe the imperial line of chanting the praise of the Crown. With the remembrance of the Sepoy Mutiny, the last flame of which was extinguished some twenty six years ago and the fear of Russian aggression from the north very much in vogue, the British were determined to establish colonial rule firmly in Indian soil. In addition to this the extremist faction of the Congress was actively involved in a campaign of bombings and assassination in the early years of 1990s. The rival imperial power Germany was very much in the background, and in 1915 a plot of coup using the native soldiers was unearthed and quelled just in the nick of time. When Kipling was writing *Kim*, he was in a way re-living and re-enacting the happiest period of his childhood. This period was followed by Kipling's stay in a boarding house – 'Lorne Lodge', a 'House of Desolation' in Kipling's memoirs, as I had already stated in the opening part of the discussion on *The Light That Failed* (1891). His parents, John Lockwood Kipling and Alice returned to India leaving Kipling and his sister Trix at the care of Holloway family. Rudyard was fond of captain Holloway, a retired midshipman and coast-guard officer. He often took Rudyard for walks to show ships. But after the death of this generous man Rudyard fell into the care of tyrant Mrs. Holloway who often beat him at the slightest provocation. Once she sent him through the streets to his school with the placard 'Liar' between his shoulder. Thus Kipling recalled his five and a half years in his autobiography *Something of Myself* (1937) and in his short story "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep", a bitter and harrowing story that understandably upset his parents (*SOM* 42). Kipling may have exaggerated the degree of punishment but the essence of his narrative is true. In sharp contrast to this bitter and harrowing experience, the India

Kipling portrays in *Kim* is painted in the rosiest of colours. Much of the book's extraordinary power which may make a visitor rush off to India, admits Hopkirk, "is due to this unbridled euphoria" (226). Borrowing the insight from Hopkirk, it may also be pointed out that from a safe distance even Bengali intellectuals have their good points. This will help a reader understand Kipling's ambivalence towards the Babu. On the one hand, the Babu is fat, garrulous and pompous and eager to show his erudition. Thus after a sumptuous meal at Kalka the Babu, finding Kim an attentive listener, spoke eloquently about the advantages of education:

> Was Kim going to school? Then he, an M.A. of Calcutta University, would explain the advantages of education. There were marks to be gained by due attention to Latin and Wordsworth's *Excursion*… French, too, was vital, and the best was to be picked up in Chandernagore, a few miles from Calcutta. Also a man might go far, as he himself had done, by strict attention to plays called *Lear* and *Julius Caesar*, both much in demand by examiners…(*KM* 162-163).

Through the uninterrupted drifts of English Kipling makes Kim pick up the general trend of the talk and establishes the Babu almost a caricature of a Bengali intellectual. But on the other hand, he is highly intelligent, moves as noiselessly as a cat and is brilliant at his job. He showed his efficiency in persuading the Russians and the Frenchman to go to Shimla instead of Rampur and in robbing them of their possessions. Yet the Babu insists that he is a 'fearful man' blaming this on being a Bengali thereby becoming agreeable in Kipling's favourable coterie of Indians where a westernized native can hardly hope to be included. In fact Kipling's dislike for educated Indians is only an extended part of his dislike for Liberal politicians at Home. This latter feature is so acute that on hearing the death of an M. P. in Allahabad in 1893, Kipling expressed that the 'Liberal Home Ruler' justly succumbed to cholera (Gilmour 83). Given the fact of Babu's being fearful and efficient simultaneously, it is not unjust to deduce that Kipling's attitude to the Babu borders on ambivalence. This ambivalence makes him, notes Don Randall, "like his creator, an Anglo-Indian, a divided subject whose identity vacillates between contradictory assertions: "I am a sahib'; I am not a sahib" (156). Hurree informs Kim that while in service of the British the latter can enjoy the half-year of leave and

that is the most opportune moment to get "de-Englishised" (*KM* 184). It is this propensity to cross the liminal space either to represent an adept multilingual spymaster or a stereotypical Babu, in other words "contradictions and consistent inconsistencies" that makes him "nothing short of superb" (Norris 4).

The creation of Lama, too, is wonderful and his meeting with the curator of the Lahore Museum becomes a meeting of two opposing worlds – East and West, the mind and the eye. Quite appropriately, the curator's gift to the Lama is the gift of sight and space such as spectacles, pencil and paper. In turn, the Lama gives the Curator an ancient Chinese pen-case which is a gift of mind and time (Sullivan 153). This saintly old man embodies all the qualities that in the East make for holiness – reverence, gentleness, abstention from all interference in the lives of others, skill in the law and philosophy of his ancient creed and most importantly the power of prolonged silent prayer and ecstasy. A perfect embodiment of the spirit of the Tibetan monk, he is no knight of God setting forth to attack wrong, neither is he any valiant soldier leading the battle against the legions of evil. But here Cyril Falls notes that the holiness of Madame de Guyon and of Fénelon, the doctrines of Quietism practised by Catholic Church are not, in effect, remote to him (169). It is this figure before whom Kim can bow down forgetting his Sahibhood with the words: "Why plague me with this talk, Holy One? … It vexes me. I am *not* a Sahib. I am thy *chela,...*" (*KM* 270, italics author's). There is little room for doubt that the searches of the two persons are contrary. The Lama, used to solitude and autonomy wishes freedom from his remaining fraction of attachment to life and illusion. Kim's search is for the opposite; what he wants is ever more binding attachments to various strangers, missionaries, Sahibs and secret services. But "the powers of contemplation, meditation, vision, repose and nonaction", observes Sullivan, "are subverted at the end of the novel by the plot, by the ideology, and by the lama's final act" (177). By choosing freely to return from 'Nirvana' for the sake of Kim, the Lama commits an action that is humane, loving and sacrificial, but it is in negation with the ultimate goal craved by the followers of Goutama Buddha. Ironically for the Lama this is then supreme sacrifice — the rejection of 'Nirvana' or salvation, the life-long quest for ascetics irrespective of creeds. The rejection of salvation naturally initiates his appropriation in the values of action and places him in the same realm

where Mahbub Ali or Kim's White masters exist. James H. Thrall points out that "…Kipling invites his readers to hold two visions — one supposedly "Eastern", one supposedly "Western" — simultaneously at the end, for both would seem to be true: the lama really has achieved Enlightenment through his mystic flight and dip in the stream…" (63). While there is no denying that the movement of enlightenment for the Lama is bizarre for he took an irrigation channel for 'the River of the Arrow', it is also certain that Kipling's intention is to show that enlightenment could happen anywhere and at that point any river could have done that. The synthesis that emerges from merging the values of action and inaction is that upholders of both values would be illumined:

> Son of my Soul, I have wrenched my Soul back from the Threshold of Freedom to free thee from all sin — as I am free, and sinless. Just is the Wheel! Certain is our deliverance (*KM* 289).

While the question whether Kim will follow the Lama's path is uncertain, the fact of Lama's returning from 'Nirvana' to the 'wheel of life' is certain. This shows the power of Eastern ascetic to unite the life of action with the life of contemplation. By so doing he certainly puts the long held Occidental assumption of the Eastern ascetic in question.

While reading the novel the reader must not for a moment detach himself from the fact that Kim was published in the first year of the twentieth century and the turn of the twentieth century supposedly marked the height of the British empire. The military successes of the second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) were almost a testimony to the undeniable superiority of an imperial race. Britain, indeed, had much to celebrate. Victoria's reign, for imperialists ended truly victorious. But notably Kipling renounced loudmouthed and vulgar patriotism and also avoided any note of national self-congratulation. Instead in his poem "The Islanders" (1902) Kipling suggested that the peace and security built up by their ancestors are being jeopardized by the frivolity and slothfulness of the contemporary British (*CV* 299-302). Kipling thought that the havoc perpetrated by the Boer War on South-African soil was the fault of the nation and not the judgement of Heaven. There was also a feeling that the much trumpeted British supremacy did not necessarily enjoy the

support of its countrymen. Joseph Bristow shows the split within the concept of 'Empire' by citing Kipling's poem "The Native-Born" (1894) (also quoted by W.E. Henley, in his preface to C. de Thierry's *Imperialism* in 1898):

> We've drunk to the Queen — God bless her! —
> We've drunk to our mothers' land;
> We've drunk to our English brother,
> (But he does not understand); …
>
> We learned from our wistful mothers
> To call old England "home";
> We read of the English skylark,
> Of the spring in the English lanes,
> But we screamed with the painted lories
> As we rode on the dusty plains! (*CV* 191, qtd. also in Bristow 223).

Contradictions such as the English brother's inability to understand national/imperial glory and his fear at painted lory are still part of the dreams of Empire alive today in the rhetoric and actions of the world powers. The poet of the Empire is also a Sahib reared in India and whose fear of the abyss, writes Sullivan, is turned into poetry, whose fundamental relationship to the outside world, mediated through language, presents a programme of survival to the outside world of readers (179). It is for the sake of survival that the end of the novel proves to be a synthesis of two contradictory forces — Kim's Sahibhood and his native self — signalling an emotional, cultural and historical bond between the Raj and her people that will prevail over 'otherness' in distant future. As writes Abdul R. JanMohamed:

> In *Kim*,…we are…introduced to a positive, detailed, and nonstereotypic portrait of the colonized that is unique in colonialist literature. The narrator seems to find as much pleasure in describing the varied and tumultuous life of India as Kim finds in experiencing it. What may initially seem like a rapt aesthetic appreciation of Indian cultures turns out, on closer examination, to be a positive acceptance and celebration of difference. Kim delights in changing his

> appearance and identity, in becoming Other, and he loves to live in a world of *pure becoming* (78, italics mine).

What is true for Kim, hints Kipling, is also valid for pure Anglo-Saxons. It is by adopting the technique of *becoming* from despots to tolerant administrators that the British will be able to understand and rule their subjects. These two factors — understanding and ruling justly — are the key to the longevity of the Empire. Through Kim, Kipling depicts as if Britain's imperial self first wants to place itself as aloof and detached, then suffers the anxiety of an inevitable confrontation with its subordinates and ultimately feels the need for a lasting attachment with these very people. It is in this third stage that the Empire sheds its status of 'ruler' and the Brown and Black people rise above their profile of being 'subjects'. Thus when the confrontation of self/other will be assuaged a White may find in a Brown/Black a reflection of his own self and vice-versa.