Chapter 3

Resistance to and Subversion of Imperial Ideology: Kipling's Short Stories 1

"The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes"

The story "The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes", which belongs to Kipling's early phase of Indian stories first appeared in *Quartette: The Christmas Annual of the Civil and Military Gazette* in 1885[1]. The protagonist is Morrowbie Jukes, an English civil engineer working in the desert of Bikaner. Typical of Kipling's style the story is begun by a frame narrator who stands witness for the credibility of the apparently unbelieveable story of Morrowbie Jukes. Hardly after one and a half page the narrator introduces the readers to Morrowbie Jukes and quietly departs from the narrative. One evening delirious with a slight fever Morrowbie Jukes was in his camp. A number of dogs were barking outside which got on his nerves. In a wild frenzy he mounted Pornic, his horse, to pursue them. The horse bolted and on a headlong gallop Jukes fell into a horseshoe-shaped sand pit. Waking up Jukes finds himself entrapped in an Indian leper colony from where there is no escape due to the sandy slope. The only escapade lies to the way to the river Sutlej. But this one, too, is infested with quicksands and a maniac rifleman who loses no opportunity to shoot whenever anyone tries to run away. The natives who inhabit the colony are presumed to be dead by the outer world. But many of them escaped death on the funeral pyre when sense came back to their bodies. Obviously such incidents were taken as eerie and supernatural by the accompanying pallbearers. Detached from the outside world in every respect, the dwellers of the Village of the Dead pay little reverence to the Europeans and Jukes is subsequently greeted by cackling and howling of the natives:

> The ragged crew actually laughed at me — such laughter I hope I may never hear again. They cackled, yelled, whistled, and howled as I walked into their midst; some of them literally throwing themselves down on the ground in convulsions of unholy mirth (*SRMJ* 45).

The behaviour of the natives towards Jukes makes the reader recognize the Englishman as inferior or at least equal to the natives. Unnerved by their incessant jibes and thinking it incumbent upon him to remain a pukka sahib at any circumstance Jukes knocked some of them down to the ground. Here, notices Louis L. Cornell, Jukes faces a two fold problem: "…he has not only to escape, but to maintain his identity as 'a representative of the dominant race', though 'helpless as a child and completely at the mercy of his native neighbours'" (104). Distraught beyond measure Jukes is suddenly confronted with one of his former Indian acquaintances, Gunga Dass, an English educated Deccanee Brahmin who was in charge of a branch telegraph office. Cut off from the civilized world in every other way for his bare necessities Jukes has to depend on this sadistic person who leaves no stone unturned to insult Jukes. Pointing to Jukes's dead horse Pornic he proclaims: "We are now Republic, Mister Jukes, and you are entitled to a fair share of the beast. If you like we will pass a vote of thanks. Shall I propose?" (*SRMJ* 59). John A. McClure is of the opinion that the leper colony actually acts as a Benthamite republic (34). For a man like Kipling who spent a large part of his life in India will know India better than any average Englishman. It is quite natural for him to be irritated at the ignorance and lack of awareness of the hardship (for which the Liberals are often blamed) required to keep an unwilling people under control. Thus it is not improper to assume that the leper colony is the projection of Kipling's fear of a post-imperial democratic period where the Whites have to depend for their very existence upon their erstwhile non-White subjects. Acting as the representative of the Whites visibly threatened by the non-Whites Jukes decides to save his skin putting up with all these malicious indignities. Eventually he does not only survive but discovers the dead body of an Englishman presumably shot down by Gunga Dass. Jukes also found a note explaining a safe passage from the crater. Gunga now confesses to Jukes that the former Englishman was on the verge of success. But fearing that the Englishman will escape alone Gunga shot him. However both Gunga and Jukes agreed to escape at night when the rifleman would be off guard. But when the time comes Gunga Dass treacherously slipped the note and as Jukes stooped to pick it up Gunga knocked him down and disappeared. Jukes is later rescued by his dog keeper Dunnoo who tracked Pornic's footprint alone to trace his master.

In his critique of Edward Said's pioneering work *Orientalism* (1978) John M. MacKenzie argues that the colonizer's power is prefigured by vulnerability. The Empire is at once triumphal and traumatic, as productive of comprehension as well as apprehension (12). Although Morrowbie Jukes manages to overwhelm the legion of unruly natives he was really at the mercy of Gunga Dass who could kill Jukes whenever he pleased. While pointing towards the imperial note in Kipling's works Edward Said writes that like his English precursors Kipling got

> …the culturally sanctioned habit of deploying large generalizations by which reality is divided into various collectives: languages, races, types, colors, mentalities, each category being not so much a neutral designation as an evaluative interpretation. Underlying these categories is the rigidly binomial opposition of "ours" and "theirs", with the former always encroaching upon the latter (even to the point of making "theirs" exclusively a function of "ours") (227).

There is no mistaking that by portraying the natives as only a little better than animals and showing Jukes as holding courage in an extremely adverse situation Kipling conforms to the pattern of binomial opposition. It is also true that Jukes is the sole spokesperson for the natives and the only representative of the Raj. Here the frame narrator, observes Gail Ching-Liang Low, employs a shrewdness which makes the reader believe in Jukes's account blindfold (119). Citing Liang Low it may be explained that the narrator, instead of presenting Jukes simply as an embodiment of those virtues generally attributed to colonizer and obviously masculine, also focusses upon his limitations. Thus Jukes, apart from being a civil engineer, is capable of very little imagination and appears a bit eccentric. But the reader does not fail to notice how Jukes memorises his experiences in India where he is staying for a long time. Placed in the metropolitan city of Bombay Jukes too, like any level-headed man heartily laughed at the news of the existence of the Village of the Deads some sixteen years ago. Endowed with accuracy and precision Jukes scrupulously measured the slope of the sand crater as 65° having 83 lairs in the ground. His sanity is best exemplified when he searched the dead Englishman's possessions and planned an escape with Gunga Dass. All these evidences evoked credibility in Jukes's version of the story. But while we ponder over Said's

assumption that in postcolonial discourse "ours" (i.e. the voice of the colonizers) always encroaches upon "theirs" (i.e. the voice of the colonized) doubts begin to creep in our mind regarding the veracity of the claim. True, this assumption is one of the major pillars upon which the superstructure of binomial opposition exists. Yet in recent years theorists and critics like Homi K. Bhabha, John M. MacKenzie, Gail Ching Liang-Low find fault with this assumption and are either in favour of propagating new theoretical dimensions or mending the traditional discourse of binomial opposition. This revisionist approach to traditional postcolonial discourse puts Said's notion of unchallenged Occidental dominance over Orient in question.

In the fourth chapter entitled "Of Mimicry and Man" of his book *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha theorises the subversive qualities of mimicry thus:

> …colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference…mimicry is therefore stricken by an indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal (86, italics author's).

Any casual reader of this text has every reason to believe that Gunga Dass is an uncouth, beastly and treacherous one time servant of the Raj. All his thoughts and actions only foreground the low morale of the Indians and by large the non-Europeans. Yet the fact that Gunga Dass is capable of delivering unctuous speech in English and is renowned for making pun in English makes him, albeit unwillingly, way better than his semi-naked peers. Here, observes, Zohreh T. Sullivan the mastery of the colonized over the language of the colonizers shows "the evolution of the babble of uncouth tongues into eloquence" (75). While in service of the Raj Gunga Dass retains the stature of an educated Brahmin, a person upon whom the Whites may rely. This tendency to rely upon the natives is clear when Jukes, again observes Sullivan, takes Gunga Dass as his "natural protector" (71): "…it was

indubitably Gunga Dass, and—for this I was thankful—an English-speaking native who might at least tell me the meaning of all that I had gone through that day" (*SRMJ* 46). From then on with his acquired expertise on English language and custom, Gunga Dass took every opportunity to censure Jukes making him literally eat crow. The frustrated outburst of the colonizer finds expression in Kipling's pen:

> Here was a Sahib, a representative of the dominant race, helpless as a child and completely at the mercy of his native neighbours. In a deliberate lazy way he set himself to torture me as a schoolboy would devote a rapturous half-hour to watching the agonies of an impaled beetle, or as a ferret in a blind burrow might glue himself comfortably to the neck of a rabbit (52).

Thus Gunga Dass fulfils all the criteria for being the "Other" who is both reformed and recognizable. His very difference with Jukes incites him to pursue a series of retributions against the colonizer.

This retribution is inflicted upon Jukes by a person whose sadism knows no bound. Had he been equal to Jukes the thought of singling Jukes out to torture could not even occur to the sadist. It is the barrier set up by the colonial power which infuriates Gunga Dass and his native peers against the Europeans and on the other hand forces Jukes to maintain a façade of courage all the while. From the very outset of the story Jukes scrupulously adheres to the distinction between the White and the non-White world. He did this successfully with the multitude of natives but failed to do this with Gunga Dass. Well aware of the weird content of his story Kipling himself vouchsafes for the sanity of Jukes. Doing this the writer only laid emphasis upon the European norm of rationality, i.e. what is being narrated by a White man cannot be discarded as hallucinatory ravings.

But the ease and authority with which Jukes discarded the natives at first, is bound to receive a jolt in the case of Gunga Dass because Gunga Dass is, to cite Bhabha again "almost the same, but not quite". To confront Jukes he does not resort to laughter or bodily insinuations which are the prerogatives of the illiterate slaves suddenly let loose of their chain. But Dass did it with words, words derived from European maxim of utilitarianism: "greatest good of the greatest number is political

maxim". To this Jukes simply did not have any answer nor could he refuse to witness the hideous dissection of Pornic's body. The more Jukes feels helpless, the torture inflicted upon him augments:

> The sensation of nameless terror which I had in vain attempted to strive against overmastered me completely…I verily believe that, for a few minutes, I acted as one mad. I hurled myself against the sand-slope. I ran round the base of the crater, blaspheming and praying by turns…I dared not face the death of a mad dog among that hideous crowd… No one had taken the slightest notice of an exhibition which makes me blush hotly even when I think of it now (*SRMJ* 49).

An exact resonance of this heart-rending lamentation can be traced back to the opening lines of Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Pit and the Pendulum" (1842) from which Kipling derives largely:

> I WAS sick — sick unto death with that long agony; and when they at length unbound me, and I was permitted to sit, I felt that my senses were leaving me. The sentence — the dread sentence of death — was the last of distinct accentuation which reached my ears (Poe 246).

While acknowledging Kipling's debt to Poe, Louis L. Cornell observes that "both tales deal with man-made traps and the futile attempts of the victims to extricate themselves, and both end with fortuitous and unexpected rescues which allow the narrators to tell their stories afterwards" (103). The Spanish Inquisition and a nameless Hindu sect play the role of perpetrators of agony in the narratives of Poe and Kipling respectively. Poe's influence on Kipling is also corroborated by Burton R. Pollin who informs the readers that the recovery of the presumed to be dead Hindu pariahs from "trance or catalepsy" is itself a typical Poeian characteristic and the comparison between the sand crater and the trap set up by ant-lion alludes to the plot of Poe's story "The Thousand – and − Second Tale of Scheherazade" (1845) (76-77). Coming back to the present story, the reader finds that Jukes's stature undergone a radical transformation from the colonizer to the colonized which his fall into the sand crater shows on a symbolic level.

Only a short while ago he replied with guns to the baying of the dogs outside his camp. The natives too, only a little better than the four-legged creature, at first received blow from Jukes. While treating both native men and dogs contemptuously Jukes feels no compunction. But after realizing his own wretchedness far away from the civilized world of Raj, Jukes finds himself a destitute, fears to face the death of a mad dog at the hand of natives. It is but natural that the natives finding Jukes as the one subjugated and not the master will not pay any heed to his outburst. The traditional postcolonial discourse of binomial opposition falls short of explaining this situation which to cite MacKenzie again is "the white man's subjectivity" (12). In accordance with MacKenzie's view one may argue that this new approach tends to emphasize the effect of colonization upon the mother country. In doing so the author forebodes the colonizer's fear of confronting a post-imperial world of potential disintegration. Gunga Dass actually acts as the harbinger of that dream world of fear and fantasy when he utters:

> There are only two kinds of men, Sar — the alive and the dead. When you are dead you are dead, but when you are alive you live…If you die at home and do not die when you come to the ghat to be burnt you come here (*SRMJ* 46).

The word "here" apart from its literal meaning connotes a state of both desire and fear. It is a state where the essential barriers between the colonizer and the colonized are surmounted. It thereby came to be known as 'fetishism' (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 74). This disavowal is possible only when the colonial self is threatened and destroyed. As has been pointed out before, the first sign of liquidation of the barrier occurs when Jukes feels relieved at the sight of Gunga Dass. It reaches its apogee when before the colonizer's eyes Gunga Dass parades the fate of a fellow colonizer who was forced to meet his death "like a rat in a hole" (*SRMJ* 62). The mutilation of Pornic's body symbolically embodies the mutilation of colonial self and the scene of Jukes's sharing the roasted crow actually equates him with the natives. True, at times Jukes shows signs of resistance but he was really in the custody of Gunga Dass who kept him alive only for accomplishing a safe passage from the sand crater with the help of Jukes. Thus dispossessing Jukes of his money, horse and most importantly Sahibhood, Gunga Dass places him with the second type

of man, namely the dead and treats him accordingly. However viewed from another perspective this loss of material possession played a pivotal role in Gunga Dass's decision to make Jukes his butt of attack. The reader can remember that like the Sahibhood of Jukes Dass, too, is bereft of his 'castemark', 'slate-coloured continuations' and 'unctuous speech' altogether. The wealth and insignia which assure prestige and distinction in society are reduced to laughter, a nought for both of them. That is why "Dass's position, observes Andrew Smith, "effectively replicates that of Jukes's because his lost sense of colonial authority is reflected in Dass, who has also been divested of his signs of authority" (61).

While concentrating on Kipling's portrayal of the colonizer's deep-seated unease and fear in the present story, Zohreh T. Sullivan finds its comparison with Franz Kafka's "A Country Doctor" (1919), written some thirty years later (72). Indeed many instances of similarity can be detected by a sensitive mind. Like Kafka's story this one too is written in the first person thereby creating an atmosphere of immediacy. Kafka's doctor commences his disastrous visit to his patient by responding to a call which itself is a hallucination of frustrating mind. Admittedly Kipling's protagonist too starts his riding all on a sudden. To put it in his own words: "In the beginning it all arose from a slight attack of fever" (*SRMJ* 40). Sullivan takes note of the fact that Jukes's opening line blames the "slight attack of fever" but together with it the full moon, the baying dogs and his own irritation all combine to make him enter into a "pathologized India" (73). But the language of both the authors, far from being incongruous, strikes a perfect note of harmony between fantasy and reality. The sexually virile and mysterious groom in Kafka's narrative finds his parallel in the figure of Gunga Dass. In Kafka's story the groom is simply irresistible who will have his own way. The groom actually unfolds the doctor's and hence Kafka's hidden fear in failing to get close to Rosa (Felice Bauer in real life with whom Kafka was twice briefly engaged). In Kipling's narrative Gunga Dass materialises the colonizer's fear of encountering his own colonized self which after being deprived of its authority, prejudice and worldly possessions is left to hollowness and impotence. The unnamed doctor, to quote Sullivan again, finds it impossible to cure the ailing boy, a projection of his own self while Morrowbie

Jukes envisaging the dead Englishman's body senses the doom that awaits him too (72-77).

To conclude it might be said that the sphere of nightmare which is only confined to the mysterious pit threatens to invade the Raj's broad daylight. Citing John A. McClure it may be argued that Jukes's entrapment in the pit only foregrounds the Englishmen's general confinement in India (34). It is here that Jukes's nightmare merges with the nightmare of the British residing in India. Ironically instead of any Englishman Jukes's native servant Dunnoo turns out to be the saviour of his master. This phenomenon once again establishes MacKenzie's notion that the relation between the ruler and the ruled can surpass the domain of binary opposition and needs to be appropriated in the context of "repeated realignment of sympathies" (xiii). This sympathy, existing between two opposite poles generally supposed to be at loggerheads, only enriches the multifaceted discourse of postcolonialism. Kipling, himself having Indian experience for many years, could not turn a blind eye to those few instances of loyalty and love in a country where people are thought to be either obsequious or inimical. The moment the colonizer accepts love and sympathy from the colonized he questions the Empire's omnipotence and its axiomatic ability to brave any oddity. Thus by making the colonizer vulnerable to both enmity and affection — the first being supposed to be firmly quashed while the second to be derided — Kipling, generally held as a diehard imperialist, creates a subversive undercurrent in the discourse of Empire that had hitherto been little noticed.

"Naboth"

The story "Naboth" made its first appearance in *The Civil and Military Gazette* on 26 August, 1886. Later it was anthologized in *Life's Handicap* (1891). Regarded by the author as "an allegory of Empire" the narrative employs the 'I' as the anonymous first person narrator. The narrator like many other of his compatriots lives in a palatial bungalow with an adjoining garden. He first comes across a destitute who had an empty basket and an unclean loincloth to claim as property in the wide world. Doubtless the name 'Naboth' is given to him by the narrator as there

is an obvious indication that the beggar belongs to the Hindu community. Out of pity the narrator gives him a rupee. When Naboth reappears he gives the impression of slowly recovering his health overnight. Like a shrewd time-server he declares his unwavering allegiance to the narrator. Next he humbly declares himself as a confectioner and begs leave to establish his small business adjacent to the narrator's house. Without a second thought the narrator permits him to do so and a much obliged Naboth leaves. Gradually as his small business begins to flourish he slowly intrudes into the territory of his master. As days go by, Naboth uses up all the shrubbery of the Englishman to build up his house and also starts a family. To increase income he begins to keep cattle and the waste they produce generates serious sanitary problems. Two months later a servant of the narrator was murdered opposite Naboth's establishment, 'vineyard', as Kipling puts it. Now nearly all the servants of the narrator got the habit of getting drunk on a regular basis presumably due to the influence of Naboth. After a few days the narrator's coach met with an accident on his way back home when Naboth undertakes to screen his womenfolk. After this last mishap Naboth is evicted and his 'vineyard' is reduced to its native dust. But the narrator, who narrowly escaped calamity both physically and psychologically, looks back at this closed chapter with a strong sense of resentment.

In this three and a half page narrative the narrator's portrayal of himself presents him as a generous Oriental king who can easily be ingratiated. The very act of helping Naboth for the first time entails the assumption that this is going to be but a beginning of losing the donor's possession: "I put my hand into my pocket to help Naboth, as kings of the East have helped alien adventurers to the loss of their kingdoms" (*LH* 59). The only visible difference between the narrator and Oriental lord is that the former is acutely aware of the latter's fate. Kipling does not ascribe so much importance to the colonial administration as he does to the colonial representative — the 'I'. He knew that the colonial rule had to be evidently backed by the natives for smooth running while at the same time the 'I' must impersonate a sort of talisman. It is precisely this reason why eviction or simply disappearance of Naboth is dealt with in one line and the rest of the story is devoted to the expansion of Naboth's colony followed by the anxiety of his lord. This anxiety may well be put in the words of Stephen D. Arata as the "late-Victorian nightmare of reverse

colonization"[2] (qtd.in Regan 460). The nightmare is aroused by the dormant feeling of guilt of being a representative of the Whites. At the outset of colonialism the Whites, regardless of nationality used their glib tongue to acquire land and secure patronage from the kings of the East. Slowly but steadily they lay their rapacious hand upon the kingdom itself. Naboth's act of pleasing the narrator and then expanding his business in the latter's territory is but a miniaturization of the colonial process India had undergone.

But whatever the British did in India throughout the colonial age they did not forget to assemble and justify it under the great banner of *civilizing the natives*. But defending the act of eviction of Naboth, a beggar turned businessman having a family, is not that easy. Hence the narrator's defence of himself betrays, notes Zohreh T. Sullivan, "the instability of apparently stable structures in Kipling's world as well as the paranoia and legitimized violence endemic to colonial discourse" (12). Now before entering the paradoxical domain of legitimacy it is apparent to the reader that the act of committing violence upon Naboth places the narrator in the position of Ahab, the Scriptural colonialist and King of Samaria as narrated in the *Old Testament*. (1 Kings, 21) Ahab wanted to occupy Naboth's vineyard. So he asked Naboth either to accept a generous amount or another more plentiful vineyard in lieu of that vineyard. But when Naboth refused to hand over his vineyard Ahab conspired with his fiend-like Queen Jezebel and had Naboth stoned to death. For this act of wickedness Ahab and Jezebel were cursed by the prophet Elijah. But for Kipling's Ahab, i.e. the narrator, to take the vineyard is not a question of possession but the retrieval of the colonial self. The way Naboth begins to manage his own affairs and took the narrator's name to shield his vested interest with almost no measure taken against leaves a thin line of difference between the colonizer and the colonized. Sara Suleri observes:

> Kipling's tale…both seeks location within the discourse of colonial cultural studies and attempts to question some of the governing assumptions of that discursive field…As the allegory of "Naboth" suggests, the story of colonial encounter is in itself a radically decentering narrative that is impelled to realign with violence any static binarism between colonizer and colonized. It calls to be read as

> an enactment of a cultural unrecognizability as to what may constitute the marginal or the central: rather than reify the differences between Ahab and Naboth,…The telling of colonial and postcolonial stories,…demands a more naked relation to the ambivalence represented by the greater mobility of disempowerment…While Ahab may need to identify a Naboth as a discrete cultural entity, finally he knows that his encounter with the other of culture is only *self-reflexive*…(1-2, italics mine).

The way Kipling's Naboth, i.e. the beggar, establishes an independent fiefdom of his own inside Ahab's i.e. the administrator's bungalow, blurs the distinction between the colonizer and the colonized. Ahab may have had a narrow escape but the fear of being decentered by the gradually evolving colonial process would continue to haunt the British for the next six decades after its publication.

"Beyond the Pale"

"Beyond the Pale" made its debut in the first Indian edition of *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888) which was followed by many subsequent publications. The narrative centres around an Englishman named Trejago. He let himself get entangled with Bisesa, a widowed native woman of fifteen. Their chance meeting, Bisesa from behind her grated window and Trejago walking the street, followed by several nocturnal rendezvous — all have the contour of a traditional romance. But later Trejago's paying court to an Englishwoman became the bone of contention between them. Bisesa was quite unreasonable, of course from Trejago's view, which led Trejago stop seeing her for a month. Finally when the separation began to tell upon his nerve he paid a final visit to Bisesa. He almost choked to horror to see that the girl's arms were mutilated from the wrists. No sooner had Trejago realized something amiss than he was stabbed inside his boorka by a howling, dark figure, presumably Durga Charan, owner of the house. The adventurer escaped narrowly as the main thrust missed his body but penetrated his groin. The grating was slammed shut before his face and all he could remember was shouting like a lunatic between the 'pitiless walls' of Amir Nath's Gully. For the rest of his life the young man

became fated to limp slightly. Kipling concludes the narrative with his typical deadpan: “There is nothing peculiar about him, except a slight stiffness, caused by a riding-strain, in the right leg” (*PTH* 151).

In the opening lines Kipling has made such a generalization about interracial relationship which is liable to categorize him as a biased spokesperson of the Raj:

> A man should, whatever happens, keep to his own caste, race and breed. Let the White go the White and the Black to the Black. Then whatever trouble falls is in the ordinary course of things — neither sudden, alien, nor unexpected (145).

But even Kipling approves such relationship under certain circumstances. The point may be illustrated with reference to stories like “Yoked With an Unbeliever” (1886) or “Without Benefit of Clergy” (1890). In both these stories there was no dearth of emotional and cultural exchanges between cross-racial couples. A close reading of the present text with reference to the texts just mentioned brings to light the truth that it is deception even in interracial relationship which Kipling really disapproves. If the White and non-White races are to unite they must take reasonable time and must meet on equal terms. But bypassing these two criteria and attempting to overcome racial barriers simply by leading a double life is not what Kipling intended to admire. Of course the protagonist in “Without Benefit of Clergy” used to live a double life and he had to pay the penalty for this duplicity. Kipling’s moral judgement ensures the premature death of his native wife and son. But this assumption of dual identity does not affect the integrity of his self as he shows a genuine love and affection for his wife and child. In “Yoked With an Unbeliever” (1886) an amoral Phil Garron is seen to have undergone a moral upliftment with the tender care of his native spouse. In both narratives the native women play integral roles in the lives of their White husbands and nowhere either identity — non-White and White — appear to be imposing or at stake. Trejago’s fault lies in the fact that his superficial knowledge of native custom and rituals, especially the one with which he could decipher Bisesa’s message, lent him a false air of wisdom or insight. Their misunderstanding, which precedes the catastrophe of Bisesa’s mutilation, and

Trejago's stabbing wound, is an outcome of this false wisdom. In her study of Kipling's shorter fictions, Helen Pike Bauer draws the curtain from this sordid truth:

> …Bisesa's life has always been unknowable to Trejago. Thinking his experience of Indian life and the ways of the Anglo-Indian world gave him power, Trejago tries to erase the boundaries between the two domains. But Bisesa's passionate response to her misreading of Trejago's social rituals suggests the gulf that separates their mentalities, a void too great to be bridged. And her mutilating punishment, so horrifying to the reader, epitomizes the distance between her culture's values and [the White's]. Trejago thought he understood her world, but, in important matters, he was as ignorant of hers as she was of his. His facility with the more accessible aspects of her culture, its poetry and traditions of object-letters, *blinded him to a more profound ignorance of the values that sustain it* (italics mine, 46).

To a White man, this *profound ignorance* always generates a craving for knowing the hitherto unknown from first-hand experience. This desire retains potentialities and possibilities which actually lead to the fulfilment of life's eternal quest, unmindful of any impending disaster. Professor Robert H. MacDonald explains:

> It is not only sexuality which lures men on to step beyond the pale, for knowledge itself is as seductive: knowledge of the unexpected, of the alien, of the teeming City, the possession of secrets "guarded and unknowable as the grave." This is information that the Anglo-Indians cannot appreciate, nor the Memsahibs touch. Knowledge of the Other, though irresistible to the authority of the author, subverts the imperial myth (*Studies in Short Fiction* 23.4 418).

However readers should take note of the fact that this subversion, although an outcome of racial transgression, is not the inevitable and necessary consequence, but a case-specific one.

In Kipling's ethical and moral code such transgressions are permissible only if they are based on high moral ground or are undertaken to serve the colonial interest. That is what policeman Strickland does occasionally in many stories and Kipling approves of it. Bereft of such aims Trejago's is a carnal one, no matter how arduous his passion grows which even the author acknowledges:

> Bisesa was an endless delight to Trejago. She was as ignorant as a bird; and her distorted versions of the rumours from the outside world that had reached her in her room, amused Trejago almost as much as her lisping attempts to pronounce his name — 'Christopher'. The first syllable was always more than she could manage, and she made funny little gestures with her roseleaf hands, as one throwing the name away, and then, kneeling before Trejago, asked him,…if he were sure he loved her. Trejago swore that he loved her more than any one else in the world. Which was true (*PTH* 148-149).

The reader should not fail to notice that in this hilarious courtship Trejago and Bisesa play the roles exactly opposite to what traditional courtship demands. With Bisesa kneeling before him, Trejago plays the role of lover/lord simultaneously. Ironically it is this role, i.e. standing before the suitor performing genuflexion, which seeks to identify him with the weaker vessel. This argument may be substantiated by referring to Gail Ching-Liang Low's discourse on veiled sexual identity:

> In his night-time visits to Bisesa, Trejago wears a native cloak — a *boorka* — which enables him free passage into alien and forbidden (Hindu) territory. But this is an article of dress belonging properly to a woman's wardrobe…a *boorka* cloaks a man as well as a woman. But one cannot be certain if the reference to sexual ambivalence is proleptic — the narrative tripping over itself by offering dreaded information ahead of time — or is meant to cast doubt on Trejago's masculinity. In either case, the sexual identity of Trejago is deliberately put into question (132-133, italics author's).

It requires but little effort to realize that the masculinity which allows itself to be shrouded and thereby questioned on metaphorical level could be brought to book by

the alleged attempt of castration on the material plane. Here again the reading of Professor MacDonald shows that this troubled sexual identity is ingrained in their very names:

> …white is not quite white, black not altogether black. The Englishman Trejago has an odd, "un-English" name; he is perhaps a Cornishman, a Celt, born outside the pale, the deceiver Jacob, the betrayer Iago….Bisesa, the self-proclaimed "widow of a black man" is "fairer than bar-gold in the Mint" (and with something of that gold's virtue?) (416).

As the White man ventures to get hold of the gold/willing native female for no colonial purpose the author permits the native keep the gold. Although he escaped mortal injury like Dan in *The Man Who Would Be King* (1888), Trejago also suffers the pre-emptive attack. With this assault, observes Danny Karlin, the narrative turns a full circle as the reader reflects upon the second sentence of the epigraph: "I went in search of love and lost myself" (12)[3]. The cut actually, sums up Karlin, 'hollowed out' his identity and reduced him to nothingness (12).

In fine, one has to be in accord with the perception that the authorial mindset which was used to receive homage in colonial administration pervaded subtly but surely the sphere of personal relationship. Ethically speaking, there is no wrong in paying or receiving homage from subordinates or dear ones. But ethical obligations are dispelled when the acknowledgement and reciprocation remain unpaid. This dispelling of obligation both in personal and political life foreshadows a not too distant future when the Raj would face stiff opposition from the indigenous mechanism as well as from the emerging national movements.

The Man Who Would Be King

The novella *The Man Who Would Be King* first appeared in *The Phantom Rickshaw and other Eerie Tales* (1888) and was later anthologized in *Wee Willie Winkie and Other Stories* (1895). The whole book depicts the narrator's five encounters with one or both of Peachy Taliaferro Carnehan and Daniel Dravot, two former soldiers.

In the first encounter *the* narrator only meets Carnehan while travelling in an "Intermediate" or "Third-Class Compartment". Before they part ways Carnehan requests the narrator to deliver a cryptic message to a friend i.e. Daniel Dravot. In the second, although the narrator keeps the request, he informs the authorities about them and persuades himself to believe that he saves them from bigger troubles. In the third, the narrator is confronted with both of them unexpectedly late one night and was somewhat dumbfounded after hearing about their impending adventure. They want to conquer Kafiristan[4], a vast and then uncharted region that lies beyond the North-West side of British-India's frontier. This almost God-forsaken stretch of land inhabitated by heathen Kafirs, is first penetrated, informs Charles Allen, by "Captain Willaim MacNair of the Survey of India and a subordinate, Syed Shah, who was one of the explorer-spies trained by the Survey of India to covertly map the countries beyond British India's northern borders" (278). Incidentally it is not unlikely, opines Edward Marx, that Kipling was well aware of the expedition of McNair from a report published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*: "The *Pioneer*, of which Kipling was co-editor from 1887 until his departure from India in early 1889, published less than a year after Kipling's departure an obituary of MacNair, who succumbed to fever in August 1889" (53-54). However unlike the real-life McNair who himself served as a link between the Raj and the unknown realm the narrator himself takes up the burden of acting as mediator. He provides them with maps and books and the two men divulge their scheme of setting themselves as rulers of Kafiristan. The fourth encounter takes place the following morning. Dravot and Carnehan disguise themselves as a mad priest and his servant respectively and the narrator initially fails to recognize the duo. After a couple of years the fifth and final encounter takes place between Carnehan and the narrator. The trials and tribulations wrought by the ordeal in Kafiristan changed him so much that the narrator fails to recognize him at first. However after sometime the narrator recognizes him and entertains him with whisky. He then enjoys listening to Carnehan's seemingly incredible success in Kafiristan with Dravot. They set almost everything with the aid of their long-range Martini rifles, army training and diplomatic cunning. The less sophisticated Kafirs are simply awestruck by the appearance of these two godlike figures and bowed down to worship them after the initial resistance is foiled. The whole country came under their direct control. Being

naturally charismatic of the two Dravot assumes the role of king with Carnehan his commander-in-chief. But their real apotheosis occurs when a native chief gives Dravot a secret Masonic handshake of the second degree with Dravot returning with the third. His authority reaches its apogee when the "Master's Mark" put on his newly made apron matched the mark carried on the underside of a temple stone. But soon this absolute power overwhlems Dravot's better judgement. He intends to break his formerly made contract with Carnehan and the unwritten codes of godhood by marrying a native girl. But the girl, frightened with the prospect of marrying a superhuman, bites Dravot's lips, draws blood and exposes him as a mortal. A general mutiny breaks out at once with the howling of the natives: 'Not a God or a Devil but only a man!' (*MWWBK* 109). Although they try to flee they are quickly overtaken. Dravot heroically assumes the sole responsibility in the hope of saving Carnehan thereby fulfilled his right to kingship to some extent. He tries to pass through a bridge over a ravine. The Kafirs cut the bridge and Dravot falls to his death. Crucified between two pine trees, Carnehan survives miraculously and was sent back to India by the Kafirs. A shadow of his former self, Carnehan relates his experience to the narrator. Shortly afterwards he dies.

The fact that a European among non-Europeans will naturally rise to a position of authority, is, says Phillip Mallett, "a reflex response among white writers, from Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* to John Boorman's film *The Emerald Forest*, and the idea of the white incomer being taken for god is at least as old as Shakespeare's *The Tempest*" (*Kipling Considered* 103). Far from establishing a responsible government, the two young adventurers set to plunder the land of its wealth. It is this materialistic attitude which makes them to set foot on Kafiristan instead of India where the government could only discourage private entrepreneurship. Kafiristan is a place where says Dravot "two strong men can Sar-a-*whack*" (*MWWBK* 80). Here Jeffrey Meyers observes that Dravot's reference corresponds to the northern part of the rich East Indian island of Borneo that became the personal property of James Brooke in 1841 (7). Meyers goes on telling that Brooke's motives in undertaking his voyage from England to Borneo was largely motivated by his desire to conquer and impose British rule into Borneo. During the time of his arrival in 1840, a rebellion against the tyrannical officials of the Malay

Sultan of Brunei was in progress. Brooke took active part on behalf of the Sultan to suppress the rebellion and as a reward was made the ruler of the island which remained in the hands of his descendants until after the second world war. The deeds of the two adventurers, again shows Meyers, are comparable to the deeds of Lord Jim in Joseph Conrad's eponymous novel (8). Like Dravot, Jim also sets up order in a previously chaotic community of Patusan and came to be regarded as Tuan Jim (i.e. Lord Jim). The fact that Dravot willingly assumes the sole responsibility of the hoax of presenting themselves as gods, as has been mentioned before, makes him comparable to Jim who willingly dies at the hand of Doramin.

There is no room for doubt that like James Brooke (often referred to as Rajah Brooke) or Tuan Jim, Dravot's kingdom depends upon the absolute rule by conquest. But whereas Rajah Brooke or Jim show genuine concern for their subjects Dravot and Carnehan only betray lust for power. This lust for power, based on absolute control is epitomized in Lord Acton's maxim: "power tends to corrupt; and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (qtd. in Meyers 9). To them Rajah Brooke represents personal and independent colonialism as opposed to national colonialism. These new kings covet power, wealth, title and fame. After their initial success in Kafiristan Dravot's pride knows no bounds as he proclaims: "we shall be Emperors — Emperors of the Earth! Rajah Brooke will be a suckling to us. I'll treat with the Viceroy on equal terms" (*MWWBK* 102). It is, therefore, quite natural that the rule of Dravot, with Carnehan as his sidekick, will prove disastrous for the subjects. Their preconceived notion of the affairs of independent states in British India is one of grim oppression and horror. The rulers of these states are little better than being "drugged, drunk, or diseased from one end of the year to the other. They [dwell in] the dark places of the earth, full of unimaginable cruelty, touching the Railway and the Telegraph on one side, and, on the other, the days of Harun-al-Raschid" (73). They also came to know the history of the Kafirs which strengthen their prejudice against their subjects: ''they was fighting one against the other, and were sick and tired of it. And when they weren't doing that they was fighting with the Mohammedans'' (100)[5]. All these circumstances only consolidate their notion that the rule of Occidental is bound to be better than the native rule. The deification of them by the Kafirs removed the last trace of hesitation: "They think we're Gods"

(94). Seeing the Kafirs willing to succumb to their rule they set to wipe out the least shred of dissidence by employing traditional imperialist *divide et impera*. They side with one sect of the tribes and slaughter the primitively armed opposition by means of their long range rifles, which, needless to say, keep them far beyond enemies' weapons. Carnehan and Dravot take these skirmishes as notable military exploits. It is not simply a handful of sophisticated weapons which made them victorious but the imperial tactics of *divide et impera* and above all the credulous nature of a primitive race who failed to see through the colonizers' real nature and intention. The ruthless nature they betray in suppressing any sort of resistance and protest closes them in one frame with the native Degumber Rajah whom they want to blackmail at the outset of the story.

Such calculated brutal form of conquest, combined with an insatiable desire to rob the land of its wealth, represents the very worst kind of colonialism. Citing Kipling's poem "For All We Have And Are" (1914), Jeffrey Meyers opines that they embody "No law except the sword/Unsheathed and uncontrolled" (9). The rapacity of the kings for the gold that lies in the rocks, the turquoise in the cliffs, the garnets in the sands of the river, and the chunks of amber may remind the reader of Edmund Burke's eloquent condemnation of the East Indian Company in 1783:

> Animated with all the avarice of age and all the impetuofity of youth, they roll in one after another, wave after wave; and there is nothing before the eyes of the native but an endlefs, hopelefs profpect of new flights of birds of prey and paffage, with appetites continually renewing for a food that is continually wafting. Every rupee of profit made by an Englishman is loft for ever to India (40).

Lodged in a country so resourceful the aim of these two adventurers are like those of Kurtz or the Eldorado exploring expedition — a lust for wealth devoid of all moral purpose. Apparently, the reader is led to think that Kipling does not castigate imperialism as a whole as Burke or Conrad did. But he vividly sketches the futility of imperial control devoid of all moral authority. At this juncture it is worthwhile to note that the remnant of moral value which redeems Kurtz in Marlow's eyes inspite of his descent into bestiality is totally absent in Carnehan and Dravot. As they retain

no commitment to morality, Kipling assigns them their doom without any compunction. Dravot's pompous claim: "I won't make a Nation,…I'll make an Empire!" (*MWWBK* 102) is as fragile as the 'contrack' he has made with Carnehan before their journey. The defenders of Kipling's imperial prejudice would like to convey the fact that such humiliating situation for colonizers will emerge if they fail to accomplish their imperial duties. To put it in other words, if the organized governments of civilized powers are denied the task of colonialism, the supremacy of the ruling race is bound to fall at the hand of ruled.

It is this fall of the imperial authority resulting from the inefficacy of meeting their claim with their deeds that Kipling sketches quite exhaustively in his story. This inefficacy centres around the question of Dravot's success as a ruler. After the subjugation of the Kafirs through military might and diplomatic cunning Dravot begins to talk about dream of doing things beneficial to his subjects. But the only thing he actually does or rather is able to do is to improve the infrastructure necessary to keep the Kafirs under his control thereby fulfilling the usual accomplishments of a dictator. These accomplishments, i.e. their ability to rule over the Kafirs for a short span of time only foregrounds the hollowness of their claim — to make the Kafirs civilized. Their pride in their own people is only a manifestation of their self-seeking nature. Because they merely use the natives as tools to meet their objectives and do not hesitate to slaughter wantonly their defenceless men in the same way they once killed their enemies. The reader has to take note of the fact that after their initial triumph in Kafiristan Carnehan looks for the 'brown of the men' (i.e. Kafirs supporting their dictatorship) and fires into the 'brown of the enemy' (i.e. the opposition). When Dravot is bitten and bleeds, he carelessly opens fire at the Kafirs and dropped three of them dead. Far from showing tolerance or love they took the natives as simply cannon fodder. But this tyranny, no matter how much Dravot tries to bring in efficient administration is bound to break as soon as the Europeans, i.e. the gods betray weakness of the flesh. Once the fear of the gods among the natives fades away, for it is fear that apotheosizes them, the power of the gods too ceased to exist.

Down the ages Kipling scholars agree to the fact that in general Kipling's works overtly emphasize heroics on the part of the Empire builders in the face of an overwhelming adversity. In "Ave Imperatrix" (1882) Kipling joyfully proclaims:

> And all are bred to do your will
> By land and sea — wherever flies
> The Flag, to fight and follow still,
> And work your Empire's destinies (*CV* 169).

The divine right attributed to the colonizers can be sustained only by the European norm of progress, cultural superiority and the almost religious ideas of Empire. Regardless of the tricks they employed to conquer the Kafirs, Carnehan affirms their kingship by alluding to the Gospel: "It's true,…True as gospel. Kings we were, with crowns upon our heads — me and Dravot…" (*MWWBK* 88). After their authority is established, Dravot also allowed the Kafirs to live and procreate according to their choice: "Go and dig the land, and be fruitful and multiply,…" (93). But the Biblical sayings, as points out Sullivan, strongly resents kings' infatuation with women (107). Herein Dravot deviates and by wanting to get married with a native girl he breaks not only his contrack with Carnehan but even, as says Sullivan, "…an unspoken code of imperial male bonding that surpasses the love of woman" (106). Sullivan goes on to add that at this stage of final crisis over Dravot's lust for a girl he actually monopolized and appropriated all meaning within himself thus becoming Nietzsche's 'Antichrist' who represents the gigantic stature that he actually does not possess. Throughout his imperial career Dravot does not betray the slightest sign of fear or remorse. At the end judged by Kipling's imperial ethics he is proved guilty and is executed remorselessly.

By contrast, Carnehan who clearly sees through their guilt and has the ability to repent once tried to convince the Kafir priest about their mortality: "…the King [Dravot] and me are nothing more than two of the finest men that God Almighty ever made. Nothing more, I do assure you" (*MWWBK* 107). Carnehan's questioning of their right to rule, observes Meyers, finds echo in Shakespeare's *King Richard II* where the king questions his kingship (6). Likewise the epigraph of the story 'Brother to a Prince and fellow to a beggar if he be found worthy' is associated with

Richard II's confession: "Sometimes am I king;/ Then treasons make me wish myself a beggar,/ And so I am" (478). Helping Dravot in every other way and yet betraying his fear and remorse Carnehan proves himself rather a pathetic figure and is allowed to return pathetically with Dravot's severed head.

Throughout the story, writes Shamsul Islam, Kipling teaches a lesson to the imperial power: 'what can happen in Kafiristan may happen to *pax Britannica*' (81). At the same time it is also true that for all their sufferings and humiliation the situation of these two self made kings is, in fact, ameliorated in the narrative. Because their oppositions are, to take recourse to the reading of Professor Marx again, uncivilized, yet fair-skinned, nearly White people:

> In the race-sensitive context of Kipling's Anglo-India, the ostensible whiteness of the Kafirs is critical… To put it in simpler terms, a narrative in which two British adventurers are vanquished by a tribe of primitive white men would have rendered it more acceptable to Anglo-Indian tastes (61).

Despite the subtle difference between Kafirs and other colonized people there is no denying that the duty assigned to the Empire builders is certainly beyond human power but they must undertake this painstaking mission to their level best; otherwise they are sure to meet their doom. The fallen colonizers of Kipling — Dravot and Carnehan in the present story, Fleete in "The Mark of the Beast", Morrowbie Jukes in "The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes", the unnamed Englishman in "Naboth", Hummil in "At the End of the Passage" either die or go through terrible humiliating situation making the claim to White superiority questionable. In the present story the depiction of two youngsters' rise to power and fall only foregrounds the narrator's deepest fear which inevitably alludes to the self-destructive mechanism of imperialism (Sullivan 110).

"The Mark of the Beast"

Among Kipling's imperial gothics which underscore anxieties with which White civilization reverts to barbarism or savagery, "The Mark of the Beast" stands prominent. This story was first published in *The Pioneer* on 12 July 1890 and was later collected in *Life's Handicap* (1891). Unlike *The Man Who Would Be King* where White man lost his control over the natives for sheer personal foibles, the present short story abjectly shows "British progress transformed into British backsliding" (Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness* 229). In the novella, previously dealt with Kipling gave White men a chance to manifest their morale before being overwhelmed by natives. In the present short story, Kipling portrays India as a place of happenings which are beyond any human and rational explanation and consequently the White men are not empowered to brave dangers."The Mark of the Beast" begins with a premonition which sets the tone of future events:

> East of Suez, some hold, the direct control of Providence ceases; Man being there handed over to the power of the Gods and Devils of Asia, and the Church of England Providence only exercising an occasional and modified supervision in the case of Englishmen. This theory accounts for some of the more unnecessary horrors of life in India: it may be stretched to explain my story (*LH* 245).

Kipling's use of 'imperialism' and 'occultism', notes Brantlinger, instead of offering a salvation to the seekers of religious truth only foregrounds the images of decline or fall of White civilization (229). This picture of the fall of British authority convinces the reader about the decline of Britain's imperial hegemony.

The events related in "The Mark of the Beast" are, to quote Paul Battles, "deceptively simple" (128)[6]. Fleete, a landowner, newly arrived in India, overindulges himself in alcohol at a New Year's party. While returning home with policeman Strickland who appears very often in other stories, Fleete slips from the people with whom he was returning. He rushes in the temple of Hanuman and grinds the ashes of his cigar-butt into the forehead of the red stone idol. Soon after this defilement a naked and leprous "Silver Man" steps out and before Strickland can intervene touches his head to Fleete's chest. At this the priests become silent and the

Englishmen are allowed to leave. This very scene frightens Strickland: “They should have mauled us,” he blurts out (248). Strickland and the narrator now carry the still drunk Fleete home and the readers are left to see the gradual transformation of Fleete into a beast. Next morning Fleete demands for breakfast underdone chops and eats three of them in a particularly repulsive manner. He informs his friends that he has been bitten by mosquitoes in a curious way and shows them on his breast a mark – presumably where the “Silver Man” touched him. The spot now has become very prominent and it is similar to the spots on a leopard’s hide. Then they go to the stables to inspect the horses. At once there is a terrible hullabaloo. All the five horses drew back, screamed and nearly uprooted their pickets. Seeing them distraught with fear Strickland instinctively concludes that it is Fleete whom they want to shun. Fleete’s favourite pony, too, refused to let him approach and the other two men rode out, leaving Fleete alone to sleep. At this point Strickland warns the narrator of the looming danger he is sensing. During that night the “Silver Man” appears at Strickland’s place and begins to roam outside. All this while Fleete convulses and is reacting to the leper’s presence. As Dr. Dumoise had already certified that Fleete was afflicted with hydrophobia neither Strickland nor the narrator approached any doctor. On a sudden impulse Strickland concludes that Hanuman has bewitched Fleete for desecrating his idol and decides to intervene. After a violent struggle he and the narrator capture the “Silver Man” as he passes the door. They drag him into the room where Fleete lies and tell him to cure Fleete. When the leper remains silent they tie him to a bedstead. They torture him with heated gun barrels and at dawn the leper finally adheres to their injunction. He simply touches Fleete’s left breast and Fleete gradually returns to his normal self and falls asleep. Then they released the leper and Strickland called on the temple of Hanuman to offer redress for Fleete’s desecration of the idol. He has been assured that the alleged desecration never took place. Next morning, Fleete too, cannot recollect anything about the incident either. He regrets that he has mixed up his liquors last night and become unconscious in the intervening day. He now complains of a beastly odour in his room which makes Strickland suffer a fit of hysterics. Realizing that by coming into physical contact with the leper to remove the curse from Fleete, Strickland has forsaken all claims to being a civilized Englishman; the narrator too, bursts out into laughter. Kipling closes his narrative with the ironic

statement that "… it is well known to every right-minded man that the gods of the heathen are stone and brass, and any attempt to deal with them otherwise is justly condemned" (*LH* 259).

Cyril Falls observes that the effect of this story and other weird tales such as "The Return of Imray" in which Strickland also plays a part is heightened by the fact that it is told in the first person which invests it with a false air of verity (124). Here the narrator like the one in *The Man Who Would Be King* acts as an ambivalent colonizer — he can distance himself from the colonized 'Other' and at the same time reveals his own vulnerability. This man of inaction is in alliance with the colonizers who can guarantee the narrator's sanity and acceptability. Being aided thus the narrator sets about the task of opposing the colonized. But in this process, notes Zohreh T. Sullivan, "his allusions, rhetoric, and imagery dismantle the oppositions and implicate him in the story of failure he chooses to remember and rewrite" (62). But it is also true that the use of the first person gives Kipling every opportunity to sketch the unease of the White men when they encounter the Orient. The encounter between Fleete and Hanuman, opines Paul Battles "is suggestive of the primal encounter of colonizer and colonized, of Englishman and Indian, of East and West" (129). Any reading of the text will show that Kipling portrays the character of Fleete as an average Englishman ignorant of Indians and their ways. Hanuman, on the other hand, poses the hostile and mysterious traits of India and of the Orient in general which any European would want to avoid. Quite in keeping with this binarism in the very opening paragraph Kipling erected oppositions between India and England by using such phrases as East/West, Gods and Devils of Asia/ Church of England Providence. In his *Orientalism* (1978) Edward Said writes:

> Only an Occidental could speak of Orientals, for example, just as it was the White Man who could designate and name the coloreds, or nonwhites. Every statement made by Orientalists or White Men (who were usually interchangeable) conveyed a sense of the irreducible distance separating white from colored, or Occidental from Oriental; . . . Since the White Man, like the Orientalist, lived very close to the line of tension keeping the coloreds at bay, he felt it incumbent on him readily to define and redefine the domain he surveyed (228).

Drawing inference from Said, Battles states that Fleete's act of grinding his cigar-butt on the forehead of Hanuman and thereby branding the statue announces not only his mastery over Indian ape-god but also over the natives who worship before the idol (130). Viewed from this angle, when Fleete calls the brand the "mark of the beast" and then proclaims "I made it" he actually proclaims his and thereby Englishmen's superiority over the natives. Following this line of argument it is possible to derive that Fleete's act is like that of a rancher who brands his cattles with a mark of ownership. Needless to say this utter contemptuous act reduces Hanuman to the level of a beast and to quote Battles again this act:

> defines Hanuman and Fleete in a reciprocal relationship: if the statue (and, by extension, Hanuman himself), can be marked, he is its master; if it is a beast, he is a man. This rhetoric of bestiality involves one of the primary tropes of colonial discourse – the superiority of the English through their supposed greater evolutionary distance from animals. Hanuman's image, from the perspective of the colonizer, validates this argument: if humankind was created in the likeness of God, then Indians were created in the image of apes (130).

It is obvious that Fleete, a newcomer from England will be tempted to define precisely that object as beast which is so much venerated by Indians.

In the Hindu mythology, Hanuman represents dual self – ape and god. The myth goes that Hanuman or Balaji was born of Anjana, a heavenly nymph who married a noble monkey. One day, on a mountain top Anjana was ravished by Vayu, the god of the winds and Hanuman was the offspring of that forced union (Kakar 57). Hanuman thus unites divine and the bestial and denies precisely that assumption which Fleete seeks to impose upon him, i.e. like their gods Indians are animal like and sensual while the Englishmen are fully human beings and rational. Again borrowing the insight from Said it may be argued:

> Being a White Man was therefore an idea and a reality. It involved a reasoned position towards both the white and the non-white worlds. It meant – in the colonies – speaking in a certain way, behaving according to a code of regulations, and even feeling certain things

> and not others . . . It was a form of authority before which nonwhites, and even whites themselves, were expected to bend (227).

It is this arrogance of being a White man in a non-White colony which invests Fleete the power to exert his authority. Thus Fleete's branding of the idol, opines Battles, is a gesture of both denial and affirmation. Because by performing this single act he renounces any similarity to Indians and, non-Whites in general and also reestablishes 'difference' as a means towards 'power' and 'self-definition' (131). This is the difference on the basis of 'nation' and 'race' which Hanuman denies. It is worth noticing that Fleete was totally drunk when he committed the sacrilege. But his utterance was grave after the deed. It implies that Fleete was not unaware of the Biblical allusion to the mark set upon a beast's forehead or right hand. The incident alludes to the well known passage in the *Book of Revelation*:

> And he [the dragon] causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:
> And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name (*The Holy Bible* 262).

Fleete justifies his action by taking Hanuman merely as a beast. But if it is so then the second passage which declares that except for those who possess the mark of the beast no one would not buy or sell has a grim reality. The "Silver Man" actually enacts as Hanuman's incarnation. Following Battles, it may be argued that one of Hanuman's epithets is 'Rajata-dyuti', i.e. 'silver radiance' (135). His colour indicates that he possesses that mark which empowers him to inflict the curse upon Fleete and also to remove it. The European doctor Dumoise, with all his good intention and professional skill thus, fails to cure Fleete.

Throughout the text the "Silver Man" remains as an unresolvable enigma for upon him lies what has actually happened to Fleete and whether it is curable or not. For a White reader, unaccustomed either to Indians or their ways the "Silver Man" poses the same trouble as the red stone idol of Hanuman. Kipling depicts him as half human and half animal — a naked, faceless creature that howls like a wolf and mews like an otter. Kipling uses the Biblical phrase "a leper as white as snow" to

describe him (*LH* 247). In the *Book of Exodus* leprosy is a mark of distinction: "And the Lord said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand *was* leprous as snow" (*Bible* 63, italics in the text). Kipling's leper is totally white and does not possess white spots which conforms to the pure category defined in the *Book of Leviticus*:

> And if a leprosy break out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of *him that hath* the plague from his head even to his foot, wheresoever the priest looketh;
> Then the priest shall consider: and, behold, *if* the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce *him* clean *that hath* the plague: it is all turned white: he *is* clean.
> But when raw flesh appeareth in him, he shall be unclean (118, italics in the text).

From the Biblical discourse, it appears that the "Silver Man" as he is entirely covered with leprosy is 'clean'. *In Purity and Danger* (1966) Mary Douglas shows that the ambivalence of the sacred lies not only in the psychological order but also in the order of values. The 'sacred' is at once 'sacred' and 'defiled' (9). It suggests another approach to the question of holiness and impurity. Holiness and impurity need not to be absolutely opposite categories. They may function as relative categories. What may appear clean in relation to one category may appear unclean in relation to another and vice versa. Yet the narrator's very attitude to him sets him apart as an unclean person. During their struggle with the leper the narrator and Strickland subdued him as a beast might be subdued: "Strickland knocked his legs from under him and I put my foot on his neck. He mewed hideously, and even through my riding-boots I could feel that his flesh was not the flesh of a clean man" (*LH* 256). Here Battles notes that the narrator's obsession with Silver Man's leprosy can be traced back to his desire for pure categories (135). While discriminating the clean from the unclean animals based on the conditions stated in the *Book of Leviticus*, Mary Douglas states that "Those species are unclean which are imperfect members of their class, or whose class itself confounds the general scheme of the world" (69). Through his existence and actions it is clear that the "Silver Man"

transgresses and blurs boundaries set up by colonial and patriarchal system. No reader will fail to notice that though the "Silver Man" is native, his skin is white, though his disease makes him untouchable he is a priest of a major Indian deity, though a male he is described in terms of a 'she-otter' (qtd. in David 135). Thus any attempt to define and contain him through categories like race, class, colour, skin and gender is futile. Implicit in this statement is the assumption that the colonizer's hegemony over the colonized is baffled. Although Strickland and the narrator coerced the "Silver Man" to remove the curse inflicted upon Fleete they could not penetrate through his enigma. Said states that in the process of re-creating the Orient, it should be known at first (92). By confounding the scheme of colonial discourse the "Silver Man" frustrates the colonizer's first attempt to know the object he intends to subjugate. In his failed attempt to solve the mystery the narrator, notes Battles, "brings to bear on the leper both the epistemological violence of his narrative and the literal violence of the heated gun-barrels with which he and Strickland torture him" (135).

If the "Silver Man" manifestly puts the position of the colonizer in question then Fleete's own action underscores a deep anxiety regarding the question: who is the colonizer? There can be no doubt that Fleete put the mark on Hanuman's forehead to show Hanuman's bestiality. When Fleete in turn is nuzzled by the "Silver Man", he too is marked by Hanuman's double, his earthly messenger. Then the question emerges — what is the mark of the beast? And more explicitly who is the beast? For any reader of Kipling 'mark of the beast' simply implies Fleete's branding of Hanuman. But there is a second sinister connotation, namely a mark which a beast makes (132). Fleete's subsequent actions and his degradations only validate the second meaning. Following this logic it can be shown that by marking Hanuman Fleete actually announces his own bestiality, not Hanuman's. More than one instances bear witness to the fact. When Fleete later develops lycanthropy (although Dr. Dumoise diagnosed him as hydrophobic) the narrator is compelled to call him a beast: "We were dealing with a beast that had once been Fleete" (*LH* 253). Earlier he described the mark upon his left breast thus: "… a mark, the perfect double of the black rosettes – the five or six irregular blotches arranged in a circle – on a leopard's hide" (248). This reference to leopard again carries Biblical

connotation. In the *Book of Revelation* the 'beast' is compared to a 'leopard' and it carries the sign of blasphemy (*Bible* 261). Significantly while desecrating the idol of Hanuman, Fleete, too says in a drunken stupor: "Mark of the B-beasht! *I* made it. Ishn't it fine?" (*LH* 246, italics author's). Even the narrator finds this offensive. In Biblical narrative the beast is bound to face defeat. Fleete too faces humiliation in an abominable way. The very term beast, once uttered, escapes the control of the speaker and instead of referring to Hanuman, actually refers to the speaker. After the sacrilege, remarks Battles, Fleete "cannot speak in a unitary, monological voice, but is forced into dialogue with Hanuman…" (132). The alliance of Fleete and hence the English with Hanuman is also evinced by Kipling's father John Lockwood Kipling. In his *Beast And Man In India* (1891) Lockwood Kipling casts light upon an unconfirmed Hindu myth which figures Hanuman as progenitor of the English nation:

> A notion exists among Hindus that the English may be [Hanuman's] descendants through a female servant of the demon king, who had charge of Sita in captivity, and who treated the prisoner so well that Rama blessed her, prophesying that she should become the mother of a race that would possess the land, and whom Hanumān took to wife. This can scarcely be made out from the poem, but the tradition exists. Others, again, say that the English came from the "monkey army", which unlovely phrase is occasionally used to describe the British nation (61-62).

However coming back to the narrative one cannot deny that the revenge set in motion by the priests is ghastly but the Europeans are warned about this beforehand. After the "Silver Man" touches Fleete's breast an Indian priest utters ominously to Strickland: "Take your friend away. He has done with Hanuman, but Hanuman has not done with him" (*LH* 247). This premonition, narrates Battles, "encapsulates the entire plot of "The Mark of the Beast": object becomes subject, and subject object — Fleete asserts his agency, but is reduced to passivity; he marks Hanuman, but is marked by the Silver Man; he projects anxieties of bestiality onto Hanuman, and is then forced to act them out" (qtd. in David 133). Viewed thus, the revenge of the priests is a miniature of the major potential resistance of the natives against the class

superiority which the Europeans so vividly manifest. Again the Biblical narrative informs us that by bearing the mark or stigma Fleete actually shows his alignment with the forces of darkness and establishes himself on the side of the beast on whom God's wrath would befall.

While Fleete asserts his own agency, i.e. defiling the idol of Hanuman, it is doubly justifiable from his point of view. As Hanuman is ape-god it is only just that he should have a mark on his forehead. Secondly, like their venerable beast-gods the Indians are powerless to resist any aggression. Thus Fleete can carry out this offensive without fearing any retribution. But Kipling portrays a spectacular failure of Fleete (i.e. the colonizer) to define Hanuman (i.e. the colonized Other). The European attempt to assert its authority through the agency of Fleete is subverted. Instead Kipling shows that the priests through the agency of Hanuman and the "Silver Man" define Fleete and thereby participate in the construction of colonial discourse. The tale is, again to quote Battles, "a meditation on the phrase "the mark of the beast" – an exploration of writing ("the mark"), possession and agency ("of"), and bestiality ("the beast")" (133). Traditional colonial discourse demands that the colonized should be portrayed as alien, an unchangeable Other. But in doing so Kipling makes Fleete subsumed by the same discourse, i.e. Fleete is forced to perform bestiality by means of which he seeks to define Hanuman. The confrontation of Fleete and Hanuman effectively mirrors a dark picture of the project of Empire which makes the reader's flesh creep. Yet it will not be proper to assume that it is only Fleete who commits the crime and is duly punished. In torturing the "Silver Man" both Strickland and the narrator only reproduce Fleete's crime and are not spared from punishment. To understand the full extent of Kipling's critique of colonial discourse the reader must realise that the difference between Fleete and the narrator and also Strickland is only superficial. Living in India for years to serve colonial purpose has made Strickland and the narrator tolerant to Indian ways to some extent. But India as a whole remains alien to them just as it is alien to the newcomer Fleete. Thus like Fleete the narrator looks at his surroundings in terms of its difference from the West. This very difference structures and colours the European's understanding of India. In this alien and essentially hostile land he can expect only *occasional and modified supervision* of the Church

of England. Anything exceptional which may emerge in the shape of reversal of roles (i.e. boundary transgression) casts him into bewilderment. It is only natural that he will desire for structure, order and clear boundary and will not hesitate to "bear both textual and physical violence" upon the natives to enforce this desire (134). A minute observation however will reveal that the character of Strickland is subtler than the narrator and also Fleete. Policeman Strickland makes his debut first in *Plain Tales From The Hills* (1888) and like there here also he assumes authoritarian attitude. But more significantly he possesses knowledge of Indian ways and techniques of surveillance. The reader can easily understand why he hates being mystified by the natives. As a policeman his business in profession is to defeat the natives in their own game. But Andrew Hagiioannu notices Strickland's technique of surveillance as 'paradoxical' (33). There can be no doubt that he belongs to a colonial community where everything in a man's life is considered to be a public property. "Such exposure", again observes Hagiioannu, "feeds hostilities towards both native culture and the mother country, whose searching eye is perceived everywhere" (33). The inference which a reader may derive is that along with the native this type of surveillance brings Strickland under colonial jurisdiction and censure thereby placing him in the position of the colonized. Thus while working in disguise Strickland obviously confronts the powerful, authoritarian gaze of his peers from the position of a native. For this reason, his experiences not simply reflect knowledge of native society through the techniques of surveillance and disguise, "but also knowledge of England as an estranged culture, a 'colonised other' " (33).

But when the question of exerting his authority arises, we find that like Fleete the narrator and Strickland have little patience with the natives. Their attitude towards the leper will make this amply clear. Like Fleete they too consider the leper subhuman:

> He [the leper] was perfectly naked, and from time to time he mewed and stopped to dance with his shadow. It was an unattractive sight, and thinking of poor Fleete, brought to such degradation by so foul a creature, I put away all my doubts and resolved to help Strickland from the heated gun-barrels to the loop of twine – from the loins to

> the head and back again - with all tortures that might be needful (*LH* 255).

Obviously, it is the leper's less than human stature which justifies the tortures that follow. In torturing the "Silver Man" they actually parallel Fleete's crime. Where Fleete uses the tip of his cigar to mark Hanuman, Strickland and the narrator used heated gun barrel to mark the "Silver Man". Both Hanuman and his earthly double are found to be in need of definition through colonial discourse. Battles opines that it is precisely "the same rationale [which] operates in the narrator's decision to torture the Silver Man" (136). Kipling vividly depicts the leper's faceless expressions in the lines. ". . . though the Silver Man had no face, you could see horrible feelings passing through the slab that took its place, exactly as waves of heat play across red-hot iron-gun-barrels for instance" (*LH* 256). As the leper has no face, he bears no identity of his own. It is but natural that he will assume the identity thrust upon him by the heated gun-barrel. This gun-barrel turns out to be the instrument of the colonizer to define the blank or never written about colonized.

"The torture scene" writes Battles "makes particularly clear the connection between knowledge and power," 'pouvoir/savoir' in Foucauldian discourse (137). In *Discipline and Punish* (1975) Foucault writes:

> … power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (27).

There can be no doubt that the red hot gun barrel is an instrument to exercise power with the intention of unravelling the enigma of the "Silver Man". But the narrator's scheme is frustrated by the absence of knowledge. In the narrative the narrator is quite explicit about his failure to penetrate this enigma:

> Some years later, when Strickland had married and was a church-going member of society for his wife's sake, we reviewed the

> incident dispassionately, and Strickland suggested that I should put it before the public. I cannot myself see that this step is likely to clear up the mystery;...(*LH* 258-259).

Thus although power is exercised, it fails to produced knowledge, and the mystery remains. The colonizer's another potent weapon (i.e. 'pen', with which the colonized 'Other' will be defined) acknowledges its defeat. It has been pointed out earlier that in torturing the "Silver Man" they parody Fleete's crime. Like Fleete they also asserted their class superiority and the heated gun-barrel was an exact analogue to Fleete's burning cigar-tip. Therefore, like Fleete the narrator and Strickland too are forced to act out the very bestiality they try to impose upon the "Silver Man":

> [Strickland] caught hold of the back of a chair, and, without warning, went into an amazing fit of hysterics. It is terrible to see a strong man overtaken with hysteria. Then it struck me that we had fought for Fleete's soul with the Silver Man in that room, and had disgraced ourselves as Englishmen for ever, and I laughed and gasped and gurgled just as shamefully as Strickland,... (258).

This hysteria clearly comes out at the annihilation of their colonial selves. They are, writes Battles, "no longer truly "English", for on the basis of their actions they have lost all claim to the moral (national, racial) superiority for which "Englishness" stands" (138). The Englishmen are made to destroy the 'difference' on the basis of which binaries like Man/Beast, rational/emotional are built. Citing John Lockwood Kipling's book *Beast and Man in India* (1891), Battles writes that the Indians regarded the English as descendants of Hanuman and therefore are not certainly devoid of bestiality (130-131). This also explains that the hysterical laughter of Strickland and the narrator also marks the moment of their confronting the truth that the beast lies within themselves, not in the Indians.

It is natural that Kipling's English audience will never fully understand the mystery of the "Silver Man". As for the narrator and Dr. Dumoise, they simply lack the socio-cultural framework within which the mystery lies. Even Strickland whose knowledge about India and techniques of surveillance are unattainable to office-bound staffs of the police department, is unable to explain Fleete's transformation.

In his Preface to *Life's Handicap* (1891) from which this story is taken Kipling tries to offer a possible way of approaching the mystery of both Hanuman and the "Silver Man". Kipling acknowledges that the inspiration of writing these stories collected in the volume is an old man named Gobind who used to live in a monastery: the Chubara of Dhunni Bhagat. Kipling writes:

> [Gobind's] tales were true, but not one in twenty could be printed in an English book, because the English do not think as natives do. They brood over matters that a native would dismiss till a fitting occasion; and what they would not think twice about a native will brood over till a fitting occasion: then native and English stare at each other hopelessly across great gulfs of miscomprehension (*LH* ii).

Thus it appears that to understand the stories in *Life's Handicap* and "The Mark of the Beast" in particular the reader must have a proper understanding of Hinduism. Strickland fails because he remains essentially an Englishman and an alien to the religious and cultural framework of India. His conjecture that the "Silver Man" has bewitched Fleete for defiling Hanuman's idol does not serve as a satisfactory explanation. Hanuman's nature and role in the Hindu mythology, opines Battles, will probably solve the mystery of what really happened to Fleete (140).

In his book *Shamans, Mystics And Doctors* (1982) Dr. Sudhir Kakar deals quite exhaustively with the role of Hanuman as a spiritual healer (55-57). Kakar's book tells us that Hanuman's temple in Mehndipur has acquired fame throughout India as a shrine of healing. It promises a quick relief to all patients possessed by malignant spirits through exorcism. Kakar calls these spirits personification of drives repressed by individuals. After the elaborate exorcism the priests announce that the evil spirit is cast out, i.e. the repressed impulses have been destroyed so that the person maybe reintegrated into society. Viewed thus, observes Battles, "Fleete's actions in the temple take on an entirely new significance" (141). He behaves like that of a possessed individual seeking the aid of the 'Lord of the Spirit World', i.e. Hanuman to exorcise a spirit. Even his insolence towards Hanuman has its own rationale because Kakar writes that "… the spirit often becomes angry and abusive, hurling obscenities at the god and mocking the piety of the onlookers" (67). In

response to Fleete's action appears the "Silver Man" who, notes Battles, "serves as an analogue to Mahakal Bhairav," a deity of Hanuman's temple in Mehndipur who administers punishment to the spirit before casting it out (141). No reader can miss the terrible physical convulsion which Fleete betrays when the "Silver Man" is fetched near him:

> When we confronted him with the beast (i.e. Fleete) the scene was beyond description. The beast doubled backwards into a bow as though he had been poisoned with strychnine, and moaned in the most pitiable fashion (*LH* 256).

Battles insists on our accepting the "Silver Man" as the temple's 'punishing deity' (141). Instead of taking him merely as a subhuman creature if we deify him, we may get an explanation of the story's some puzzling and bizarre details. The "Silver Man" endures a whole night of torture. He relents only when the dawn was beginning to break. He chose the moment to cure Fleete when the narrator and Strickland nearly gave up and unstrapped him. After the human soul restored into Fleete's body Strickland observed that it took exactly twenty four hours to complete the transformation. Battles argues that it is merely the passing of time and not the torture which makes "Silver Man" adhere to his torturers' injunction (141). The reader is immediately reminded of the fact that the desecration took place in the previous day just when the dawn was beginning to break. The logic that follows is that the predetermined length of punishment for Fleete (i.e. the spirit which possesses Fleete) is twenty-four hours. The narrator and Strickland and the readers as well take it for granted that the "Silver Man" was responsible for Fleete's transformation. This accounts for their failure to unravel the mystery of the "Silver Man". Following Battles' logic the inference which one derives is that Fleete's actions identify him as 'possessed' deserving punishment. As the possessed ones cannot commit any desecration on their own Strickland was assured that there was no defilement of Hanuman's image:

> When he [Strickland] came back, he said that he had been to call on the Temple of Hanuman to offer redress for the pollution of the god, and had been solemnly assured that no white man had ever touched

> the idol and that he was an incarnation of all the virtues labouring under a delusion (*LH* 258).

The European mind which expresses values like masculinity or rationality is virtually ineffectual before the magical power ascribed to the Indians. This supernatural potency, writes Sandra Kemp, "elude[s] the fixing of cultural stereotyping" (18). Kipling does not necessarily believe in the supernatural but the confrontation between belief and scepticism enables him to think beyond the culturally determined identity. At the end when Strickland searches for a rational explanation the narrator just refrained himself from uttering the oft-quoted phrase in *Hamlet*.

Kipling felt that the Western world should not interfere with non-Christian creeds because these are, writes David Gilmour, "vital to their believers' cultures and social systems" (82). However in this story Fleete had no intention to convert the pagans (i.e. Hindus) whichever way we interpret the story. But it is obvious that the zeal with which Fleete desecrates the idol is inspired by the same zeal with which the missionaries want to impose Christianity on reluctant and defenceless subjects. Again Gilmour notes that this attitude of non-interference was also prevalent in Kipling's father John Lockwood Kipling "who used to scoff at warm evangelical gush" purveyed by the missionaries (81). For Kipling reforming India simply means purging the country of abuses such as child marriage, the poverty and squalor in urban slums. But it does certainly not mean that every Indian must be transformed into Christianity with a good knowledge of English language. During his Indian years and long afterwards Kipling continued to oppose missionary activities in his works. In a letter to Reverend John M. Gillespie, a leading American Presbyterian he confesses:

> It is my fortune to have been born and to a large extent brought up among those whom white men call "heathen"; and while I recognize the paramount duty of every white man to follow the teachings of his creed and conscience as "a debtor to do the whole law," it seems to me cruel that white men, whose governments are armed with the most murderous weapons known to science, should amaze and

> confound their fellow creatures with a doctrine of salvation imperfectly understood by themselves and a code of ethics foreign to the climate and instincts of those races whose most cherished customs they outrage and whose gods they insult (Pinney 2: 205).

As the history of Christianity is not untainted it has no right to teach lessons to other religions.

The grotesque and sensational is deployed to produce the anxiety of the West in its failure to define the East (Gilbert 196). This very lack of comprehension of the Englishman is to quote Battles again "programmatic", enacting the failure of the English and the Indian to communicate (142). For the English this lack of comprehension or knowledge changes into a loss of power despite their apparent mastery over the "Silver Man". In the end they are compelled to acknowledge the beast within themselves and not in the Indians. This acknowledgement is prominent in the last line which "ironizes, deflates and subverts" the voice of authority which they strive so hard to sustain (Sullivan 10).

"At the End of the Passage"

"At the End of the Passage" (1890) is regarded as one of the earliest tales of horror in which Kipling portrays the helplessness of White man before the invincible forces of nature, especially in a place where the Union Jack long established its dominion. The tale first appeared in the *Boston Herald* on 20 July, 1890 followed by *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* publication in the same year. Finally it was incorporated in *Life's Handicap* (1891). Four young men — Hummil the assistant engineer, Mottram the surveyor, Lowndes the civil serviceman and Spurstow the doctor used to gather at the engineer's bungalow once a week. The Indian summer is slowly getting upon them leaving no escape from heat and dust. Hummil, who could not sleep properly for a few days, lives between the thin barrier of sanity and lunacy. He is deprived of the very thing which is regarded as a boon to mankind—'sleep'. When inspite of himself he falls lightly asleep he is haunted by a "blind face that cries and can't wipe its eyes, a blind face that chases him down corridors!" (*LH*

217). This dread encroaches upon his solitary exile so much that he always keeps a spur on his bed to sting himself back to consciousness and to safety. Realising the predicament of his situation Spurstow empties the chamber of Hummil's gun to prevent him from committing suicide like Jevins whose fate Hummil envies now. He administers soporific bromide to assuage Hummil's tense nerves and stays that night with him. But when he advises Hummil to leave the place the latter denies on the ground that the would be replacement, Burkett, is a newly married man with a child. It would be the death of the young woman if she follows her spouse in this hostile terrain. The friends then leave and only after a while Hummil relapses into the terrible circle of insomnia and monophobia. When his friends return to see him on the following Sunday they found Hummil lying dead but the staring eyes reflect "terror beyond the expression of any pen" (220). As is natural Spurstow attributes this death to hallucination and sleeplessness and brushes aside the servants' claim of supernatural visitation. But after taking the photograph of those dead eyes he decides to destroy all the films with the camera because "far from mastering or explaining the unimaginable horror, Western technology can only reproduce it with photographs that must be censored" (Montefiore, *Rudyard Kipling* 25).

It would be superficial to assume that Kipling's diversity of attitude towards the Empire made him portray an essentially weak-hearted protagonist in Hummil whose collapse might serve as a foreboding to the whole enterprise. Kipling's colonizers almost invariably find themselves in a situation where they are provided with no second choice. From the very outset of the story through an impeccable description of prevailing heat wave Kipling slowly prepares his readers to sense the impending catastrophe that one of his characters is to suffer:

> Four men, each entitled to 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness', sat at a table playing whist. The thermometer marked—for them—one hundred and one degrees of heat. The room was darkened till it was only just possible to distinguish the pips of the cards and the very white faces of the players. A tattered, rotten punkah of whitewashed calico was puddling the hot air and whining dolefully at each stroke. Outside lay gloom of a November day in London. There was neither sky, sun, nor horizon,—nothing but a brown purple haze

> of heat. *It was as though the earth were dying of apoplexy* (*LH* 201, italics mine).

Each ingredient of the outside world yields unhealthy influence upon the normal bearings of the Europeans. If the earth is afflicted by apoplexy presumably caused by "the brown purple haze of heat" then her children are likely to be withered away. As Jeffrey Meyers points out:

> The image of the apoplectic earth suggests the mode of death: the loss of sensation and consciousness from brain damage. The unhealthy pallid faces in the darkened prison, the doleful whine and the gloom outside, evoke a mood of desolation and deep despair…The mention of London recalls as a frame of reference the civilized and familiar world that the men unsuccessfully and poignantly strive for. Finally, instead of 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness', Hummil achieves only bondage, despair and death (2-3).

Thus Kipling's ideal colonizers, foot soldiers, the men who keep the wheel of the state in motion stay far away from the hearth of their native homeland. Neither do they lead a life of opulence like the Indian puppet kings of the colonial period. It is in this context that one has to understand Richard Le Gallienne's explanation of White man's situation in India: "To us at home India is long ago a conquest; to the Anglo-Indian, on the contrary, it has daily to be conquered" (78). It is their daily corrosion with a people before whom they must abide by the norms of being White men and their wish to be at 'home' (as the unwary mention of London suggests) that make their experience even more unbearable. They have become even before arriving at thirty in the most literal sense "lonely folk who understood the dread meaning of loneliness" (*LH* 202).

But if all the men suffer alike the question may arise why it is Hummil who is doomed to suffer such terrible aftermath. The answer lies in the fate of Kiplingesque heroes like Daniel Dravot, Carnehan, Morrowbie Jukes, Findlayson, Duncan Parrenness who in the course of their staying in the Indian subcontinent have seen and stirred by the Empire's achievements and drawbacks. It is not

necessary that all of them should die while holding on to their posts until the last. But it is inevitable that they should experience *what is beyond the expression of any pen*, things that even their colleagues and associates may never come across. It is highly likely, as explains Sandra Kemp, that in this story Kipling "combines the *doppelgänger* theme with that of the radical disintegration of the personality into multiple or irreconcilable selves" (17, italics author's). There is no difficulty in understanding that the apparition which Hummil encounters is his 'doppelgänger'. But the problem remains as to why this 'doppelgänger' must be at loggerheads with its original self, i.e. Hummil, the living being. The answer provided by John A. McClure lays bare the inessential layers of Hummil's personality which prevent him from being united with his real self, i.e. 'the doppelgänger':

> Hummil's hallucination projects a terrible insight; he has realized, if only subconsciously, that he himself is blind, terrified, and unable to admit his terror (to wipe away the tears) for fear of being overwhelmed…by terror itself. Hummil has seen the true face behind the imperial façade; he has recognized, behind the image of the brave man with the stiff upper lip, the terrified child. And the vision drives him mad…[His] madness results, the story suggests, from his insights into his own condition…Even Hummil's nightmarish tormentor may have a more-than-imagined existence, for the doctor takes a picture of the creature as recorded on Hummil's eye. What Hummil sees, Kipling suggests, is in some sense the truth. It is because he sees more than his fellows that he goes mad (36).

In Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*[7] (1890) the eponymous villain led a life of forbidden pleasure at the expense of his doppelgänger — a mere portrait. When he tried to kill the hideous portrait, which was but a reflection of his present self, he both symbolically and literally killed himself. Hummil's doppelgänger, i.e. the blind face, bestowed the very horror by which it was blinded upon Hummil's face. It is this ghastly scene which makes Chuma, Hummil's servant, utter:

> …my master has descended into the Dark Places, and there has been caught because he was not able to escape with sufficient speed. We

> have the spur for evidence that he fought with Fear. Thus have I seen men of my race do with thorns when a spell was laid upon them to overtake them in their sleeping hours and they dared not sleep (*LH* 221).

Kipling chose to retain the fear in the dead eyes of Hummil even in the end of the narrative. The readers are left to presume that when the eyes would be closed before going to grave the two selves would be identical.

There is no denying the fact that Kipling's Indian[8] stories of which the present one occupies a place of prominence, are largely influenced by his personal experience and increasingly troubled eyesight. William B. Dillingham, while brushing aside all these literary subtleties, draws the readers' attention to these facts by citing Kipling's letter to his aunt Edith Macdonald on July 11, 1884:

> I assure you Auntie, that for one weary week my fear in the daytime was that I was going to die, and at night my only fear was that I might live to the morning. I wasn't seedy but I was washed out and boiled down to the lowest safe working point, had lost my sense of taste, my temper and *all desire to keep alive a moment longer than was necessary*…as soon as I was alone in the big dark house my eyes began their old tricks again, and I was so utterly unstrung…that they bothered me a good deal. I could only avoid the shadows by working every minute that I could see, and I can say with my hand on my heart—I mean my head—that I cured myself by going sixteen hours grind a day at office…It cured the blue devils *but it about used me up* (67-68, italics mine; qtd. also in Pinney 1:69).

It is the White men's state of being used up in colonies while back in England their brethren are apparently happy at the expense of the formers which makes Kipling probe deeply the looming catastrophe upon the Empire: "…the gates of Hell are opened and riven,/ And the winds of Hell are loosened and driven,…/And the clouds come down in a fiery sheet,/ Heavy to raise and hard to be borne" (*LH* 201).

"The Return of Imray"

"The Return of Imray" was first published as "The Recrudescence of Imray" (1891) in *Mine Own People* followed by the reappearance in *Life's Handicap* in the same year. The story is all about the sudden discovery of the corpse of Imray, a fellow Englishman of Strickland, the policeman. After Imray has gone untraced his bungalow is taken on rent by Strickland. But the policeman's dog, Tietjens, remains always restless there. The anonymous narrator, hosted by Strickland, too senses the presence of a dim figure trying to deliver a message at a night of heavy downpour. The next day brings no reason to cheer, only some chance happenings lead to the ultimate discovery. Strickland climbs up the ceiling to kill snakes. As he pokes the space between the roof and the ceiling-cloth with a rod, he finds a dead body is stuck in the space. With a powerful thrust he makes the corpse collapse upon a table and the next moment the uncertainty regarding the whereabouts of Imray is solved. Upon interrogation by Strickland, Bahadur Khan, the deceased man's former valet confesses the killing of his master. But at the same breath he accuses Imray of the bewitchment and premature death of the former's son.

Andrew Lycett traces the origin of the story to Kipling's staying in the Belvedere bungalow of Allahabad, which survived the ire of the mutiny:

> (It had cloth ceilings to create an air pocket under the thatched roof. Once, when a powerfully unpleasant smell pervaded the house, it was traced to a small dead squirrel trapped under the roof — an incident that Rudyard used in his story 'The Return of Imray') (223).

Kipling's familiarity with India was so great that even the minutest details given by him appear convincing. But at the end Strickland's somewhat melodramatic identification of the criminal may divert the attention of the reader from the undercurrent of fear and self-loss. On one hand Strickland's professional zeal is praised and thought to be exemplary for his peers by critics like Belliappa (74). On the other hand Angus Wilson attributes the credit to the barking of Tietjens and the presence of snakes inside the ceiling cloth (66). Philip Mason, too, refers to the absurdity of the whole situation as the body was not traceable despite hot weather and the household remained unsearched (104-105). But in all these arguments and

counter-arguments little do we care to acknowledge that with the advancement of the story the narrator, who at the outset assumes a detached, philosophical attitude towards life of the White man in colony, finds it difficult to retain his composure. The narrator's account of the missing of Imray can claim no more merit than an apathetic description of an accident:

> Upon a morning, [Imray] was not, and no manner of search could make sure where he might be. He had stepped out of his place; he had not appeared at his office at the proper time, and his dogcart was not upon the public roads. For these reasons, and because he was hampering, in a microscopical degree, the administration of the Indian Empire, that Empire paused for one microscopical moment to make inquiry into the fate of Imray…He was gone, and his place knew him no more (*LH* 260).

The 'microscopic existence' of Imray in the Anglo-Indian society, may perhaps be quickly forgotten. But what the narrator cannot dismiss even in spite of himself is his finding himself at the precipice of physical and psychical vulnerability where Imray was standing.

The first sign of this vulnerability which the narrator feels in the deceased man's bungalow is the feeling of alienation. These men in the service of the Raj are compelled to keep their 'Sahibhood' before the natives. Even in the recluse of domesticity they cannot feel at ease with their surroundings. The narrator gives vent to his oppressive feeling in these lines:

> The heat of the summer had broken up and turned to the warm damp of the rains. There was no motion in the heated air, but the rain fell like ramrods on the earth,…The bamboos, and the custard-apples, the poinsettias, and the mango-trees in the garden stood still while the warm water lashed through them,…(262).

This inability to harmonise with the natural world and being constantly preoccupied by the affairs of the Raj left them careworn in body and barren in mind. These barren minds can only utter incoherent words or remain silent if not endowed with

the gift of speech. These two characteristics are shown in Gail Ching-Liang Low's description of the aftermath of Imray's murder:

> Imray's death is one of partial decapitation. His throat is slit from ear to ear, rendering him *voiceless*; the narrator comments, 'That's why he whispered about the house'. The voiceless ghostly figure only symbolises the de-materialisation that can *overtake the members of the Raj* (123, italics mine).

The process of overtaking the members of the Raj initiates in the narrator's mind when he reverts his gaze from the scene of the falling of Imray's body. While keeping in mind the ghastly manner of Imray's murder this fall appears more distressing in the pen of John A. McClure:

> When Imray's body falls, the narrator experiences the event as a traumatic psychological breakthrough, the emergence into consciousness of some hitherto repressed terror. The mysterious object breaks through the fragile barrier of cloth with a terrible, dreamlike slowness and inexorability…Why does the narrator experience the event in this way; why is he so terrified by the bundle that he dares not face it? The reiterated identification of the narrator with Imray provides a possible answer. Perhaps Imray's body, like the terrible apparition that forces its way into Hummil's vision in "At the End of the Passage", represents the narrator's own repressed self-image, an image of himself as a potential victim of forces beyond his knowledge (40-41).

Earlier it is the intuition of the forthcoming disaster which makes the narrator eager to leave the bungalow. Even after the final revelation of Imray's body he cannot make up his mind as to the source of the 'repressed terror'. Thus for him the actual moment of recognition of the terror comes when he hears that his own servant, like Imray's, has been in service for four years: "I shuddered. My own servant had been with me for exactly that length of time" (*LH* 272). But the course of the narrator's stay in India leads us to believe that in more than one way he is different from his peers who remain ignorant about the different shades and colours of life that the

natives enjoy. It is this ignorance of the 'other' which begets fear in the heart of the colonizer underneath the imperial mask. The only viable way to counter this fear is to get attuned to the native ways of life. The credit of the author lies in the fact that he can explore the theme of stereotypical Occidental fear about the ways of the Orient and yet identify the essential source of this fear ingrained in suffering in isolation which is common for humanity. This is how T. A. Shippey very succinctly describes the situation: "[Kipling's] stories move from the traditional genres of the Eastern tale or ghost story to original explanations of the supernatural in technology and of pain and consolation in everyday life"[9] (1586).

"A Deal in Cotton"

This story first appeared in *Collier's Weekly* on 14 December, 1907 succeeded by *Cassell's Magazine* in the following year. Later it was anthologized in *Actions and Reactions* (1909). The story is set in a British colony in Africa which the author narrates as 'Centro-Euro-Africo-Protectorate'[10]. Although this name and the imaginary town Dupé reveal nothing John McGivering in his reading of this short story identified this colony as Sierra Leone (n.pag.). Adam Strickland, son of the former policeman Strickland who appeared in many earlier stories of Kipling, serves as an Assistant Commissioner in the Protectorate. Suffering from a bout of fever Adam returns to Weston-super-Mare and one day was enjoying the company of some of his sire's soulmates. He amuses the audience by recounting his experiments with cotton plantation. Ironically while his superior officers were engaged in a skirmish with the chief of the Arab slave dealers, Adam albeit unknowingly, found in the chief a great patron for his youthful exertion. While after several contradictory claims and assumptions Adam retired to the tender care of his mother, Imam Din, his Punjabi servant made the rest of the company aware of the whole truth. Nearly poisoned to death Ibn Makarrah (i.e. the Arab slave dealer), impersonating as a 'Hajji' was taken to Adam's camp. Unaware of the identity of the destitute Adam nursed him back to health and to life. After his recovery the grateful rebel intends to help Adam financially in the latter's agro-economical venture. But when he realized that Adam could not accept what would look like a bribe he egged out a plan with

Imam Din. According to the plan Ibn Makarrah begins to acquire slave openly in his benefactor's, i.e. Adam's district. He was arrested, tried and sentenced to fine £ 200 for the patched up offence all by a newly arrived Englishman with delirium of fever. At the end Kipling makes the 'Hajji' find pardon and shelter in the camp of the torch-bearers of civilization. The "patronising deceiving of the adored young man" by the 'Hajji' appears "offensive" in Marghanita Laski's eye but it is also a rude reminder that apart from the fairness of skin the White man has very little to be proud of in the colonies (Laski 135).

Now before probing into Kipling's vision of the complicated relation between the colonizer and the colonized it appears necessary to have a foreknowledge of slave system prevalent in the western part of Africa during the colonial period. From the account of Sir Frederick Lugard we came to know that these colonies were initially set up to promote slave trade[11]:

> In the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, which sat for three and a half months in 1865 'to consider the state of the British establishments on the Western coast of Africa', may be found an account of the origin and objects of each colony,…*The object with which these settlements were established was, in the first instance, the promotion of the oversea slave trade, and when that trade was stopped they were maintained for its suppression*…In 1807 the oversea slave trade was abolished, and a 'languid commerce' took its place on the Gambia, while the Crown took over the administration in Sierra Leone (qtd. in Murray 835-836, italics mine).

It is this vortex of *languid commerce* which drew Adam in contact of first the would be cannibal labourers for his cotton project and then the slave-dealer. It is the primitive lifestyle of the former that shocks Adam's view of world and also kindles in him a desire to be the lord over their lives: "…a Sheshaheli offers you four pounds of woman's breast, tattoo marks and all, skewered up in a plantain leaf before breakfast,…" (*AR* 179). Although repulsed to the core at this pre-civilized gesture the White men metaphorically dried the milk of the Mother Earth by exploiting the cotton growing fertile black soil. Infant mortality and malnourishment

still very much plague the country once exploited by the White settlers. The Mexican-American film actress and producer Salma Hayek's act of breastfeeding a malnourished child in Sierra Leone in 2009 may be interpreted as an act of paying the debt which the Whites owed to the non-Whites.

While acknowledging the presence of violence and greed in Adam's psyche as a sort of contagious disease prevalent among the colonizers it is far from my intention to work out a Simon Legree from him or that of Uncle Tom from Ibn Makarrah. Their relationship surpasses the barriers of an administrator and an outlaw. When Adam's boss in a visit to his subordinate indicates that Ibn Makarrah's head is sought, Adam replied "If his head had been needed, another man should have been appointed to govern my District, for he was my friend" (*AR* 195). Kipling's emphasis is not so much upon the success or failure of Adam's 'cotton-play' (as his superior snubs) as upon taming the hitherto untamed. Speaking materially this 'cotton-play' would have been a total failure had not the 'Hajji' intervened with his money and man-power. All these he did for a boy for whom the aged man felt a spiritual-paternal affection, as recounted by Imam Din: "The Hajji loved our Sahib with the love of a father for his son, *of a saved for his saviour, of a Great One for a Great One*" (*AR* 188, italics mine). In Kipling's imperial ethics the 'saved one' refers to the 'willing colonized' which leaves no doubt upon the identity and nature of the saviour and it is this willingness which is enough to earn greatness. True to the spirit of a great Arab the 'Hajji' hails his master as 'the breed', i.e. capable of upholding the glorious tradition of his race. Together they embark upon running and exploiting a people they abhor. The complex relationship is summed up by Nora Crook thus:

> …the reader realises gradually that the story is a morality and that they are types of Satan and God, a realisation helped by That One's (i.e. Hajji's) exclamation, 'Be quick with my trial. I am not Job'. The implication is that it is Adam who has been allotted that role, and that he is being tested, as Job was tested by God's deliverance of him into the hand of Satan. But, unlike Job, Adam has unwittingly made friends with the Devil, who has in return adopted him as a son (48).

It is this humane relationship which the colonizers and their allies wanted to keep to sustain an inhuman system. And again it is precisely this quality of Adam, to make an ally out of an enemy, that makes him a 'Great One', as Imam Din calls him. This alliance enabled 'Hajji' to go away unscathed while securing the profit of his business and Adam to win the 'Hajji' himself. This latter success in turn helped Adam to curb the root of all enmity even during his staying in England. This mutual profit can never be more aptly put than the utterance of Imam Din towards the conclusion of the story:

> …Great Ones employ words very little between each other in their dealings; still less when they speak to a third concerning those dealings. Also they profit by silence…. (*AR* 195).