Chapter 5

Vision of Tiresias: A Review of Kipling's Poetry

While referring to the duality in Kipling's creative art, Harold Orel writes:

> Rudyard Kipling's history as a writer illustrates one of the most serious problems in modern criticism, the relationship between members of the Establishment (in both England and the United States) and writers who, for one reason or another, do not seem to satisfy the Establishment's expectations of what they *should* be saying and writing (213, italics author's).

It is this area where Kipling refuses to endorse the stance of the Establishment and offers alternative viewpoints that attracts the attention of Kipling scholars in the postcolonial period. In his personal life, too, Kipling chose to stay miles away from the formality and grandeur of the officialdom of the Raj. His refusal of the 'Knighthood' offered to him in 1899 and 1903 by Lord Salisbury and Balfour consecutively, bears evidence to this statement (Carrington 393). The same accounts for his refusal to join the royal party thrown in the honour of the Prince of Wales (later King George V) in 1903 and 1911 on the occasion of his trip to India (393). All these instances only hint at Kipling's notion of the Empire, which far from being monolithic, is replete with contradictions and subversive ironies. In this chapter I am going to focus on several of his poems bearing testimony to his gradual disillusionment with the Raj. A good number of poems such as "The overland Mail" (1886) or "The White Man's Burden" (1899) reflect the myth of White superiority. But at the same time a close examination reveals that they also debunk this myth substantially through some suggestive hints. Other poems such as "Recessional" (1897) or "Mesopotamia" (1917) pose a direct threat to the Empire.

"The Overland Mail"

"The Overland Mail" first made its debut in 1886 in the second edition of the volume entitled *Departmental Ditties and Other Verses.* The poem is wholly about the

transportation of letters to British civilians and military personnel living in exile, mostly in the Indian hill stations like Quetta, Shimla and Darjeeling. These hill stations have become popular retreats for those who found Indian summer intolerable. Peter Hopkirk in his book presented a very graphic description of these annual retreats (150-152). Subtitled as "Foot-Service to the Hills" this poem celebrates a runner's spirit whose job is to carry mails to the exiled British officers. John McLeod in his book *Beginning Postcolonialism* (2000) argues that it is possible to locate the areas of anxiety and ambivalence in his seemingly joyful celebration of imperial service (57-64). McLeod first draws the readers' attention to the fact that the Indian landscape permeates the whole poem. The runner has just received the post from the railway station and is about to commence his foot-journey through the hill road at night. Kipling makes his readers see and realize the threats awaiting the runner on his way. Yet Kipling hails the runner as 'Lord[s] of the Jungle' and expresses satisfaction about his efficiency. Significantly Kipling advises the runner to perform the work in the name of the 'Empress of India', i.e. Queen Victoria. Any reader familiar with colonial discourse will not fail to notice that the 'Lord[s] of the Jungle' (the word 'Jungle' can stand for anything apart from its surface meaning) is ordered to obey the diktat of an overseas Queen and the sheer power of that diktat is enough to overcome all obstacles. Apparently conforming to the role of a royal imperial subject the poet makes the runner overcome all obstacles. India, with all its malignant forces such as dark forests, the rivers, ravines, rock-ridges, tempests and floods cannot check the runner. It is this re-reading which makes the readers compare the runner's ascent to the hill with the conquest of the rocky and rugged Indian terrain by the British with Queen Victoria leading from fore. In accomplishing his task the runner gives the impression of himself as not only loyal to the colonial rule but also as a potent weapon capable of taming a wild India. It is an historical truth that in the days of the Raj it is the loyal Indian soldiers under British generals who kept the imperial pride intact from Peshawar to Lower Burma. The impression which one gets, observes McLeod, is that the benighted runner "moves up,… through the night of a wild, dark undomesticated India" only to come to "the civil daylight of British colonial rule" (60). A reader will obviously relate this fact to British army's venture into the remote parts of India to bring it under the Queen's authority whose messenger might call attention from the sun: "For the great Sun himself must attend

to the hail:—/ In the Name of the Empress, the Overland Mail!" (*CV* 33). No wonder that Peter Keating regarded this poem as "not simply a celebration of the postal service [but]… one of Kipling's most unashamedly joyful endorsements of imperial endeavour, with the postal activity offered as a microcosm of the far-flung Empire" (21). But while Keating calls this poem as the only poem in *Departmental Ditties* written "in a mood of unqualified happiness" (21), John McLeod chose to accept a completely different view to prove this joyful endorsement of Empire rather unsteady.

In order to prove this McLeod makes his readers see that apart from the 'runner' the only human being which figures in the poem is the 'robber' (60). The Queen is too deified to be considered as a being of flesh and blood. Following this logic it appears that although mentioned only once the robber is not at all a marginal figure in this poem that at first reading the reader intends to assume. On the surface he is simply one of the various dangers of the wilderness of India and the runner must avoid him en route. Although Kipling has never suggested, it is quite obvious that like the runner, the robber too, is a native of India. It is here that McLeod invites his readers to recognize the "split positions commonly available to the 'colonised subject' in colonial discourses" (60). Viewing thus the runner must either be a highwayman posing a threat to imperial service by snatching the mail or he must necessarily be a loyal servant who is bound to deliver mail to the exiles. Conforming to the traditional binarism of colonial discourse no other position of the colonized is recognized and this is what accounts for Kipling's portrayal of depopulated landscape. The same reason stands for the namelessness of the runner and the robber. Both of them belong to the wild, rocky terrain of India and must be judged by the yardstick of their loyalty or disloyalty to the Crown.

A close reading of the poem reveals that from the very outset a sharp contrast is imposed between the runner and the robber. In the succeeding lines he almost dispels the fear of the robber by making him retreat into his den, i.e. the jungle. Readers familiar with colonial discourse will obviously relate this fact to the overcoming of all the obstacles by the runner who emerges victorious at the end. But again to cite McLeod:

> …the threat of the robber is *never entirely banished*, but instead haunts the speaker's representation of the runner throughout the poem. Runner and robber threaten to merge. The messages entrusted to the colonised need not get given back to the British. The speaker anxiously recognises that the colonised have the potential for subversion — a recognition which he attempts to disavow (62, italics author's).

While the subversive potential of the runner is explicit the readers cannot forget the indispensability of the same. It is obvious that to accomplish the daily affairs of the government native officials and workers are required. In other words the process of colonization would be jeopardized if the line of communication is blocked between different levels of administration. So for the sake of its very existence the Empire needs thoroughly domesticated stout runners who can simultaneously serve the Empire and curb the untrustworthy robbers. It is this train of thought which leads the readers to the realization of the poet's thrice use of the word 'must': 'must ford', 'must climb' and 'must bear' (*CV* 33). Knowing full well that the demand is too high to meet, the poet wants to have the runner engaged thoroughly in the service of the Empire and thereby quashing any possibility of dereliction on the runner's part. But by doing so the poet only foregrounds the Raj's half-hidden anxiety because dereliction, at worst, keeps alive the possibility of the runner's assuming the role of a brigand. Therefore not content in warning him once, the poet again proclaims in the third stanza: "The service admits not a "but" or an "if"/ While the breath's in his mouth, he must bear without fail,…" (33). There is little room for doubt that Kipling is less a poet than an imperial spokesperson here and this warning is intended to wipe out any chances of disobedience by the runner. Needless to say, all the applause preceded by subsequent warning bestowed upon this young 'Casabianca' is an attempt to hide the unpalatable fact that the runner may use his potential to subvert order.

In the light of Bhaba's definition of mimicry and the nature of 'Other' it is possible to identify the runner as a reformed, recognizable 'Other'. Yet it is this 'Otherness' which makes the Whites suspicious about his course of action and take every precaution to remind the runner of his loyalty to the Empire. Any instance of

indeterminacy i.e. the possibility of the runner's flinching from his duty against the natural calamity or at worst his assuming the role of a highwayman will have in Bhabha's words "profound and disturbing" effect upon the colonizer (*The Location of Culture* 86). Acknowledging his debt to Bhabha, McLeod urges his readers to take note of the fact that in the final stanza the runner's body the description of which was so prominent in earlier stanzas almost becomes invisible (63). Reduced to a 'dot' or 'speck' he is still able to indicate his presence by the jingle of his bells and his hail to the Empress. Clearly he delivers the mails at the end and the mere sight of him is enough for the British exiles to rest in peace. In other words with all their assumed racial superiority and technological advancements the British have to depend on this native runner whose loyalty to the Empire is not beyond doubt. "The *menace* of mimicry", argues Bhabha "is its *double* vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority (88, italics author's). In line with Bhabha's theory McLeod reaches to the conclusion that the runner's hail to the 'Empress of India' is a sign of menace which in turn reverses and mocks the power relations between the colonizer and the colonized (63).

All these arguments and assumptions inevitably draw a picture of the runner who is quite different from the loyal servant of the Raj. The runner, already identified as an ambivalent figure, is both praised and disciplined. His efficiency puts the life of the British in order. But he who is "*almost the same but not quite*" may use this efficiency to sabotage the smooth running of their lives. The threat to British supremacy is at first generated in the figure of the robber and attains full maturity in the runner. Thus Kipling's seeming celebration of the loyal colonized subject lays bare the deep anxiety and disquietude at the prospect of the Other's subversive potential.

"The Ballad of East and West"

"The Ballad of East and West" was first published in *The Pioneer* on 2 December, 1889. Subsequently it was included in *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892). On its first appearance the poem creates much upsurge and much of its fame or infamy rests upon the opening lines: "OH, East *is East, and West is West, and never the twain*

shall meet,/ Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;" (*CV* 233, italics author's). These two lines for which Kipling was stereotyped as a colonial poet apparently epitomizes the irreconciliable racial difference between the Occident and the Orient. "Ironically, Kipling's slogan-like quotability," writes Harry Ricketts, "obscured the real point" (qtd. in Booth 114)[1]. Instead of projecting an affirmation of the essential incompatibility between East and West here Kipling really intended to reconcile the differences, albeit in exceptional circumstances. The succeeding two lines will establish this hypothesis clearly:

> *But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,*
> *When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from*
> *the ends of the earth!* (*CV* 233).

Kingsley Amis observes that the first line, often quoted out of context and the second line to consolidate the implication are largely responsible for "the ignorant castigation of Kipling as a racialist in the full aggressive sense" (54). He adds to this observation that the succeeding two lines serve as an antithesis to the first two lines (54). A brief sketch of the incidents narrated in the poem will help the reader to understand how and in which circumstances the two strong men can transcend these apparently irreconcilable racial and cultural barriers. Kamal, an Afghan chieftain, steals the horse of an English colonel and is pursued relentlessly by the colonel's son. Impressed by the youngster's courage Kamal returns him the horse. As a token of friendship, the English lad presents his pistol to the Afghan and Kamal in turn returns this good gesture by sending his own son to serve in the imperial army. Both the English and the Afghan lad set out for the British camp after taking "the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood" (*CV* 236). It is worthwhile to have a glimpse upon Kipling's own opinion of the Pathans' attitude to the British in general. Citing *Civil and Military Gazette* 1 April 1885, Andrew Lycett writes: "As an Englishman passes, [the Pathans] will turn to scowl upon him, and in many cases to spit fluently on the ground after he has passed" (*Kipling Abroad* 32). Describing their dexterity in carnage Kipling himself writes in the poem "Arithmetic on the Frontier" (1886)

> No proposition Euclid wrote
> No formulæ the text-books know,

Will turn the bullet from your coat,
Or ward the tulwar's downward blow (*CV* 45).

Thus in Kipling's words, the Pathans are:

> magnificent scoundrels and handsome ruffians; all giving the on-looker the impression of wild beasts held back from murder and violence, and chafing against the restraint. The impression may be wrong; and the Peshawari, *the most innocent creature on earth,* in spite of History's verdict against him; but not unless thin lips, scowling brows, deep set vulpine eyes and lineaments stamped with every brute passion known to man,…(qtd. in Lycett, *Kipling Abroad* 32, italics mine).

This view strikes an almost incredible note of harmony with Bhabha's projection of the 'Other'. Written more than hundred years afterwards, Bhabha describes the colonized 'Other' in the following manner:

> The black is both savage (cannibal) and yet the most obedient and dignified of servants (the bearer of food); he is the embodiment of rampant sexuality and yet *innocent as a child*; he is mystical, primitive, simple-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished liar,… (*The Location of Culture* 82, italics mine).

Although strikingly handsome in physiognomy the frontiermen like the Africans are presumed to be monolithic in postcolonial discourse. Thus after taking the oath of 'Brother-in-Blood', the English lad can accept the young Afghan as he would accept any newly recruited loyal English soldier. But the kith and kin of the frontier youth would remain as hostile to the British as they were before: "Belike they will raise thee to Ressaldar when I am hanged in Peshawur!" (*CV* 236). Thus although in outer appearance the Afghans are irreconcilably 'Other', far from endorsing strict binarism Kipling creates a sense of camaraderie between the English lad and the Afghan chieftain. In the discussion of "The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes" (1885) in chapter 3, I have already explored the dynamism that existed between the White rulers and their non-White subjects. This new approach to the discourse of

Orientalism reveals that the East/West encounters do not remain confined to the field of the unequal and essentially hostile power-relations of colonialism. Instead this approach argues in favour of a sympathetic representation of colonized subject. Kipling, himself having Indian experience for many years, could not turn a blind eye to these few instances of loyalty and love in a country where people are generally presumed to be either obsequious or inimical. This almost impeccable delineation of harmony existing between the English lad and the frontier youth ("They have looked each other between the eyes, and there they found no fault" 236) does not present the poet as the mouthpiece of racial superiority which is often implied in the first line: "OH, East *is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,…*" (233).

But apart from this theoretical approach if we probe the background of the poem we are yet to confront an almost shocking revelation of Kipling's questioning the racial superiority. Citing Karl W. Deutsch and Norbert Wiener, Vasant A. Shahane tells that the English colonel in the poem is Sir Robert Warburton, famed as the founder of 'Khyber Rifles' (111-112). This information also draws the curtain from the truth that Jr. Warburton, i.e. the English lad in the poem, is of interracial lineage. Robert Warburton, who as a hostage in Kabul in 1842, was released only after the intervention of an Afghan princess. He later married the princess and his son is the hero whom Kipling so admiringly presents in this poem. Thus Shahane is right to claim that "…East and West had already met in the person of Warburton, Jr. and as such one of the two principal characters in the ballad nullifies the argument of the incompatibility of East and West" (112). Implicit in this assumption is the question as to why Kipling chose to suppress the parentage of the English lad. The reason put forward by Shahane makes the reader realize a poetic mind which far from being prejudiced is actually very humane chalking out a bridge of love and sympathy between the ruler and the ruled. In the poem by placing Jr. Warburton and the son of the Afghan chieftain side by side Kipling conforms to the Occidental approach to the Orient. But although White and non-White, advanced and backward, superior and inferior are allowed to confront each other, Kipling did not allow the White to be triumphant over his non-White counterpart. This confrontation achieves credibility and poignancy simply because the English lad is shown as a pure Anglo-Saxon. If Kipling disclosed his real identity the assertion: *"But there is neither East*

nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,/ When two strong men stand face to face,…" (*CV* 233, italics author's) could have been put into question and along with it the poet's sincerity about his own creation. But here Kipling actually did endeavour "to synthesize this in-group feeling with the notion of the union of two powerful men who would overcome the barriers of East and West" (Shahane 112). By so doing the poet attempts to resolve the tension generated in the first line and admitted that the Whites need not be necessarily superior to non-Whites.

"Danny Deever"

The first poem of *Barrack-Room Ballads*, "Danny Deever", was initially published in the weekly *The Scots Observer* on 22 February, 1890. Composed in the 'question and answer' sequence the poem presents a sickening picture of a soldier in the gallows and the reaction of his comrades thereof. The fateless soldier, Danny Deever, is convicted of shooting a sleeping colleague. The readers are provided with no reason for his crime and the soldiers are mere puppets whose absence will impede the formality required for the occasion. This inescapable condition standing witness to the persecution of fellow man is rendered poignant in the lines:

> They are hangin' Danny Deever, they are marchin' of 'im round,
> They 'ave 'alted Danny Deever by 'is coffin on the ground;
> An' 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute for a sneakin' shootin' hound— (*CV* 395-396).

Ann Parry questions the righteousness of a system that "requires a man to die like 'a whipped dog', observed by those who have been his closest companions" (*The Poetry of Rudyard Kipling* 43). Further, it lays bare before the soldiers that for the system they are bereft of individuality and serve only as instruments to achieve goal. Viewing thus both the living and the dead emerge as victims: "What makes that front-rank man fall down? said Files-on-Parade" (*CV* 395). What befalls on "front-rank man" can befall anyone comprising the file. It is through the cadence of the verse that the precarious situation of the individual is seized and permeated throughout. As observes T. S. Eliot:

> The regular recurrence of the same end-words, which gain immensely by imperfect rhyme [*parade* and *said*] gives the feeling of marching feet and the movement of men in disciplined formation — in a unity of movement which enhances the horror of the occasion and the sickness which seizes the men as individuals; and the slightly quickened pace of the final lines marks the change in movement and in music. There is no single word or phrase which calls too much attention to itself, or which is not there for the sake of the total effect; so that when the climax comes…..… the atmosphere has been prepared for a complete suspension of disbelief (271).

It is perhaps this prolonged disbelief at the ritualistic yet brutal execution of a man which at the end insinuates the innocence of the victim: "What's that so black agin the sun?" (*CV* 396). The spectacle of Danny Deever's mortal body silhouetting the sun reminds us the execution of Christ which appeared to have blackened the universe (Parry 43). Justifiably Lord Birkenhead, one of Kipling's biographers, calls the poem a 'macabre masterpiece' which is set to debase the morale of soldiers at Home and abroad (121).

"Fuzzy-Wuzzy"

Written in the form of a toast to the heroic exploits of the Sudanese troops under Mahdi[2] in 1884-1885, "Fuzzy-Wuzzy" was first published in the *The Scots Observer* on 15 March 1890. Later this piece was included both in *Departmental Ditties* (1886) and *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892). The colloquial name of the poem traces its origin, explains Roger Ayers, to one of the two tribal groups — Baggara and Beja, opposition of Britain and her ally Egypt. (n.pag.). It is a significant population of the latter group that can be easily marked by their shaggy and frizzled pattern of hair resulting in the British soldiers calling them 'Fuzzy-Wuzzy'. General Gordon[3], the Commander of the British forces, virtually lay besieged and the attempt to relieve him was meeting with ferocious resistance. The first few lines of the verse are an acknowledgement of heroic feats of the Sudanese troops against the imperial force vastly superior in firepower:

WE've fought with many men acrost the seas,
An' some of 'em was brave an' some was not:…
But the Fuzzy was the finest o' the lot…
'E cut our sentries up at Sua*kim*,…
…Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan;
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin'
man;… (*CV* 398).

The publication date of the poem itself tells us that Kipling was well aware of the fate of Gordon. Yet he chose to be munificent in his acclamation of the non-White oppositions of the Empire. The possible reason for this may be, as explains Katharine Moore:

> …the idea that Fuzzy-Wuzzy should ever demand independence did not seem to occur to Kipling, for the conception of the good native, the wise and brave 'child' who fulfils his destiny contentedly in service, dominated his view of the relationship between the coloured and white races… (56).

Not surprisingly, in the wake of Kipling's growing reputation as a poet, this poem along with "Mandalay" (1890) and "Danny Deever" (1890) became "household words" (Gallienne 27).

"Loot"

The poem "Loot" was first published in the *The Scots Observer* on 29 March, 1890 and was subsequently incorporated in *Departmental Ditties* (1886). The subject matter of this rather unkindly held verse is looting or plundering by the victorious imperial army after the end of wars. A veteran soldier recounts his experiences to a young recruit thereby instructing the latter. The most vivid and yet visibly unpolished description of the basic human instincts when let loose from the bounds of morality and military discipline can offend any critic and ordinary readers alike:

If you've knocked a nigger edgeways when 'e's thrustin' for your life,

You must leave 'im very careful where 'e fell;
…Then the sweatin' Tommies wonder as they spade the beggars under
Why lootin' should be entered as a crime.
So, if my song you'll 'ear, I will learn you plain an' clear
'Ow to pay yourself for fightin' overtime (*CV* 408).

It is this near photographic accuracy of the description of calculated vandalism underpinned by the seemingly authorial approval that makes Kipling face the wrath of literary circle. In Edward Shank's opinion the poem "is wholly detestable, and it makes the commentator on Kipling turn red when he endeavours to explain it" (81). Hilton Brown is equally censorious in viewing it as a piece where the "… [poet's] intensity spills over into hysteria…"(198). However the poem is also fortunate to receive more favourable and perceptive reading. In his Introduction to *A Choice of Kipling's Verse* (1941) T. S. Eliot writes:

> This is to read an attitude into the poem which I had never suspected. *I do not believe that in this poem he was commending the rapacity and greed of such irregularities, or condoning rapine…[H]is concern was to make the soldier known, not to idealise him*. He was exasperated by sentimentalism as well as by depreciation or neglect — and either attitude is liable to evoke the other (26-27, italics mine).

That Kipling's purpose is to reflect only on the normal and yet forbidden activities of the soldiers without any serious forethought is revealed by the cockney dialect. Christie Davies comments:

> The utterly facetious language is necessary if the soldier's advocacy of looting is to remain pure farce; were the verses written in standard English they would be too close to seriousness for comfort given the repellent nature of the events that are being described (49).

But by showing the soldiers' unsoldierly acts Kipling unwisely displays a spirit of jingoism which in turn tarnishes the image of the Empire in the colonies.

"The Widow at Windsor"

"The Widow at Windsor" first appeared in the *The Scots Observer* on 26 April, 1890 and subsequently included in *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892). The message of the poem, although at first reading, appears as a hailing of the Queen Victoria by the lower echelon of the imperial establishment, turns out to be a jibe at the Queen herself. Stretched from the Pole to the Tropics, the Empire, reflects Enamul Karim, can be maintained by fellow-feeling, equality and charity among its subjects widely dispersed on the basis of race, class and religion (165). But the speaker is all praise for the 'babarious wars', 'the sword an' the flame', 'the guns' and the soldiers' keen attention to the bugle. The prevailing note of swagger, writes Harry Ricketts, "is undercut by parenthetical lines whose self-rhyme spells out the human cost" (115). The concerned lines standing witness to this observation are:

> Walk wide o' the Widow at Windsor,
> For 'alf o' Creation she owns:
> We 'ave bought 'er the same with the sword an' the flame,
> An' we've salted it down with our bones.
> (Poor beggars! — it's blue with our bones!) (*CV* 411,
> qtd also in Ricketts 115).

Obviously Kipling finds himself at odds with the recounting of the bloodstained episodes of annexation and expansion. But the curious aspect of the poem lies in the composer's act of making the soldiers denounce the Queen instead of denouncing the soldiers directly. The possible explanation is that the soldiers fall under the category of those imperial subjects who bear the brunt of annexation and expansion witnessing all the while tyranny, despotism and indifference in the imperial army which they in turn perpetrate upon the conquered subjects. Thus the indispensable organ of the imperial establishment, the armed forces, is made to see the true nature of the Empire and significantly, the poem was popular with the soldiers (Ricketts 115).

"Mandalay"

"Mandalay" was first published in the *The Scots Observer* on June 21, 1890 and was subsequently incorporated in the *Barrack-Room Ballads* two years later. Through the mouth of a presently discharged British soldier the poet gives vent to his nostalgic recollection of the days spent in Burma. In his 1899 visit to Burma Kipling fantasized about a native girl in the premises of a pagoda as his biographer, Charles Carrington, cited from the poet's memoir: "I should better remember what the pagoda was like,… had I not fallen deeply and irrevocably in love with a Burmese girl at the foot of the first flight of steps" (122). Uniting in her delicate physique all the mysteries and charms of the East the girl, in the poet's imagination, keeps sitting with " 'er arm upon my shoulder an' 'er cheek again my cheek" (*CV* 417). The surrounding atmosphere — the movement of the palm leaves in the wind, the tinkling of the temple bells and the air heavily laden with 'spicy garlic smells' — all help to immortalize the perhaps not too strong freak of the soldier/poet. But back in his room in London the poet is visibly upset with the 'blasted English drizzle' outside and with 'beefy face an' grubby" housemaids inside. Thus the longing for an exotic maiden from 'somewheres east of Suez', some 'cleaner, greener land' — all retain the potentiality to categorize the poem as any familiar Occidental depiction of the Oriental charm.

What makes the verse different from any hackneyed love lyric is Kipling's use of cockney dialect. This not only saves the romantic atmosphere but also makes the identity of the speaker convincing as belonging to the lower stratum. This view of mine is corroborated by Charles Allen who sees the poem as "almost maudlin" but like "Gunga Din", "Loot" and "Fuzzy-Wuzzy" it expresses the sentiment of Victorian working class (307). The point is emphasized by Jack Dunman in no uncertain terms: "…*Mandalay*, with its more elaborate rhythmic scheme, and with clinching lines…is a real poem in working-class language" (244). While castigating the poem for "refuse of language", Le Gallienne could not but acknowledge "Kipling's wonderful transmuting use of the commonest material" (30). Kipling's notion of the Empire is certainly broad in its scope and when the question of expression comes it can assume several personae to depict different aspects. The

assumption of working class/soldier identity, which manifestly confronts his rightist leanings, is but a small instance of his constantly reflexive authorial stance.

"Gunga Din"

The poem first appeared in the *New-York Tribune* on May 22, 1890 and was subsequently collected in *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892). After the short story "The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes" (1885) this is perhaps the most telling example of the camaraderie that existed between the British and the Indian people. The eponymous hero of the poem is a regimental 'bhisti', i.e., a water-career, dedicated in his duty to quench the thirst of the British soldiers. The first person narrator, an anonymous British soldier, is all praise for the poor 'bhisti' who stands out quite distinctly from the rest of his non-White brethren:

> Of all them blackfaced crew
> The finest man I knew
> Was our regimental bhisti, Gunga Din (*CV* 404).

With his ever assuring appearance with skin bag full of water before the needy soldiers, his tending of the injured ones at nightfall and the act of supplying ammunition when called for he becomes a ray of hope for Tommies even at the most miserable minutes. It is this selfless conduct which the narrator feels obliged to salute:

> An' for all 'is dirty 'ide
> 'E was white, clear white, inside… (405).

Viewed from the twenty-first century context it is easy to condemn such lines as unashamed betrayal of racial prejudice. But the poet's innocence of such a charge is evinced by K.C. Belliappa: "in the eighteen-nineties, the phrase, 'a white man', did not only mean man with an unpigmented skin; it had a secondary symbolic meaning: a man with the moral standards of the civilized world" (61).

That Gunga Din's moral standard even surpasses the standard of so-called civilized world is manifest when the supreme moment of sacrifice arrives. Mortally

struck by a bullet the 'bhisti' still takes care to place the already wounded narrator inside a carriage before breathing his last. The White narrator recognises the true heroism in the lower class Indian bearer that outshines the brow-beating bravery of the White masters:

> By the livin' Gawd that made you,
> You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din! (*CV* 406).

Kipling's account of the unflinching loyalty of Gunga Din to his White masters puts forward a simple truth the colonizers dare not acknowledge openly. Without the whole-hearted effort and sympathy of the Indians and non-Whites in general colonial rule will not sustain in any part of the globe. The fact of the narrator's lying wounded indicates, again to use MacKenzie's words, "specific colonial moment(s)" marked by vulnerability (11). That such moments exist when the Whites lay in dire need for service from their non-White subordinates is corroborated by Pettigrew by citing the historical account of the siege of Delhi that took place in 1857 (7). The happenings of the siege serve as motivation for this verse. The head 'bhisti', Jurna[4], the prototype of Kipling's protagonist, laid down his life exactly the same way as composed by Kipling. For this act of bravery in the face of extreme adversity is rewarded with a posthumous 'Victoria Cross'. The Muse of the Empire beneath the façade of cockney dialect and easily discernible racial pride conveys his tributes to the indispensable service of the non-White associates without whom the Union Jack could never be hoisted at the top of the Red Fort.

"Screw-Guns"

The poem "Screw-Guns" was first published in the *National Observer* on 12 July 1890 and was anthologized in *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1890). Kipling's spokesperson is the anonymous British military personnel 'I' who in the second stanza promptly assumes the plural 'we' to voice the message of the Crown to the tribal people of Indian subcontinent. These tribes are often at feud with each other and not occasionally wreck havoc on plainsmen and their properties upon whom the British interest is centred. In a clear and apparently unambiguous note he warns all

the tribes — stretching from the Nagas of the North-Eastern Frontier to the Afridis of the North-Western — to pay obeisance to the Union Jack. Otherwise they are to become the food for the cannon:

> So when we take tea with a few guns, o' course you will know what
> to do — hoo! hoo!
> Jest send in your Chief an' surrender — it's worse if you fights or
> you runs:
> You may hide in the caves, they'll be only your graves, but you can't
> get away from the guns! (*CV* 402).

The nature and effectiveness of the gun of which the poet is so enthusiastic is expounded by Ralph Durand in the following lines:

> *Screw-guns* are guns used in mountain warfare, made in light pieces which can be screwed together when the gun is to be used or packed separately on the backs of mules for transport. No piece must be longer than the length of a mule from neck to rump, or weigh more than 255 pounds. The whole gun is in five pieces. These can be unloaded, put together, and the first round fired within the space of one minute. Mules are employed in mountain batteries in preference to horses, as they are more sure-footed (31).

Roger Ayers takes the trouble to specify the nature of this 'sure-footed' killing machine as 2.5 inch (5,1 cm.) R. M. L. Screw-Gun which was in use as late as the Second Boer War of 1899-1902 (n. p.). Incidentally Bertolt Brecht took the inspiration of his famous "Cannon Song" of *The Threepenny Opera* (1928) from Marx Möller's translation of the *Barrack-Room Ballads* (Lyon 93). The relevant lines of Brecht are:

> …The troops live under
> The cannon's thunder
> From the Cape to Cooch Behar.
> Moving from place to place
> When they come face to face

With a different breed of fellow
Whose skin is black or yellow
They quick as winking chop him into beefsteak tartare
(Brecht 3).

Brecht's pastiche of Kipling's verse filters the blood-stained history of colonial expansion in our minds. The Prophet of the Empire in the present verse paints a picture of annexation with sugar-coated joviality and triumphalism.

"Snarleyow"

The poem "Snarleyow" was first published in *National Observer* on 29 November 1890. Unlike the jubilant attitude betrayed by the soldiers in "Screw-Guns" in the present poem Kipling paints a grim picture of the war. Although the site of the battle is not specified Roger Ayers assures us that this one, beyond doubt, was fought in India (n.pag.). Snarleyow, the eponymous soldier, was grievously wounded in the course of the battle. His cry for help to his own comrades fell into deaf ears. Instead, finding him useless and a burden in field his own men stabbed him to death: "They saw 'is wounds was mortial, an' they judged that it was best, / So they took an' drove the limber straight across 'is back an' chest" (*CV* 410). In the face of extreme adversity the artilleryman, to whom much importance was attributed in colonial warfare, can turn out to be a loser seeking to save his skin: "But down in the lead with the wheel at the flog/ Turns the bold Bombardier to a little whipped dog!" (410).

The real life association of the account of Snarleyow is brought to the reader's notice by Charles Carrington: "…'Snarleyow' is an episode from Sergeant Bancroft's history of the Bengal Horse Artillery,…" (104). In his scrupulous research on Bengal Horse Artillery and the source of Kipling's poem Roger Ayers presents a more, if not humane then tolerable, account of the actual happenings (n.pag.). In Ayers's findings "Snarly Yow" (Snarleyow in Kipling's) is a horse who after being struck by a bullet in the stomach was forced to render service with its innards dangling about. Likewise Snarleyow's brother who is left unmoved at the

death of the former in Kipling's verse mirrors the man who is made to jump on the mangled body of his own brother in Ayers's account. Every single instance of inhumanity is not only permissible but is actually ordered to perform in the name of military necessity which the composer of this verse tersely acknowledges:

> The moril of this story, it is plainly to be seen:
> You 'aven't got no families when servin' of the Queen —
> You 'aven't got no brothers, fathers, sisters, wives, or sons —
> If you want to win your battles take an' work your *bloomin' guns!*
> (*CV* 410-411, italics mine).

The intermittent insistence on forsaking human values and brandishing the 'bloomin' guns' are but two sides of the same coin — namely colonial annexation and expansion. The sole purpose of the present verse is, therefore, to unfold the dehumanizing mechanism that is instrumental to sustain colonialism outside the English Channel.

"The English Flag"

"The English Flag" was first published on 3 April 1891 in *The St. James's Gazette* and was afterwards compiled in the *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892). The occasion of this poem is the fluttering of the Union Jack on a burning building and the fact of its remaining unscathed even after being fallen down. This historical background of the poem has been put to the reader's notice by Ralph Durand in the following lines:

> On 27th March, 1891, during an important trial of Irish political agitators, the court-house at Cork caught fire. Political feeling at the time was at fever-heat, and the crowds outside the building laughed and cheered as the building burned, especially when the flagstaff fell with the Union Jack still flying from it. The crowd, in the words of the *Times* correspondent, 'seemed to see significance in the incident'. If so, they must a few days later have been impressed by the fact that, when the ruins were examined, the flag was found uninjured, though

> the flagstaff and halliards had been destroyed. It had been caught in falling in an unburnt angle of the wall (82-83).

For the Prophet of Empire no visible occasion can be so inspiring as this. So the first stanza builds up the motto of the verse in a nutshell:

> WINDS of the World, give answer! They are whimpering to and fro —
> *And what should they know of England who only England know?*[5] —
> The poor *little street-bred people* that vapour and fume and brag,
> *They are lifting their heads in the stillness to yelp at the English Flag!* (*CV* 221, italics mine).

The poem's passionate attribution of Britain's present elevation to her sons, the overseas colonial administrators, struck the right chord in an ardent imperialist like Tennyson who instructed his son to congratulate the composer of the present verse (Gilmour 96). In reply to Hallam Tennyson, son of Lord Tennyson, Kipling gratefully writes:

> When the commander in chief notices a private of the line the man does not say "thank you", but he never forgets the honour and it makes him fight better…If there be any good in my verses [Lord Tennyson] knows better than I, that that is due to no power of my own (Pinney 2: 33).

It hardly requires acknowledgement that Kipling was no commander in the battlefield. But he takes it upon himself to denounce the Liberal politicians at Home headed by W. E. Gladstone who supported the strike of the London dockers in 1889 and also raised voice against the discrepancy shown to the Irish labourers. Such actions and a general apathy towards the major political events of the overseas colonies, feels Kipling, will provide ample opportunities to the 'street-bred people' to yelp at the Union Jack. But what torments the poet's soul is not merely the irreverence betrayed by political dissenters but rather the psychological inertia, the stillness, prevailing on almost every stratum of society. In a bid to rouse the nation out of its present hibernation Kipling calls forth the Four Winds to witness the sacrifice of the Britons to uphold the glory of their flag:

Never the lotos closes, never the wild-fowl wake,
But a soul goes out on the East Wind that died for England's sake—
…Because on the bones of the English the English Flag is stayed (*CV* 223).

The personification of the winds to bear testimony to Britain's glory, writes Peter Keating, reminds the reader of Francis Bret Harte's poem "What the Engines Said" published in 1869 (12). In Harte's poem engines, epoch-making output of industrial revolution and favourite with Kipling[6], declare their irresistible passage throughout the world. Like Harte's engines Kipling's winds are the strongest envoys from the overseas to keep alive the memory of the sons of the soil toiling abroad.

The poet's perception of threat to the Empire and Her cause has two distinct shades — reactions at the happenings in colonies and at Home. The present poem, belonging to the latter category, perfectly reflects the complex psyche of Kipling that is able to foresee the danger and forewarn the nation.

"The Long Trail"

"The Long Trail" was first published in the November 1891 issue of *The Cape Illustrated Magazine* and collected under the title "L' Envoi" in *Barrack-Room Ballads and Other Verses* (1892) but included as "The Long Trail" in the Definitive Edition. In the present poem Kipling recounts his earlier sea voyages stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific. That the poet's recollection is not confined to the external pageantry of foreign countries but also incorporates so trivial a thing as the name of a vessel as 'bucking Bilbao tramp', astonishes the reader: "And I'd sell my tired soul for the bucking beam-sea roll/ Of a black Bilbao tramp,…" (*CV* 164). Marghanita Laski attributes this quality to Kipling's first-hand experience of the docks and refutes the general conjecture of poetic imagination (101). The speaker, while versifying his past experiences, makes address to one "dear lass" — Caroline Balestier, to whom he was engaged — and seeks her unwavering companionship. "In an early draft of the poem", notes Peter Keating, Kipling addresses a "dear lad", presumably Wolcott Balestier, an American writer and publisher and later his

brother-in-law (87). But this alteration of gender cannot make any difference in the essence of these oft-cited and controversial lines:

> Ha' done with the *Tents of Shem*, dear lass,
> We've seen the seasons through,
> And it's time to turn on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
> Pull out, pull out, on the Long Trail — the trail that is always
> new! (*CV* 164, italics mine).

The Biblical phrase 'Tents of Shem' refers to Genesis 9: 27, where Noah blesses his son Japheth for covering the naked portion of the former's body and lays curse on Ham and Cannan for neglecting their duty. Charles Carrington doubts that the poem has any success to convey "subjective undertone" (193). But Martin Seymour-Smith argues that:

> …Kipling was obsessed, as were so many men of his generation, with a nasty Jew-commerce equation. He was always speaking of 'Jew hawkers' and suchlike: clearly the Jewish mentality, in his estimation, and especially when he was not giving the matter thought, was identical with the buying and selling (in modern terms the 'marketing') mentality. So, however, was Wolcott Balestier, who really was a buyer and seller…Kipling's attitude towards Wolcott is: *'Stop this Jew-like buying and selling and talking of partnerships with Heinemann and come away with me to lead the roving life! Leave the tents of Shame where we saw (or wanted to see) each other's nakedness!* (186, italics mine).

Kipling's reproach to Wolcott Balestier is all but severe. And that mild complaint also fades away with the news of his death in December 1891. The irony that emerges from the whole scenario is that Wolcott's mercantile attitude is but a miniaturized manifestation of the mercantile attitude of the 'Nation of the Shopkeepers'[7], i.e. the British, whose colonial enterprise was held by Kipling from a romantic and idealistic point of view. In a sense Kipling's advice to Wolcott is: leave the petty commercial engagements and be a part of the worldwide colonial enterprise.

"Hymn Before Action"

Initially titled "A Little Sermon" this poem first appeared in *The Echo* in 1896 and was later collected in *The Seven Seas* (1896). The verse is an immediate reaction to the Venezuelan Crisis of 1895[8] and Kruger Telegram of January 3, 1896, the latter being mentioned in the analysis of the next poem "Recessional" (1897). Composed in the form of a dirge Kipling borrowed heavily from Samuel John Stone's 1866 hymn "The Church's One Foundation". The very opening lines present a picture of the Empire facing fire and brimstone from every corner of the earth:

> THE earth is full of anger,
> The seas are dark with wrath,
> The Nations in their harness
> Go up against our path… (*CV* 323).

In the remaining lines of the first stanza followed by next five the reader can have "Kipling's complex vision of the imperial task, his sense of the need for order, his reminders of the duties of the White Man's Burden, and resigned acceptance of the inevitable decline of empire" put in a nutshell (MacDonald, *The Language of Empire* 169). But it is not the war cry or prediction of troubled years ahead, characteristic features of his poems such as "Screw-Guns" (1890), "Recessional" (1897) or "Mesopotamia" (1917) that draw our attention towards the poem. Rather the poet utters a soulful prayer to the Lord Jehovah beseeching the divinity to grant strength to British nation to bear celestial justice. But at the same breath Kipling vouchsafes to the Lord the innocence of the colonized people in all the wrongdoings of the Crown. Thus although the non-White people of the colonies are polytheistic they deserve pardon by virtue of their childlike simplicity and devotion to the Empire:

> For those who kneel beside us
> At altars not Thine own,…
> Who lack the lights that guide us,
> Lord, let their faith atone!
> If wrong we did to call them,
> By honour bound they came;

Let not Thy Wrath befall them,
But deal to us the blame (*CV* 323).

In Kipling's code of ethics this should be the ideal gesture to the colonized people who have to forsake their own comfort to stand by their White superiors in the hour of need. In return the British, too, are duty-bound to look after the welfare of their subordinates. Himself holding an obligation to his being a member of the race of the colonizer Kipling did his share of duty towards the Crown by refusing to accept payment when anthems like the present poem started to be published in *The Times* (Gilmour 118).

"Recessional"

Subtitled as "1897" the poem "Recessional" first appeared on July 17, 1897 in *The Times* and after a few days appeared again in *The Spectator* (July 24). After many subsequent publications it was finally anthologized in the 1919 edition of *The Five Nations*[9]. In his unfinished autobiography *Something of Myself* (published posthumously in 1937) Kipling narrates the occasion of penning the poem thus:

> …at the back of my head there was an uneasiness, based on things that men were telling me about *affairs outside England*. (The inhabitants of that country never looked further than their annual seaside resorts.)…into the middle of it all came the Great Queen's Diamond Jubilee, and a certain optimism that scared me. The outcome, as far as I was concerned, took the shape of a set of verses called 'Recessional', which were published in *The Times* in '97 at the end of the Jubilee celebrations. It was more in the nature of a *nuzzur-wattu* (an averter of the Evil Eye),…(120 italics mine).

Now in order to understand the identity and nature of the 'Evil Eye' it is necessary to cast light upon the political atmosphere of contemporary Europe. Kipling's biographer David Gilmour informs the reader that after the end of the Jameson Raid (1895-96)[10] German monarch Kaiser Wilhelm declared Germany a world Empire in a telegram to Transvaal President Paul Kruger while congratulating him for

successfully thwarting the Raid (116). The proposed construction of Berlin-Bagdad Railway[11] and the expansion of German Navy made Kipling visualize the forthcoming Great War in the continent. However Kipling cherished high hope upon the naval power of his motherland. On 24 June, 1897 he went to Spithead with his father John Lockwood Kipling to observe the great Jubilee naval review where nearly one hundred and sixty-five fleet took part. Awestruck by the magnificent spectacle he wrote in a letter to William Joshua Harding on the very next day:

> "Never dreamed that there was anything like it under Heaven. It was beyond words — beyond any description! Perhaps the most effective sight in its suggestion of deviltry was the line of t[orpedo]. b[oat]. d[estroyer]'s (qtd. in Pinney 2: 303).

With such a power in command he had reason to believe that England would not face much trouble to be ahead of Her enemies. In a letter to Rider Haggard he reflects this optimism:

> …any nation save ourselves, with such a fleet as we have at present, would go out swiftly to trample the guts out of the rest of the world; and the fact that we do not seems to show that even if we aren't very civilized, we're about the one power with a glimmering of civilization in us…we've always had it somewhere in our composition (qtd. in Cohen 33).

Despite all these jubilant proclamation of the imperial exploits the Patriot Kipling had to sober his tone before the prophet Kipling. If the former could boast of having civilization the latter was afraid of losing the glimmering of it not to the uncivilized but to the enemy of civilization.

An evident indication of this soberness is the poet's resorting to Biblical allusions to warn a nation that is busy in maintaining her colonies with age-old fleet and is apparently blind to the danger that is being reared at backdoor. He acknowledges God as the ancient Father of his nation and the One whose wish let England hold "Dominion over palm and pine" (*CV* 327). At the end of the first stanza he makes an appeal to the Lord with a tone of finality and devotion to stay

with his nation. Otherwise his nation lies in the danger of falling from grace. The last line of the first stanza: "Lest we forget — lest we forget!", which is also the refrain of the poem refers to the Biblical text of Deuteronomy, 6:12: "*Then* beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (195). The cost of forgetting the Lord made the Israelites slave of Philistines for forty years (Judges 13:1). Likewise the self-complacency in which Britain is now indulging will make Her fate as one like Nineveh and Tyre:

Far-called, our navies melt away;
On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre! (*CV* 327).

Apart from this material loss, the self-complacency has the potential to make the nation blaspheme just like the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah:

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
Or lesser breeds without the Law— (327).

The singlemost phrase "lesser breeds without the law" is quoted widely out of context like the first two lines of "The Ballad of East and West" (1890) and became a potent weapon to censure Kipling as a jingo-imperialist. But this phrase is directed not against the Indians or the non-Whites in general, but as George Orwell informs the reader, it inevitably refers to "the Germans, and especially the pan-German writers, who are "without the Law" in the sense of being lawless, not in the sense of being powerless" (qtd. in Gilbert, *Kipling and the Critics* 75)[12]. Again the Biblical text of Romans, 2:14 reveals that the Gentiles do not abide by common law but "are a law unto themselves" (161). If 'the Gentiles' and 'the common law' are substituted by 'the Germans' and Kipling's 'imperial ethics' then obviously this younger imperialist nation, i.e. Germany must appear as Enemy of the Civilization. Quite naturally the righteous and justified wrath of the Prophet Kipling would prescribe a horrible doom for Germany faithfully imitating the calamity the Gentiles have to go through: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law…"

(Romans 2: 12). But before the divine retribution is being meted out the 'lesser breeds' may envenom the heart of civilization, namely the British Empire with its fangs. The British, content within their own isle with colonies to look after, appear vulnerable in Kipling's eyes. Hence Kipling seeks forgiveness for the British in the lines:

> For heathen heart that puts her trust
> In reeking tube and iron shard,…
> Thy mercy on Thy People, Lord! (*CV* 327).

The derogatory epithet 'heathen', notes Harrison, is attributed to the British who are oblivious of the God-given duty to wipe out the blot from the face of the earth and remain in the danger of being wiped out (142).

Despite this sombre and near admonishing note, with the publication of "Recessional", again to borrow Gilmour's words, "Kipling came to be regarded as a national symbol, a one-man embodiment of the Empire with a talent for anticipating a public sentiment…just before it became apparent" (124). The chief reason for this public acclaim, perhaps, lies in the nature of the English nation itself which cherishes a fascination for the end of any grand event:

> There is something about twilight that appeals to the English, and that expresses itself in the Beating of the Retreat, the singing of "Abide With Me", the bugles calling the Last Post, the shades lengthening over cloisters and cricket grounds,… "Recessional" — the dying music of the evensong choir as it withdraws — has all this netted in one word. To those born or brought up in England after 1914, let alone 1945, the sense of a waning day is part of the assumed historical outcome. It was Kipling's achievement to have sounded this sad, admonishing note during the imperial midday, and to have conveyed the premonition among his hearers that dusk was nearer than they had thought (Gilmour, "A Man of Permanent Contradictions" 31-32)[13].

Quite naturally the English people choose Kipling as the 'Muse of the Empire' who can reflect the afterglow of the twilight in verse rather than a virtually nonentity Alfred Austin who become the official Poet Laureate just a year before the publication of the "Recessional". It appears but a whim of fate that the poem whose language is moulded primarily to turn the arrogant and boastful hearts into 'humble' and 'contrite' ones should become a clarion call itself. Apart from all the fame the composer received at Home the poem soon came to be known in overseas colonies. Thus in a parade outside the Parliament of Transvaal during the Boer War 10,000 British soldiers sang it (cited in Parry 79). But the irony which played a prominent part in shaping the purpose and the contradictory outcome of the poem, assumed a lurid hue in the mature years of the composer. While basking in the glory of "Recessional" the poet received the news of the birth of John, his only son on 17 August. It was the same boy Kipling was to lose in the Battle of Loos in 1915 at the hands of the 'lesser breeds'.

"The White Man's Burden"

Generally regarded as epitomizing Kipling's cult of imperialism and much acclaimed as well as censored for this reason "The White Man's Burden" made its debut in *The Times* on 4 February, 1899. After several republications it was anthologized in the 1919 edition of *The Five Nations*. The occasion was the American victory over Spain in 1898 in which along with several other territories Philippines was decided to be given to the United States. While the question whether U.S. should take over Philippines or not remained a fiercely debatable issue in the U.S. itself[14], a section of British newspapers put passionate appeal to this younger imperialist nation to carry on the legacy of colonialism. Citing the common racial lineage of the English and the Americans G.W. Steevens wrote on 10 May, 1898 in the *Daily Mail*:

> …it is still true that we are of common stock. Whether that will be true a century hence is a hard riddle; but to deny it now is to mistake a process — the modification of the old English blood by admixture of …Teutons and Slavs — for an accomplished fact…the men who

> are leading the States today — McKinley, Long, Miles, Sampson, Dewey — are all as plainly of British stock as were the Lincolns, Lees, Grants, and Shermans of the last generation. Till now THE ANGLO-SAXON HAS ALWAYS LED the population of the States… (qtd. in Harris 249).

It is highly likely that Kipling's address to the American people and their government to civilize the Filipinos was profoundly influenced by newspaper campaigns. The famous opening stanza of the poem tends to view the Americans as disciples ready to learn colonialism from their British brethren and apply it whenever needed:

TAKE up the White Man's burden —
Send forth the best ye breed —
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild —
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child (*CV* 321, italics mine).

It is because of the usage of such epithets — 'half devil and half child' — today deemed as politically incorrect that Bhabha comes to regard the poem as betraying 'blind ethnocentrism' and 'total egocentricity' (*Delusions and Discoveries* 206). Notably the litterati belonging to the liberal circles make Kipling their butt of relentless onslaught. One of the most scathing attacks came from the radical M. P. Henry Labouchère who penned in the same month "The Brown Man's Burden" in *Truth*:

Pile on the brown man's burden,
Nor do not deem it hard
If you should earn the rancor
Of those ye yearn to guard.
The screaming of your Eagle

Will drown the victim's sob — (qtd. in Brantlinger, "Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" and Its Afterlives" 182).

In "Satan Absolved" (1899), Wilfrid Scawen Blunt calls the burden of the White man is nothing but the burden of his cash. H. T. Johnson's "The Black Man's Burden" (April 1899), E. A. Brininstool's "The White Woman's Burden" (March 1899) or W.E.B. Du Bois's "The Burden of Black Women" (November 1907) only lengthen the list of unfavourable opinions.

But as early as in 1972 Robert Conquest emphasised the fact that the ultimate result of this colonization will be freedom and emancipation for the 'sullen', 'half devil' and 'half child' population (105)[15]. The relevant lines are:

Take up the White Man's burden —
The savage wars of peace —
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease (*CV* 322);…

This view is supported and further illustrated by Craig Raine in his 2002 reading of the poem where he opines that the decisive goal of colonialism will be equality of the colonizers and the colonized (17). This hope is expressed in the last line "The judgment of your peers!" (*CV* 322). Professor Raine's logic for this quite radical interpretation sounds convincing:

> …the imperialist aim, which mustn't be rushed, is eventual independence: "Nor call too loud on Freedom/ To cloak your weariness." In other words, grant freedom at the proper juncture, when the moment is ripe — and not because fatigue makes you want to rest…Kipling waits until the last line of the poem to spring his surprise — a surprise marked by an exclamation mark. There he makes it clear that, in the end, the judgment of the colonised on the colonisers will be the judgment of equals, "the judgment of your peers".
>
> The aim, then, is not subjection and exploitation in perpetuity, but 'Freedom' with a capital 'F' and elevation to equality (18).

The question which may surface at the moment is, if Kipling's ultimate aim is to champion equality among the races irrespective of skin colour, why should he support the American attempt to make Philippines her colony. The answer lies in the title of the poem itself and in the nature of its composer who chooses to refrain from attacking those who were attempting to drag his name through the mud after the publication of the poem. A true believer in the imperial duty of the White man Kipling feels that Philippines is not secured at the hand of a 'puny' imperialist nation like Spain who can only enslave but will shirk the responsibilities involved. Still more dangerous will be to leave the land at the mercy of Western educated Filipinos. This attitude is expected as I have already shown Kipling's dislike of westernized Indians in the previous chapters dealing with his prose. Commenting on the White House's decision to remove a governor[16] from his post in Philippines Kipling writes in his autobiography *Something of Myself* (1937):

> There was an ex-Governor of the Philippines, who had slaved his soul out for years to pull his charge into some sort of shape and — on a turn of the political wheel at Washington — had been dismissed at literally less notice than he would have dared to give a native orderly. I remembered not a few men whose work and hope had been snatched from under their noses, and my sympathy was very real. *His account of Filipino political 'leaders', writing and shouting all day for 'independence' and running round to him after dark to be assured that there was no chance of the dread boon being granted — 'because then we shall most probably all be killed' — was cheeringly familiar* (149, italics mine).

From this two-pronged danger — clutch of a rival imperial power and the inefficacy of native leaders, possessing only the gift of the gab — the 'new-caught' and 'sullen peoples' need to be protected. The burden of the Americans, the descendants of the Anglo-Saxons also include incessant toil to ward off famine and disease and if required sacrifice of one's life for the betterment of the newly colonized people. In return the colonizers can only expect rebuff and scorn:

Take up the White Man's burden —

And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard — (*CV* 322).

But the services, if rendered with a pure heart and clear conscience, will ultimately make a bridge between the colonizer and the colonized which in due course will beget transnational identities.

"The Lesson"

"The Lesson" was first published on July 29, 1901 in *The Times* and was subsequently anthologized in the 1919 edition of *The Five Nations*. The theme of the poem is his despondency over Britain's hard won victory in the Second Boer War (1899-1902). Here Kipling adopts a mood of self-introspection instead of fuming against the political and military inefficacy of the Empire. This self-reflection is aptly manifested in the use of the first person narrator 'we'. The narrator 'we' is made to probe deep into the nature of organization and performance of the imperial army in the war:

It was our fault, and our very great fault, and *not* the judgment of Heaven.
We made an Army in our own image, on an island nine by seven,
Which faithfully mirrored its makers' ideals, equipment, and mental attitude —
And so we got our lesson: and we ought to accept it with gratitude (*CV* 297, italics mine).

Perhaps it is this note of humiliation and abasement which makes the appeal of the poem, if not universal, then of course, bereft of class consciousness. Britons, irrespective of their inequality in wealth, social status and political affiliation appear as one great existence but cursed with the limitation of insularity. It is to this grand audience that Kipling successfully conveys a two-fold message:

> … on the one hand railing against Britain's lack of preparation for war; on another calling for it to raise its sights and adopt an

> expansive, global outlook rather than a narrow insular one (Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling* 458).

However the prophetic vision of the poet can clearly visualize the upcoming years of strife and struggle with the rising Germany. Kipling's verdict for his nation is to prepare whole-heartedly for the future years of trials and tribulations. If the nation toils more in peacetime it can afford to be less arduous during warfare and retain its overseas territories: "We have had an Imperial lesson. It may make us an Empire yet!" (*CV* 298).

"The Islanders"

"The Islanders" first came out on 3 January, 1902 in *The London Weekly Times* and after a few more reappearances collected in the 1919 edition of *The Five Nations.* After the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) Kipling lashes at the wealthy gentry complacent in their world of leisure and luxury. The ultimate victory of the imperial forces in the war could not obliterate from the poet's mind the great toll which England had to pay. Having visited South-Africa several times during and after the war Kipling was visibly upset with the attitude of his own people unwilling to part with comfort back in England. His reproach takes a severe hue, as to some extent, it is directed against his own preferred socio-political stance — the aristocratic-right wing-Tory — in the lines:

> …ye returned to your trinkets;… ye contented your souls
> *With the flannelled fools at the wicket or the muddied oafs at the goals* (*CV* 301, italics mine).

Orwell writes that the phrase " the flannelled fools at the wicket and the muddied oafs at the goal sticks like an arrow to this day, and it is aimed at the Eton and Harrow match…" (79). Orwell's observation leads us to the inference that it is easy to oppose the political stance propagated in the poem but it is not possible to discard it as frivolous (84). It is the unique characteristic of the poem to create an air of deep self-introspection for a race by using apparently naïve and vulgar language. In a letter to Rider Haggard Kipling himself acknowledged that his intention was to

evoke a strong reaction from the literary circle. For this explicit purpose he was ready to use even more derogatory epithets: “I ought to have written *hired* fools instead of flannelled. That might have made my meaning clearer” (Cohen 46, italics author’s). From these instances it would be presumptuous to conclude that Kipling took a firm and decisive stance of opposition to sports. Kipling’s message to his readers is simple: the ignorance about the activities of the Empire outside the Channel and attribution of too much importance to athletics will ultimately usher the downfall of the whole enterprise. Certainly issues related to athletics are important to pay heed to but these cannot vie the importance of the outcome of Waterloo or Trafalgar.

Published alongside “The Lesson” (1901) and “The Rowers” (1902) — all within a space of few months — this poem refrains from taking to task the poet’s chosen potshot, the rising German imperialism, in the continent. This unfinished job is done in the next verse “The Rowers”.

“The Rowers”

“The Rowers” was first published on 22 December, 1902 in *The Times* against the background of the Venezuelan Crisis (1902-1903). The nature of the crisis is a naval blockade imposed upon Venezuela over her refusal to pay foreign debts. Along with several other European nations Great Britain allied herself with the German Empire in the party of attackers while Venezuela was supported by Argentina and the United States. The sole reason for Kipling’s ire is the German persuasion of Britain to press Venezuela for unpaid debts: “…our strength is sold/ To help them press for a debt!” (*CV* 282). There is no denying that Britain, too, had its vested interest over the recovery of the debts she owed to Venezuela. But Kipling cannot get on well with the bitter memories of the Boer War when Germany went out of its way to frustrate Britain’s objectives by helping the Boers. For Kipling the air is still heavily oppressed with the gun-powders fired in the war. Britain’s eagerness to accept Germany as an associate is itself a short-sighted and condemnable act having far-reaching detrimental consequences:

In sight of peace — from the Narrow Seas
O'er half the world to run —
With a cheated crew, to league anew
With the Goth and the shameless Hun! (282, italics mine).

The first sign of detriment is Britain's own self-delusion that there can be any lasting peace with Germany as a consequence of this temporary and opportunistic coalition. As the eye of Tiresias was unable to see the external world of pomp and make-believe but could sense the approaching doom similarly the prophet in Kipling could see through the imperial ambition of Germany. But for the present the last two lines of the quoted stanza, which are also the last lines of the verse, create a furore both in Germany and England. After the end of the First World War when the world saw the veracity of Kipling's prophecy about 'the Goth' and the 'shameless Hun' a contented Kipling writes to André Chevrillon:

> In 1902 I was rude to the Holy German Nation — called 'em in fact, Huns on the strength of the China expedition. That got me a whole storm of letters from all over Germany most of them … pointing out my base ingratitude to the Kaiser who had honoured me with a telegram when I was ill in New York in '99!! (Pinney 4: 532).

Kaiser's telegram to Kipling after the latter's recovery but bereaved at the untimely death of daughter Josephine is indeed touching: "You live, - but half your joy in life has gone, beyond return" (qtd. in Wickham 161). However for Kipling, Kaiser appears in his true colour in the latter's 1900 speech to the German troopers who were to depart for China to crush the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901). The German Emperor's diktat was to render no pardon and to take no prisoner. Like Attila's Hun they should wreck havoc upon the Chinese so that no Chinese can be left with the courage to look cross-eyed to a German (Gilmour, *The Long Recessional* 206).

One should remember that this is but one of the earlier instances of Kipling's Germanophobia which is yet to take shape until 1936. The Battle of Loos (1915) when Kipling is to lose his son is still more than a decade away. But this modern-day Tiresias in his late thirties is very much responsive to the threats of imperial rivalry followed by long-standing war.

"Rimmon"

Bearing the epigraph "After Boer War", "Rimmon" was published in 1903 in the collection *The Five Nations*. The name of the verse suggests a comparison between the Biblical text of 2 Kings 5: 17-18 and the post-Boer British military establishment. In the said scriptural text, Naaman, the Syrian general, was cured of leprosy. He promised the prophet Elisha that henceforth he would offer no homage to any false god but would do so only to the Lord Jehovah. Immediately after this swearing he acknowledged on the pretext of his master's idolatry that he too must bow down before the altar of Rimmon — the false god or one of the fallen angels to whom authority over the atmosphere was generally attributed. Like Naaman the British generals were well aware of the huge casualties and losses of the war which made the victory literally a pyrrhic one. But they all chose to indulge in the pro-war sentiment prevalent during and after the overseas conflict. In fact it is the pro-war rhetoric of the Conservative Party headed by Lord Salisbury that turned the general election of United Kingdom in 1900 a 'khaki election' (Gilmour 151). True, Kipling's political sympathy lies with the Conservatives who came to power after the 1900 election with an absolute majority. But he was not prepared to entertain or further intensify the gung-ho mood permeating the political scenario in the aftermath of the war. In the present verse Kipling's direct butt of attack is the War Office as points out Bonamy Dobrée: "…the War Office is clearly implied to be the House of Rimmon. It refers to the commission which had been set up under Lord Esher to examine into military organization, and had issued what was judged to be a whitewashing report…" (89). But the War Office, as is evident, is only a tool to implement the policy of the government — Conservative or Liberal. Under the premiership of Salisbury the Conservative government, Rimmon like, was only too eager to keep up the false *atmosphere* by accomplishing two tasks simultaneously: suppressing the report of inefficacy and loopholes in the military establishment and diverting the people's mind to the general mood of joy and festivity:

Because he had won us the war (*CV* 311).

Apart from the distortion of truth and insult to the memories of the slain soldiers the great harm which arises as a result of these two unethical conducts is the gradual weakening of the moral fibre of the nation.

"If"

The poem "If", preceded by the story "Brother Square-Toes", was published in the volume *Rewards and Fairies* (1910). But the poem is more famed as a single piece and popular only after "The Ballad of East and West" (1889) and "The White Man's Burden" (1899). In Kipling's own words "… 'If—',… escaped from the book, and for a while ran about the world" (*SOM* 146). The whole poem, divided in four stanzas each containing eight lines, is an urge to his son to perform all sorts of impossible tasks if the addressee is to become a man. But far from keeping such performances unattainable Kipling visualizes the cult of manhood in the persona of Leander Starr Jameson whom I have mentioned in the discussion of the poem "Recessional" (1897)[17]. The lines which best exemplify Jameson's credibility as a colonizer and hence as a 'Man' are:

> If you can make one heap of all your winnings
> And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
> And lose, and start again at your beginnings
> And never breathe a word about your loss;
> ... Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!" (*CV* 578).

Geoffrey Wansell in an article published in *Daily Mail* unearthed the reason for Kipling's nearly deification of Jameson's exploits in South Africa (n.pag.). Jameson was responsible for organizing a private militia with the aim to overthrow the Boer Government in the Transvaal Republic. The British foreign policy, implemented by the colonial secretary Joseph Chamberlain and premier Lord Salisbury, was to covertly support Jameson's raid and condemn it when the attempt failed. After the unsuccessful raid a trial followed which resulted in the handing over of the saboteurs to the British Government. This along with Kaiser Wilhelm's congratulatory telegram to Paul Kruger created a furore in the British media which showered praise

on Jameson on the one hand and vilified the imperial rival Germany on the other. Even after getting imprisoned for fifteen months in Britain Jameson chose not either to divulge Britain's complicity in the raid or lose his heart. Instead, after the completion of his term in gaol he sailed for South Africa once again only to become the Prime Minister of Cape Colony in 1904. It is this chivalric attitude which, thinks Mr. Wansell, must have been the inspiration of the opening lines:

IF you can keep your head when all about you

Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too; (*CV* 578)…

An attempt to contextualise this attitude to the postcolonial world also explains the prevalent tendency of either blackening or bypassing his contributions. In a wonderfully pleasant-reading biography of Dr. Jameson, Chris Ash reflects:

> Throughout [Jameson's] life, where others lost their nerve, dithered and hesitated, Jameson acted. This decisiveness is, of course, a complete anathema to modern minds, where focus groups, public inquires and committees stifle, complicate and delay every decision-making process and our so-called leaders are primarily concerned with cheating on their expenses and covering their backsides at all times…Of course, in these enlightened times, swift, decisive action of the kind Jameson favoured is not politically correct, and is derided as gunboat diplomacy and neo-colonialism. It is more fashionable, even though completely useless, to debate a problem year after year, buying votes from other unsavoury dictators at the UN and passing a meaningless resolution from time to time (27).

All these arguments only justify Kipling's poetic lionization of Jameson which is so vivid and yet so subtle that the poem outlives its immediate political-historical context and continues to entertain literary and non-literary personae alike. A notable name in sex education and family planning in contemporary Britain, Marie Stopes, even requested Kipling (obviously with no success) to change the last line and

rewrite it as — “And you will lead the Race o’er ground you’ve won” — to apply the poem to womenfolk also (cited in Pinney 5:234).

“Hadramauti”

The poem “Hadramauti” first appeared in *Songs from Books* which Kipling published in 1912 and which was afterwards collected in the Definitive Edition of Kipling’s verse in 1940 among many other publications. The last stanza of the verse appeared as epigraph to the story “A Friend’s Friend” from *Plain Tales From the Hills* (1888). The six stanzas of the poem categorically illustrate how a White man, unaware of the ways of the desert dweller Arabs, pays dearly for his unwise remarks accompanied by more than casual attitude. Ralph Durand informs us that ‘Hadramauti’ (Hadhramaut) is a district on the south coast of Arabian Peninsula peopled mostly by Aristocratic and conservative Arabs (290). Arabs are known for their legendary hospitality throughout the world and can even endanger their own lives to save the guest’s. So following the racial instinct the narrator, an anonymous Arab welcomes a White man readily chased by enemy:

> …One came to me weeping —
> The Avenger of Blood on his track — I took him in keeping.
> Demanding not whom he had slain, I refreshed him, I fed him
> As he were even a brother (*CV* 536).

But the ignorant and short-sighted sahib failed to understand the social and ethical obligation attached to this hospitality. His attire, unsuitable to this foreign land, was making him ill at ease. To the host the sahib’s bearings appeared only too vulgar. Still the Arab tried to restrain his gradually increasing anger with the thought that his guest must be too tired to behave judiciously: “I said: “ ’Tis his weariness speaks,…” (536). But then the sahib, already satisfied with warm hospitality, takes recourse to light-hearted pun and frivolity which proved to be fatal. In his observation of the general characteristics of an average Arab, Ralph Durand writes:

> …the Arab is studiously calm, and rarely so much as raises his voice in a dispute. But his outward tranquillity conceals a passionate and

> revengeful nature. A rash jest may be revenged years after it has been uttered (291).

True to his hereditary vengeful nature the narrator protagonist at first lets the sahib depart and travel a considerable distance. Then he mounts his horse, chases the sahib and releases the latter's soul from the body:

> When he was gone from my tent, swift I followed after,
> Taking my sword in my hand. The hot wine had filled him.
> Under the stars he mocked me — therefore I killed him! (*CV* 536).

It will be presumptuous to conclude that Kipling uses this poem as a powerful tool to warn White man against social interaction with non-Whites. If this was the case then the poem could not be written from the Arab's point of view. Instead the poet is convinced that social interaction itself is far from being simple and requires mutual tolerance and respect. Witnessing the personal tragedy of the White man one can recount the mask of reporter/journalist through which Kipling voiced the Indian/Oriental experience of himself and some of his acquaintances in many of his short stories. The newspaperman persona can effectively enrich the readers, especially the White ones, with Oriental experience without incurring the wrath of the Orientals. But any third person narrator can ill afford to express the silent disgust, the rage and passion of the protagonist. Kipling conveys successfully the message of restraint and respect which the White man is to cultivate in an alien land.

"The Fabulists"

"The Fabulists" was first published in *A Diversity of Creatures* (April 1917) as second of the two accompanying poems to the story "My Son's Wife". The publication date of the poem indicates that during its composition Kipling has already passed the bitter memories of the second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) and is now experiencing the far more intense and ghastly slaughter of the First World War. But the most memorable aspect of this wartime poem is that the composer avoids any harsh language either to forewarn his nation about the external threat or blame them for their supposedly military unpreparedness — themes he quite

extensively illustrates in poems like “The Rowers”, “The Lesson”, “Mesopotamia” or “Recessional”. Instead, he makes an attempt to reach to his audience by reminding them of the role of fables to teach mankind the way of the world. The reason for this innovative approach is stated in the opening stanza:

WHEN all the world would keep a matter hid,
Since Truth is seldom friend to any crowd,
Men write in fable, as old Æsop did,
Jesting at that which none will name aloud.
And this they needs must do, or it will fall
Unless they please they are not heard at all (*CV* 545, italics mine).

There is a strong suggestion that apart from the political and military establishments the poem is also meant for those readers and critics who do not place Kipling’s name in their favoured list of authors for the supposedly jingoistic undertone. The inference which the reader can derive is that the act of not paying heed to one’s voice can have greater and worse consequence than suppressing the voice itself. As Professor T. J. Connell reflects: “ “The Fabulists” warns of the dangers of not speaking out and the even greater dangers of not being listened to, with the ironic refrain ‘Unless men please they are not heard at all’ ” (28). It is to please the ignorant mass that the seer/Kipling will have to take recourse to the fables which will eventually sugar-coat his warnings and castigation. That Kipling did employ this tactics in his literary output — poetry and prose alike — notes Basil M. Bazley, is evinced by the fact that he is still widely admired (10).

“Mesopotamia”

While in “Recessional” a Prophet Kipling forewarns his nation about the looming disaster, in “Mesopotamia” (1917) the warning turns into a terrible rage against the incompetent military authority unable to provide protection to its young bravehearts. Designed initially as a piece of protest this poem first appeared on 11 July 1917 in *The Morning Post* and also in *The New York Times*. The language of the poem appears so vitriolic that *Daily Telegraph* refused to publish it. As the name indicates the theme of the poem is the Mesopotamia campaign of the British-Indian army

during the First World War and its appalling consequences which severely affected the morale of not only the men in uniform but the ordinary Britons as well. Now before probing into the root of Kipling's righteous indignation it will not be presumptuous to deal with the historicity of the text a little. With its scrupulous and minute attention to details the historical background provided by Julian Moore will suffice this purpose (n. pag.). In the First World War Turkey (an ally of Germany) was severely hampering the supply of arms to the Russian forces allied with the British. In order to keep the supply line working and check the Turkish advances the British think tank planned to launch an attack on Bagdad. Along with this a simultaneous naval raid was planned to capture Dardanelles which would keep Germany and His ally away from the storehouse of oil in Middle East. Apart from the sabotage acts such as inciting the native Arabs to take up arms against the Ottoman Empire the main offensive was launched by Sir John Eccles Nixon who made the fatal mistake of ordering the troops to cross the Tigris without sufficient water transports. Thus the British army, comprising mostly of Indian soldiers, under the leadership of General Townshend crossed Tigris and penetrated deep inside the Turkey territory. They faced a crushing defeat at the hand of the Turks at Ctesiphon, forced to retreat down the river and ultimately laid down arms at Kut-el-Amara already besieged by the enemy. Himself fighting on the side of the Crown Kazi Nazrul Islam, the lutanist of fiery lute in pre-Independence Bengal, depicted the battle in glowing terms in his poem "Shat-il-Arab"[18] (1922):

> The Tigris has carried a river of
> blood filled at Kut-Amara;
> Now the Tigris outpours that blood
> in you and dances the terrible dance
> of recklessness, the waters are astir;
> "I have punished impudence" roars
> the Euphrates, the river of blood…
> [The warriors] pine away to death in the
> desert, yet do not wear the chains of custom (qtd. in *The Rebel and Other Poems* 8-9).

The end of the battle proved that those who did not hesitate to embrace death rather than to embrace *chains of custom* could yield death upon their enemy chained by the Raj. While Townshend was interned his troops, nearly two-thirds of the hapless soldiers, were physically and sexually tortured before putting to death. Thus Kut remained a sight of imperial humiliation just like Kabul after the Second Afghan War (1878-1880).

However this humiliation, if seen from overall perspective, was of short duration. More than a year later in early 1917 under the efficient leadership of General Stanley Maude Kut had been recaptured and along with it Bagdad bowed down before the British Lion on 11 March, 1917. But the scar which the Lion received on its countenance was simply indelible and provoked this reaction from Kipling:

> They shall not return to us, the resolute, the young,
> The eager and whole-hearted whom we gave:
> But the men who left them thriftily to die in their own dung,
> Shall they come with years and honour to the grave? (*CV* 298).

What infuriated Kipling most was that, when the ordinary soldiers suffered either from inept medicare or got literally mowed down, their decorated superiors showed no qualm in receiving promotions. In fact they began to fear the public outrage and took disciplinary action, as informs Bonamy Dobrée, against Lionel Charles Dunsterville (the man who featured as Stalky in Kipling's *Stalky & Co.* and one of Kipling's associates) for publishing a scathing report (99). Narrating his visit to the Indian troops wounded in the war Kipling wrote to Dunsterville on 24 February, 1915:

> I've been down at Brighton looking at the Indian wounded and having a lovely time with the Punjabis. The little *Larrai* has filled them with great respect for the manners of sahibs when they fight. As a young Peshawuri *naik* said to me:—"It was a war of a kind which has not hitherto been shown to us" (Pinney 4:286, italics author's).

It is Kipling's keenness to feel the fervour of war, his ability to adopt the soldier's tongue as his own that make him distinguished from the other White reporters in the battlefield. On another occasion in 1927 he narrates to Dunsterville, then promoted to the rank of Major General: "I was at the unveiling of the Memorial to the Indian missing and dead at Neuve Chapelle the other day…" (Pinney 5:394). True to his imperial spirit Kipling never felt short of bestowing honour to those people whom he regarded as Empire builders irrespective of race and colour.

"The Storm Cone"

"The Storm Cone" was first published on 23 May, 1932 in *The Morning Post* and was serialized in the Definitive Edition of 1940. The poem personifies Britain as a Ship set to sail in a dark night defying reefs, gale and tumultuous waves. The menacing sea has every opportunity to engulf the vessel with all the passengers and crew on board. Only a strong determination to fight the storm and devotion to duty has the faintest possibility of ensuring a safe passage.

The publication date of the poem itself indicates the political unrest in the continent through which Britain was passing. Defying the Treaty of Versailles (1919) the Nazi Party was increasingly gaining foothold in Germany and reminds David Gilmour, two months after the publication of the poem the Nazis won 230 seats in the Reichstag making Germany virtually a totalitarian state (303). Himself bearing much grudge against the ethos and ideals of the government of the Labour Party[19] headed by James Ramsay MacDonald, Kipling was apprehensive regarding the firmness of the political will to counter the German threat:

> THIS is the midnight — let no star
> Delude us — dawn is very far.
> This is the tempest long foretold —
> Slow to make head but sure to hold (*CV* 833).

The dwindling mental state of the poet regarding the welfare of the Ship/nation bears close resemblance to Horace's *Ode* (1.14) from which Kipling took inspiration. The relevant lines are:

SHALL ebbing waters bear thee back,
Poor vessel, on thy watery track?
…then furl thy sail,
Nor prove the play-thing of the gale; (28-29)…

Addressing the Republic of Rome as a ship on voyage the Roman classicist betrayed the same anxiety and the futility of harping on past glory throughout the first three stanzas. Then prophet like Horace bids the Ship to fight the storm. Himself well-versed in Horace[20], Kipling achieves in the present verse, reflects Susan Treggiari, "the *curiosa felicitas* of Horace, the felicity of expression, of words fitted to matter,…" (10).

However unlike Horace, Kipling refuses to harbour even the slightest note of aspiration until and unless the rage of the nature is pacified: "But, till she fetches open sea,/ Let no man deem that he is free!" (*CV* 834). The most notable feature of Kipling's warning is that it deliberately remains vague regarding the identity and nature of the enemy, even though Kipling had the threat of German aggression precisely in his mind. It is this deliberate vagueness which makes "the lines", notes Harry Ricketts, "transcended their occasion, suggesting by the tragic intensity of the voice a threat of more existential proportions" (383).

"The Bonfires"

Initially titled as "Bonfires on the Ice" this poem was first published in *The Morning Post* on 13 November 1933 and afterwards collected in the Definitive Edition. In more than one ways this piece is complimentary to "The Storm Cone" and vice versa. In the background of the previous poem the shadow of the Nazis was looming large in Germany. But prior to the publication of the present verse on 12 November the German people cast vote with an overwhelming majority in favour of Adolf Hitler. Kipling thoroughly watched the rapidly changing political scenario of the continent and the decisive upcoming of the Nazis elicited the lines:

We know the Fenris Wolf is loose.
We know what Fight has not been fought (*CV* 349).

Evidently, observes Professor Keating, "Kipling equated Fenrys with Hitler, the embodiment of Nazi ideology" (237). But to explore this Nordic/Scandinavian mythology the reader will have to take a look on Kipling's speech delivered at the University of Sorbonne on 19 November, 1921 (*ABW* 201-206). There he reminds the audience of the old English and French folktales of werewolves believed to be capable of assuming human form. In this way they can victimize innocent men and women until they are driven out of the locality. But the interesting thing is that people soon get oblivious of these hideous creatures and after a few years or decades the attacks resume with a renewed vigour. The cycle of the reappearances of the dark forces of the earth and people's united defence against them goes on until the former is annihilated. The annihilation of the Fenris wolf, the Hun, can be possible, notes George Macmunn, by Britain's colonization of Germany: "We have to occupy Germany for a long period of years, lest she prepare for another orgy of conquest" (*KJN*, July 1947, 4). But the seemingly impossible task can be possible by changing the erroneous British and French foreign policy of appeasing Hitler. In explaining the title of the poem Howell Arthur Gwynne, editor of *The Morning Post* and Kipling's close friend, said: "…'Bonfires on the Ice' meant policies built upon falsehood, which cheer and deceive for a time, but in the end fall through the foundations on which they are built" (*KJN*, March 2000, 70)[21].Over the years this Germanophobia increases so much that he decided to remove the 'swastika' emblem from all his printed works (Rutherford xxiv). In a letter to Mrs. Edward Bok he justified this move as the "[emblem] has been defiled beyond redemption!" (qtd. in Pinney 6:404).

In fine, one has to acknowledge that the ambivalances and neuroses that marked the literary outputs of late nineteenth century poets like Francis Thompson, Lawrence Binyon, Swinburne were far more noticeable in the works of Kipling[22]. The ambiguous strain in Kipling's works is twofold: in the first case Kipling hints at the degeneracy of the elements active within the Empire thereby questioning its moral right to rule over and in the second the complacency and short-sightedness of the islanders who failed to recognize the menace of the 'lesser breeds'. This second attitude, so neatly summed up in the analysis of the last two poems, where Kipling had to take once again the pain of warning the British people about the renewed

strength of ‘shameless Hun’, became prophetically true. Although Kipling did not live to see the aftermath of the Second World War the sun had to set finally in the British Empire[23].