Conclusion

Generically Kipling falls in the category of those rarest writers whose pen successfully delineate the anxiety and unease hidden beneath the Victorian mythology of Empire under the veneer of eulogizing the Empire. This apparent eulogization of the Empire becomes so conspicuous that the author's reflection of the views and moral lapses of the colonial regime remain largely unexplored. First impressions, instant reactions, stereotypes coupled with liberal prejudice prevalent in the Western literary circle tend to form the readers' perception of Kipling as a whole. One has the authority of his biographer Charles Carrington who narrates how after reading Kipling's poem "Danny Deever" (1890), Professor David Mason waved the periodical (i.e. *The Scots Observer* in which it was first published) before the students of his class and cried "Here's Literature! Here's Literature at last!" and William Ernest Henley stood up and danced on his wooden leg (154). Throughout this thesis I have tried to chalk out Kipling's ambiguous responses to the Empire that reflect both an urge to save the imperial institution from enemies within and outside and rectify the immoral deeds of the colonizers. That is why whether Kipling was an imperialist or not is a subject of disputation and debate. That the imperialists used to view Kipling as one of their famous bards is manifest in a singlemost incident. After his death on 18 January 1936, his "pallbearers", writes David Gilmour, "reflected the imperial rather than the literary side of his career: they included the Prime Minister (Baldwin), a Field Marshal, an Admiral of the Fleet, and his disciple and closest surviving friend, Taffy Gwynne" (309). Two days later died King George V. Lord Birkenhead, a British historian and the author of a controversial biography of Kipling, writes: "The King has gone… and taken his trumpeter with him" (358).

In a bid to save the author from the charges of jingoism and chauvinism a few attempts, perhaps too naïve, have been taken negating Kipling's association with imperialism. In his critique of Lionel Trilling's *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society* (1950) Alan Sandison adopts a novel way to defend Kipling. Far from acknowledging the fact that Kipling is one of the prominent spokespersons of imperialism, he doubted in Kipling's belief in the Empire itself: "…his Imperialism is frequently offensive not because it *is* imperialism but because it isn't" (108, italics author's). To Sandison the Indian

Empire is simply a "Place des Signes,…where [Kipling] could find refuge and reassurance in his frontiersmen's ideals" (108-109). This fundamental denial of the very existence of Empire, apart from being naïve, is absurdly grotesque and triggered this reaction from W. Ramarao Naidu: "The denial of the very existence of the empire — its ingenious transformation into some kind of 'objective correlative' cannot be said to offer us a much more profound insight into the real nature and function of the imperial idea in Kipling's works" (37). A vast number of his works are premised on an acceptance of the Empire as a fact for the time being and near future, if not for eternity. Thus in the novel *Kim* (1901) the narrative is never free from imperial background. Be it the opening description of the 'Zam-Zammah' canon and its loudmouthed association with the ownership of Punjab or Kim's slow initiation into the fold of 'Sahibhood' at the behest of White colonial administrators — the Empire exerts an immense physical and psychological impact upon the characters of the novel. Even while left to themselves Kim and his trainer turned crony Hurree Babu are often on the horns of a dilemma as to support the cause of the Empire or subvert it. In Hurree Babu's unwise and impulsive blabbering before the foreign spys and Kim's desperate attempt to become the fittest 'chela' one may see a desire to psychologically reject the Empire. *Stalky & Co*. (1899) is one of those few literary texts which allow a glimpse on the making of the future Empire builders rather than on imperial activities and their outcome in Home and overseas colonies. The faults and loopholes of the imperial education system brought to book by the author bears evidence to an authorial intention to rectify them. In the same vein *The Light That Failed* (1891) sheds light upon the ignorance and indifference of average British citizens towards the imperial enterprise. The follies and blunders committed by the protagonist are not spared by the author. But at the same time Kipling leads us to believe that most of these follies and excesses occur due to the lack of sympathy expected from Maisie who is a beneficiary of the imperial enterprise but like any sophisticated Londoner parts her ways from any imperial activity. In the long run such apathy and nonchalance may prove more injurious to the Empire rather than a few mishaps in the colonies. This latter phenomenon may incite a section of the native population to rebel against the Empire at one point in colonial history, but the former one will perpetually dissociate the empire builders psychologically from their compatriots. This in turn will heighten their intolerance

towards the natives thereby perpetuating the racial barrier between the Whites and the non-Whites. The heroine of *The Naulahka: A Story of West and East* (1892) came to India to fulfil her dream of serving the humanity. The author deftly shows that India is yet to reach the maturity of socializing with the Whites without the racial and religious inhibitions. On a material plane her efforts fail but she is able to create a lasting impression to brighten the image of the Whites in the minds of some of the people who are able to transcend the barriers of caste and creed. Such varied nature of works only indicates a comprehensive and all-encompassing attitude of the author towards the Empire, namely identify, criticize and appropriate the imperial course of action. I have already shown in the Introduction the author's near religious zeal towards the imperial obligations at Home and abroad. Thus it can hardly be denied that for Kipling Empire was a complex material and psychological phenomenon from which, whatever may be his reaction in different moments to the imperial activity, he could not escape.

It is this impossibility of escaping the imperial responsibilities that makes Kipling find the Empire in different climes and conditions — sometimes exerting power upon the defenceless native population, sometimes lying at the mercy of those very natives and in a few instances vying with other imperial powers. Narratives like *The Man Who Would Be King* (1888) and "The Mark of the Beast" (1890) entail within themselves the curious combination of performing dual roles by the colonizer — that of a tyrant and victim. The White protagonist in "Beyond the Pale" (1888) fares even more abjectly — humiliated and defamed by natives at the dead of the night for amorous intrigue with Coloured woman — an offence held culpable and in derision not only by the ruled but even by his own class. His attempt to veil the wound on the right leg under the garb of 'riding-strain' makes a reader feel the tremendous psychological pressure which compels every White man in the East put up a brave face against all oddities. But here it may appear particularly intolerable as Trejago, the tragic hero, is denied to share this stifling experience even in his own class thereby denied any chance to be held in sympathy. With all its apocalyptic hue "At the End of the Passage" (1890) casts the premonition that even inanimate objects, the flora and fauna, the hallucination and vision are capable of assuming the role of nemesis for the White protagonist in colonies. Even in the stories of more

introspective nature, such as the discussion of the narratives in the fourth chapter, the White man is not bereft of his fair share of sensing the void, the hollowness of imperial establishment. A reflection on the realization of White men at the end of these narratives will, perhaps, suffice for losing faith in the future well-being of the Empire. In this sense these latter narratives are more portentous than the first group of stories discussed in the third chapter. Unlike the White protagonists of the third chapter here they are allowed to return physically unscathed but morally more debased and convinced of the futility of their civilizing mission in the Orient. Coupled with these phenomena a reader has to consider the author's sympathy and genuine concern for the indigenous people — be they Indian, Brazilian, African or Japanese — that compel the author to think about the welfare of these non-White races in his own way. I have already shown how the author's journalistic career in India and abroad acts as a catalyst to open up his mind prejudiced with Victorian ethos, break up the stereotypical notions about the Black and Coloured races. His travel to Rajputana serves as an eye-opener to garner respect for the Indian martial races apart from the frontier tribesmen. However the sympathy, love, and in a few instances, respect which Kipling acquired for the Indian races in general was almost mirrored in his feelings for the French-ruled Algerians during his 1878 trip to France. Similarly the trip to Brazil is instrumental to achieve the vision of a postcolonial society comprising Whites, Blacks and Coloured people — all living in an absolute harmony with each other. Apart from visualizing such illuminating pictures of the peaceful co-existence of the White and non-White races in the world the other thing which fills the author's mind is respect and admiration. This respect and admiration for the non-White population reaches its zenith in his trip to Japan. On the basis of Kipling's experience in Japan it would not be inappropriate to assume that every non-White race does not necessarily require a colonial phase in their national history in order to be civilized. At this stage one should not be oblivious of the fact that all such ideas and realizations dawned on the author gradually throughout his life. So it would be improper to expect a quintessence of all these mature notions in a single work of the author chosen at random or belonging to his early phase of writing. Quite naturally, if a critic takes a few lines of the author's work out of context, as I have shown in the discussion of "The Ballad of East and West" (1889), then the former runs the risk of completely misevaluating and

misinterpreting Kipling. The diverse nature of specific colonial situations makes Kipling profess the very thing in one occasion he might have abjured elsewhere. This apparent incoherence and incongruity do not necessarily point towards a lack of perception in the author, rather they vindicate the existence of a keen and receptive mind able to accept, penetrate, evaluate and absorb colonial encounters of all nature. It is in this context that one should remember Archbishop Rowan Williams' sermon at the commemoration service in Burwash on 26 January, 2006:

> All great artists know more than they know that they know, and Kipling was no exception. For so many of the greatest artists…the effort to explain what they think they are doing is one which reduces them to incoherence…when Kipling,…tried to spell out in prose and in non-fiction what he thought he was most deeply about, he said things that were neither coherent nor edifying. *But he knew more than he knew that he knew, and his work comes from deeper places than prose or theory* (10, italics mine).

The said deeper place is, beyond doubt, the author's acutely sensitive mind which is able to react sharply to the changing colonial realities from time to time.

Among Kipling's contemporaries we can name at least two prominent literary figures who at times voice the anxiety threatening to engulf the British Empire — George Alfred Henty (1832-1902) and Henry Rider Haggard (1856-1925). Like Kipling both these writers were famous in the British imperial circle for their nearly unconditional support for and glorification of the establishment. Rider Haggard's *She: A History of Adventure* (1887) deals with female authority and feminine practices in an African community against the patriarchal system of the British Empire. The eponymous protagonist "She" or "She-who-must-be-obeyed" is often taken as a successful counterpart of Queen Victoria and the latter remains in the danger of being replaced in a process of 'reverse colonization' — a theme I have mentioned in discussing some of Kipling's works. *Ayesha, the Return of She* (1905) is equally fascinating with Hesea/'She'/Ayesha, a mysterious Oriental 'incarnate essence' holding sway over the rational Occidental mind. In both the former work and its sequel, supernaturalism and Gothicism are common tropes which are also

employed by Kipling in a good number of his works. In the thesis I have already mentioned Fleete's ghastly encounter with the leper, Morrowbie Jukes's tragedy in the Village of the Deads, the oppressive and hostile 'Presence' threatening the narrator/Kipling in his trip to Rajputana and the old house on coffee plantation in Brazil. Equally worth studying is "The Phantom Rickshaw", first published in 1885 and later incorporated in the eponymous volume accompanied by three other stories, where the hero can never be free of his past illicit association. In *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) the racial prejudice is not directed towards every African and the novel even bears the possibility of interracial liaison provided the non-White partner is worthy — again a theme I have explored in Kipling's shorter fictions such as "Without Benefit of Clergy" (1890). In *Allan Quatermain* (1887) a group of natives cross the racial boundary and abduct a White girl thereby intimidating the White adventurers to the core. Although the writer did not spare the lives of these Black miscreants — a popular butt of attack for nearly all colonial writers — the fear of White women's sexual attachment to the natives remains no longer a theme of allusion and suppression. Like Rider Haggard, George Alfred Henty on occasions gives vent to acknowledgement and admiration for the natives while describing the problematic relationship between the British and the Indians in the early phase of the Raj. In his *With Clive in India: Or, The Beginnings of an Empire* (1884) the protagonist Charlie Marryat develops an intimate relationship with his native valet Hossein who saved his master's life several times — a theme that reminds us of Dunnoo's saving the life of Morrowbie Jukes. The author also permits the swarthy valet and personal bodyguard of Charlie marry an English cook — a theme also explored by Kipling albeit in the works of the latter author the interracial White partner is inevitably the male. The novel *In Freedom's Cause: A Story of Wallace and Bruce* (1885) clearly upholds and glorifies the anti-establishment spirit with the author's vivid portrayal of the hero's struggle against an expansionist England helmed by King Edward I. The root cause for the animosity with the English lies in the Scottish racial lineage of the hero Archibald Forbes — a theme also manifest in Kipling's "The Mutiny of the Mavericks" (1891)[1] where the protagonist is of Irish origin. Thus such examples can be multiplied by the close intertextual study of contemporary literary output from various genres which will eventually extend and enlarge the scope for future research.

During the years of research and writing I have come to learn about several other aspects of Kipling, which provide interesting details regarding the author's choice of theme and technique. One such aspect is Kipling's tendency to narrate the minute details of modern transport like railways and his fascination with the feats of civil engineering like the construction of bridges. One can recount the author's enthusiastic description of the railway bridge over the Ganges in the short story "The Bridge Builders" (1893). The description itself is so graphic that the reader is led to believe that the author was an eyewitness to the construction of the bridge. In reality Kipling was staying in Vermont while scribing this story. The story ".007" (1897) attains the stature of a science fiction by documenting an imaginary conversation between two locomotives. Like the previous story this one also is full of railway jargons making the conversation lively and credible. An enthusiast of the railroad projects and especially the setting of new lines, Kipling devoted a chapter to railways in his *Brazilian Sketches* (1927). Likewise Kipling's many overseas voyages made him familiar with a number of technical aspects of steamship prevalent in his time. In the story "The Ship That Found Herself" (1895) Kipling uses such technical terms quite dextereously leaving the impression of a captain recounting his voyage. The short story "With the Night Mail" (1905) becomes a science fiction in the literal sense of the term. The author imagines the world of 2000 A.D. with intercontinental passenger flights and all their imaginary but modern aviation details. To some extent, this novel is comparable to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Novel* (1949) as Kipling writes of the world of 2000 A.D. from the perspective of early 1900s. The sequel of "With the Night Mail" came out in 1912 under the title "As Easy as A.B.C." Like its prequel this new story is equally impressive with its depiction of the world of 2065 A.D. This world is inhabited by people with high living standard and a passionate craving for privacy. The population is gradually diminishing and all the efforts of people are made to maximize personal amenities and comforts with the aid of a wide array of futuristic and imaginary mechanical devices. Overall the description of these machines and their mode of operations — both real and imaginary — are lively and are far from being felt as imposed. Herbert L. Sussman comments on Kipling's ability to cope with these details in the following manner:

> As his experiments in technological language testify, Kipling had absorbed the facts of mechanization far more fully than had most nineteenth-century writers. This imaginative grasp of the machine is shown, too, in his ability to use the machine in metaphors as vehicle rather than tenor. Before World War I, the machine served not only as an emblem of his social ideals *but as a figure for psychological states unrelated to mechanization* (217, italics mine).

It is Kipling's rare craftsmanship which enabled him to assimilate mechanical jargons from a matter of head to that of heart and this helped him to knit a close texture between man and machine. We should never be oblivious to the fact that Kipling had before him works such as H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) or the masterpieces of Jules Verne as early prototypes of this genre. The use of modern jet planes or to maintain connectivity between human beings with the advanced electronic media such as artificial satellite or Internet was still a far cry. Another important aspect of Kipling's writing is his tendency to pioneer the theme of sacrifice in fictional works. I have already mentioned how the loss of his son John inspired the short story "The Gardener" (1925). This theme also is evident in stories like "At the End of the Passage" (1890), "The Miracle of Purun Bhagat" (1894) and novels such as *The Light That Failed* (1891) and *Stalky & Co.* (1899). But apart from the immediate colonial/imperial perspective this theme has been beautifully employed against a fairy tale background in "The Knife and the Naked Chalk" (1909), a sequel of the Puck stories collected in *Rewards and Fairies* (1910). Except for "The Miracle of Purun Bhagat" there is also a curious difference between the protagonists of colonial/imperial narrative and the fairy tale narrative I have just mentioned. The White victims of imperial narrative — no matter whether their sacrifices are voluntary like that of Hummil in "At the End of the Passage" (1890) or involuntary like those of Daniel Dravot and Carnehan in *The Man Who Would Be King* (1888)[2] — they are widely regarded as victims of the vengeful Orient. But the Flint Man, the protagonist of "The Knife and the Naked Chalk" comes to be regarded as the god, a Messiah for his community after the sacrifice of one of his eyes and the prospect of marriage. While writing this thesis I have tried to show Kipling's familiarity with the modern machinery, essential to

material progress in the path of civilization and his frequent use of the theme of sacrifice. Of course, such discussions find a place in my thesis in so far as they are relevant to understand Kipling in the postcolonial context. But the issues merit separate and detailed examination which is beyond the scope of my thesis.

To sum up, it may reasonably be argued that a large number of Kipling's works indicate, in the words of Stephen Prickett, "a sense of *extra* meaning…suggest[ing] a universe that is richer and fuller of possibilities than had hitherto been dreamed of" (200, italics author's). It is this hidden realm of possibilities and conjectures that one has to find and understand Kipling's responses to the Empire which in turn reflects the author's varied and contradictory selfhood. At this point of time it is worthwhile to view in retrospect the objective of this research and whether it has met its promised commitments or not. The objective set by me was to analyze the works of Kipling in the light of the contemporary, especially postcolonial, discourses thereby revealing how far his narrative tallies and discords with the imperial narrative of the time. In other words, the purpose was to examine how Kipling's narrative acts as a metanarrative of the imperial/colonial narrative while constantly enriching the latter with criticism, approbation and suggestions. All these proposed rectifications of the colonial narrative actually make the reader aware of the reflection of the author's self that tends to view colonialism as a humanitarian mission that could not be shirked. At this stage of my research I believe that I have tried to establish the strain, the tension between these two narratives — that of contemporary/imperial/colonial and the author's — and how the latter enriched not only the former but also the problematic interracial relationship in a decolonized world. The future researchers inhabiting this decolonized world can trace the root of any interracial tension — social, political or cultural — back to the days of colonialism and employ the colonial lesson documented by Kipling and his contemporaries towards the solution of these problems.