

KIPLING AND IMPERIALISM :

the Literary Significance of the Setting of  
Certain Short Stories and Poems that  
Relate to War Conditions and to Service in  
India and at Sea.

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"If you could hear the blood.  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues --  
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est  
Pro patria mori."

Wilfred Owen  
Killed in France, 4th November, 1918.

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## SUMMARY

### Chapter I: Origins

The fundamental opposition of certain literary critics is reviewed. It is evident that much of the antagonism results from Kipling's allegedly tendentious presentation of imperialism, and from the dispute over forms of political dominance.

The purpose of this study being to examine the nature and significance of imperialism in his work, several definitions of the term are given, and the areas in which he had particular interest are reviewed. A basis for a comparison with other poets is suggested.

The extent of his influence on politics and society is summarized in statements by contemporary historians; it is concluded that this influence continues to affect the response to his work.

### Chapter II: Imperialist Poetry

Some literary origins of Kipling's thought and style are demonstrated. They include the 18th-Century satirists and patriotic poets; they include the Bible and the Roman poets. His subjects, his approach and treatment, are within a convention that has appeared at various times in English literature.

His intention, as stated in the autobiography, was to display an imperial conspectus. Among his creative writings, the most public in theme and vehement in expression is his patriotic and satiric poetry. The influence of the Bible on its style and meaning is reviewed; though the Biblical phrases impart to his lines a mnemonic quality, the complexity necessary to the portrayal of 19th-Century politics is lacking. The objectivity of thought, intricacy of detail, and quality of poetic imagery, in the 18th-Century poets, are not equalled in Kipling's verse.

Although his imperialism is not mindless, as suggested by Trilling, his earlier poems on national issues are highly rhetorical and reveal an emotional commitment to certain notions of State and Empire.

### Chapter III: Alienation

The author's stated political intention does not accommodate the full meaning of "With the Main Guard"; for the responses of its characters conflict with the advocacy of Empire.

The conditions endured in army service in India may destroy the individual, physically and psychologically. Their effect on personality is the significance of the imaginative representation of private soldiers.

Similar conditions relate to the European community generally. Subjective images of darkness and chaos are introduced, the position of this community being symbolically demonstrated as lying at the edge of the Ditch.

The alienation suffered in India leads to the psychological and moral abyss; it may result, in its extreme form, in a death-wish, as expressed by Learoyd, in murderous brutality, which is exhibited in the Frontier's perpetual war, or in execution, which is the subject of the ballad "Danny Deever."

The inner truth of the 'Soldier' stories and of the Barrack-Room Ballads is that the defenders of the Frontier of the Indian Empire form a forgotten and sacrificed society. This truth is seen through a surface of brusque and colloquial language, harsh discipline, brutality, and vivid action. It is never related in depth; for the artist's function is to hide it by telling exciting stories of work and action, stories that involve men and their predicaments. Men will respond to these accounts of their prowess, and will forget the hopelessness of their situation.

### Chapter IV: Reality and Invention

Meanings additional to those of the author's stated intention emerge in an analysis of "The Tomb of His Ancestors," where the emphasis rests upon the character of a tribal people.

In demonstration of Kipling's use of actuality in his settings, there is an examination of the records that were available to him, and a review of the literary conventions and empirical beliefs that related to the treatment of the themes and issues with which he was concerned in this story. The analysis shows that although the story is to some extent governed by these conventions and beliefs, it imaginatively re-creates the history and myths of the autochthonous community.

The life of the tribesmen, their responses to the manifestations of their Gods, their superstitions, the psychology of their relationships with other races, are revealed in typical but invented situations, in an imaginative presentation that discloses the nature of interactions between widely differing cultures. The external actuality gives emphasis and definition to this presentation.

The underlying significance is that in given conditions, these interactions might be made to overcome mutual antipathies. There is a vein of idealism in this standpoint, which relates to a literary convention and also to Kipling's belief in the necessity of a profound communion with India on the part of those who govern. The nature of this communion is revealed in his use and interpretation of Indian history and myth. Certain tribal attitudes in the story imply that other types of ideal, not precisely defined, may prove to be disruptive.

#### Chapter V: An Imperial Anxiety

The setting of "The Man Who Was" implies certain strategic factors that related to India's geographical position. The drama is centred upon the death of someone who had been lost beyond the Frontier. The final tragedy is the result of imperial rivalry and of the enforced and total alienation of an individual from the society to which he belonged. The two themes are fused in an imaginative study of a character who is based on one or more actual originals.

Certain aspects of an idealism, which is again not precisely defined, are depicted in this story and in others with which it is compared. Some of the theories of a distant Government tend to disrupt the work that is necessary to the integrity of the individual. A concern with principles and ideals may lead to the ignoring of real dangers and in consequence, to the loss of the sustaining Frontier.

The themes of political and psychological destruction are also fused, in the image of a Cossack who is made to embody the threat that was believed, at the time of composition, to lie beyond the Khyber. Symbolically, the Cossack is depicted as an incursion from the outer darkness.

Kipling's scepticism as to the stability of the Indian Government and the continued existence of the Raj emerges, and this is compared with Conrad's standpoint. It is shown that they both advocated the necessity of involvement in the present actuality of society and work.

The concentrating of immense implications into brief dialogue and narrative, during the most intense crisis of the destroyed person, gives the story its particular value. The technique is contrasted with that of Conrad.

#### Chapter VI: The Tides of the Universe

Both "With the Main Guard" and "The Man Who Was" demonstrate the liquidation of the individual by the predicament in which imperial service places him.

In the story "A Disturber of Traffic," the course of a progressive psychosis is imaginatively but convincingly depicted. Loneliness, and the contemplation of metaphysical concepts too vast for him, disrupt a Light-keeper's fortifying work and cause the disintegration of his personality.

The motion of the tides is an image of the power of the magnetism of the universe over him, and also, a symbol of a metaphysical force that is entirely indifferent. The anodyne, presented in the image of a survey ship, the Britomarte, with

its active community of professional seamen, is an involvement in the constructive work which, paradoxically, imperial service demands.

Accompanying poems are analysed. One is a prayer that the vision of ultimate metaphysical power be veiled from man; the other, a prayer to Romance that presents the artist's purpose as the painting of a simulacrum.

Inner meaning is now at some remove from the stated intention, for the true significance of the stories and poems is their revelation of the reality that lies beyond the simulacrum.

#### Chapter VII: The "Law" and the Sea

Three Naval stories are examined. Although they differ from each other in many respects, the analysis exposes the presence of a sequential theme.

They are representations of responses to the demands of Naval Service. Two of them, "Judson and the Empire" and "Their Lawful Occasions," are humorous; "Sea Constables" is not. All three show personal characteristics that conflict with convention; in the first, there is initiative; in the second, waywardness; in the third, ruthlessness and brutality. The stories were written in a period of more than a decade; the last, published in 1915, displays an acceptance of the morality of total war. The series shows the development of narrative technique and of the author's ability to compress wide sea-scapes into literary form.

The "Law," the system of ordered social relationships which Carrington asserted to be the significance of Kipling's image of the ship, is ditched by one of the mariners in "Sea Constables," and this eclipse is accompanied by a rejection of imperialistic ideals.

A poem that accompanies "Their Lawful Occasions" is premonitive of the moral effects of the new machinery and weapons technology, and of their influence on attitudes in warfare. An early series of essays, A Fleet in Being, repeatedly discloses

an undertone of anxiety; and, within the imaginative literary view that he presents of warships, these innovations are shown to have an effect on the class conflict.

Chapter VIII: His Personal Daemon.

Kipling's response to what he regarded as the source of his literary imagination is examined in the context of poems and stories analysed in this study. The relationship between meaning and intention is investigated, and it is concluded that the strength of his creative writings resides in personifications.

The degree of his moral honesty to the actuality of his experience of imperialism, the freedom that he gives to his intuitive and speculative imagination to govern his craftsmanship, and the extent of his artistic discipline, constitute an evaluation that refutes the major criticism.

REFERENCES

- i) Bibliographic references and accompanying notes are in numbered sequence at the end of each chapter.
- ii) Supplementary notes appear occasionally at the foot of pages in the text.
- iii) The style of citation is the one set out in TURABIAN, K.L. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations; 3rd ed. revised (Chicago: University Press, 1967), with certain amendments that accord with methods adopted in libraries.
- iv) For the identification of bibliographic details, the work consulted was: STEWART, J. McG. Rudyard Kipling: a Bibliographical Catalogue (Toronto: Dalhousie University Press, 1959).
- v) Except where otherwise stated, the quoted passages of Kipling's prose are taken from the Library Edition, published by Macmillan between 1949 and 1951, and subsequently reprinted. (Stewart, pp. 582-583).
- vi) Except where otherwise stated, the quoted passages of Kipling's poetry are taken from Rudyard Kipling's Verse; definitive edition (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1973), which is cited as Verse.
- vii) There is frequent reference to The Readers' Guide to Rudyard Kipling's Work (London: Kipling Society, 1961- ) The full citation appears in the Bibliography in the section headed KIPLING: WRITINGS. In the lists of references at the ends of chapters it is cited as KIPLING Readers' Guide.

## CHAPTER I

### ORIGINS

Imperialism is fundamental to the study of Kipling, because many of the predicaments that he depicts in the short stories develop from conditions of administrative or military service in the Empire, and because many of the poems display his concern for the State. A political intention has consequently been attributed to him, and it has been a major factor in the critical response to his work, even from the time of its first publication in England.<sup>1</sup>

A widely-held assumption that this response was one of disapproval was implied in an incident that E.L. Gilbert recalls in his recent study. He recounts how Ernest Hemingway, describing the books he most admired, discussed several writers; to one of them, however, he gave only a restricted appraisal; for he would reckon merely with "the good Kipling."<sup>2</sup> That the response ought to have been one of disapproval was implied by Boris Ford, who seriously regretted T.S. Eliot's sympathetic interest in Kipling, and asserted: "What Kipling reveals, in every line he wrote, is, a sensibility entirely devoid of moral discipline and artistic honesty; the only discipline he observes is that of his ideal Subaltern, ..." In his next paragraph he explained: "To go further into the matter, or to support these generalizations with detailed analysis, would be to perform a task out of all importance to its intrinsic importance."<sup>3</sup>

The widespread condemnation of Kipling's politics has caused some critics to concentrate on other aspects of his work. Gilbert analyses an attitude to a struggle for identity that he has discerned, and relates it to a myth. There is a moral discipline, he believes, in the method of presenting this theme and in the theme itself, both being governed by Kipling's idea of the "Law."<sup>4</sup> Sandison's most significant statement is: "Kipling, much more so than one would at first suspect, in talking about political society is talking about self and individual consciousness."<sup>5</sup> Tompkins<sup>6</sup>

and Bodelsen<sup>7</sup> do not concentrate their discussions on the significance of imperialism, neither do they claim to have written a comprehensive appraisal. Dobrée analyses the poems and stories so as to reveal their realism and discover their fabular content; however, he devotes one chapter to a comparative survey of imperialist poets.<sup>8</sup> Faber demonstrates the political significance of both essays and imaginative writing, but his is a work of historical, rather than literary, interpretation.<sup>9</sup> (a)

In Kipling's autobiographical sketch there is a retrospective view of his motive. Recalling his return from India in 1889 and life in London immediately after that event, he says:

Bit by bit, my original notion grew into a vast, vague conspectus ... of the whole sweep and meaning of things and efforts and origins throughout the Empire. 10

Turning to the political infusion he says:

The general situation, as I saw it, promised an alluring 'dog-fight,' in which I had no need to take an aggressive part because, as soon as the first bloom had faded off my work, my normal output seemed to have the gift of arriding per se the people I most disliked. 11

It was thus his intention to bring the Empire to the notice of the public, and to oppose certain current attitudes. He implies in this late statement that the meaning, tone and style of his creative writing were appropriate to a political dispute.

Extracts from two critical essays illustrate the sense of outrage that his imaginative presentation of the Empire had provoked. "The Voice of the Hooligan," published in 1899 by Robert Buchanan, is the more strident:

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(a) There are several references to these criticisms in the course of this study.

It is no purpose of mine, ... to touch on political questions ... It will scarcely be denied, indeed it is frankly admitted by all parties, that the Hooligan spirit of patriotism, the fierce and quasi-savage militant spirit as expressed in many London newspapers and in such literature as the writings of Mr. Kipling, has measurably lowered the affection and respect once felt for us among European nations. 12

In his appraisal of the Barrack Room Ballads he denounces certain manifestations of popular imperialist fervour:

There was no glimpse anywhere of sober and self-respecting human beings -- only a wild carnival of drunken, bragging, boasting Hooligans in red coats and seamen's jackets, shrieking to the sound of the banjo and applauding the English flag. 13

The style of the ballads was in fact influenced by the rhythm of popular songs. (a) The poet lived opposite, and frequently attended, Gatti's Music Hall; the scene deplored by Buchanan would have been real enough to Kipling.

It was evidently the common soldier that dismayed Buchanan, yet the importance of realism in the Barrack Room Ballads is that the characters, while existing in a fictive world, display a convincing truth about their condition. (b) Orwell makes the point that Kipling provided the only literary record of the Army of the late 19th Century, and adds picturesque descriptions in support of Kipling's accuracy. 14

It was not that an infusion of politics into literature was regarded as objectionable by 19th Century critics; Buchanan himself expressed great faith in what he regarded as the enlightening function of British rule. Nor was Kipling alone in propounding imperialism:

(a) Carrington's recent edition of the Barrack Room Ballads shows this: see reference 42, of ch. iii.

(b) "Danny Deever," described in ch. iii, has been proved to be highly realistic.

We know that many other writers have expressed unpopular political opinions without these opinions being seriously held against them in discussions of their work; in evaluating Lawrence or Eliot, for example, most commentators seem able to separate the writers' aesthetics from their personal politics ...

15

What was seriously held against him was a tone and language that enflamed artistic tastes and offended moral sensitivities. Eventually, however, his association with imperialism caused him to be discredited; for the reaction against this form of political dominance tended to influence critical opinion.

A later essay, far removed from the idealism of the 19th Century liberal imperialist, attempts to define Kipling's political temperament. In this critique, of 1943, Trilling comments on the introductory appraisal to a selection of Kipling's poetry made by T.S. Eliot, and published in 1942:

In speaking of Kipling's politics, Mr. Eliot contents himself with denying that Kipling was a Fascist; a Tory, he says, is a very different thing, a Tory considers Fascism the last abasement of Democracy. But this, I think, is not quite ingenuous of Mr. Eliot ... Kipling is not properly to be called a Fascist, but neither is his political temperament to be adequately described merely by reference to a tradition which is honoured by Dr. Johnson, Burke,<sup>(a)</sup> and Walter Scott. Kipling is not like these men; he is not generous, he is not manly; and he has none of the mind of the few great Tories.<sup>(b)</sup> His Toryism often had in it a lower-middle-class snarl of defeated gentility, and it is this, rather than his love of authority and force, that might suggest an affinity with Fascism. His imperialism is reprehensible not because it is imperialism but because it is puny and mindless imperialism. In short, Kipling is unloved and unlovable not by reason of his beliefs but by reason of the temperament that gave them literary expression.

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- (a) Burke was in fact a Whig for most of his political life.  
 (b) Yet his thought has some similarity with that of Bolingbroke and Alexander Pope; a comparison is made in ch. ii. See also reference 30 at the end of this chapter.

Although many of the stories depict professional and working men in their duties, and contain an expression of class consciousness, of bitterness and frustration, Trilling's view that they exhibit a lower middle-class snarl appears to be influenced by non-literary factors. Indeed, he later stated that he regarded Kipling with a more "affectionate consideration" than he had displayed in this essay.<sup>17</sup>

Trilling's assertion that Kipling's imperialism is not in the Tory tradition is contradicted by Richard Faber's interpretation:

This awareness of original, or at least inherited, sin is a familiar ingredient of Tory political philosophy, with its belief in the need for traditional restraints. Imperialism was Kipling's main political interest; in domestic affairs it is not surprising that he should have been a Tory rather than a Liberal. He had a Tory's distrust of intellectual dogma, together with his straightforward patriotism and his sense of tradition and hierarchy. His Toryism is evident in a number of stories, particularly in "An Habitation Enforced," from his Sussex period, where the American wife unwittingly discovers her roots in the English countryside. In his Dedication of The Seven Seas (1896) to Bombay, the city of his birth, he wrote:

And she shall touch and remit  
After the use of kings  
(Orderly, ancient, fit)  
My deep-sea plunderings ...

'Orderly'; 'ancient'; 'fit': three words  
at the heart of Tory belief ...

18

Faber refers to Kipling's middle-class origins, to which Trilling had disparagingly referred, but shows that these excluded him from neither an affiliation with Toryism nor a sympathy towards the seriousness of imperialist activity:

In spite of his respect for tradition and for gentle inheritance Kipling came from the middle class himself and so did most of his Indian heroes. At least in later life he was not always impressed by the landed gentry. But he could find in the

Tory structure, though weakening, some security for the stability of Empire and for the maintenance of law and discipline against democratic ravages. There was, besides, an affinity between the Tory and the Imperialist faiths. Tories, as Labouchere argued, 'never could believe that people could govern themselves: they always thought it was necessary for some superior class to step in and govern them.'

19

The questions at issue in Trilling's commentary on Eliot's essay are whether Kipling has an affinity with fascism, and whether his imperialism is mindless. (H.E. Bates compared Kipling with Hitler.)<sup>20</sup> A political question that has relevance in a literary evaluation is whether the stories and poems express a standpoint that has an affinity with Toryism; for if they do, they could be compared with the works of other English writers.

In his political satire, exemplified in "The Islanders," and "The City of Brass," Kipling is a 19th Century counterpart of the Tory satirists of the 18th Century, of whom it has been said:

The satirists were much more attentive to the problems of the world of men than to ultimate questions of philosophy and religion. (a)

21

Some of Kipling's short stories display a similar interest. The satirists were held to be:

... in the mêlée, not above it, and they wrote with the conviction that they were dealing battle-blows to save from extinction the virtue and glory of England.

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(a) Faber asserts that Kipling was more concerned with the world of men than with moral and philosophical problems:

One of the least vulnerable aspects of British rule in India, towards the end of the nineteenth century, was the officials' capacity for work and their sense of duty. It was typical of Kipling that he should admire their efforts, and become fascinated by their expertise, without questioning their ultimate aims or seeking for justification outside the work itself.

23

The second statement could be readily applied to Kipling's denunciations of English public life. (a)

Imperialism and Kipling

A definition of 'imperialism' is a desirable preliminary to a discussion of its use as a literary subject. In their book Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840 - 1960, Koebner and Schmidt ascribe a very wide meaning:

Today the word may be found applied to systems of control maintained by densely settled colonists of the dominant people, but also to political influence which is exerted through the influence of business concerns which have managed to domicile themselves in the dependent country. The dominance called 'imperialistic' may have originated in conquest or in treaties concluded with indigenous rulers. The practical value of the dominance appears in most cases to materialize in financial returns. But imperialism may also be thought constantly concerned with securing strategic outposts.

The word not only refers to systems of rule and interests of dominance very different from one another; it is also made characteristic of most varied habits of policy. It may be primarily applied to the obstinacy with which existent control is maintained. But it may also hint at a supposed tendency of the 'imperialist' power to extend its sway. High-handed action and the reckless use of brute force may be branded by the name as emphatically as subtle, conspiratory tactics by which the rulers and exploiters ingratiate themselves with certain sections of the dependent population. All these ambiguities, however, have not prevented imperialism from becoming an immensely powerful term of abuse on every continent. It is now so frequently employed by the radio and the press communicating in almost any spoken tongue on earth that in February 1960 a frequency count, including the press and radio of America, Europe, Asia and Africa, showed that imperialism was used at a rate of at least one in every ten political broadcasts.

(a) The patriotic poetry is discussed in ch. ii.

Reviewing the political scene in 19th-Century Britain, they show how imperialism became a domestic issue:

Lastly, Disraeli added the tie of military power, which gave millions justice and order. Its commanding centre was in the British Isles where all the power was centralized. It made the British Government the Government of the Empire ... 25

They quote the Earl of Carnarvon for a contemporary view of the history of imperialism; (a)

'I have heard of Imperial policy, and Imperial interest, but Imperialism, as such, is a newly coined word to me.' ... 'In one sense the English Constitution knows nothing of Imperialism.' He admitted, however, that there was an imperial element embodied in the Constitution and had been there since Tudor times. 26

Imperialism was a concept which then, as in previous ages, had been the cause of deep political division in domestic politics in Britain:

It was clear, therefore, that the slogan of Imperialism had struck root in the field of party politics by the end of the year 1878 and was adopted by the Liberal Opposition in their political struggle against the Conservative Government. 27

With regard to the use of the term in political dispute:

It has often been understood as the shibboleth by the use of which one section of the nation expressed its low opinion of the political morality allegedly possessed by another section. 28

Referring again to the Victorian era, Koebner and Schmidt describe an imperial issue that had throughout the modern history of the British Isles occasioned bitter and violent controversy; namely, the governing of Ireland.<sup>29</sup> Kipling's invective against Gladstone included this topic.<sup>30</sup>

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(a) Contemporary with Kipling's formative years.

From these extracts two major conclusions are to be drawn; firstly, that when Kipling writes poetry about the condition of socio-political institutions in Britain that relate to the defence, security and stability of the realm, he is concerned with matters that fall within the meaning of the term 'imperialism'; secondly, that the use of the term in political invective will continue to bear upon the response to his work.

Despite the wide connotation and usage of the term, there are evident in a survey of Kipling's creative writing, certain predominant interests. These are the features of the British Empire of which he had personal experience -- the British Army in India, the Indian Army, and the Royal Navy. The Empire is present in all but a few of his short stories,<sup>(a)</sup> and it is evoked with a realism that is particularly evident in his technique of describing the personal predicaments of men employed in imperial duties. There is displayed a confident knowledge of present actuality,<sup>(b)</sup> of background, and of work. His use of fact creates one kind of artistic unity; for neither his plots nor his characters leave the bounds of probability.

Although his style was deplored by the critics, it appealed to popular sentiment. His work has enjoyed an immense popularity -- none of his authorized collections has been out of print since its first publication -- and has at times proved influential politically.

In demonstration of its historical effect, there are two interesting statements in recent commentaries. Koebner and Schmidt,

(a) Faber, in describing Kipling's artistic vision, asserts:

Any attempt to expound visions risks causing them to evaporate. Kipling was an artist and something of a mystic; he was not a trained political thinker. As a mystic he had a strong, intuitive, sense of certain values, which he embodied in his concept of Empire. As an artist he displayed the Empire -- and these values --<sup>31</sup> in a wide range of scenes and activities.

(b) Kinkead-Weeks asserts:

Every book, every short story, has its origin in his background or in the events and circumstances of his life.<sup>32</sup>

in analysing the political condition of Great Britain in the late 19th Century, state:

At the beginning of 1899 Kipling published his famous poem "The White Man's Burden." It expressed in verse the latent thought of those years:

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.

... Kipling brought home, in the words of the Spectator, 'the duty of the white man to conquer and control, probably for a couple of centuries, all the dark peoples of the world, not for his own good, but for theirs.' 33

Referring to the war in the Sudan, they conclude that Kipling represented popular feeling:

Kipling's verse in 1898 captured the mood of that year, the romantic pride in the virility and vastness of the Empire and the belief that it was an Empire with a difference. Its might and authority was wielded for the good of the backward races ... Kipling's advice to the Sudanese to accept British tutelage and belief in the sincerity of the British educational effort was undoubtedly in keeping with the views of many other English men who abhorred cruel abuse of power ... 34

There has been a more recent evaluation of his influence in the propagation of imperialism, by an historian who is convinced that the Empire, far from affording Britain an economic buttress and a military bulwark, caused, by the extent of its various demands, the liquidation of British power. His conviction, which has some affinities with an older Tory mode of thought, is that the only colonies worth keeping were those that had some strategic value. Barnett indicts Kipling for creating a romantic ideal out of the Empire and thus, of bringing about Britain's fall:

The imperialist ideal took the form of a world civilized by Anglo-Saxons. The myth was of a British master race carrying a heavy burden of responsibility for lesser breeds. The white man was thus not conquering or ruling unnumbered coloured men in vast territories simply in order to augment his power and wealth, but also to bring the benefits of Western administration to the benighted. The imperial myth was movingly and imaginatively expounded, above all by Rudyard Kipling.

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Although the latter is a superficial appraisal of Kipling's intention, it is important; firstly because it attributes to him a powerful and popular political influence, and secondly, because the evaluation of a writer depends to some extent upon the continuity of the public's appreciation of him: "... the relations between literature and society are reciprocal. Literature is not only the effect of social causes, it is also the cause of social effects." 36

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10. KIPLING. Something of Myself, pp. 90-91.
11. Ibid., p. 92.
12. BUCHANAN, R.W. "The Voice of the Hooligan," Rudyard Kipling: the Critical Heritage; ed. R.L. Green, p. 247.
13. Ibid., p. 241.

Buchanan's article closes with a statement that shows an idealist's concept of imperialism: "I have left myself no space, I find, to draw a final contrast between the coarse and soulless patriotism of the hour and that nobler imperialism in which all true Englishmen, to whatever political camp they belong for the time being, must still believe. In the federation of Great Britain and her colonies, and in the slow and sure spread of what is best and purest in our civilization, there was hope and inspiration for our race and a message of freedom for all the world."

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15. GILBERT. The Good Kipling, pp. 7-8.
16. TRILLING, L. "Kipling," Kipling's Mind and Art; ed. Andrew Rutherford, p. 91.
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- He saw a particular significance in the swastika on Kipling's book-covers. It was a device used by Macmillan in the binding design of many of the earlier editions of his works. It was the sign of Ganesh, the Hindu God of Culture.
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22. Ibid., p. 8.
23. FABER. The Vision and the Need, p. 98
24. KOEBNER, R. and SCHMIDT, H.D. Imperialism: the Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840 - 1960. (Cambridge: University Press), p. xviii.
25. Ibid., p. 137.
26. Ibid., p. 153.
27. Ibid., p. 157.
28. Ibid., p. 165.
29. Ibid., p. 168.
30. KIPLING. Verse, pp. 227-229.

The poem "Cleared," 1890, concerns the Parnell Commission. With reference to Gladstone, there is a couplet:

"Hold up those hands of innocence -- go,  
 scare your sheep together,  
 The blundering, tripping tups that bleat  
 behind the old bell-wether;"

There is evidence that Kipling read,  
 and was influenced by, the works of Bolingbroke.  
 In Letter V "On Parties," Bolingbroke states:

"But there are some men, such as I shall  
 not mention on this occasion, who never  
 deviate into the road of good sense; who,  
 crossed by no difficulties, pressed by no  
 exigencies, meeting scarce opposition  
 enough to excite their industry, and  
guiding a tame well tutored flock, that  
 follow their bell-weather obstinately, ..."

"The Islanders" and "The City of Brass" condemn  
 the divisiveness of English politics in a time  
 of crisis. In Letter IV, Bolingbroke does so:

"A country party must be authorized by the  
 voice of the country. It must be formed on  
 principles of common interest. It cannot be  
 united and maintained on particular prejudices,  
 any more than it can, or ought to be, directed  
 to the particular interests of any set of men  
 whatsoever. A party, thus constituted, is  
 improperly called party. It is the nation,  
 speaking and acting in the discourse and  
 conduct of particular men."

ST. JOHN, Henry, Viscount Bolingbroke. Works 5 vols (London:  
 1754). II, pp. 71 & 68.

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 Mind and Art; ed. Andrew Rutherford, pp. 197-234.
33. KOEBNER & SCHMIDT. Imperialism, p. 218.
34. Ibid., pp. 216-217.
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CHAPTER II

IMPERIALIST POETRY

The nature of Kipling's commitment to imperialism needs to be assessed, in view of the definitions and critical assertions quoted in the last chapter. It is seen in many of the poems in which he proclaimed his political opinions.

Kipling has a relationship with a stream of patriotic poetry that has emerged at various times in English history.<sup>1</sup> For example, a similarity of theme allows a comparison between him and certain 18th Century poets.

Roman poets are also among the acknowledged literary origins of his thought. Horace and Virgil are cited in "Regulus," a story particularly relevant to his imperialist ideal. The chapter-heading is a summary of the heroic account of the death of Regulus as given in the 5th Ode of the III Book of Horace:

Regulus, a Roman general, defeated the Carthaginians 256 B.C., but was next year defeated and taken prisoner by the Carthaginians, who sent him to Rome with an embassy to ask for peace or an exchange of prisoners. Regulus strongly advised the Roman Senate to make no terms with the enemy. He then returned to Carthage and was put to death.

2

Kipling's school-story is a re-statement of this theme. (a)

In the course of a punishment period, a housemaster dictates the following extract from Virgil, to a youth whose actions are intended to exemplify the Roman general's virtues:

---

(a) The story is biographical; the school depicted was his own -- Westward Ho! It had been established to educate boys to the entrance requirements of military academies.

Tu regere imperio popules Romane memento  
 Hae tibi erunt artes pacisque imponere morem,  
 Parcere subjetiis et debellare superbos. (a) 3

"There you have it all, Winton," says King, who then expounds a political theme taken from the 5th and other Odes of the III Book, where deference to popular acclaim, boasting, pride, pleasure-seeking and other political and social tendencies are shown to be incompatible with the qualities required of workers in imperial service. The line "Dis te minorem quod geris imperas"<sup>4</sup> is recurrent in the dialogue.

Dyer's "Ruins of Rome" contains an augury of disaster in its description of the decay of a civilization, which it attributes to the degeneracy of the people. Kipling admonishes, in "The Islanders," a nation that he considered to have lost its ability to survive because of the degeneracy of its social institutions. Dyer depicts the people as a potential danger to the State, and the example is held up to Englishmen:

O Britons! O my countrymen! Beware;  
 Gird, gird your hearts: The Romans once were free,  
 Were brave, were virtuous. --Tyranny how'er  
 Deign'd to walk forth awhile in pageant state,  
 And with licentious pleasures fed the rout, 5  
 The thoughtless many:

Kipling echoes this sentiment, which had appeared also in the writings of Bolingbroke.<sup>6</sup> In "The Islanders" Kipling asserts:

No doubt but ye are the People --your throne is above  
 the King's ...  
 Fenced by your careful fathers, ringed by your leaden seas,  
 Long did you wake in quiet and long lie down at ease;  
 Till ye said of Strife, "What is it?" of the Sword,  
 "It is far from our ken";  
 Till ye made a sport of your shrunken hosts and a toy of  
 your armed men.  
 Ye stopped your ears to the warning --ye would neither  
 look nor heed --  
 Ye set your leisure above their toil and your lusts above  
 their need. 7

---

(a) But you, Roman, must remember that you have to rule the people by your authority; for this will be your skill, to establish peace as a tradition, to spare the subjected, and to wage war against the proud until they are annihilated.

It is in this poem that the public are admonished because of their interest in: "... flannelled fools at the wicket or the muddied oafs at the goals."<sup>8</sup> Kipling's poem is more concerned with immediate issues than Dyer's, for he wrote "The Islanders" as an expression of despair over the conduct of the South African War.<sup>9</sup> Dyer's premonition derives from a reflection on history:

Fall'n Fall'n in a silent heap; her heroes all  
Sunk in their urns; behold the pride of pomp, 10  
The throne of nations fall'n! obscured in dust;

The metre of "The Islanders," the traditional and dignified iambic, with interspersed anapaests, is appropriate to a serious theme infused with satire. The length of line allows a direct and full statement in each distich. However, the strength of the beat distorts the normal speech rhythm, and the language is archaic, being clearly influenced by the Authorized Version.<sup>11</sup>

Dyer's decasyllabic lines do not rhyme fully; his poem is a meditative composition, and the thought is allowed to run on through the paragraph. "The Ruins of Rome" contains a careful consideration of a historical process and the diction, though it includes rhetorical elements, such as "pageant state," "licentious pleasure," "gird, gird your hearts," is less archaic than Kipling's.

In the poem "Britannia," James Thomson (1700-1748) urges the English to see to their patriotic duties:

And what, my thoughtless sons, should fire you more  
Than when your well-earned empire of the deep  
The least beginning injury received? ...  
Lo! now, my sons, the sons of freedom! meet  
In awful senate; thither let us fly;  
Burn in the patriot's thought, flow from his tongue  
In fearless truth; myself transformed preside, 12  
And shed the spirit of Britannia round.

Personifying England as a mother, and regarding Englishmen as her sons, Kipling repeats Thomson's concept of a racial identity in "England's Answer":

Sons, I have borne many sons, but my duggs are not yet dry.  
 Look, I have made ye a place and opened wide the doors,  
 That ye may talk together, your barons and Councillors, --  
 Wards of the Outer March, Lords of the Lower Seas,  
 Ay, talk to your grey mother that bore you on her knees! --  
 That ye may talk together, brother to brother's face --  
 Thus for the good of your peoples -- thus for the Pride of  
 Race.

Also, we will make promise. So long as The Blood endures  
 I shall know that your good is mine; ye shall feel that my  
 strength is yours:

In the day of Armageddon, ...

13

The tone of both poems is patriotic but Kipling's is more fervent. Defects in Kipling's style are apparent; the end-rhymes are contrived and the metre involves a dislocation of speech-rhythm that does not enrich the meaning. An example is the juxtaposition of:

... and opened wide the doors  
 with  
 ... your barons and Councillors.

"Britannia" is an earnest consideration of Britain's sea-power in particular circumstances, and evokes the national destiny. The poem presents a theme that often occurs in England's political thought -- the relationship of the nation's liberty with her Navy. Although the diction is formal, it is more elegant and possesses greater subtlety than "A Song of the English"; this is evident in the alliteration and internal rhyme of the following passage,

Make every vessel stoop, make every state  
 At once their welfare and their duty know.  
 This is your glory, this is your wisdom; this  
 The native power for which you were designed  
 By fate, when fate designed the firmest state  
 That e'er was seated on the subject sea: ...

14

where ambiguities of the word "state" imply both the condition and concept of the nation. The image of the vessel being made to "stoop" represents the motion of a ship hove-to and the symbolic act of subservience. There is a double meaning in the second line, where "welfare" implies the security existing in the present governance of the seas, and contains a warning to other nations that this security should not be disturbed. Expressions such as "designed / By fate, when fate designed the firmest state" are controlled

rhetoric, and contrast with the fervour of Kipling's verse. Thomson's immediate concern is with the predominance of English, over Spanish, sea-power. Kipling affirms a desire for general predominance, but advocates a racial identity too bluntly.

Dyer's "The Fleece" is regarded by Dobrée<sup>15</sup> as the greatest patriotic poem in the language. It is a highly reasoned and detailed examination of the mercantile expansion that had been achieved with British wool. The value of sea-power and the enterprise of the English are described, and the vigour of the race is applauded:

Each clime, each sea, the spacious orb of each  
 Shall join their various stores, and amply feed  
 The mighty brotherhood; while ye proceed  
 Active and enterprising, or to teach  
 The stream a naval course or till the wild,  
 Or drain the fen or stretch the long canal,  
 Or plough the fertile bellows of the deep.  
 Why to the narrow circle of our coast  
 Should we submit our limits, while each wind  
 Assists the stream and sail, and the wide main 16  
 Wooes us in every port? ...

Kipling expressed the same idea:

We warn the crawling cargo-tanks of Bremen, Leith,  
 and Hull, ...  
 Come up, come in from Eastward, from the guardports  
 of the Morn!  
 Beat up, beat in from Southerly, O gipsies of the  
 Horn!  
 Swift shuttles of an Empire's loom that weave us main  
 to main. 17

This verse is presented as a song from a coastwise navigation-light. The rhyming of "guardports of the Morn," with "Gypsies of the Horn," does not aid the sense; also, "weave us main to main" is a juvenile image of the interlinking trade-routes that maintained the maritime empire. Dyer stated the concept with much greater clarity and seriousness:

'Tis her delight  
 To fold the world with harmony, and spread  
 Among the habitations of mankind,  
 The various wealth of toil and what her Fleece,  
 To clothe the naked, and her skilful looms, 18  
 Peculiar give.

There is a more profound intention than an appraisal of wool traffic; trade is presented as a symbol of the ordered state of the world.

Patriotism is in "The Fleece" bodied forth in clear language, and the author ranges over the subject of Britain's global commerce and industrial expansion intelligently. The dominant theme is tribute to a national achievement; the poem is often naively uncritical, but not tendentious. There is an honest simplicity of tone and an enthusiasm about the grandeur of the subject, which, despite the occasional superficiality of the political view, convey a plausible reality and a purity of purpose. Kipling's "Song of the English" is by comparison turgid, and immoderate of language:

Yea, though we sinned, and our rulers went from  
righteousness --  
Deep in all dishonour though we stained our garments'  
hem,  
Oh, be ye not dismayed,  
Though we stumbled and we strayed,  
We were led by evil counsellors -- the Lord shall deal  
with them!  
Hold ye the Faith -- the Faith our Father seal'd us;  
Whoring not with visions -- otherwise and overstale.  
Except ye pay the Lord  
Single heart and single sword,  
Of your children in their bondage He shall ask them  
treble-tale! 19

The opposing of an ideal of moral and intellectual order to the corruption and chaos in society and government is a theme of "The Dunciad." In this sense it is a precursor of "The Islanders" and "The City of Brass." In "The Dunciad" English intellectual activities are examined; the poem is suffused with the conviction that corruption and chaos have triumphed:

The learned Baron Butterflies design,  
Or draw to silk Arachne's subtle line;  
The Judge to dance his brother Sergeant call;  
The Senator at Cricket urge the Ball;  
The Bishop stow (Pontific Luxury!)  
An hundred Souls of Turkeys in a Pye;  
The sturdy Squire to Gallic masters stoop,  
And drown his Lands and Manors in a Soupe ...

And nobly conscious, Princes are but things  
 Born for First Ministers, as Slaves for Kings,  
 Tyrant supreme! shall three Estates command, 20  
 And MAKE ONE MIGHTY DUNCIAD OF THE LAND.

The last lines of Book IV describe the triumph of darkness. In this passage, the allegorical figures are spiritual and intellectual values:

Religion blushing veils her sacred fires,  
 And unawares Morality expires.  
 Nor public Flame, nor private, dares to shine;  
 Nor human Spark is left, nor Glimpse divine!  
 Lo! thy dread Empire, CHAOS is restor'd;  
 Light dies before thy uncreating word:  
 Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall; 21  
 And Universal Darkness buries All.

Here is the destruction of a nation, of its moral, religious, and intellectual heart.

"The Islanders" also portrays the destruction of a nation, significantly, at nightfall. The representatives of political fashion are denounced, as is the clamour with which they are praised. Idleness, the pursuit of pleasure, industrial unrest, the education system, the uncaring insularity of county society -- all these are shown to contribute to the eventual defeat of order and the letting in of chaos. The diction is vivid in sound and the imagery effective in evoking a sense of numbing bewilderment. The similarity with the Tory satirists of the 18th Century is again evident.<sup>22</sup> The climax of the poem is:

Also your gods are many; no doubt but your gods  
 shall aid.  
 Idols of greasy altars built for the body's ease;  
 Proud little brazen Baals and talking fetishes;  
 Teraphs of sept and party and wise wood-pavement  
 gods --  
These shall come down to the battle and snatch you  
 from the rods?  
 From the gusty, flickering gun-roll with viewless  
 salvoes rent,  
 And the pitted hail of the bullets that tell not  
 whence they were sent.  
 When ye are ringed as with iron, when ye are  
 scourged as with whips,  
 When the meat is yet in your belly, and the boast  
 is yet on your lips;



As for their kinsmen far off, on the skirts of the  
 nation,  
 They harried all earth to make sure none escaped reprobation  
 They awakened unrest for a jest in their newly-won  
 borders  
 And jeered at the blood of their brethren betrayed by  
 their orders.  
 They instructed the ruled to rebel, their rulers to  
 aid them; 28

It is evident here that military factors are among Kipling's fundamental concerns. The ignoring of the strategic significance of the overseas possessions, and the Liberals' moral opposition to rearmament, might, he believed, end in disaster for the Empire.

Ironically, in those years leading up to the Great War the Liberal Party was obliged to put into effect perhaps the greatest programme of naval construction that the nation had ever seen.<sup>29</sup> Kipling had therefore at that time no basis for predicting the nation's complete military unpreparedness:

Out of the sea rose a sign -- out of Heaven a terror.  
 Then they saw, then they heard, then they knew -- for  
 none troubled to hide it,  
 An host had prepared their destruction, ...  
 .....  
 There was no need of a steed nor a lance to pursue them;  
 It was decreed their own deed, and not chance, should  
 undo them.  
 The tares they had laughingly sown were ripe to the  
 reaping,  
 .....  
 For the hate they had taught through the State brought  
 the State no defender,  
 And it passed from the roll of the Nations in headlong  
 surrender. 30

The anapaest runs throughout the poem, although it is varied by the use of hypermetric end-rhyme. The speed of the rhythm imparts an incisive effect to the satire

Obviously, neither "The Islanders" nor "The City of Brass" is as profound or extensive as "The Dunciad"; they do not analyse in any detail the facets of society that they denounce. The epigrams are undeniably mnemonic, but they do not display the complexities and tensions of a modern state. The Biblical language and the borrowing of Old Testament contexts are revealing here, for they tend to simplify the political thought.

The Durand commentary, on Kipling's poetry up to 1912,<sup>31</sup> shows how great is the extent of Biblical influence on both meaning and language. Kipling in these poems takes no account of the proliferation of social and industrial problems, or of the reasons for the Liberal Party's popularity. There is little comprehension of the general realignment of Europe, or of the newer political forces at large in the continent.

From the Bible descend many of his phrases expressing concepts of racial identity. In "Recessional," there are several; verses 1, 3 and 4 are quoted:

God of our fathers, known of old,  
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,  
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold  
Dominion over palm and pine,  
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget -- lest we forget.

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!  
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,  
Lest we forget -- lest we forget!

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 --  
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget -- lest we forget.

32

In the fourth stanza, a chosen people is reminded that it possesses the "Law"; the implications of these lines are revealed in the source -- Romans II, xiv, verses 12-14:

... and as many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law, for not the hearers of law are just before God, but the doers of a law shall be justified: for when Gentiles which have no law do by nature the things of the law, these, having no law, are a law unto themselves ...

"Lesser breeds without the Law" are all other peoples. "Lesser breeds" also appears to encompass the collective democratic voice. (It will be seen that one of his contemporary imitators assumed this).<sup>33</sup>

Other implications in the poem are that a responsibility for governance has been laid upon generations of Englishmen (the appeal to the Old Testament "God of our fathers" is significant), and that their history has now reached a crucial stage. With an injunction reminiscent of Dyer's "Ruins of Rome," the nation is exhorted to purity, steadfastness, and humility.<sup>34</sup> With the moral and verbal power of the Bible, the ruling class is warned not to forget that there is One greater than they: the sense derives from: "Then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the Land of Egypt." Deut., vi, verse 12. Humility is essential:

Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,  
An humble and a contrite heart.

The idea is derived from Psalm 51:

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:  
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou will  
not despise.

The imperialist must not only observe the "Law," he must take it with him into every land, and fulfil its teaching by example; for his work will be judged. The refrain gives a high moral purpose to imperial activity, because the "Law" is the concomitant of the word of God. The source of the expression "Judge of the Nations ..." reveals its significance:

... for out of Zion shall go forth the Law,  
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And  
he shall judge between the nations. Isaiah ii verses 3-4.

The poem is still quoted. (a) (b) In addition to imparting a mnemonic quality, the Bible affects the poetic style in such

- 
- (a) Writing in the Sunday Telegraph, of the 1st September, 1974, of the problems and condition of the post-colonial era in Europe, a political commentator, Douglas Brown, stated that it was not, in fact, exactly "one with Nineveh and Tyre."
- (b) Addressing the Commonwealth Conference in Jamaica, in 1975, Harold Wilson replied with verses from "Recessional" when asked whether Britain would be willing to send troops to protect the integrity of one of the smaller colonies. Daily Telegraph, 6th May, 1975.

pieces as "Recessional." Phrases from the prophetic books convey the tone of forewarning, of admonition; borrowings from the Epistles enhance the didactic tone; the diction of the Psalms is appropriate to the lyric mode.

The comparisons with Pope, Dyer, and Thomson reveal three effects; firstly, Kipling's poetry is far more popular in intention than theirs; secondly, it is far less intelligent in content; thirdly, the tone of the satiric, patriotic, and admonitory work of the 18th Century writers is repeated and amplified.<sup>35</sup>

Within these poems are many examples of ambiguity that enrich their meaning and significance. There occurs in the first stanza of "Recessional," the line "Far-called our navies melt away," implying not merely a dispersal after a review, but the general policy of sending major units to stations outside European waters, and the consequent dissipation of Britain's sea-power. (a) This line also contains a premonition of a reduction in the effectiveness of the Navy as the result of successive wars and political changes, and an augury of the concomitant decline of the Empire.

In "The Islanders," the opening line,

No doubt but ye are the People -- your throne is  
above the King's

is another example of metonymy with several meanings: "You are the People, and to-day you have more authority than the King:" or, "Because you are the People your authority in a democracy is higher than the King's; Kings rule because they hold themselves as lower than the Gods, but you are absolute in your power." A further meaning conveyed by the poem is that government is now the whim of the People, whose needs are raised above those of the State and Empire:

Till ye said of Strife, 'What is it?' of the  
Sword,  
'It is far from our ken.'

---

(a) There was some controversy over this subject.<sup>36</sup>

and: Ye set your leisure before their toil and your  
lusts above their need.

In "The Song of the English," there are several concepts transmitted in the passage:

We were dreamers, dreaming greatly in the man-stifled  
town;  
We yearned beyond the sky-line where the strange roads  
go down.  
Came the Whisper, came the Vision, came the Power with  
the Need,  
Till the Soul that is not man's soul was lent us to  
lead.  
As the deer breaks -- as the steer breaks -- from the  
herd where they graze,  
In the faith of little children we went on our ways.<sup>37</sup>

It presents an image of the human predicament in industrial society in late 19th-Century Britain, and symbolizes a personal response and a psychological cause of imperialism. There is a metric stress on the word "man" in the first line, where man has stifled the towns. In opposition four lines later is the "Soul, that is not man's soul," that has been lent to the imperialist. The "Whisper" and the "Vision," the urging of a political destiny -- metaphysical concepts -- are balanced against "Power" and "Need" -- the State and its policies. The "Soul" derives from the high moral sanction that is imparted to the imperialist. This is an important implication, because Kipling believed that the inspiration of his poetry derived from some mystic power that lay outside his conscious mind. (a)

"A Song of the English," which appeared in 1893, was an attempt at a patriotic hymn; Kipling said of his compulsion in writing it:

There must be born a poet who shall ... compose the greatest song of all - The Saga of the Anglo-Saxon all round the earth -- a paean that shall combine the terrible slow swing of the Battle Hymn of the Republic with Britannia needs no Bulwarks, the skirl of the British Grenadiers with that perfect quickstep, Marching through Georgia, and at the end the wail of the Dead March.

---

(a) This is discussed in the final chapter.

Of "Recessional," he said:

Altogether, one had a sense of 'a sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees' -- of things moving into position as troops move. And into the middle of it all came the Great Queen's Diamond Jubilee, and a certain optimism that scared me. . It was more in the nature of a nuzzur-wattu (an averter of the Evil Eye), and -- with the conservatism of the English -- was used in choirs and places where they sing long after our Navy and Army alike had in the name of 'peace' been rendered innocuous.

39

It is necessarily deduced from these statements, that the English nation and Empire were for him subjects of fundamental concern. The satires, motivated by his anxieties over what he saw as the defects of the people, over the future of the Empire, and over England itself, demonstrate by their vehemence the extent of his feeling.

The comparison with patriotic poets of the 18th Century is sufficient to demonstrate the similarities of theme, to illustrate certain aspects of a poetic convention, and to indicate the relative merits of Kipling's political verse.

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2. KIPLING. "Regulus," p. 239.
3. Ibid., Quoting the Aeneid, vi, 851.
4. KIPLING. "Regulus," passim.
5. DYER, J. Poems by John Dyer (London: Hughs, 1771), (Facsimile reprinting, Westmead: Gregg, 1969), p. 43
6. ST. JOHN, Henry, Viscount Bolingbroke. Works 5 vols. (London: 1754) II, pp. 177-178.

Dyer disparages "the thoughtless many," Kipling, the people:

No doubt but ye are the People --  
Your throne is above the King's  
Whoso speaks in your presence  
Must say acceptable things.

There is in both poets a similarity with Bolingbroke's attitude:

"But still it must be confessed, that if it be unsafe for a people to trust too much power to a prince, it is unsafe for them likewise to keep too much power to themselves. Absolute monarchy is tyranny; but absolute democracy is tyranny and anarchy both."

7. KIPLING. Verse, pp. 301-304.
8. Ibid.
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"No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you".
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23. KIPLING. Verse, p. 304.
24. Ibid., p. 315.
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28. KIPLING. Verse, p. 316.
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The story "The Legion on the Wall" repeats the words of "Recessional." Two naval officers discuss the concept of service, as represented by the Navy, and contrast it with political developments in Britain.

34. See references Nos. 5 and 10, above.

35. DYER. Poems, pp. 40-45.

For example, the last lines of "The Ruins of Rome" portray the downfall of the city in terms reminiscent of Book III of the Odes of Horace. Kipling's work is in turn reminiscent of both Dyer and Horace.

36. PRESTON, A. and MAJOR, J. Send a Gunboat: a Study of the Gunboat and its Role in British Policy, 1854-1904 (London: Longmans, 1967), chs. xiii & xiv, particularly pp. 167 & 172.

37. KIPLING. Verse, pp. 172-173.

38. CARRINGTON, C.E. Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Work (London: Macmillan, 1955), p. 130.

39. KIPLING. Something of Myself, pp. 147-148.

### CHAPTER III

#### ALIENATION

There is a tone of despair in Kipling's portrayal of British private soldiers in India; their plight is depicted in Soldiers Three, particularly in "With the Main Guard."

The character of Terence Mulvaney is developed in six of the stories in this collection, and in stories that appear in other collections. The structure of these six is as follows: the narrator, speaking as a fictive presence, describes the setting; in five of them Mulvaney intervenes as the colloquial raconteur; in one, the Yorkshireman Learoyd does so. The structure of the 'Soldier' stories in the other collections is similar.<sup>1</sup> The background is mainly contemporary service-life in the Punjab, although other places with which the regiments are associated are frequently recalled.

Because of this correspondence of character, time, place, and structure, each story gains significance from the others; the personal history of each of the three men is revealed, the setting is broadened, and successive facets of character emerge. Describing the 'Soldier' stories, Fenwick states:

They exploit the fact that this is a collection with a single and coherent setting, so that the individual stories gain from the atmosphere created elsewhere. Within the stories, too, one part begins to comment upon and affect the impact of the other ... Such advances are all-important to the more intricate achievements of Soldiers Three. With a smaller and even more coherent society, that of the private soldier, Kipling makes increasing use of the environment he treats. At no point does one find him suggesting that there is an answer to the problem raised by the conflict of this society and the individual. Instead, his acceptance of the military situation as insoluble pervades the whole collection with sadness and a sense of strain, focussed in the personal commitments of the narrator and his three friends, and intensified by the larger insolubles of ageing, sickness and death which form a permanent background to the action. <sup>2</sup>

From biographical research, the origins of the cantonments, barracks, regiments and personalities that appear in the stories have been discovered.<sup>3</sup>

"With the Main Guard" opens with a scene of intense discomfort in a Punjab garrison in the hot weather. The fort has been identified as the old Citadel at Lahore.<sup>4</sup> This is a picture of the reality of imperial service, and we see at once that there are doubts about the prospect of British rule, expressed by one of those whose task it is to maintain it. The story commences with this question:

'Mary, Mother av Mercy, fwhat the divil possist us to take an 'kape this melancolious country? Answer me that, sorr?'<sup>5</sup>

The narrator then depicts a condition of extreme heat and discomfort. A measure of relief is derived from periodic dousings with cold water -- a remedy applied to Private Learoyd, whose reason and physical resistance have been destroyed in the torrid atmosphere of the guard-room. He questions the validity of trying to preserve, not the British Empire, but his own life:

'An Ah divn't see that a man is i' fettle for going on to live; an' Ah divn't see that there is owt for t'livin for. Hear now, lads! Ah'm tired-tired. There's nobbut watter i' ma bones. Leave ma die!'

The hollow of the arch gave back Learoyd's broken whisper in a bass boom. Mulvaney looked at me hopelessly, but I remembered the madness of despair had once fallen upon Ortheris, that weary afternoon by the banks of the Khemi River, and how it had been exorcised by the skilful magician Mulvaney.<sup>6</sup>

Vernacular expressions, slang, renderings of mispronunciations, and idiomatic phrases form the conversation of the three soldiers. The use of dialect was not new in 19th Century fiction, but it is interesting in the 'Soldier' stories because of its variety. An approximation of Irish, Yorkshire and Cockney is used to represent respectively the speech of Mulvaney, Learoyd and Ortheris. In all three cases the diction is recognizable as appropriate, but there is no exactness of phonetic transcription.

The intended function of dialect here is to present a convincing picture of the British soldier in India and to show the humour and pathos in his response to conditions. Added to the private-soldier's idiom, therefore, are the expressions of the barrack-room, and certain attempts at Urdu and Hindi.<sup>7</sup>  
This was new; Keating says of it:

On 25th March, 1890 The Times welcomed Kipling to England with an eulogistic article in which he was hailed as the discoverer, as far as India is concerned, of "Tommy Atkins" as a hero of realistic romance ... The use of words such as 'discover' and 'inventor' is significant, for nothing quite like Kipling's soldier stories had ever appeared in English literature before. Henry James, writing an appreciation of Kipling's tales, decided that 'the most brilliant group is devoted wholly to the common soldier, and of this series it appears to me that too much good can hardly be said.' ... the 'freshness of the soldier tales was undisputed.' The reason for this has been given by Charles Carrington: 'Search English literature and you will find no treatment of the English soldier on any adequate scale between Shakespeare and Kipling.' ... the soldier was regarded as a social outcast 'drawn from the unemployed or unemployable, so that "going for a soldier" was, in the respectable working class regarded as the last degradation, analogous with "going to the bad."' ... Kipling fully understood the necessity for the working 8 man to express himself in his own language.'

Although Kipling's transcription is not properly phonetic, it achieves the effect of making the utterance appropriate to the speaker. The rendering of dialect is sincere, and with it Kipling presents sympathetically a class of men that was little known, particularly in literary circles.

The subject of "With the Main Guard" is the personal alienation of the members of a guard detachment. The condition of their morbid vigil in the ancient brick guard-house is described further:



acute suffering and endeavour to halt the process of psychological disintegration. It is evident that Kipling saw his own value as a writer in this way, and that Mulvaney's efforts are analogous to his.<sup>11</sup>

Mulvaney's power and function are indeed recognized by Learoyd and Ortheris; this is apparent when he describes the prospects of the gentleman-ranker, to whose person he now applies the attributes of fervent heat:

'Gentleman born,' said Mulvaney; 'Corp'ril wan year Sargent nex'. Red-hot on his C'mission, but dhrinks like a fish. He'll be gone before the cowl'd weather's here. So!'

He slipped his boot, and with the naked toe just touched the trigger of his Martini. Ortheris misunderstood the movement, and the next instant the Irishman's rifle was dashed aside, while Ortheris stood before him, his eyes blazing with reproof.

'You!' said Ortheris. 'My Gawd, you! If it was you, wot would we do?' 12

There is ambiguity in the metaphor "Red-hot"; it conveys keenness, but also the effect of the burning climate. There is an element of dramatic irony, for too much enthusiasm will in these conditions achieve not advancement, but personal destruction. Ambition is linked with drinking as cause and effect, and the end is extinction, somewhere on the Indo-Gangetic plain. That these men are all in a place of punishment is suggested by terms such as "brick-vault", "burning," "harsh glare," "heat."

An augury of death is evoked in one symbolic act -- the toe to the trigger of the Martini. (The end of the barrel goes in the mouth.) The dependence of Learoyd and Ortheris on Mulvaney's resistance to the destructive force of their adversity is stammered out by Ortheris.

Mulvaney turns to his story in response to the appeal: "Talk, Terence! ... Talk! He'll answer your voice." For Learoyd has suffered a physical and mental collapse; he is demented through the fear of death, and his neck veins are dangerously swollen from the intense exertion of breathing in the stifling heat.

The Irishman is given a greater knowledge of language than the other privates. The late middle-English "melancolious," as an appraisal of India, has a wide connotation in the circumstances set out in the story. It describes the plight of the soldiers who are Kipling's concern, implies a general and individual response to the situation, and conveys pathos in being misapplied by an uneducated man. He aspires to further vividness of expression when he describes sleep as a "Shuparfluous necessity." The antithesis of adjective and noun shows the absurdity of sleep in the conditions of hot-weather guard duties. The phrase is symbolic of the story's significance, for the infantrymen are themselves a superfluous necessity -- superfluous as human beings, but necessary as troops. On Ortheris' production of gingerade Mulvaney calls him a "Machiavel," an epithet used in an original sense. Again there is pathos, in the applying of a grandiloquent metaphor to an act of petty larceny, pathos endorsed by the implication that an additive to an officer's brandy is for the men an essential relief from thirst.

The dramatic dialogue is broken by occasional interjections by the fictive Kipling, which increase its plausibility. There is no preliminary adjectival description of the citadel or of its situation; it is introduced simply as the "most desolate and least desirable of all fortresses in India." Its characteristics are presented, sometimes directly and sometimes by implication, in the responses of the men to the severity of its atmosphere. For example, the answer to Mulvaney's question: "Is all Hell loose this tide?" are the gasps of soldiers on the verge of madness and heatstroke. A little background detail is given, with very careful selection, in brief commentary between dialogue.

There is a deft interlacing of the two narratives, and there is a similarity between Mulvaney and Marlowe, of whom Leavis said:

As a main participant in events though, by his specific role as such, a detached one, he gives his technical function a dramatic status in the action, and the author a freedom of presence that constitutes a temptation.

Tompkins attributes a similar freedom of presence to Mulvaney,<sup>14</sup> but the fictive Kipling is a counter to the danger that he might become too cognizant, and too vivid to convince. He is never allowed beyond the limits of probability.

The major task of the raconteur is to attract the attention of his hearers, and his efforts will be the more successful if he persuades them to identify themselves or to sympathise with, the characters in his story; or makes them recognize that they would do and suffer what he says was suffered or done. Mulvaney therefore chooses an event in which both Ortheris and Learoyd had participated. However, the fictive Kipling is the first to be involved; for Mulvaney appeals to his historical knowledge: is he aware of the nature of a particular Irish regiment, the "Black Tyrone?" The response is: "the choicest collection of unmitigated blackguards, dog-stealers, robbers of hen-roosts, assaulters of innocent citizens, and recklessly daring heroes in the Army List."<sup>15</sup> The description also serves to engage the contemporary reader's sympathy; it has the appearance of a moral exposition. It is actually an ironic comment, for Kipling was aware that this was a widespread appraisal, among the public, of any regiment.

Mulvaney proceeds to recall a hill skirmish in which his present regiment had been supported by the "Black Tyrone," and asks Ortheris to verify the locality, which he remembers promptly as "Silver's Theatre."<sup>16</sup> Thus, the little Cockney becomes immediately involved in the narrative. Mulvaney then deliberately asserts that Learoyd was not present, being in the base camp, sick; Learoyd of course indignantly contradicts this assertion; he is thus drawn from his personal preoccupation, and his interest in the story is awakened.

Audience participation deepens as the narrative progresses. Ortheris interjects with a descriptive comment on the fight in the ravine, whereupon Mulvaney remembers how "wan little man" saved his life that day, and asks him whether he is not "the divil of a man in a ruction." At this point, in the response "Don't make game," the Cockney appears to guess something of Mulvaney's intention, but he is concerned with the topic,

which is his preferred method of fighting. There ensues an exchange of ribald personal epithets. The exchange quickens Ortheris' interest in the account, but the talk of methods of killing suddenly moves Learoyd to show how he uses his rifle as a murderous bludgeon. His speech is suffused with hate; for it conveys his psychological response to the mental and physical anguish that he had suffered in the fort. The outburst is his release from an intolerably oppressive discipline:

'Sitha,' said he softly, 'that's better than owt, for a mon can bash t'faace wi' thot, an', if he divn't, he can breek t'forearm o' t'guard. 'Tis nut i' t' books, though. Gie me t'butt.' 17

In the context of his employment this is a desirable response. Moreover, an enlivened interest in his profession gives him the will to survive the night. Mulvaney's reflection on the characteristics of men at war is consciously ironic, for it had been his intention to awaken this facet of Learoyd's personality:

'Each does ut his own way, like makin' love,' ... the butt or the bay'nit or the bullet accordin' 18 to the natur' av the man.'

The realization of the irony occurs as a shock, in the sudden apprehension that among these soldiers, guardians of the Empire, an instinctive murderous brutality is necessary to self-preservation.

There is in Mulvaney's recollection of the mutilation of the wounded<sup>(a)</sup> an implication that conveys one of the motives in the drama that he had reproduced. The impetus and savagery in the surge of the "Black Tyrone" against the Pathans was the result of their desire to meet hand-to-hand with an enemy that

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(a) cf. John Masters' autobiography Bugles and a Tiger 19 for a description of actions and reactions in Frontier warfare.

had tortured their wounded messmates.<sup>(a)</sup> In military terms, the scrimmage in the ravine was unnecessary, but it followed from the nature of military service at the Frontier. It was a psychological response to these conditions, as was Learoyd's outburst.

The guard is turned out, with Learoyd singing. The narrator praises Mulvaney's abilities, but the latter's reaction shows the transience and inadequacy of the achievement:

He looked at me wearily; his eyes were sunk in his head, and the face was drawn and white. 'Eyah!' said he; 'I've blandandhered them through the night somehow, but can thim that helps others help thimsilves? Answer me that, sorr!'  
And over the bastions of Fort Amara broke the pitiless day. 21

There is here a suggestion of Mulvaney's history. He has suffered tragedy and disgrace; this is recorded in "The Courting of Dinah Shadd." His personal alienation is even greater than that of his messmates, as many of the 'Soldier' stories reveal. He is not young, he has lost his stripes on more than one occasion through drunkenness, and he is encumbered with the memories of his failures. In his role of artist he does not assuage his own sufferings, he merely enables the others to endure theirs.

The Irishman's linguistic and literary qualities are further implied in the name given to the locality of the skirmish -- "Silver's Theatre." The original is described in "The Courting of Dinah Shadd."<sup>22</sup> It was one of the Dublin theatres known to Mulvaney's regiment. Having experienced frequent difficulties with his actors, the director had encouraged volunteers from among the troops to serve as stand-ins. Among them was Mulvaney,

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(a) There is a reference to the frenzy of this type of warfare in one of the Barrack Room Ballads:

"When you're wounded and left on Afghanistan's plains,  
And the women come out to cut up what remains,  
Jest roll to your rifle and blow out your brains  
An' go to your Gawd like a soldier." 20

and he alludes to his having been chosen frequently to act Shakespeare. This adds to him a cultural dimension that sets him apart from his comrades; it accounts for his knowledge of language, for his dramatic power, and for his ability to depict character.

There are three parts to the structure of the story; an initial statement of the crisis, an action reported in a secondary narrative, and a conclusion in which the crisis is resolved. The presentation of episode and incident does not move beyond the guard-room. The story thus possesses qualities of consonance and integrity<sup>(a)</sup> despite its vividness, excitement, and unconventional surface.

#### The Abyss

The final part reveals other aspects of the author's intention and thought, and contains a deeper significance than the dramatic action of the skirmish. On leaving the main gate, Mulvaney discovers the tiny daughter of one of the garrison asleep on the edge of the Fort ditch:

'See there!' said Mulvaney; 'poor lamb! Look at the heat-rash on the innocent skin av her. 'Tis hard - crool hard even for us. Fwhat must it be for these? Wake up, Nonie, your mother will be woild about you. Begad, the child might ha' fallen into the Ditch!'

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(a) I use these terms as defined by Professor Hough:

**Integrity:** "The Aristotelian requirements for unity and completeness of plot." It connotes artistic form, the need for the work to be an entity in itself, not a part, or an extract, or a heap. The beginning, middle and end of a work of art that has integrity relate coherently to each other. The characters, language, episodes, the use of time and space, are co-ordinate with its whole structure.

**Consonance:** "The demand for coherence and proportion ... it includes congruousness of imagery; maintenance of a consistent relation to reality; harmony of emotional tone." 23

He picked her up in the growing light, and set her on his shoulder, and her fair curls touched the grizzled stubble of his temples.

24

There is an impression of disbelief accompanying the sudden realization that, despite the fierceness of this and all other nights in the hot weather, there are children living here. The significance of the passage is the analogy of the child with British India, with the European population as a whole. In "His Private Honour," Many Inventions, the ditch is described in detail -- it is 40 feet deep -- and the word is not capitalized. The use in this story of the initial capital, and the separation from the attributive "Fort" demonstrate the symbolic intention. The Ditch evokes the concept of the abyss, of chaos. Also symbolic is the fact that the child is carried away from danger "in the growing light."

The night setting is indicative of a mood that recurs in Kipling's work. A dread of the dark and an inability to sleep properly appear to have been symptoms of Kipling's own endogenous depression. Prolonged nocturnal anxiety and insomnia, he believed, weakened the integrity of the personality and produced symptoms of physical degeneracy.<sup>25</sup> (a) (b)

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(a) Dobrée alludes to these psychological factors:

There is an equally important allied theme which runs through all Kipling's work, 'the horror of great darkness,' which he had himself encountered at the age of twenty, and which he rightly calls a 'pivot' experience:

"It happened one hot-weather evening, in '86 or thereabouts, when I felt that I had come to the edge of all endurance. As I entered my empty house in the dusk there was no more in me except the horror of a great darkness, that I must have been fighting for some days. I came through that darkness alive, but how I do not know."

...

Hummil, in "At the End of the Passage" (an appropriate title), does not 'come through.' His Indian servant thus diagnoses the cause of his death: "In my poor opinion, this that was my master has descended into the Dark Places, and there has been caught because he was not able to escape with sufficient speed."<sup>26</sup>

(b) Solzhenitzin describes the methods of inducing these effects by means of night-time interrogations.<sup>27</sup>

The child of course has no coherent apprehension of her danger; in contrast with Learoyd she is innocent, but her vulnerability is not less real than his. In the interpretation of the symbol of the child and the Ditch, Annan's comment is valuable:

The picture of India which Kipling painted in his first four volumes of short stories and in his earliest verse is that of a society which politically, nervously, physically, and spiritually quivered on the edge of a precipice. None of the conditions of life resembled those in England. Here nature was inconceivably hostile. 28

#### Humour

A study of men at war, to be convincing, must portray human responses, and these are not always consistent; their tone may change suddenly, and in battle situations there is often a degree of humour. As the column leaves the gorge, a staff officer approaches. His incompetence is depicted in his most evident lack of comprehension of either the identity of the column or its task. His stature is assessed and demonstrated by one of the "Black Tyrone":

"F'what in the name av misfortune does this  
parrot widout a tail mane by shtoppin' the      29  
road av his betthers?"

They were caked with dirt and streaked with blood, they had been involved in a violent orgy of revenge and slaughter, but their mood suddenly changes to one of ridicule. There is derisive laughter when the same private, referring to the staff officer, utters the mimicry:

"Come and kiss me Major dear, for me husband's  
at the wars an' I'm all alone at the depot."  
'The Staff Orf'cer wint away, an' I cud see      30  
Crook's shoulthers shakin'.

This ribaldry effects a relief from tension, but within it is a comment on the Army's conduct of the campaign and on the sexual ethics of the officer caste in India. Kipling is not critical;

although he sometimes satirizes the social life of Anglo-India, he does not moralize on the subject of adultery. Military incompetence seldom occasions serious comment in his Indian work; indeed he often uses it to introduce humour into his situations. It was in the South African War that his poems and stories acquired tones of sarcasm and contempt.

#### Stevenson's Appraisal

R. L. Green records that Kipling and Stevenson read each other's work, that a number of letters were exchanged, and that for some years Kipling planned to visit Stevenson in Samoa.<sup>31</sup> E.L. Gilbert states that Kipling was often compared with his older contemporary.<sup>32</sup> Stevenson made a critical evaluation of the younger writer in a letter to Henry James. It is interesting in that it demonstrates a contemporary opinion of the style of the short story: Stevenson was intrigued by Mulvaney:

... Kipling is far the most promising young man who has appeared since -- ahem -- I appeared. He amazes me by his precocity and various endowment. But he alarms me by his copiousness and haste. He should shield his fire with both hands "and draw up all his strength and sweetness in one ball" ... So the critics have been saying to me; but I was never capable of -- and surely never guilty of -- such a debauch of production. At this rate his works will soon fill the habitable globe; and surely he was armed for better conflicts than these succinct sketches and flying leaves of verse?

33

This indicates that Kipling contravened a stylistic convention. Yet his rapidity of dialogue, brevity of description, and symbolism of underlying significance were more effective than Stevenson's prolonged expositions and monologues in presenting the 'single effect,'<sup>(a)</sup> advocated as the main requirement of the short story.<sup>34</sup>

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(a) "With the Main Guard" has a firm hold on one strong conception. The story also exhibits the concomitant requirements; brevity, the rendering of a totality of effect or impression, and an undercurrent of meaning and mystery.

Execution in India

Some of the Barrack Room Ballads form a thematic parallel to the 'Soldier' stories. Kipling's biographer, Carrington, has recently published a collected edition of this verse, with an introduction that analyses their style and meaning.<sup>35</sup> They are largely in dialect, mainly that of Cockney soldiers. They portray the personality of a type of British private and, according to George Orwell, constitute the only literary evocation of that personality.<sup>(a)</sup> The poems are not attractive in sentiment; often they demonstrate extremes of brutality, but they are based upon the poet's experience.

The newly published Oxford Book of 20th Century Verse,<sup>36</sup> edited by Philip Larkin, contains as much of Kipling's poetry in length of samples quoted as it does of any other poet except Hardy. One possible implication of the extent of this selection is that Kipling is now to be regarded as a significant poet.<sup>(b)</sup> Included in the Kipling material is "Danny Deever," a ballad about a military execution. The poem has several immediate effects; it describes the harshness of military life in India, it presents by implication the tensions and despair that induce to murder, and it displays Kipling's sympathy for the type of man represented by Danny Deever, Learoyd, Ortheris and Melvaney.

Although the situation is imaginatively created by means of dramatic dialogue, the actions and the scene are typical; they are a profile of recorded events:<sup>37</sup>

(a) His critique is quoted as reference no. 14 to ch. i of this study.

(b) In this context, Professor Hough quotes Samuel Johnson:

"He said that the only test that can be applied to works of literature is 'length of duration and continuance of esteem,' and that it is 'by the common sense of readers uncorrupted by literary prejudice' that all claim to literary honours is finally decided."

Amending note.

In the Oxford anthology there are five poets who, in terms of the amount of space allocated to them, far outrank the remainder. They are Eliot, Hardy, Auden, Yeats, and Kipling.

"What are the bugles blowin' for?" said Files-on-Parade.  
 "To turn you out, to turn you out," the Colour-Sergeant said.  
 "What makes you look so white, so white?" said Files-on-Parade.  
 "I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch," the Colour-Sergeant said.

For they're hangin' Danny Deever, you  
 can hear the Dead March play,  
 The Regiment's in 'ollow square -- they're  
 hangin' him to-day.  
 They've taken of his buttons off an' cut  
 his stripes away,  
 An' they're hangin' Danny Deever in the  
 morning.'

.....  
 "What makes the rear-rank breathe so 'ard? said Files-on-Parade.  
 "It's bitter cold, it's bitter cold," the Colour-Sergeant said.  
 "What makes that front-rank man fall down?" said Files on Parade.  
 "A touch o' sun, a touch o' sun," the Colour-Sergeant said.

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 --  
 O they're hangin' Danny Deever in the  
 mornin'!

39

One criticism of this is that it depicts brutality, that its diction is coarse, and that its theme is weird, militaristic, and inhumane. Such criticism implied in the poet an estrangement from poetic convention. Nevertheless, the British Army of India existed, worked, and exerted its discipline; and Kipling used it as a literary subject.

The ballad's structure is described by Eliot;<sup>40</sup> the factor that is particularly relevant to this study is its presentation of psychological and moral responses. Carrington has shown that the dialect is a literary language in its own right.<sup>41</sup> Whatever the merits of this argument, the diction cannot because representative of the speech of common soldiers be dismissed as



"With the Main Guard" exemplifies Kipling's 'Soldier' stories, and "Danny Deever" exemplifies many of the Barrack Room Ballads. They are representations of the truth of a predicament, set in a fictive world that has a constant relation to actuality. Neither the story nor the poem are veridical imitations of actual events, but the function of reality in the background of Kipling's work is important. The way he brings into his short stories the underlying implications and significance of this reality accord with Marler's review of Melville:

Melville's 'techniques of disguise,' as William Charvat called them, refer to Melville's creation of a surface for his fiction that would have popular appeal but that would conceal the important meanings beneath the surface. ... To Melville, the actual world is a facade, even a lie. The fictive world is an artifice that leads to Truth, though, paradoxically, the writer must begin with the materials of real life to penetrate to the core of meaning. Hence, actuality is fundamental to the art of fiction. 43

Kipling's method of imparting an undercurrent of significance is analagous to this. Mulvaney's aim was to capture his audience from a preoccupation with disintegration and chaos. The subject available to him was the soldier's experience of the Frontier. Obviously, this subject is one that has the capacity to captivate, interest and instruct, particularly because of the vivid realism with which he endows it. Taking Mulvaney's narratives in their context within the stories, a deeper significance is apprehensible -- a penetrating interpretation of the human condition in imperial service. The continual representation of this imperial service is an indication, however, that Kipling has a profound concern with political problems. It is this concern that reverberates in the patriotic poetry and satire analysed in Chapter II. Human and political conflicts emerge in other stories of India that extend the setting beyond that of the Soldiers Three sequence.

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39. KIPLING. Verse, p. 397.
40. KIPLING. A Choice of Kipling's Verse; made by T.S. Eliot, with an essay on Rudyard Kipling (London: Faber & Faber, 1942), p. 11.  
"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."
41. KIPLING. The Complete Barrack Room Ballads; ed. C.E. Carrington, pp. 14-18.
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CHAPTER IVREALITY AND INVENTION

A political commitment is demonstrated in "The Tomb of His Ancestors" by a young officer in the service of imperial government. However, Kipling's study of personality is not focussed upon him but upon a tribal society that is in conflict with the imperialists. The story also displays a possible solution to certain fears that the rulers experience because of the enigmas of tribal religion and custom. There is extensive evidence relating to the background and events among which Kipling posits this socio-political conflict, and the axiom that the fictive world is an artifice that leads to truth<sup>1</sup> is particularly appropriate in the analysis of its inner significance.

Graham Hough, discussing critical methods conducive to the discovery of meaning, describes certain procedural rules. They are relevant because the essence of imperialism as a literary subject in Kipling cannot be determined from the declared intention:

I applaud the two procedural rules suggested by Skinner at the end of his article: 1. 'Focus not just on the text but on the prevailing conventions governing the treatment of issues or themes with which the text is concerned,' 2. 'Focus on the writer's mental world, the world of his empirical beliefs.'

.....  
I wish to argue, that there is indeed relevant and useful information obtained by these methods, that it generally assists interpretation, but that what it leads back to cannot be reduced simply to the author's intention. 2

On the implications within a work of literature he concludes:

Neither 'the words on the page' nor the 'intentions of the author' can alone reveal the significance of a work of literature. We read the words on the page, but we read the gaps between the words too, and we supplement them with a complex of insight and information that comes from outside the text.

3

In 19th Century Anglo-Indian literature, the treatment of the themes and issues that appear in "The Tomb of His Ancestors" was governed by a convention.<sup>4</sup> Some of the story's political significance is rendered intelligible in the light of contemporary attitudes to the Empire; for example, the presentation of the abilities of India's young officers was part of a literary tradition (a) that was committed to portraying the ideal of moral ascendancy in the imperialist.

An important feature of the realism in Kipling's story was the relation of the English to the Bhils. Prior to the advent of British suzerainty in their country, the Rajputs and Mahrattas were lords of the region. (b) Kipling does not change the social involvements that he perceived and learned of, he does not invent his situations, but introduces and develops a personality that is consistent with the actual history of the tribe. This he displays

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(a) Herbert Edwardes, whose achievements are described in his book, quoted later in this chapter, was one of a considerable number of officers who acted individually in the reconstruction of the Punjab.

(b) In his essay on the peoples of India, N.C. Chaudhuri describes the Indian attitude to the autochthonous peoples.<sup>5</sup>

"Whenever the Westernized Hindu is found airing a liking for the aboriginals, it may be assumed that he is affecting a British attitude as the legatee of British imperialism, in whose arcana they had a very special place. When this class of Hindus show any solicitude for the welfare of the primitive tribes, or even intellectual interest in them, they are even more affected. The pose is transparent."

in a series of interactions with the manifestations of rule, Hindu and British. He also presents the predicament of the Bhil leader, Bukta, towards whom the reader's sympathy is clearly directed.

"The Tomb of His Ancestors" was written in 1896 and is one of Kipling's later and longer stories about India. The setting is Khandesh and Satpura, a region south of Mēwar in Rajputana. The story describes an infantry battalion consisting of Bhil riflemen and a few British officers; it tells of a disturbance and how harmony and stability were restored. However, the author intends to convey much more than a military adventure, and commences with a glimpse of a tradition of service:

Some people will tell you that if there were a single loaf of bread in all India it would be divided equally between the Plowdens, the Trevors, the Beadons, and the Rivett-Carnacs. That is only one way of saying that certain families serve India generation after generation as dolphins follow in line across the open sea.

6

There follows the history of an imaginary family, the Chinnns, from the latter part of the 18th Century to the middle of the 1880's, the time at which the story begins. The elder Chinn had raised a corps of Bhil auxiliaries and had pacified the Satpura territory, instituting habits of trade and cultivation; his son, Lionel, became Colonel of the regiment, and on his way into retirement passed his son, John, in the Suez canal, travelling out to India.

In the Regimental Mess one evening, a discussion takes place from which this new officer learns of his past connections with the territory. There are certain hereditary powers claimed by the Bhils for the Chinn family; to these a native officer, who had been John's servant in his infancy, alludes on the occasion of their reunion. This officer, Bukta, exhibits an extreme devotion to the young man, and John Chinn recalls words and phrases from the native language that he had learned when he first talked. The situation occurred frequently and was stylized in Anglo-Indian literature.<sup>7</sup> There are biographical

overtones here; for in "Something of Myself," Kipling stated that upon his arrival in Bombay the sights and smells and the vernacular of his own birthplace came back to him. He recalled that he regarded his return to Lahore as a homecoming:

There were yet three or four days' rail to Lahore, where my people lived. After these, my English years fell away, nor ever, I think, came back in full strength. 8

Carrington gives the reasons for this sentiment.<sup>9</sup>

The Subaltern's reactions are a projection of the author's own; India had a powerful though varied influence on the young writer.

In "With the Main Guard," military service in the Punjab produces an alienation effect which is presented as an image of the condition of the European community. In "Christmas in India"<sup>10</sup> and in many other poems and short stories, the condition is defined. Yet to Kipling, India meant simultaneously home and exile; the poem "The Galley Slave" exemplifies this ambivalence:

It was merry in the galley, for we revelled  
now and then --  
If they wore us down like cattle, faith, we  
fought and loved like men!  
As we snatched her through the water, so we snatched  
a minute's bliss,  
And the mutter of the dying never spoiled the lovers'  
kiss.

.....  
By the brand upon my shoulder, by the gail of  
clinging steel,  
By the welts the whips have left me, by the scars  
that never heal;  
By eyes grown old with staring through the sunwash  
on the brine,  
I am paid in full for service. Would that service 11  
still were mine.

Therefore, Kipling's literary response to British India is not satisfactorily explained in terms of a dichotomy of the 'Self' and the destructive 'Non-self' -- the position taken by Sandison:

For these men are less the victims of empire than of the wider necessity which decrees that man shall live for ever at the edge of the pits, snatching his identity from the limbo of non-existence lying at his feet. The conflict between their personal lives and the empire they serve is only a reflection of that more fundamental dialectic between self and destructive non-self ...

Self-sacrifice of the sort Kipling recommends is self-assertion, through devotion to the actualities of duty one preserves identity and individuality and keeps chaos at bay. 12

There is in Kipling's work a sympathy with something larger than the preservation of personal identity. India was for him more than a place in which to consider the psychology of the individual.

A large part of "The Tomb of His Ancestors" is written in the form of a dramatic dialogue. The thoughts of the Colonel, the junior officers, the tribesmen, the Hindu, are given in a range of distinctly differing styles of language. The idiom of the junior officers is jocular, reticent, and waggish. Their Colonel speaks in a more serious tone, one appropriate to his dramatic function, which is to describe the social and religious mysteries of the tribe, the political and military problems of the region, and the techniques and dangers of tiger hunting. In the following extract he is not present; his place is taken by the Major:

Then they spoke of Bhil superstitions, a wide and picturesque field, till young Chinn hinted that they must be pulling his leg.

'Deed we aren't,' said a man on his left. 'We know all about you. You're a Chinn and all that, and you've a sort of vested right here; but if you don't believe what we're telling you, what will you do when old Bukta begins his stories? ...

'You know you've an ancestor buried down Satpura way, don't you?' said the Major, ... 'Your revered ancestor, my boy, according to the Bhils, has a tiger of his own -- a saddle-tiger that he rides round the country

whenever he feels inclined. I don't call it decent in an ex-Collector's ghost but that is what the Southern Bhils believe ... It is supposed to be a clouded animal -- not stripy, but blotchy, like a tortoise-shell tom-cat. No end of a brute, it is, and a sure sign of war or pestilence or -- something.'

13

The first speech is that of a Subaltern, and is bantering in tone, but the second is that of a senior officer deliberately displaying little concern, withholding the fact that he is expressing anthropological theories. Despite his joke about the collector's ghost, what he says implies an unexpressed fear and a sense of unease from which he would wish to turn rather quickly. Later in the story a junior officer describes the nightrunning:

'Riding cross-country by moonlight on his processional tiger. That's the story. He's been seen by about two thousand Bhils, skipping along the tops of the Satpuras, and scaring people to death. They believe it devoutly, and all the Satpura chaps are worshipping away at his shrine -- tomb, I mean -- like good 'uns. You really ought to go down there. Must be a queer thing to see your grandfather treated as a god.'

14

Typically, the young man does not wish to admit the serious significance of a shrine into his talk, but alludes to what others apparently believe. The Colonel comments:

'There's only one thing you've overlooked,' said the Colonel, thoughtfully. 'When a local god reappears on earth it's always an excuse for trouble of some kind; and those Satpura Bhils are about as wild as your grandfather left them, young'un. It means something.'

15

Kipling's transcription of Bhil speech possesses a directness of emotion. It has a more archaic vocabulary and syntax than idiomatic English. Kipling knew Urdu fluently, a language strongly influenced by Persian. The idiom of the Bhils in this story appears as an English rendering of Urdu.<sup>16</sup> By contrast, the English of the "Government educated Mahratta" is officiously

unidiomatic, and comic in effect, and in this there is a reflection of another literary attitude.<sup>17</sup>

Kipling represents in several stories what he considers to be departmental staffing errors. The Bengali administrator is portrayed unsympathetically in "The Head of the District," the Mahratta, in this story. The criticism is merely that they are placed in incongruent circumstances. Kipling obviously perceived a lack of political acumen in the Government that determined their duties.<sup>(a)</sup>

At the moment of crisis in this story, there is on the one hand the British officer face-to-face with the crowd, demonstrating the predicament of the ruler; on the other, the employee of a distant Health Department. John Chinn has to address the Bhils to save the situation from violence; he tries to quell the fears of the tribe and suggest a solution intelligible to them:

'These are my orders. (Heaven send they'll take 'em, but I seem to have impressed them so far!) I myself will stay among you while this man scratches your arms with knives, after the order of the Government. In three, or it may be five or seven days, your arms will swell and itch and burn. That is the power of Smallpox fighting in your base blood against the orders of the Government.' ... In an undertone, to the vaccinator: 'If you show you are afraid you'll never see Poona again, my friend.' 18

His use of this metaphor in describing the effects of the vaccine demonstrates his knowledge of tribal psychology. The plaint of the Hindu demonstrates helplessness:

'There is not sufficient ample supply of vaccine for all this population,' said the man. 'They have destroyed the offeecal calf.' 19

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(a) Although it could be argued that the Government was trying to adopt an enlightened policy in its appointments to the administrative and specialist services.

Whereupon Chinn tells him to scratch their arms nevertheless, as the tribe does not know the difference between a genuine vaccination and a scratch that lacks the prophylactic. The Englishman outthinking the native in such a manner and by cleverness achieving mastery over him is another stylistic feature of Anglo-Indian literature.<sup>20</sup> Typical also is the picture of the indigenous as gullible children.

The gradual unveiling of the mystery, and the demonstration of the superstition that surrounds it, ensure the continuance of suspense. As the plot develops, successive features of the tribal character are shown. The main enigma creates a tension, relieved by humorous interludes that add further dimensions to the tribal mind. John Chinn has been taken to the grave, and he decides that to accord with protocol, Bukta should bring the local tribesmen to him:

'Where is he?' whispered one.

'At his own place. He bids you come,' said Bukta.

'Now?'

'Now!'

'Rather let him loose the Clouded Tiger upon us. We do not go.'

'Nor I, though I bore him in my arms when he was a child in this life. Wait here till the day.'

'But surely he will be angry.'

'He will be very angry, for he has nothing to eat. But he has said to me many times that the Bhils are his children. By sunlight I believe this, but -- by moonlight I am not so sure. What folly have ye Satpura pigs compassed that ye should need him at all?' 21

There follows an example of Kipling's insight into the social psychology of primitive peoples. The Bhils see the medical officer's intention only too clearly:

'One came to us in the name of the Government with little ghost-knives and a magic<sup>(a)</sup> calf, meaning to turn us into cattle by the cutting off of our arms.' 22

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(a) Kipling evidently understood this term in its anthropological context.

The dialogue is suited to the presentation of the beliefs of this aboriginal people. It transmits the fear with which the tribesmen behold their traditional God, their trust in the beneficence of a much newer paternal deity, and their instinctive response to the Government's scientific emissaries, whom they see as magicians.<sup>(a)</sup> Their superstition hovers between a ghost who portends dreadful subjugation and a powerful predator who is physically a danger to themselves and their cattle. The fear of the tiger symbolizes the fear of the tyranny that had been present throughout their history.

The story is in four sections; the survey of family service to the Indian Empire, the description of the Bhils, the action that leads to the main crisis, and a conclusion that reviews the manner in which it was resolved.

The narrative within dialogue, describing the features of the wild country, the prevailing tensions of hunting, and the influence of folk-lore on this activity, creates the atmosphere in which the mottled monster with its deistic attributes may convincingly appear. The portrayal of tiger-shoots establishes the sense of danger that surrounds the Subaltern's approach to the cave. The rites and orgies that succeed the killings are a premonition of the moment of mystery when he visits the grave and appears among the assembled tribe as their God.

There is no in-depth description of the Subaltern. The working of his intellect is not shown, neither is the development of his personality, nor any psychological process. There is no revelation of his consciousness and no portrayal of his emotions. He is represented as a man without fear and without reproach, having an inaccessible interior existence. But the main constituent of his personality is implicit; it is a profound communion with India.

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(a) The Bhils view the Medical Officer as a practitioner of sympathetic magic.<sup>23</sup> By scratching the calf and then the tribesmen, he is imparting to them the characteristics of cattle. No explanation based on the properties of the serum drawn from the calf would quell their fears. Ironically, they see that they are receiving certain qualities from the animal, but they do not see this in terms of immunology.

The interpretation of John Chinn as a character in literature demands an analysis of his relationship with his environment. It is evident that Kipling considered the significance of the identifying of an individual with India during his own travels in Rajputana, from his readings of Rajput history, and from accounts of parallel situations in other parts of the country. Some of the articles commissioned by the Allahabad Pioneer recount his journeys through the Sub-Continent and describe the various regions where he encountered the Bhils.<sup>24</sup>

At the beginning of "The Tomb of His Ancestors," the tribal history is surveyed; the exposition is a good example of his prose style:

They were, and at heart are, wild men, furtive, shy, full of untold superstitions. The races whom we call natives of the country found the Bhil in possession of the land when they first broke into that part of the world thousands of years ago. The books call them Pre-Aryan, Aboriginal,<sup>(a)</sup> Dravidian, and so forth; and, in other words, that is what the Bhils call themselves. When a Rajput chief, whose bards can sing his pedigree backwards for twelve hundred years, is set on the throne, his investiture is not complete till he has been marked on the forehead with blood from the veins of a Bhil. The Rajputs say the ceremony has no meaning, but the Bhil knows that it is the last, last shadow of his old rights as the long-ago owner of the soil.

Centuries of oppression and massacre made the Bhil a cruel and half-crazy thief and cattle-stealer,<sup>(b)</sup> and when the English came he seemed to be almost as open to civilization as the tigers of his own jungles. But John Chinn the First, father of Lionel,

- 
- (a) They are believed to be pre-Dravidian, but invaders, not the original inhabitants of the Sub-Continent.<sup>25</sup>
- (b) Apparently, they have reverted to the habits of their former ungovernable state, and their social and economic condition has regressed considerably. This is evident in an account of research undertaken in the 1950's.<sup>26</sup>

grandfather of our John, went into his country, lived with him, learned his language, shot the deer that stole his poor crops, and won his confidence, so that some Bhils learned to plough and sow, while others were coaxed into the Company's service to police their friends.  
.....

It was slow, unseen work, of the sort that is being done all over India to-day ..., <sup>27</sup>

In addition to his own observations, Kipling's sources of information on the Bhils include earlier Anglo-Indian writings, notably those of Colonel Tod<sup>28</sup> and Bishop Heber.

The importance of the story lies in its speculation on circumstances in which tensions occurred. Its fictive world is a remote part of the Indian Empire, and the plausibility of its social conflicts depends on the author's ability to depict their causes convincingly. History, myth, and tribal personality had to be drawn from actuality. If they had not been, the conflicts presented by the author would not have been those of India, but fanciful entities that had no relation to imperialism. (a) (b)

- (a) The criterion of artistic consonance is applicable here. Professor Hough defines it as follows:

The demand for coherence and proportion, the Coleridgean demand that the work shall contain in itself the reason why it is so and not otherwise. This includes proportion in the quantitative sense -- an important development must be sufficiently developed when it arrives; and proportion in the qualitative sense -- the right degree of emphasis on the several parts, corresponding to tonal relations in a painting ... Again, this consonance must not be seen in purely structural terms. It includes congruousness of imagery; a consistent relation to reality. <sup>29</sup>

- (b) On the relation of actuality to prose fiction he states:

Any criticism of the novel which neglects its ties with historical actuality is false to the novel's real values, and empty when it should be full.  
.....

A truthful picture often reveals itself as such by its coherence. We know, say, from external evidence that the setting and certain circumstances

### Historical Sources

As this story presents a particularly interesting example of the way in which Kipling made imaginative use of actual conditions and historical records, the following survey is included to show the relation of the fiction to reality.

Concerning the Bhils, it is recorded that they had imbibed many of the religious beliefs of their overlords, that they had observed the main festivals of the Hindu pantheon. Their chief god was Baghdeo, a tiger. They had been the feudatory subjects of Rajputs and later, of Mahrattas. Mahratta rule had been particularly tyrannical, and it was from this subjugation that the British sought to reclaim them. <sup>30</sup>

The irony in the portrayal of a Mahratta, on the orders of a distant Government attempting to vaccinate the Bhils, is made evident by this background information, more so by the fact that the Goddess of Small-Pox, Mata Devi, was worshipped in that region. <sup>31</sup>

The tribal personality displayed by Kipling is explained in his narrative as a legacy of their subjugation. Substantially, these factors were taken from history. The contemporary situation and the account of its causative past, as given in the story, follow convincingly one from the other. Both past and present in the story accord with the external actuality and with the annals of the peoples of the region.

Kipling stated that his intention was to present the whole

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(Note (b) continued from preceding page)

of a particular novel are drawn from history. And we know at least something about the history. The novelist tells the fuller kind of historical truth that is his business by showing what kind of people must have lived in this world, what kind of motives could have been at work in it, what their consequences will be. Besides being a report on social reality the novel is a formal construction, and historical falsity in the novel <sup>32</sup> will often reveal itself as internal contradiction.

sweep and meaning of things in the Empire, to demonstrate men's work, to describe its importance.<sup>33</sup> The Readers' Guide notes that this story was based upon the life of Augustus Cleveland, who worked amongst the autochthonous tribes of India in the days of the East India Company.<sup>34</sup> It also notes that there was a tradition among the Outram family that Kipling was thinking of them when he wrote it.

Cleveland's pacification of the tribesmen, his removal of tyranny, his establishment of cultivation, trade, and a benign law, took place among the tribesmen of Baughlipur in Bengal, where a monument was erected to him. The inscription on another monument, erected by Warren Hastings in Calcutta,<sup>(a)</sup> and verses written by the Governor General of Bengal, are transcribed by Kipling and discovered by the Subaltern in the story on the tomb of his grandfather.

Cleveland, however, established no dynasty.<sup>(b)</sup> The first Outram did so and raised a corps of Bhils, and his descendants for generations returned to the same part of India. They were all excellent shots and renowned tiger hunters, and had the peculiar physical ability of being able to spend the night in the jungle without succumbing to fever; this is what John Chinn does in the story. Another possible origin for the Chinns, cited in Tod's Annals,<sup>35</sup> was John Malcom, who also raised a corps of Bhil levees, countered Rajput tyranny, and improved the condition of the tribesmen.

On the functions of the Bhil Corps, the Colonel at the end of the story describes his expedition as a special police force. This is accurate historically. The Cambridge History of India<sup>36</sup> states that they were auxiliary to the ordinary police, and that their task was to endorse the authority of the Collector and in times of disturbance effect the restoration and maintenance of peace by force of arms.

(a) The entry under Cleveland in the British National Biography describes his renown and the high regard in which the Government held him. 37

(b) He died at the age of 29.

On the ethnic history of the Bhils, the Cambridge History states that India had been inhabited several millennia before the Christian era by "a dark negroid race of low culture characterized more or less by the features known as Dravidian." The races were various, the oldest stratum of pre-Dravidian blood probably belonging to peoples termed by ancient poets Villavar (bowmen), with whom the Bhils may be identified<sup>38</sup>

With regard to the ceremony of installation, Tod records that the bloodmark descended into contemporary history with the Gehlote Dynasty of Mēwar:

The fact is mentioned by Abul Fuzil, and is still repeated by the bards, ... The Bhils having determined in sport to elect a king, the choice fell on Goha; and one of the young savages, cutting his finger, applied the blood as the teeka of sovereignty to his forehead. 39

(From Goha is derived 'Gehlote')

It is pleasing to trace, through a series of ages, the knowledge of a custom still 'honoured in the observance.' The descendants of Baleo of Oguna and the Oondree Bhil still claim the privilege of performing the teeka on the inauguration of the descendants of Bappa. 40

(Bappa was the founder of the Gehlote dynasty.)

Tod also shows that the treatment of the Bhils, despite the privileges bestowed by the tribesmen upon the Rajputs, became harsh and brutal.<sup>41</sup>

The origin of the deity in the story is obviously the Bhils' belief in the god Bhagdeo. But the tiger was also a symbol of Rajput royalty, and in the Annals Tod accounts for this legendary symbolism of kingship. He describes how a Rajput oracle had in a recorded case of dispute determined legitimacy by pointing to the claimant who was holding a panther skin. He adds in a note:

Singasan is the ancient term for the Hindu throne, signifying 'the lion-seat.' Charuns, bards, who are all Maharajas, 'great princes,' by courtesy, have their seats on the hide of the lion, tiger, panther, or black antelope.

42

The godliness of the tiger has a further origin in the Rajput divinity known in the Western world as Bacchus:

whose orgies, both in Egypt and Greece, are the counterpart of those of the Hindu Bagh-es, thus called from being clad in a tiger's or leopard's cloak.

43

On two occasions the Subaltern presides at a bacchanalia; when he shoots his first tiger, and after his pacification of the Satpuras.<sup>44</sup>

Cleveland's rule over the Puharrees is recorded by Bishop Heber and described in a manner very similar to that adopted by Kipling in recalling the exploits of the elder Chinn: (see reference no. 27)

He rigorously forbade, and promptly punished, all violence from the Zemindars against the Puharrees; he got some of these latter to enter his service, and took pains to attach them to him, and to learn their language. He made shooting parties into the mountains, treating kindly all whom he could get to approach him ... He gave them wheat and barley for seed, and encouraged their cultivations, ... And, to please them still further, and at the same time to keep them in effectual order, and to bring them more into contact with their civilized neighbours, he raised a corps of Sepoys from among them, ...<sup>45</sup>

Heber regrets that Cleveland introduced liquor among the tribesmen, and deplored his habit of drinking with them. If Cleveland was Chinn's original, the story is true to history in this too. Also included in Heber's account is the haunting of a tomb in Bhauglipur by a large tiger. He refers, also, to the sufferings from epidemics of smallpox, and records that a programme of vaccination had been generally introduced.<sup>46</sup>

An inscription was discovered by Heber on the Cleveland monument at Bhauglipur. It was in Persian, and is translated on the last page of the text of volume one of his Upper Provinces of India:

The Zemindars of the district, and the Amleh, or native officers, of the court, in memory of the kindness and beneficence exhibited towards them by the late Mr. Cleveland, have, at their own expense finished this monument in the month of Phagun 1193, ... 47

Woodruff quotes a funeral ode by John Shore, Cleveland's cousin, and Governor-General:

... the savage band  
Forsook their haunts and bowed to his command  
And where the warrior's arm in vain assail'd  
His gentler skill o'er brutal force prevail'd ...  
Now mended morals check the lust for spoil  
And rising hamlets prove his generous toil ... 48

Woodruff also quotes an inscription that he erroneously believed to appear on the monument at Bhauglipur. It actually appears on the monument erected in Calcutta by Warren Hastings:

To the memory of Augustus Cleveland, late  
Collector of Baughlipour who without bloodshed  
or the terrors of authority employing the  
means of conciliation confidence and benev-  
olence accomplished the entire subjection of ... 49

Lieutenant John Chinn in Kipling's story discovers the following inscription on his grandfather's tomb:

To the Memory of John Chinn, Esq. Late Collector  
of ..... ithout Bloodshed or ... error of  
Authority Employ. only .. eans of Conciliat ...  
and Confiden. accomplished the ...tire  
Subjection ... of a Lawless and Predatory peop ...  
... taching them to ....ish Government  
by a Conque..over ...Minds  
The most perma...and rational Mode of Domini ..  
... Governor-General and Counc ...engal  
have ordered thi .....erected ...arted  
this Life Aug.19,184. Ag...

The verses on the other side of the grave "As much as Chinn could decipher," said:

.... the savage Band  
 Forsook their Haunts and b....is Command  
 ....mended..rals check a...st for spoil  
 And .s.ing Hamlets prove his gen....toil  
 Humanit...survey....ights restore..  
 A nation .. ield...subdued without a Sword. 50

That the idealism in the story derives from a literary and service tradition, an example will suffice to demonstrate. In 1854, Herbert Edwardes published the record of his commission in the Sikh Kingdom as A Year on the Punjab Frontier. It is a comprehensible account of a series of extremely delicate military and political manoeuvres, and the narrative highlights the significant events that contributed to the successful outcome of his endeavours. It is written in a flowing and clear style, and is one of the origins of later literary attitudes to the Punjab.<sup>51</sup> "The Tomb of His Ancestors" is one of the very few of Kipling's Indian stories that do not take place in this region, but the Frontier traditions are present in it. Kipling, working in the Gazette office in Lahore, the old Sikh capital, would certainly have known Edwardes' book well.

Edwardes says of his purpose in writing:

In writing it I have had three objects in view, and I will put the most selfish one first, to save anyone else the trouble.

1. It is to put on record a victory which I myself remember with more satisfaction than any I helped to gain before Mooltan -- the bloodless conquest of the wild valley of Bunnoo. It was gained neither by shot nor shell, but simply by balancing two races and two creeds. For fear of a Sikh army, two warlike and independent Muhammedan tribes levelled to the ground, at my bidding, the four hundred forts which constituted the strength of their country, and for fear of those same Muhammedan tribes, the same Sikh army, at my bidding, constructed a fortress for the Crown, which completed the subjugation of the valley.

Thus was a barbarous people brought peacefully within the pale of civilization, and one well-intentioned Englishman accomplished in three months, without a struggle, a conquest which the fanatic Sikh nation had vainly attempted, with fire and sword, for five and twenty years.

Yet so little is it known, that to this moment I have never even been thanked by my own Government for the service.

52

Therefore, he took leave, and wrote the two volumes of his book in six months. John Chinn's fictional achievement is nothing like Edwardes' actual achievement. With regard to Edwardes' comments on the lack of recognition, it is worth noting that among Kipling's themes is the thanklessness of the governing authorities in the Indian Empire. The distant Government often frustrates, hinders or negates the work of his stoic heroes. In "The Bridge-Builders," the difficulties of civil engineering construction are misunderstood;<sup>53</sup> in "The Head of the District," the work of years is annulled;<sup>54</sup> in "Tod's Amendment," economic realities are ignored.

With regard further to the actuality of the story, the validity of the portrayal of the Bhils has been praised by a Hindu commentator. Recently K. Bashkara Rao stated:

In addition to Muslims and Sikhs, the tribal people receive understanding treatment at the hands of Kipling ... "The Tomb of His Ancestors" praises and flatters British capacity for handling dangerous situations. But more than that, the story is a fascinating study of the tribal mind. Their strong belief in the reality of the unseen phenomena rather than the seen, the impact of their blind devotion bordering on superstition, and their maintenance of a rigid individualism are all part of the atmosphere of the story. Their customs, manners, way of life, fear of evil, and concept of a god of vengeance, find adequate treatment.

55

Rao does not think that the Hindus, particularly the educated, receive such adequate treatment. He attributes this to political prejudice.<sup>56</sup>

The name of the tribal chief, Bukta, is not an invention. In Tod's Annals, there is an extensive description of the military exploits and political ambitions of one Bukhta, sometime Rajah of Marwar.<sup>57</sup>

### Myth

There is nevertheless a large element of invention in the story; historic symbols are re-applied and their meanings expanded. For example, in describing the assumption of kingship by the Subaltern, Kipling invents the adverb "cloak-fashion," to imply the significance of donning the tiger-skin. The Subaltern is dramatically and ironically unaware of the importance of this unconscious act, which appears to the tribesman as an epiphany -- a moment of illumination:

He dropped into a deep wicker chair, over which was thrown his first tiger-skin, and his weight on the cushion flapped the clawed paws over his shoulders. He laid hold of them mechanically as he spoke, drawing the painted hide, cloak-fashion, about him.

'Now will I tell the truth, Bukta,' he said, leaning forward, the dried muzzle on his shoulder, to invent a specious lie.

'I see that it is the truth,' was the answer, in a shaking voice.

.....

Flinging back the tiger-skin, he rose with a long, unguarded yawn that showed his well-kept teeth.

Bukta fled, to be received in the lines by a knot of panting enquirers.

'It is true,' said Bukta. 'He wrapped himself in the skin and spoke from it ...'

The grey-whiskered assembly shuddered.

58

The story reveals, also, an attempt by Kipling to show something akin to the Hindu concept of dharma -- the recording of a man's achievement in his appointed task, for which he will be responsible in his next life. Chinn is aware of his dharma in its spiritual context, for prior to his expedition to the

Satpura hills he advises his Colonel to exact no retribution if he is killed, as he "would never forgive himself if anyone of his name got them into trouble."<sup>59</sup> It is evident that he has before him the prospect of rebirth. This is an imaginative infusion into the historical source-material, yet it evokes the spirit and religion of India.

Another invented piece is the final tiger-killing, where in few words Kipling creates the personality of the tiger, who understood well enough the brown natives but "was annoyed by the white helmet in the sunlight, and did not approve of the voice that broke his rest." He draws himself out of his cave, lazily as a gorged snake, blinks and yawns<sup>(a)</sup> in the entrance, then leisurely lowers his head in an attempt to mesmerize the Subaltern, "which he had practised many times on his quarry." The calm "My word! He's trying to frighten me!"<sup>60</sup> precedes the one shot that kills the terrifying beast. At this point Kipling abruptly abolishes its personality, transforming it into a carcass eleven feet long.

The conclusion reviews the crisis, the fears, and expectations of the tribesmen:

Indeed, the final version of the Bhils' anti-vaccination stampede said nothing about Lieutenant John Chinn, his Godship. But Bukta knew, and the Corps knew, and every Bhil in the Satpura hills knew.

And now Bukta is zealous that John Chinn shall be swiftly wedded and impart his powers to a son, for if the Chinn succession fails, and the little Bhils are left to their own imaginings, there will be fresh trouble in the Satpura hills.

61

This passage reveals another mythical element in the story. In Frazer's Dying God, there is a detailed account of the sources of this belief and a description of its continuance

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(a) This image corresponds to the Subaltern's yawn earlier in the story.

in many societies. Briefly, the powers of the king pass from father to son; a man's journey through life is taken up by his male progeny. The implications of the myth are that the monarch has an inescapable connection with the welfare of his people, and that his successor must always continue his functions, since he inherits the king's power.. John Chinn is not so much an individual personage as a symbol of the collective good, and this is the reason why his character, emotions, and mental reactions are not shown.

#### Justice to the Visible Universe

Kipling's exploitation of actuality may be compared with Conrad's method; both men wrote into their stories, settings deriving from the British presence in the eastern hemisphere. On the use of actuality Conrad makes a number of comments, in one of which he announces a criterion of literary art:

A work that aspires, however humbly, to the condition of art should carry its justification in every line. And art itself may be defined as a single-minded attempt to render the highest kind of justice to the visible universe, by bringing to light the truth, manifold and one, 62 underlying its every aspect ...

Kipling's story demonstrably meets this criterion. The events in "The Tomb of His Ancestors" did not occur to a man called John Chinn, they did not all happen in the sequence given, but they were probabilities, and they reflected a few of the things that Kipling observed in India.

The comparison with Conrad is useful for the purpose of literary evaluation. Conrad in his eastern stories was closer to actuality than Kipling; his fictional names are frequently taken from living men, and his ships may be identified from historical records. Professor Sherry demonstrates that there is in many of the stories a repetition of a historical sequence, and that occasionally there is an exact portrayal of the circumstances of a man's life.<sup>63</sup>

Conrad explores the effect of a predicament on the individual personality far more deeply than Kipling does. For example, the narrator's soliloquies in "The Shadow Line" are of an intensity that never appears in Kipling's work. The underlying truth of Conrad's story is the process of psychological maturing, which is demonstrated in the career of a young master mariner. His code of professional seamanship is tested, and his reactions to crises are explained in detail. His predicament is made critical because he has to face almost every calamity that might afflict a schooner in the Gulf of Siam.<sup>64</sup>

Kipling's imaginative effort in his story is the study of conflict in society, of the anguish of a tribal mind in a political and cultural confrontation. The importance of this problem is not limited to the particular communities that he depicts; it occurs in the administration of the interiors of many countries. It does not appear only in an imperial situation, and it is evident in India to-day.<sup>65</sup>

The imaginative use of the political history of part of the Indian Empire leads to an important question. Is the author's thought such as to detract from any artistic merit that the story may possess? There are critics who have affirmed that his political attitude outweighs any potential literary value.<sup>66</sup>

The degree of Kipling's honesty to ethnic history, contemporary opinion, and tribal custom, is to some extent an answer to this view. The ideal of imperial government specifically enunciated in the story was taken from a poem by a Governor of the Honourable East India Company, and from an engraved plinth in Calcutta. It is endorsed by a valediction chiselled on a tombstone in Bhauglipur. The fact that the latter is in Persian, and conveys a tribute from Muslim and tribal officials, shows that the concepts on which Kipling based the theme of his story were recognized by the peoples of the region and not merely by a distant Government. Kipling imaginatively extends the motif by projecting it upon the Bhils of Mēwar. Their plight was real, and their fears and superstitions were such as he described. Therefore his fictional statement of the need for an enlightened administration cannot be said to lack moral justification.

Moreover, a great prestige attached at that time to the achievements of a number of young British officers. Kipling alludes to this when he talks of "slow, unseen work, of the sort that is being done all over India."<sup>67</sup>

"The Tomb of His Ancestors" does not therefore tendentiously exploit any current attitudes. Kipling might have viewed contemporary opinions in a different light, indeed in some of his stories he shows that they do not accord with the realities of India. In this story, however, the plot follows from the setting, from the statement of the problem. It is highly coloured but entirely consonant with the conditions that he imaginatively creates. These conditions are shown in almost every instance to be typical of actuality. There is no distortion of character or milieu in order to present a situation that was potentially the cause of political conflict. The examination of the story's internal consonance in relation to external actuality thus has value in the interpretation of meaning and in the moral evaluation.

It is a necessary conclusion from a reading of Kipling's short stories, poems, and essays, that he regarded problems of communication between societies and individuals as the major cause of political and personal crises. Yet his moral views and attitudes are not straightforward, and there are divergent standpoints in his work. He shows the ethnic and cultural antipathies in political and psychological terms; he artistically presents areas and conditions in which they may be resolved, as well as other areas and conditions in which they may not.

"The Tomb of His Ancestors" underlines the immense importance of a sympathetic knowledge of custom, superstition, belief, family structure, language. Given this, the English might have overcome the mutual incomprehensions present in the imperialist's situation; or so Kipling evidently thought.

Kipling in this story is more positive of approach to the ethnic conflicts of India than Forster. A Passage to India demonstrates the incompatibilities and mutual alienations of Indian and British societies. When Forster wrote his novel,

the policies of Morley, Minto and Montagu, the declaration on self-government, and the 1918 Report on Indian Constitutional Reform, had begun to influence politics in India. Further, the Indian National Congress had become a political force, and its aims and methods had begun to receive much moral support in the United Kingdom. There had been a great deal of indignation in England over the suppression of an uprising in the Punjab. A new political attitude dominated Indian affairs, wholly different from the confident moral ascendancy evident in the passage quoted from Edwardes' work and in the prevailing beliefs of Anglo-Indian society in the 19th Century.<sup>68</sup>

Kipling recognizes the problem that Forster evokes, although he does not view it in the same light. There is in some of Kipling's fiction a belief in the possibility of overcoming the dilemma; in "His Private Honour," he explains why the work would be justified.<sup>69(a)</sup> Some of his heroes are crushed by India, but not all. Sandison, however, perceives no optimism in Kipling:

The Administrator then, as Kipling creates him, has at his core a terrible irony: he who would 'administer' and govern this vast mass is himself a victim. Stoically he goes through the motions of his trying occupation, appropriating to himself a world and a life completely alien; and the more alien it becomes the more it engrosses until he has no soul of his own left, and can only plod mechanically on until finally engulfed ... "At the End of the Passage" illustrates powerfully, if didactically, what this means. The imperial demand is for self-sacrifice of a most complete and senseless character, a willingness on the part of the imperial servants to offer themselves up so that the great maw of India may feed upon the offering.

70

This is not the attitude in the "The Tomb of His Ancestors." The Subaltern does not offer himself up, he accepts his duties and enjoys them. The great maw of India does not feed on him; he is by inheritance, of India. Although Sandison's view may represent one facet of the attitude of Anglo-India, the evidence does not show that it was the predominant view when Kipling wrote this story.

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(a) But his explanation goes no further than conceiving the possibility of a permanent English community within an independent India. It leaves many questions unanswered.

Sandison considers India as the main character in Kipling's work, and as the destroyer of the alien's efforts:

The Anglo-Indians' main reaction to this ubiquitous persecution is to assert their own cultural morality more fiercely than ever. The result is that they fail to understand the people they govern.

71

But John Chinn does not fail; he understands the people he governs, as does Orde in "The Head of the District."<sup>72</sup> Comparing Kipling with Forster, Sandison quotes from "On the City Wall":

Wali Dad presents, in fact, the most complete picture of what has happened in the collision to people like him ...

'India has gossiped for centuries -- always standing in the bazaars until the soldiers go by. Therefore -- you are here to-day instead of starving in your own country, and I am not a Mohammedan. I am a Product -- a Demnition Product. That, also, I owe to you and yours; that I cannot make an end to my sentence without quoting from your authors.'

Exhorted to take up his place in the world, he becomes even more ironic:

'I might wear an English coat and trousers. I might be a leading Mohammedan pleader. I might even be received at the Commissioner's tennis parties where the English stand on one side, and the natives on the other, in order to provide social intercourse throughout the Empire.'

Is this a source for Mr. Forster's Aziz and his famous bridge party? <sup>73</sup>

This passage does not show Kipling's entire literary response to India, although it indicates where he is at times similar to Forster in attitude. Kipling occasionally demonstrates a constructive attitude to the racial dilemma. He offers solutions, but they are not valid for all conditions, neither are they permanent. On the other hand, they are not imposed literary solutions; they are typical of actual situations and events, and they reflect actual results.

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This is quoted as an example of political criticism:

"Kipling ... is the voice of a dying hierarchy which, for all its cruelty, violence and stupid complacency and reaction, he seeks to perpetuate. Kipling, like Hitler, chose the swastika for an emblem, and if the two men have nothing else in common they share a love of the most extravagant form of patriotism, flamboyant stage effects and sadistic contempt for the weak."

67. KIPLING. "The Tomb of His Ancestors," p. 105.
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- "At all events Kashmir was the only place that Englishmen could colonize ... I ... swept on as far as an independent India, ... paying interest on her loans with beautiful regularity, but borrowing no men from beyond her borders -- a colonized, manufacturing India with a permanent surplus and her own flag."
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CHAPTER VAN IMPERIAL ANXIETY

Kipling believed the future of the British in India to be uncertain, and his anxiety on this subject appears in some of his literary work. He also believed the interior administration of the Raj to rest with a nexus of groups, groups that provided psychological stability for their individual members. He perceived in the menace that lay beyond the frontiers of the State, an image of a menace that confronted the person outside the society to which it owed its identity. He creates a tragedy out of a unique experience, in a story that fuses the political theme with a study of psychological disintegration.

The imaginative conception of "The Man Who Was" derives to some extent from deep speculation on the military problems of the Empire in Central Asia and on its political progress through the latter half of the 19th Century.<sup>1</sup> The story contains a view of the strategic dilemma that confronted the British, and the imperial rivalry described was authentic. During the period covered by the fugitive's imprisonment and escape, Russia twice mounted expeditions to the Afghanistan with the invasion of India as their objective; and also during that period, the Czars seldom tired of seeking an involvement in the foreign policy of the Emirate.<sup>2</sup>

The story, which first appeared in April 1890, endorsed by its inner seriousness Kipling's assertion that his purpose was to display the "sweep and meaning of things and efforts and origins throughout the Empire."<sup>3</sup> However, the view that emerges is not one that would have encouraged the idealist. Nor does the young imperial officer embody any solution to the problems that the view reveals. For while the Subaltern expresses confidence and military readiness, various references to political realities contradict his attitude. "The Man Who Was" presents an ambiguous standpoint; it urges that there should be a determined defence of the Frontier, but implies that it will fall.

The events of the drama appear improbable, yet they are in essential details true. There was substance in the account of a man returning from captivity in Russia to India.<sup>4</sup> The strangeness of the central incident, the background geographically

remote yet so full of political implications, are factors that intensify the interest and hold it in a state of readiness to receive the full force of the malignancy that pervades the story.

The "White Hussars," celebrating after a polo match against a cavalry regiment of the Punjab Frontier Force, are playing host to a Cossack who is employed as a political correspondent for a Russian press agency. The convivial atmosphere and high spirits evaporate when a fugitive is caught on the barrack square and brought in among the officers. It is discovered that he had been taken prisoner at Balaelava and held in a forced-labour camp. From one of these he had at length escaped, and after crossing the Afghanistan had entered Peshawur, presumably via the Khyber.

He is identified by the Cossack, who likens his destruction to the coming liquidation of British power in India. This collapse, he believes, will precipitate the expansion of Russian influence in Asia. Kipling's historical intuition was impressive. Today, a much greater degree of dramatic irony may be read into the story than his contemporaries might have either perceived or enjoyed. The cowering refugee, the coffin shadow, the sinister presence of the Russian awakened from his drunken oblivion -- these symbols create a mood of foreboding and contain a premonition of historical truth.

At the head of the story are two verses from a ballad. They establish an overtone of patriotic emotion and impart a sense of injustice. They demand a readiness to avenge a national humiliation and a personal tragedy. The ballad is Kipling's own composition:

The Earth gave up her dead that tide,  
 Into our camp he came,  
 And said his say, and went his way,  
 And left our hearts aflame.

Keep tally -- on the gun-butt score  
 The vengeance we must take,  
 When God shall bring full reckoning,  
 For our dead comrade's sake.

Ballad 5

The two verses constitute the full poem; the Definitive Edition<sup>6</sup> gives no other. In the first verse the choice of words achieves a direct expression of feeling, particularly the colloquial "said his say" and "went his way," but there is irony here, for the way is to the grave, as the last line and later the story, affirm.

The second verse is equally direct, though more aggressive. Pursuing the assumption that the response to the emotions invoked is immediate and powerful, it proposes that a tally be made of the acts for which vengeance is to be taken. Yet the urging to retribution is stronger than the sense of indignation that can logically be derived from these verses. The overall impression is of admonition and warning, and this is a clue to the political mood of the story that they precede. There is ambiguity in the concept of the "tally," for this refers to the injustices suffered; however, "... score/The vengeance we must take" and the idea of the gun-butt imply armed aggression.

The opening image of a tide giving up its dead was also used by Kipling on the occasion of a personal crisis. In a poem written nearly thirty years later, about the loss of his son in the Battle of Loos, the repeated line "not with this wind blowing, and this tide," is used to transmit the agony of hopeless waiting and heartfelt loss.<sup>7</sup> The poet's retention of this symbol reveals the measure of its emotional significance. The third line of the second verse contains an appeal to the Supreme Being reminiscent of other political poems; for example, "Recessional."<sup>8</sup>

#### Myth and Political Personality

The initial paragraph outlines the political personality of Russia as Kipling saw it:

Let it be clearly understood that the Russian is a delightful person until he tucks in his shirt. As an Oriental he is charming. It is only when he insists upon being treated as the most easterly of western peoples instead of the most westerly of easterns that he becomes a racial anomaly extremely difficult to handle.

The host never knows which side of his nature is going to turn up next.

9

An interpretation of the converse adjectives appears two pages later in the narrative. It is that Russia's emergence as an imperialist power in Asia constitutes an ominous paradox,<sup>10</sup> and the description of Dirkovitch emphasizes the ambivalence of the national character:

But he remained distressingly European through it all. The White Hussars were 'My dear true friends,' 'Fellow-soldiers glorious,' and 'Brothers inseparable.' He would unburden himself by the hour on the glorious future that awaited the combined arms of England and Russia when their hearts and their territories should run side by side, and the great mission of civilizing Asia should begin. That was unsatisfactory, because Asia is not going to be civilized after the methods of the West. There is too much Asia and she is too old. You cannot reform a lady of many lovers, and Asia has been insatiable in her flirtations aforesaid. She will never attend Sunday school or learn to vote save with swords for tickets.

Dirkovitch knew this as well as any one else, but it suited him to talk special-correspondently and to make himself as genial as he could. Now and then he volunteered a little, a very little, information about his own sotnia of Cossacks, left apparently to look after themselves somewhere at the back of beyond. He had done rough work in Central Asia, and had seen rather more help-yourself fighting than most men of his years. But he was careful never to betray his superiority ...

11

The image of the lady of many lovers is identifiable with India's own history, her "lovers" being conquerors who over several millennia had brought their cultures to the Sub-Continent. In this statement there is a recognition of Britain's position and a review of India's success in repelling attempts, made by intruders, at imposing fundamental change. Her attitudes and beliefs, her cultures and social structures, would resist any 19th Century idealism. The image also implies that the peoples

of India had derived their established social and religious characteristics from many ethnic origins.<sup>12</sup>

These significations recur in another story, "The Bridge Builders." At a Panchayet on an island in the Ganges, the Gods speak of the technology that the British had brought to India:

'Their Gods! What should their Gods know? They were born yesterday, and those that made them are scarcely yet cold,' ... 'To-morrow their Gods will die.' ...

'They have changed the face of the land -- which is my land. They have killed and made new towns on my banks,' said the Mugger.

'It is but the shifting of a little dirt. Let the dirt dig in the dirt if it pleases the dirt,' answered the Elephant.

They then speak of religion, and of bridges. The bridges are symbolic; they are supposed to link differing cultures for their mutual benefit, whereas in fact they lead back to the older order:

'True. It is true,' murmured Hanuman. 'To Shiv and to the others, mother, they return. I creep from temple to temple in the North, where they worship one God and His Prophet; and presently my image is alone within their shrines.'

'Small thanks,' said the Buck, turning his head slowly. 'I am that One and His Prophet also.'

'Even so, father,' said Hanuman. 'And to the South I go who am the oldest of the Gods as men know the Gods, and presently I touch the shrines of the new faith and the Woman whom we know is twelve-armed, and still they call her Mary.' ...

'... and I go West among the fire-carriages, and stand before the bridge-builders in many shapes, and because of me they change their faiths and are very wise. Ho! ho! I am the builder of bridges indeed -- bridges between this and that, and each bridge leads surely to Us in the end! ...'

13

Thus, Kipling imaginately presents his view of India's fundamental spiritual personality.<sup>14</sup> In "The Man Who Was" he demonstrates an aspect of the related political personality.

The description of attitudes at the dinner maintains interest and creates dramatic tension, for it prepares an atmosphere of sporting rivalry that soon veers to military rivalry. The Cossack's conversation and social postures are described:

He was fraternizing effusively with the captain of the hussar team, who was wondering how many of Dirkovitch's Cossacks his own wiry down-countrymen could account for in a fair charge. But one does not speak of these things openly. 15

There is a pun in the Native officer's reference to the "game"<sup>(a)</sup>

'Then we will play you afresh' ('Happy to meet you') 'till there are left no feet upon our ponies. Thus for sport.' He dropped one hand on his sword-hilt and his eye wandered to Dirkovitch lolling back in his chair. 'But if by the will of God there arises any other game which is not the polo game, then be assured, Colonel Sahib and officers, that we will play it out side by side, though they,' again his eye sought Dirkovitch, 'though they, I say, have fifty ponies to our one horse.' 16

A popular sentiment, though mawkish at the scene of a regimental celebration. However, it creates political tension by establishing the first of two opposing poles of military strength. A mood of armed rivalry had to be created, and the speech is necessary as a precedent to the dramatic incident that provokes Dirkovitch's announcement of Russian aims.

A discordant note, which anticipates the change of mood, enters into the setting when the Cossack's incongruous presence is recalled: "Dirkovitch's dull green uniform was the only dark spot at the board, but his big onyx eyes made up for it."<sup>17</sup>

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(a) The Great Game was a book by W.M. Thorburn: it went through three editions in 1876, and was concerned with the rivalry between the Russian and British Empires. Among other things, it proposed an imperial policy aimed at securing British India from external aggression. 18

The celebrations are interrupted by the sound of a shot from the barrack square. The narrative refers to the eagerness with which local tribesmen repeatedly sought out and stole the new Martini-Henri rifles. The first indication that this is not such an incident is Hiram Singh's observation that the man's cries are those of a European. The prisoner collapses in the Mess, and the picture of his ragged destitution is at variance with the revelry and warmth of the celebration. The contrast emphasizes the change of conditions that was foreshadowed by the presence of Dirkovitch.

The effort to identify the fugitive proceeds and is assisted by one symbolic action. In describing it, Kipling intrudes his own views on developments in imperial government and denies the expression of confidence with which the story closes:

Once more the Colonel rose, but his hand shook, and the port spilled on the table as he looked straight at the man in little Mildred's chair and said hoarsely, 'Mr. Vice, the Queen.' There was a little pause, but the man sprung to his feet and answered without hesitation, 'The Queen, God bless her!' and as he emptied the thin glass he snapped the shank between his fingers.

Long and long ago, when the Empress of India was a young woman and there were no unclean ideals in the land, it was the custom of a few messes to drink the Queen's toast in broken glass, to the vast delight of the mess-contractors. The custom is now dead, because there is nothing to break anything for, except now and again the word of a Government, and that has been broken already.

19

An immediate implication in the broken word is that the fugitive will die unavenged, and that Dirkovitch personifies a power that will eventually prevail against India. For the last sentence is a symptom of hopelessness.

The Disintegration of the Personality

The forgotten officer had been a prisoner for most of his life. The length of his lost years is rendered vivid by the archaic toast. The contemporary title in India was "Queen Empress." (a) The older form of words draws from the fugitive a reaction that leads to the discovery of his identity. Limmason has been dissociated from his original personality, which nevertheless continues to respond to points of ritual that recur to it from among the conventions and traditions that it knew before his long exile.

The narrator's reflections develop the significance of this tragedy. They suggest that an unconvincing idealism was being introduced into political thought, while beyond the Frontier something lay ready to destroy the very structure upon which this thought was focussed. The malignant external power is Russia, in the political and military sense, and chaos, in the psychological sense. The structure was the Indian Empire, in the political sense, and the integrated person,<sup>(b)</sup> in the psychological sense. Chaos might be admitted into both as the result of the application of the new idealism, and this is the underlying significance of the story "The Head of the District," in which Kipling describes the aspirations of a particularly idealistic Viceroy:<sup>20</sup>

(a) Kipling knew the correct form of the toast.<sup>21</sup>

(b) Person

"The phenomena of psychology always have reference to someone who acts or behaves or who has a mental content. Better than any other, the term person seems to the editor to reflect the way in which the majority of psychologists today conceive of 'this centre of reference' this performer of biopsychological functions."  
ENGLISH H.B., and ENGLISH, A.C. A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms  
 (New York: Longmans Green, 1958)

His administration was based on principle, and the principle must be enforced in season and out of season. His pen and tongue had created the New India, teeming with possibilities ...

'The principle is sound enough,' said the weary-eyed Head of the Red Provinces in which Kot-Khumarsen lay, for he too held theories. 'The only difficulty is --'

'Put the screw on the district officials; brigade Dē with a very strong Deputy Commissioner on each side of him; ... and if anything goes wrong, say that his colleagues didn't back him up. All these lovely little experiments recoil on the District Officer in the end,' said the Knight of the Drawn Sword with a truthful brutality that made the Head of the Red Provinces shudder. 22

It was Kipling's view that political idealism tended to ignore reality, and that one aspect of this reality was the abyss that always threatened the political society and the individual person. These fears, political and psychological, are coalescent in the symbol of the Cossack, newly risen from his drunken stupor:

From under the table, calm and smiling, rose Dirkovitch, who had been roused from healthful slumber by feet upon his body. By the side of the man he rose, and the man shrieked and grovelled. It was a horrible sight coming so swiftly upon the pride and glory of the toast that had brought the strayed wite together. 23

After Dirkovitch has interrogated the fugitive he gives his history, and then expresses the political foreboding with which Kipling was assailed:

'The Czari! Posh! I snap my fingers -- I snap my fingers at him. Do I believe in him? No! But in us Slav who has done nothing, him I believe. Seventy -- how much - millions of peoples that have done nothing -- not one thing. Posh! Napoleon was an episode.' He banged on the table. 'Hear you, old peoples, we have done nothing in the world -- out here. All our work is to do; and it shall be done, old peoples. Get a-way!' He waved his hand imperiously, and pointed to the man. 'You see him. He

is not good to see. He was just one little -- oh, so little -- accident, that no one remembered. Now he is That! So will you be, brother soldiers so brave -- so will you be. But you will never come back. You will all go where he is gone, or,' -- he pointed to the great coffin-shadow on the ceiling, and muttering, 'Seventy millions -- get a-way, you old peoples,' fell asleep.

24

Finally, when he leaves Peshawur, he infers that he will return:

'Yes, but I will come again. My dear friends, is that road shut?' He pointed to where the North Star burned over the Khyber Pass.

25

There is a deliberate intention, in the use of this image, to fix in the consciousness of his readership the point of the compass from which the political and military confrontation was to be expected. For it distorts geographic reality. From Peshawur you would not see the North Star over the Khyber, as the pass is directly to the west of the city. The Afghanistan<sup>26</sup> lies in that direction, and Kipling wished to identify Russia as the threatening power. Although the invader would use the Khyber, he would come from the country to the north.

The story terminates with a Subaltern, little Mildred, watching this symbolic North Star while he hums a tune that Kipling says was taken from a review currently playing in Simla:

I'm sorry for Mister Bluebeard,  
I'm sorry to cause him pain;  
But a terrible spree there's sure to be  
When he comes back again.

27

The verse suggests the author's lack of faith; it is puerile when compared with the oracular pronouncement that he makes through Dirkovitch. The song might be regarded as characteristic of the British Subaltern; this, however, would be an inadequate appraisal of its significance, for it is as unconvincing as little Mildred himself. The dominating presence in the story, the one character who is depicted substantially, is Dirkovitch.

The political emphasis differs from that of "The Tomb of His Ancestors," with its stress on society and custom, on interactions between governor and governed. There, the Indian Empire is shown extending its activities among the aboriginal tribes. The story's deeper meaning is the resolving of the conflict within and between societies.

In "The Man Who Was" the technique of presentation is different, the structure is different, and a geo-political dilemma dominates the setting.<sup>(a)</sup> The personal tragedy echoes the political thought and pervades the narrative, the plot, the character analysis, and the dramatic conclusion.

The study of a psychological trauma is convincing. Everything Limmason does and says demonstrates his loss of the integrity of his personality. His moments of cognition are so evanescent that he is not aware of them. His captors are alone capable of communicating with the slave that they have superimposed upon the original person; only Dirkovitch is able to receive the full story, which is not given to the reader because the suggestions and allusions have already been understood. The history is told while an officer is described searching through the regimental records. On his return to the Mess the suspicion of tragedy is confirmed.

Again there occurs a fleeting act of cognition. It had been discovered that a Lieutenant Limmason had disappeared before Sebastopol; the name is repeated:

Swiftly as a shot came the answer, in a slightly surprised tone: 'Yes, I'm Limmason, of course.' 28

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(a) The dilemma was, whether or not to occupy the Hindu Kush, the 'natural' geographic boundary between India and Russia. A further dilemma was that Russia was expanding from the other direction to this boundary, was involved in an attempt to gain a sphere of influence in the Afghanistan, and had thought of invading India. The works of Swinson<sup>29</sup> and Barnett<sup>30</sup> review the various solutions, and Rywkin describes Russia's policy<sup>31</sup>. In Lord Roberts's book are reprints of communications between Russian political and military staff in Central Asia.<sup>32</sup>

This is the response of the original Limmason. Fragments of Mess ritual, the mention of the name, various objects -- these are as call-signs to him. This scene shows how the personality<sup>(a)</sup> demands recognition by other men, and how it is dependent for its continued integrity upon a society with which it may identify, upon behaviour patterns and upon traditions. Limmason had suffered total alienation from these factors.

Dramatic irony is maintained until the Cossack's final outburst, which fuses the imperial anxiety with the pathos of a psychological liquidation and an extreme of human suffering. This is the episode of greatest crisis, and it is emphasized by a reflection from the candles:

There was nothing special in the ceiling  
beyond a shadow as of a huge black coffin.  
Owing to some peculiarity in the construction  
of the mess-room this shadow was always  
thrown when the candles were lighted.

33

The political and strategic dilemma that underlies the story is expressed in A.E.W. Mason's The Broken Road. In this novel, one facet of the plot is a family's devotion, through several generations, to the construction of a road that was intended eventually to reach the 'natural' frontier.<sup>34</sup> As the title of the book indicates, neither the road nor the frontier were ever established, but the theme was pursued with enthusiastic interest in contemporary Anglo-Indian literature.

The "White Hussars" was a British regiment that appears in several of Kipling's stories, and was probably a representation of the 9th (The Queen's) Lancers. The Indian cavalry in the story were probably inspired by one of the regiments of the Punjab Frontier Force.<sup>35</sup> Polo matches between teams drawn from both armies were frequently seen, and men holding Viceroy's-commissions would celebrate in the British Mess.

(a) Personality

"The quality or state of being a person ..."  
"... the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustment to his environment." ENGLISH. A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms.

The Readers' Guide states that Limmason is possibly based on Lord FitzGibbon of the 8th Hussars, whose regiment took part in the charge of the Light Brigade. He was reported missing afterwards, and was not included in any exchange of prisoners:

Limmason could well have been made up by Kipling from FitzGibbon. Fitz is, literally, 'son,' and if we substitute for 'gibbon' a similar animal the lemur, we have, phonetically, 'Limmason.' (a)

36

The inventive achievement lies in creating a plot that links the incident with a political theme and concentrates an intense study of personality within brief passages of dialogue. All that is seen of Lieutenant Limmason's career is the most dramatic part of it, -- the final moment at the table of his Regiment. The structure of the plot requires him only for this brief appearance in the Mess, where he confronts his captor; his life is terminated soon afterwards. The tragedy is compressed, but its significance is very extensive..

#### Comparisons

The technique may best be viewed in the light of a comparative appraisal, for which Joseph Conrad is the most obvious choice because of his similarities with Kipling. These include his use of localities in distant areas of the Empire, his extensive use of actuality in setting and episode, and his view of politics and personality. Conrad and Kipling were contemporaries; they were both exiles, and their writings reveal an exile's objectivity. They knew and commented on each other's works, and they lived not far apart. (b)

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(a) There is also the possibility that the "White Hussars" was portrayed by Kipling with more than one regiment in mind, and another original could have been FitzGibbon's actual regiment.<sup>37</sup>

(b) The comparative interpretation is developed further in subsequent chapters.

"The Man Who Was" gains its artistic power from its symbolism, by showing character only at its most intense crisis, and by drawing a theme of global significance into a drama that only once moves from one room.<sup>(a)</sup> Historical and present actuality is given by inference and allusion. A topic of immense magnitude is depicted in small scale by the inclusion of a few, highly selective external details. These attributes of brevity and intensity are applicable as much to the narrative as to the dialogue. For example, the Cossack's duplicity is given in: "but it suited him to talk special-correspondently." This is an invented adverbial construction of a type that occurs frequently in Kipling's prose.<sup>38</sup> It has various meanings, and implies that the Cossack is an official representative of his country, has an extensive knowledge of Russian politics and strategy that he may confidentially reveal to his friends, is aware of India's political problems to which he can suggest answers, and that he is concerned to further the superficially good relations between the two imperial powers. It also implies that he is a liar.

There is a subsidiary theme. A policy that had been seriously advocated for the security of the Indian Empire was that Britain should seek an alliance with Russia. Russia's expansion in Central Asia meant that her territories would run alongside Britain's for a very substantial distance. The policy of imperial détente was advocated by Thorburn in The Great Game.<sup>39</sup> An intention in Kipling's story is to oppose the alliance by showing the menace under the fictive Cossack's suave exterior, and by generating a mistrust of the Russian national character.

This subsidiary theme shows the extent of the political significance in Kipling's fiction. Conrad is not as directly concerned with imperialism, although he appears to prefer the British version. Obviously he admired the British Empire, particularly in comparison with the Russian. He often makes disparaging remarks about the colonial activities of other States. In "Almayer's Folly" there is an expression of disappointment at Britain's lack of interest in eastern Borneo;<sup>40</sup> in "Heart of Darkness" he condemns French and Belgian policies

(a) I except the epilogue on the station platform at Peshawur.

in Africa;<sup>41</sup> in The Rescue Jørgenson is very disparaging about the Dutch and their military morale, and presents as despicable the acts of one of their gunboats in the East Indies.<sup>42</sup> The manoeuvres of the Dutch Navy as an arm of imperial government are also ridiculed in "Almayer's Folly".<sup>43</sup>

The main difference lies not in the vision, but in the technique, of the two writers. In his reference to India's past and her invaders, Kipling uses an allusion that evokes one of the historical myths:<sup>44</sup> Asia was a lady of many lovers: "insatiable in her flirtations aforetime." Conrad's historical expositions are by contrast of considerable length; an example is the explanation of Babalatchi's presence on the Berau river in An Outcast of the Islands.<sup>45</sup>

In Kipling's stories, only as much character delineation as is necessary to the gathering of the elements of the main predicament is given, and then briefly, and usually in the course of the narrative or dialogue. Conrad inserts lengthy descriptions; the technique is evident in many stories of eastern waters such as "Falk,"<sup>46</sup> "The Shadow Line,"<sup>47</sup> and "Typhoon".<sup>48</sup> In all these there are expositions on the psychological development of the main personages, on their backgrounds, personal histories, and on the reasons for their present condition.

Conrad's presentation is of a different magnitude from Kipling's; it demonstrates setting, history, and personality in much greater detail. Interior responses to events, to personalities, to the main predicament, to the governing morality, to all the other conditions artistically created, are given at length. As in Kipling the area covered is large, the problems global, and the vision intense, but the presentation is on a large scale. Consequently, Kipling's stories move much faster than Conrad's; they are by comparison classical in their observation of setting and time-sequence. There is no geographical or historical ranging, action is almost always reported, often by a secondary narrator.

Although Conrad's expositions, narratives, and broken time-sequences retard the progress of the dramatic action, they

give much more breadth than Kipling's method allows to the expression of a vision of truth. Yet there is some similarity in the underlying significations of their works. Leavis, in The Great Tradition, asserts:

It is not a question of a 'philosophy'; Conrad cannot be said to have one. He is not one of those writers who clear up their fundamental attitudes for themselves in such a way that we may reasonably, in talking of them, use that portmanteau term. He does believe intensely, as a matter of concrete experience, in the kind of human achievement represented by the Merchant Service -- tradition, discipline and moral ideal; but he also has a strong sense, not only of the frailty, but of the absurdity or unreality, in relation to the surrounding and underlying gulfs, of such achievement, a sense so strong that it often seems very close to Decoud's radical scepticism. 49

"The Man Who Was" also displays a degree of radical scepticism, and what Leavis says of Conrad's Merchant Service applies to Kipling's view of work in India.

Kipling's exposition of military themes never becomes tedious; his evaluation of tactical prowess is achieved with humour and interest, but very briefly. For example, the reputation of the cavalry regiment is given from the standpoint of its enemies, in a transcription of Pukhtun<sup>(a)</sup> colloquialism that has a religious fervour:

They even called the White Hussars children of the devil and sons of persons whom it would be perfectly impossible to meet in decent society. 50

His emotional attachment to the "White Hussars" is evident in his warm and vivid description of their Mess-room. The realization that Limmason had once belonged to it intensifies the tragedy of his dissociation and alienation. Kipling's treatment of the scene effectually reveals the relation of the lost personality to its own environment.

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(a) 'Pathan' means Pukhtun Wallah; i.e. 'a man who speaks Pukhtun.'

He recalls the social characteristics of the officers by allusion:

... the big spurs clanked as the big men heaved themselves up and drank the Queen upon whose pay they were falsely supposed to settle their mess-bills.

51

He allows himself a freedom of nostalgia in a scene that illustrates his love for the traditions of service in India:

The great beam-roofed mess-room of the White Hussars was a sight to be remembered. All the mess plate was out on the long table -- the same table that had served up the bodies of five officers after a forgotten fight long ago -- the dingy, battered standards faced the door of the entrance, clumps of winter-roses lay between the silver candlesticks, and the portraits of eminent officers deceased looked down on their successors from between the heads of sambhur, nilghai, markher,<sup>(a)</sup> and, pride of all the mess, two grinning snow-leopards that had cost Basset-Holmer four months' leave that he might have spent in England, instead of on the road to Thibet and the daily risk of his life by ledge, snow-slide, and grassy slope.

52

There are personal memories present in this passage, and it is suffused with recollected atmosphere. There are also allusions to events long past, which invoke the history of regimental life on the Frontier. Kipling here depicts the community of men in the Army of the Punjab, whose companionship he enjoyed at the table of the regiment upon which he based his "White Hussars."<sup>53</sup>

The subjective implications are similar to those of passages in "The Shadow Line" where the young master-mariner admires the design of his first command, and later sits alone in its saloon, gazing into the mirror with the ormolu frame.<sup>54</sup> The awareness of a tradition, of a compelling morality, and of a pride in accomplishment and service are all introduced into Conrad's setting.

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(a) Sambhur, the Indian Elk; Nilghai, an enormous wild deer, found in Central India; Markher, the large wild goat of North India.

There were biographical influences on both scenes,<sup>55</sup> but Kipling, unlike Conrad, was not directly involved; he was present as a guest, not as a soldier. Perhaps because of the limits of his participation, because he was not a professional, the political implications are the more vehemently expressed in Kipling's work. This externality, however, allows him a view of the tragedy of the individual soldier destroyed by a geopolitical confrontation. It is a non-professional view, in a military sense, in that it concentrates on the turmoil of the inner consciousness with profound anxiety and intense depression.

Yet Kipling saw imperial service as an antidote to psychic desolation; Sandison asserts:

The self in isolation was wholly vulnerable to the forces of disintegration ... The imperial milieu for Kipling came nearest to offering the ideal balance. 56

The regiment sometimes created the needful sense of identity, and, to those who lived with it, gave a measure of integrity.<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, duty in the Guard-Room in Fort Amara, despite the regimental traditions, might have the very opposite effects. Kipling's imaginative presentation of imperial service was ambivalent, and no perfect or general solutions to its predicaments are offered by him.

Leavis, writing on Conrad in The Great Tradition, twice describes Kipling's prose as the art of a magazine writer, and alludes to a "cheap insistence on glamour."<sup>58</sup> Kipling had pre-empted this evaluation by describing himself, in the preface to Life's Handicap,<sup>(a)</sup> as a bazaar story-teller.<sup>59</sup> Neither pronouncement adequately assesses this story. It is true that it is vivid in setting and emotional in language, and that its action is exciting. No complexity of thought or character is set out in detail, and the story can be read purely as entertainment. Indeed, it was first published in a magazine.<sup>60</sup> Yet it transmits a deeply tragic human experience and possesses an extensive underlying political seriousness.

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(a) "The Man Who Was" appears in this collection.

Darkness Visible

When Dirkovitch recounts Limmason's history, he explains how he had escaped, "' ... from over there.' He nodded towards the darkness of the night." This statement contains the symbolism of the outer darkness, the chaos, which is further defined in a poem that heads the story "The House of Suddhoo":

A stone's throw out on either hand  
From that well-ordered road we tread,  
And all the world is wild and strange;  
Churel and ghoul and Djinn and sprite  
Shall bear us company to-night,  
For we have reached the Oldest Land  
Wherein the Powers of Darkness range.

61

Sandison expresses the notion thus:

... Anglo India came nearest to offering Kipling the ideal nourishment for his ethic of crisis. There the present actuality took all one's time, attention and energy, and the friendship and support of a tightly-knit 'knowable' community, though never becoming intimate nor seeking to break down the barrier that guarded inner privacy yet linked individuals in a fortifying alliance against the powers of darkness and disintegration.

62

Anglo India did offer Kipling this nourishment, but the political significance of the Indian Empire in the stories cannot be ignored.

Kipling meant by chaos, that which causes political, moral, and psychological disintegration. The fear of chaos is ever visible in his imagery of the darkness, which pervades his poems and stories, his literary studies and evocations of imperialism and personality.

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4. KIPLING. Readers' Guide, II, p. 965.
5. KIPLING. "The Man Who Was," p. 97.
6. KIPLING. Verse, p. 569.
7. KIPLING. Verse, p. 216.
8. Ibid., p. 328.
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11. KIPLING. "The Man Who Was," pp. 98-99.
12. CHAUDHURI, N.C. The Continent of Circe (London: Chatto & Windus, 1965), ch. ii.

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Also, RAO, K.B. Rudyard Kipling's India (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), pp. 155-159.

"Trade and commerce brought the British, and religious fanaticism motivated the Muhammedan invasion.

India was invaded by other races as well, the Aryans, the Persians, the Greeks, the Scythians, and others, ... But these invasions, except for the Western ones, which ultimately withdrew from the land, were absorbed into the Indian synthesis."

13. KIPLING. "The Bridge Builders," pp. 31-34.

14. CHAUDHURI. The Continent of Circe.

p. 20:

"I would like to set down, as a matter of moral observation, that I consider Kipling to be the only English writer who will have a permanent place in English literature with books on Indian themes and who will also be read by everyone who would know not only British India but also timeless India."

p. 176:

"To those Western readers who wish to have a feel of this bucolic Krishna and who yet cannot read the Krishna cycle in Sanskrit or Bengali I would recommend the few lines that Kipling has on him in his story of the Bridgebuilders. I was never able to understand how an Englishman ... was able to get so near to the quint-essence of Vishnava poetry."

15. KIPLING. "The Man Who Was," p. 102.

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20. KIPLING. Readers' Guide, II, p. 967.

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22. KIPLING. "The Head of the District," p. 124.

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39. See reference no. 18.
40. CONRAD, "Almayer's Folly," pp. 34-36.
41. CONRAD. "Heart of Darkness."

pp. 61-71: The descriptions of the French cruiser shelling the coast, and of the rapacity of the colonial company in the Congo, are apposite in this context.

42. CONRAD. The Rescue, pp. 92-101.
43. CONRAD. "Almayer's Folly," pp. 120-126, 145.
- The Dutch Navy was ineffective against the intrigue of Almayer's trading opponents and incapable of instituting the disinterested governance that might have revived his fortunes.
- "...That drunken madman was right; we haven't enough hold on this coast. They do what they like."
44. Kipling appears to have been aware of the significance of sexual symbolism in Indian myth. Chaudhuri asserts:
- "Owing to the very inadequate development of the historical and scientific spirit among the Hindus, the greater part of their early historical traditions remains embodied only in myths. But when judiciously analysed they yield valuable historical information which otherwise would be totally absent." The Continent of Circe, p. 191.
45. CONRAD. An Outcast of the Islands, pp. 50-59.
46. CONRAD. "Falk," pp. 196-208.
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58. LEAVIS. The Great Tradition, p. 229.
59. KIPLING. Life's Handicap, p. x
60. KIPLING. Readers' Guide, II, p. 959.
61. KIPLING. Verse, p. 506.
62. SANDISON, A. The Wheel of Empire (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. 105.

CHAPTER VITHE TIDES OF THE UNIVERSE

In the passage quoted from "The Head of the District" in the last chapter, there are people who make brief appearances bearing such names as "The Knight of the Drawn Sword," or, "The Head of the Red Provinces"; they seem to be figures in an allegory. Lieutenants John Chinn and Austin Limmason embody some of the characteristics of this genre; one personifies a beneficent imperialism; the other, a geo-political anxiety. It is tempting, therefore, to explain Kipling's short stories -- those that have imperialist themes -- as manifestations of a politically didactic intention. However, this would not complete their interpretation or evaluation; for the analysis of purely political intention reveals neither their psychological factors nor the symbolic significance of images that occur in their narratives and dialogues.

The comparison with Conrad illustrates Kipling's use of observed or recorded actuality and the extent to which it activates his inventive faculty. Although he attempted to achieve a close reconstruction of some aspects of historical truth, his "justice to the visible universe" is of a different order from Conrad's. It has been shown, for example, that Kipling does not re-create individual living men, or events, or milieux, with the precision and detail of Conrad. This is not to say that the reality of the imperial situation is not present in Kipling's stories; quite evidently it is, but the features depicted are fewer.

Although Kipling's imperial realism may relate to political or strategic themes, it is used to convey more than such themes. For example, it provides the setting for the demonstration of personal alienation, presents the sociological function of the imperial officer, depicts a state of tension between nations, demonstrates a personal tragedy, illustrates a moral and psychological theory about human existence. Sandison asserts that "imperialism served as the paradigm for the structure of his own moral universe."<sup>1</sup>

Because of the presence of themes such as the prevailing anxiety concerning imperial strategy and the tensions to be endured in the governing of India, his work might have been interpreted as an attempt to exemplify a political concern to which the literary art was subordinate. Many critics have adopted this approach. If it were to be accepted as valid, two assumptions would follow: the first, that literary evaluation rests on the discovery of the author's intention; the second, that Kipling's intention was entirely political. Neither may be allowed: the first, because the general view of the function of criticism denies that it is limited to the discovery of intention; the second, because there is more to Kipling's intention than politics. Various intentions have been demonstrated by his critics, and not only recently.

Sandison discovered that the Empire was for Kipling a symbol of the self-conscious control of alien nature, of the self's government of the destructive non-self.<sup>2,3</sup> Gilbert makes a similar point:

Kipling is not, of course, naive in his celebration of the efficacy of action; he does not, for example, ask us to return to a happier day when men believed they could physically vanquish the absurdity of the universe -- and thus Findlayson's bridge is not offered as a physical victory over disorder (we are very clearly told that, as the gods measure time, the bridge will last only a moment), but rather as a symbol of the engineer's personal triumph, his assertion of his own reality as the only reality that matters.

4

The process of discovery and the involvement in work being essential on psychological grounds, it follows that the object on which knowledge is sought and the work expended -- the undeveloped territory -- is also essential on psychological grounds. Thus, the activity of the imperialist in the late 19th Century presented for Kipling the picture of a psychological need being fulfilled.

The establishment of human experience, Gilbert asserts, as ultimately sovereign, is Kipling's response to the formless external world:

What is required is an active commitment to what the consciousness reveals; absurdity in the universe but also the sense of order within the mind.

5

Neither the Sandison nor Gilbert interpretation denies that imperialism is a theme in a very large number of Kipling's stories and the inspiration of much of his poetry, but they show that there are other themes.

Trilling states that "Kipling affects that obscure and important part of our minds where literary feeling and political attitude meet";<sup>6</sup> Dobrée, that Kipling had a great capacity for assessing the reality of human characters reacting not always too prettily to the events in which they are caught up. He relates Kipling's realism to the mystery of personality:

The substance of his stories grew more and more throughout the years to be "the eternal mystery of personality," as one of the characters in "A Friend of the Family" phrases it -- the vulnerable personality of man. ... What fascinated him most, especially in his early maturity, was the character and being of the people who did things, for it was what they did that gave them individuality in the Great Game of 'To Be or Not to be' that they played in the face of an indifferent, timeless universe. His individuals had to have an integrity proud and secure in its own fortress -- even an integrity of which others might not be proud; they had to be people of action of some kind because it is through action alone that people reveal what they are, and arrive at a sense of themselves ...

.....

... it did not matter if they were failures, or tramps, or 'wilful-missings,' so long as they kept themselves whole, though sometimes only partly, as Dowse the lighthouse-keeper who went mad because of the infernal streakiness of the tides ...

He continues:

One of the earliest of the recurrent recognitions about life, is that of the loneliness of man ... It was loneliness, as much as the infernal streakiness of the tides that drove to madness Dowse, the lighthouse-keeper ...

7

The analysis of the relationship between the psychological and political significances in the stories is the most important facet of the study of imperialism in Kipling's work.

Tompkins interprets the relationship in terms of the mental stability that Kipling saw in imperialist work:

It is necessary to man's health in this world that he should be short-sighted. If he watches the great tides of the universe he will lie, like poor Dowse in the Disturber of Traffic, with his eye to the planking, unable to speak. This is seeing unto madness, exposure to conceptions too vast for him, and it unfits him for work in this world. Work is the great educator and consoler of man.

8

Kipling's concern with imperialism, she insists, must be assessed from his historical perspective, where no empire was immune from the eternal process of growth, decline, and fall.

He was aware that ultimately the activity of the imperial servant would be seen against the transience of its effect, and that the important characteristic of the Empire was its need for the workman to work and spend himself in present actuality and to ignore ultimate ends. This coincided with a psychological need, for such involvement, and here Tompkins quotes from Kipling: "builds a bulkhead 'twixt Despair and the edge of nothing."<sup>9</sup>

The characteristics of India dominate many of the stories and leave the imprint of a pervading hostility that destroys perceptions, conventions, morals, and energies, and what Sandison calls the "sustaining categories,"<sup>10</sup> by which he means all those aspects of life that maintain individual integrity and identity. The environment may even annihilate the imperial officer, as in "At the End of the Passage," where Hummil's servant ascribes his

master's death to a "descent into the Dark Places."<sup>11</sup> There are several reasons why India might have been feared by Kipling. Historical, climatic, and ethnic factors might be adduced, as they all influence the meanings of the stories. In "At the End of the Passage," there is yet another factor; for in the conclusion it is suggested that the terror that killed Hummil was a malign native supernatural presence.

Kipling's sensitivity to darkness is most evident in the Indian stories, but it is a recurring theme.<sup>12</sup> An extract from the autobiography gives a description of his fear of the night:

Here, for the first time, it happened that the night got into my head. I rose up and wandered about that still house till day-break, when I slipped out into the brick-walled garden and saw the dawn break.

13

The ~~persistance~~ persistence of the fear in India is described with more feeling:

It happened one hot-weather evening, in '86 or thereabouts, when I felt that I had come to the edge of all endurance. As I entered my empty house in the dusk there was no more in me except the horror of a great darkness, that I must have been fighting for some days. I came through that darkness alive, but how I do not know.

14

This haunting depressiveness reveals Hummil as a projection of Kipling's subjective chaos, of which darkness is the pervasive image. A different view of chaos is given in one of the sea stories.

#### The Streaks and the Intellect

The reference to emptiness is important because it implies loneliness, which is the theme of "A Disturber of Traffic." In this story there occurs a gradual process of mental derangement. Dowse, the subject, endured circumstances in which Kipling saw the subverting of the isolated person. Dowse is alone except for a strange and very primitive sea-dweller. There is available to him no society of men involved in his professional activity; there is not much work to do in any case and he allows himself

a large leisure of gazing at the streaks of the tides. He is governed by no "Law" of society; there is no tradition to observe except his code of duty, and this becomes obsessive. There is no antidote to mental desolation.

The psychological responses to similar situations were reviewed, with particular reference to the sea and to exploration, in 1957:

It has long been known through autobiographical writings that explorers and shipwrecked individuals who undergo isolation for many days may suffer curious mental abnormalities.

Of the experiences of Admiral Byrd and Dr. Alain Bombard in prolonged isolation in the Antarctic and at sea, the authors of the survey say:

Both men, dedicated scientists, reacted to their isolation and loneliness in almost identical fashion. The lack of change in their environment caused a monotony which was oppressive, and they felt themselves drawing deeply into themselves for emotional substance.

Both explorers found that while their lives were threatened daily by the hazards of their milieu, it was the constancy of their surrounds which seemed like a force which would destroy them. Both men felt that they could control themselves and their environment only by thoroughly organizing their days, assigning themselves to a strict routine of work ... In this way, each felt he proved to himself that he could control both himself and his environment.

15

This provides an endorsement of Kipling's view of imperialism; for the stories reveal that he was aware of a psychological significance in man's political situation.

"The Disturber of Traffic" was written in 1890 and does not appear to be based on first-hand knowledge of the setting; some of the details are fictitious. The Readers' Guide asserts that the Flores Strait would not have been a suitable location for a screw-pile Light, and that Kipling never visited the area.

Apparently, he consulted Admiralty charts for background material when he wrote the story, in London.<sup>16</sup> A screw-pile Light is one that is erected on stilts in the sand of a channel or strait where there is no solid foundation. This is a technical detail of some importance in that the position of the Light places Dowse over the water, and when he gazes down, he sees its perpetual movement, and no firm base of rock or concrete.

The remote strait was visited only rarely by the Dutch authorities. It was in fact most unlikely that they would have appointed a British Light-keeper but in creating this situation, Kipling implies that even the contact with employers or colleagues produces an alienation effect. Dowse's only companion is a strange creature described as an Orang-Laut, a representative of a proto-Malayan tribe; the name means "man of the sea."<sup>17</sup> He has no English except for one word, "'dam,' and he said that where you or me would say 'yes'." The Orang-Laut spends most of his day drifting on the flow of water through the strait; he has no tribal community and no contact with others of his kind.

### The Vision

The story's verse-heading is entitled "The Prayer of Miriam Cohen." In diction archaic, the lines contain a compound symbolism; physical images are given multiple metaphysical meanings:

From the wheel and the drift of Things  
 Deliver us, good Lord;  
 And we will meet the wrath of kings  
 The faggot, and the sword.

Lay not Thy toil before our eyes,  
 Nor vex us with Thy wars,  
 Lest we should feel the straining skies  
 O'ertrod by trampling stars.

A veil 'twixt us and Thee, dread Lord,  
 A veil 'twixt us and Thee:  
 Lest we should hear too clear, too clear,  
 And unto madness see!

18

Tompkins points out that:

... the wheel recalls those 'turning wheels  
of vicissitude' which Bacon shrank from  
beholding, moving in a vaster cosmos than  
Bacon knew. There is nothing of this in  
the tale as it stands, and there could not  
be; but it is a latent potentiality of the  
subject. Let a beam fall from another angle  
and the undertint will show up. Kipling lets  
the beam fall for the length of three verses. 19

The three stanzas appear with the story in the collection Many Inventions. Later, the poem was enlarged; in the Definitive Edition of the poetry, there is an amendment and an addition:  
amendment: stanza 2, line 1; "Lay not Thy Works before our eyes."  
addition: stanzas 3 and 5:

Hold us secure behind the gates  
Of saving flesh and bone,  
Lest we should dream what Dream awaits  
The Soul escaped alone.

Thy Path, Thy Purposes conceal  
From our beleaguered realm,  
Lest any shattering whisper steal  
Upon us and o'erwhelm. 20

The first stanza is a plea to God for release from the effects of a natural and mechanistic energy, irrational in that it is conceived of as moving the universe by "wheel" and "drift." The line "Lay not Thy toil ..." signifies that God created and maintains this mechanistic force, His wars being the conflicts of which it is the prime mover. These conflicts are in the last two lines of the second stanza symbolized by the motions of the planets and the stars. Simultaneously, the vast power of the universe indicated by these images, "straining skies," and "trampling stars," implies the mechanical crushing of man's thought and work, which is seen as being too trivial to influence, resist, or even contemplate, the massive indifference of physical laws. Images such as "wheel," "drift," "madness," "beleaguered realm," "Soul escaped alone," show no moral purpose in these laws, which nevertheless govern man's existence. The poet may do no more than appeal to the Supreme Being, as though it were personalized, and urge the drawing of a veil so as to hide the truth from human perception. Conrad's view assists in the interpretation of the symbols:

There is a -- let us say -- a machine. It evolved itself ... out of a chaos of scraps of iron and behold! -- it knits. I am horrified at the horrible work and stand appalled ... And the most withering thought is that the infamous thing has made itself; made itself without thought, without conscience, without foresight, without eyes, without heart ... It knits us in and it knits us out. It has knitted time, space, pain, death, corruption, despair and all the illusions -- and nothing matters. I'll admit, however, that to look at the remorseless process is sometimes amusing. 21

The appeal for the "veil," in the last stanza, rendered immediate by the omission of the verb and the repetition of the cry "twixt us and thee," is an expression of Kipling's view of the poet's function, which is to paint a simulacrum, of which the subject would be the work of the imperialist. The poem is a statement of Kipling's perception of the moral universe; and the story, a representation of a particular crisis that exemplifies this perception.

The first of the added stanzas recalls the security perceived in everyday living. This is a relative security only and by implication, an admission of the fear of death;<sup>22</sup> for the overwhelming of the individual has also become symbolic of the poet's dread of the soul's fate when released from the body, and Hamlet's soliloquy is recalled. The need for the veil is urgent, "Lest any shattering whisper steal/Upon us and o'erwhelm." These images present the opposition of the immensity of deep space and the minuteness of man, in physical terms, and they present also the idea of the metaphysical minuteness and loneliness of man.

The rhyme-pattern, the metre, and the language, recall those of the English Hymnal.

#### Structure and Meaning

The language of the story, apart from that of the fictive author, is the idiom of lighthouse keepers, and the irony and compression of meaning are to some extent the result of the limitations imposed by the use of this vernacular.

In a brief exposition on lighthouses, there is introduced an element of invention, where the fictive Kipling alludes to the prospect of being allowed to stay with a Trinity House officer during his periods of duty. This, as he admits, was strictly forbidden. However, his imaginative presence on the Light enables him to give the story an appropriate atmosphere and to introduce the secondary narrator, Fenwick, while he is working.

There follows a description of Fenwick's duties and of numerous technical details. There is then a review of various incidents that typify the mystery of the sea, the curiosities of navigation, and the loneliness of lighthouses. A fog descends, and nothing can be seen but the reflection of the light-beams;

...The talk always came back to Lights: Lights of the Channel; Lights on forgotten islands, and men forgotten on them; Light-ships -- two months' duty and one month's leave -- tossing on kinked cables in ever-troubled tideways; and Lights that men had seen where never lighthouse 23 was marked on the charts.

There is a preparative element in this passage, as the story will relate to troubled tideways, false lights, and a forgotten man. Fenwick's function as a secondary narrator is introduced thus:

... I tell here, from Fenwick's mouth, one that was not the least amazing. It was delivered in pieces between the roller-skate rattle of the revolving lenses, the bellowing of the fog-horn below, the answering calls from the sea, and the sharp tap of reckless night-birds that flung themselves at the glasses. 24

As a story-teller, Kipling has an accomplished ability to impart the necessary degree of expectancy and tonal consonance. The weird insularity of the conditions of a night-duty in the fog-bound Light accord with the loneliness of the distant setting in which the story of Dowse is to be established.

Fenwick serves to focus the picture by describing the navigation of the Dutch East Indies and of the Flores Strait in particular. He then depicts the daily routine of Dowse and his companion. An interesting feature of the narrative structure

appears when Fenwick and the fictive primary narrator discuss a type of man so extremely curious and primitive that his characteristics might easily be discounted as a seaman's exaggeration. To affirm credibility, the primary narrator interjects and gives the correct generic name; he thus instills a degree of convincing actuality into the mind of the reader:<sup>25</sup>

"There was another man along with Dowse in the Light, but he wasn't rightly a man. He was a Kling. No, nor yet a Kling he wasn't, but his skin was in little flakes and cracks all over, from living so much in the salt water as was his usual custom. His hands was all webby-foot, too. He was called, I remember Dowse saying now, an Orange-Lord, on account of his habits. You've heard of an Orange-Lord, sir?"

"Orang-Laut?" I suggested.

26

Fenwick then reviews the events leading to Dowse's madness. Dowse had said that it was his habit to lie watching the streaks of the tides running beneath him. Recalling Kipling's reference to the night entering his head, in the autobiography, there is an image of an analogous trauma:

"Then, he told me, his head began to feel streaky from looking at the tides so long. He said there was long streaks of white running inside it; like wall-paper that hadn't been properly pasted up, he said ..."

Then there is an image of alienation:

"Those streaks, they preyed upon his intellects, he said; and he made up his mind, every time that the Dutch gunboat that attends to the Lights in those parts come along, that he'd ask to be took off. But as soon as she did come something went click in his throat, and he was so took up with watching her masts, because they ran longways, in the contrary direction to his streaks, that he could never say a word until she was gone away and her masts was under the sea again."

27

Dowse had become convinced that the passing steamers made the streaks, so together with the Orang-Laut he placed false wreck-lights in the channel to warn the ships from using that passage.

Mental disintegration is shown to have no absolute boundaries; for when planning the setting of the lights Dowse thinks: "Lord, Lord, what a crazy fool I am!"<sup>28</sup> Later, when a boat arrives from a British ship, he gives his reasons for setting the lights, and:

"All the time he was saying that he kept on thinking to himself, 'Now that's foolishness, -- now that's nothing but foolishness;' and all the time he was holding tight to the edge of the platform in case the streakiness of the tide should carry him away." 29

This vessel is a symbol of imperialist work, and as such effects his return to normal life. It is an Admiralty survey ship, the Britomarte, about its routine of constructing graphic representations of the archipelago and its surrounding seas. In one sense, it is constructing a simulacrum.

An image that reveals to Dowse the extent of his alienation is his reflection, which he glimpses on the deck of the Britomarte, in one of the binnacle brasses: he is "mother-naked in front of all them sailors, and he ran into the fo'c's'le howling most grievous."<sup>30</sup> Among the professional seamen of the Admiralty vessel, he realizes that his speech has become divorced from his thought, and that he can utter only silly verses, although conscious of their absurdity.

Finally, there is presented a symbol of extreme pathos. The Britomarte leaves the strait with Dowse on her, but the Orang-Laut tries to follow them: "calling 'dam -- dam' all among the wake of the screw, and half heaving himself out of the water and joining his webby-foot hands together."<sup>31</sup> This image presents again the supplication with which the work commenced. It relates to the poem; for while the Englishman is rescued from destructive contemplation of the cosmic movement, the Orang-Laut is abandoned, floundering, praying for a release from the element in which he is bound. His permanent condition is to be totally immersed in the cosmic ebb and flow that had dominated Dowse; his

brief spell of positive work, the placing of lights and the construction of floats to hold them, being merely a manifestation of Dowse's madness.

From successive episodes, it becomes evident that Fenwick is not repeating a history given to him verbally by someone else. He is the teller of an imaginative chronicle of events in the strait and enjoys a view far greater than the one accessible to Dowse. Having gone into the forecastle, Dowse could not have seen the supplicating posture of the Orang-Laut; the conversations of the officers of the Britomarte could not have been known to him; it would not have been possible for him to repeat to Fenwick the verbal communications between that vessel and the Dutch gunboat. Fenwick returns to non-imaginative discourse when he describes Dowse's morbid moral crisis, as it was repeated to him in the conversation that took place between them. The final passage, by the primary narrator, describes the end of night-duty, the coming of day, and the regression of sea-fog. There is a view of normality in the song of a lark and the smell of cows, which are subjects of the re-awakened perceptions. The terminal sentence is a brief peragraph expressing thanks to God for another day of "clean and wholesome life";<sup>32</sup> this is an ironic re-statement of the "saving flesh and bone" of the opening prayer.

The secondary narrator, when speaking directly to the character he has created, retrieves him partially from a continuing aberration -- the belief that he must atone for sinking so many ships. Yet Dowes is not fully cured; he retains a residual guilt, suspicious of having caused severe damage during his foolishness in the Flores Strait. However, he gains employment as a wherryman, rowing across the tides from Portsmouth to Gosport.<sup>33</sup>

Fenwick as narrator is an autonomous personality who imparts, by his membership of the craft brotherhood, a degree of reality to the heterocosm called into being by the story. He in turn is called into being by the imaginary primary narrator, who is a character in the story, and one that the author 'sees round.' The story's narrative structure is thus on several planes, and its significance is not consciously revealed on any one of them.

Fenwick could not, simple seaman that he was, know of the symbolic inference of Dowse's story. However, his ability to effect a partial cure by demonstrating the foolishness in the sense of guilt shows a depth of psychological insight.

The primary narrator reveals that he is interested mainly in maritime technicalities and in obtaining worthwhile stories of the sea. He portrays no awareness of the meaning of Dowse's story; he merely contrasts its morbidity with the release that came with the dawn. He makes no allusion to the movements of the universe and their attendant symbolism; he only shows that a prolonged contemplation of the pull of the tides had deranged Dowse. He offers no metaphysical reasons for the process of disintegration; he only makes a story of the psychological predicament.

#### Mimesis and Symbolism

Dowse's extreme loneliness is one of the causes of his psychological destruction, but it is in some degree inconsistent, as within the narrative there is an account of his visit with the Orang-Laut to a near-by village, which exists in the real setting.<sup>(a) 34</sup> There are other breaks with actuality. The Readers' Guide alludes to some of the improbabilities; for example, the setting is the Dutch East Indies, the ships that Fenwick describes are Dutch; their crews would not therefore have spoken colloquial English.<sup>35</sup>

Fictional characters whose function it is to convey the various themes that relate to imperialism should typify its servants. They do in this story. Further, whatever Fenwick says of navigation, shipping, sea-routes, and the remote anchorages and channels with which the story is concerned, should be convincing.<sup>36</sup> It is. Although there are some contingent untruths, the topography is authentic, as are the details of the shipping.

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(a) Although the village and its primitive tribesmen would have offered him little solace; it is not a serious inconsistency.

The difficulties of negotiating the channel, as Kipling charts them, are also accurate.

There is not, however, the veridical imitation that appears in Conrad's sea stories. (Interestingly, some of these are located in regions that lie close to the Flores Strait; "Lord Jim," "Almayer's Folly," "An Outcast of the Islands," use settings in the Celebes.) The lighthouse is not where Kipling places it,<sup>37</sup> and the story does not recount the history of any actual life. However, the general geographical features, the type of man who looks after a distant Light, and the technical details, are true to the extent that the story demands; they are, separately, typical of reality. Placing them together is an imaginative literary act that presents an effectual probability; effectual because the purpose of this story is to depict mental reactions in these circumstances and to imply a cosmic significance.

Dowse, as Fenwick recounts, speaks of the derangement as though it had happened to someone else, seeing himself, that is, as a third person. This is an aspect of the story's authenticity; for one effect of the condition, verified in the papers quoted above, is the alienation of the self and the loss of the sense of personal identity. Dowse's perpetual staring at lines of surf gives him the impression of being in continuous movement against them. Looking down from the platform of a screw-pile Light he would have no solid object, not even a rock, on which to sustain his balance.

Dowse is thus in a situation of constant immersion in defective sense-impressions; from here it is only a short step to a permanent rupture with normal sense-impressions. The metaphysical implication in the first verse of the poem is relevant again, because the abnormal sensations are the result of the universal "wheel" and "drift" of things. Dowse, by observing the tidal flow, has glimpsed the reality of the universe and knows its complete power over him. Hence, he cannot release himself from its influence even when the Dutch gun-boat visits the Light. His insight derives from sensory deprivation, but he ascribes the streaks to the passing of ships, of which the largest are painted in "Two-streaks."<sup>38</sup> After his vision of reality, mental degeneracy

follows quickly: to prevent the forming of the streaks, the ships must be sent round the strait, so he yells at them from a prow; his shouts being ignored, he sets up the false wreck-lights. Eventually, he has hallucinations about the ships, imagining that he has assembled the whole English Navy. The extent of the psychosis is stressed by his repeated referral to his previous sense of normality; his thoughts constantly dwell upon his own derangement. The psychological process is entirely convincing artistically, and the progressive stages of mental derangement are analogous to trends that have been observed.

There is throughout, an effort to present images of which the pictorial qualities correspond in some way to the spiritual facts with which Kipling is concerned; the story derives its strength from symbolic meaning.

The language used does not express the intricacy of a complex psychological reaction, which is not explored in depth. In the passage quoted above (reference 27), there is an image of personal alienation, but the "streaks, they preyed upon his intellects," is only an approximate statement of it. Yet the crisis is given vividness in the juxtaposition of "Now that's foolishness -- now that's nothing but foolishness -- " with the bodily gripping of the edge of the platform "in case the streakiness of the tide should carry him away."

The language imparts a beguiling sense of strangeness to the story. There is, for example, a feeling of wonder in the unsophisticated seaman's description of the physiognomy of the primitive man, and a simple and direct pathos in his deeply emotional image of the supplication from the Britomarte's wake. The affective diction also emphasizes the sundered ego of the sufferer, which even after the rescue remains divided, as Fenwick recalls:

'No more he couldn't ever keep his eyes off the tides that ran up and down so strong, but as soon as ever he looked at the high hills standing all along Flores Strait for rest and comfort his eyes would be pulled down to the nesty streaky water; and when they once got there he couldn't pull them away again till the tide changed.

He told me all this himself, speaking  
just as though he was talking of somebody  
else' ...

'Yes, he spoke about himself very curious,  
and all as if he was in the next room laying  
there dead.' 39

The syntax has the defects intrinsic to the idiom; but the psychosis is given a fearful reality in the simile in this last sentence.

The narrative method gives the story its conciseness. The setting is a framework that imparts tone, mood, and essential technical information. The deeper symbolic meaning in the story is achieved at the expense of any detailed interpretation of the mental processes and by the absence of any explanation of images by the primary narrator. The secondary narrator has neither the knowledge nor the linguistic ability to present the metaphysical and psychological implications. The primary narrator has the artistic consciousness to present the story as literature, but he could not take refuge in the simplicity of thought and expression to which Fenwick's narrative is limited, and so the reader is left to construct the psychological complexities. In concentrating this long process in a distant geographical locality into the course of one night, and into the primary narrator's account of his sojourn in the lighthouse, the structure exhibits a classic perfection. It achieves the desired brevity, compression of implication, selection of detail, directness of effect, that are criteria of the short story. It imparts a unity of time, place, and tone. (a)

Psychological disorders are described in many of the stories. An earlier example, "In the Same Boat," is a study of depressive conditions resulting from disturbances experienced in childhood.

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(a) There is another difference with Conrad. Marlow -- one of the men of action -- is endowed with an artistic consciousness and with the ability to give expression to hidden significations, to interpret character, to present the narrative in literary form. In Kipling's stories, the literary narrator, Kipling, (Pycroft describes him as such) frequently receives the action and such interpretation as there is, from a colloquial teller.

The cure is effected by revelations of experience, and by adducing the cause of the recurrence of certain images in the dreams of companion sufferers.<sup>40</sup> "A Madonna of the Trenches" is an account of the delirium of a young soldier who is mentally disturbed by his memories of the dead in the trenches. He is calmed by the re-statement of his emotional crisis and an explanation of the reason for the presence of a ghost. In the last collection there are four stories on the theme.<sup>41</sup> "The Woman in His Life" demonstrates the curative effect on a war neurotic of a dog's loyalty to him.<sup>42</sup> "Fairy Kist" shows the partial overcoming of a guilt complex in the recounting of the events that precipitated a trauma suffered in a war hospital.<sup>43</sup> "The Miracle of Saint Jubanus" contains a theory about the therapeutic effect, on conditions of depressive war neurosis, of sudden laughter.<sup>44</sup> "The Tender Achilles" depicts the curing of a neurosis that derives from a surgeon's memories of men dying in his care in a front-line dressing-station. Strain, and an awareness of error, had worried him into this condition. The cure here is achieved by a deliberate error made by hospital staff in the diagnosis of a lesion on his own heel.<sup>45</sup>

Some of these stories show psychological traumas in personal reactions to political or moral predicaments. Those of the Great War show both types of predicament; for Kipling could not reconcile his earlier faiths with his experience of that war. This dilemma is visible in its effect on his literary imperialism. The naval stories, discussed in the next chapter, culminate with a different sort of response to the highly significant crises of the war at sea.

There is a story in Limits and Renewals that helps to explain Kipling's notion of the influence of the tides of the universe upon mankind. This is "Unprofessional," in which the physical effect of the magnetism of the galaxies is considered as a method of treating cellular morbidities such as cancer:

Harries described to them the vasts of  
 the Ultimate Heavens fizzing in spirals  
 'with -- or rather like -- champagne,'  
 but all one generating station of one  
 Power drawn from the Absolute, and of  
 one essence and substance with all things. 46

The idea occurs in the poem "The Astrologer's Song," which  
 presents the vision of the predominance of the stars over all  
 earthly things.<sup>47</sup>

All thought, all desires,  
 That are under the sun,  
 Are one with their fires,  
 As we also are one.  
 All matter, all spirit,  
 All fashion, all frame,  
 Receive and inherit  
 Their strength from the same. 48

This is the second stanza of the poem, containing a seriousness  
 of thought that the anapaest does not support.

With regard to the symbolism of the universe as an external,  
 a-moral and mechanical force, Gilbert comments:

... in the obsessiveness of Dowse, the  
 mad "Disturber of Traffic," ... again  
 and again we are confronted with an ir-  
 rational universe, indifferent to man  
 but often deadly in its carelessness. 49

On the problem of the human response to this mechanical force,  
 he compares Kipling with Conrad:

Unlike Hardy, Joseph Conrad believed in  
 the possibility of human response to the  
 "absurd" universe, and in this belief he  
 occupied a philosophical position closer  
 to Kipling than did most artists of his  
 time. 50

Yet the response, typified by Dowse's efforts in the strait, might  
 also be absurd:

First there was the Wurlee Light, then  
 these four queer lights, that could'nt  
 be riding-lights, almost flush with the  
 water, and behind them, twenty mile off,  
 but the biggest light of all, there was  
 the red top of old Loby Toby volcano.

Dowse told me that he used to go out in the prow and look at his handiwork, and it made him scared, being like no lights that ever was fixed.

51

The brevity of narrative, and dialogue, the concrete and direct statement of events, the selective description, and the allusiveness of symbolic imagery, effect a tight ordering and control upon the immense breadth of speculation contained within the work. The story's inherent defect is the paucity of characterization and the failure, once the cosmic crisis is presented, to explain its meaning or show the individual response with the intricacy of reasoning that the problem requires.

#### The Painted Veil

At the beginning of the collection there is a poem entitled "To the True Romance"; it is an octet, with the first quatrain repeated before the eleventh and final stanza. The end-rhyme pattern varies, and there is some internal rhyme; each paragraph is therefore adequate to the development of complex meaning. Its recurring thought is of death. It is written in lyric mode and addressed to Kipling's Muse, which he calls Romance:

Stanza 1            Thy face is far from this our war  
                       Our call and counter-cry,  
                       I shall not find thee quick and kind,  
                       Nor know Thee till I die,  
                       Enough for me in dreams to see  
                       And touch Thy garments' hem:  
                       Thy feet have trod so near to God  
                       I may not follow them.

Stanza 5            As thou didst teach all lovers speech  
                       And Life all mystery  
                       So shall thou rule by every school  
                       Till life and longing die,  
                       Who wast or yet the Lights were set,  
                       A whisper in the Void,  
                       Who shall be sung through planets young  
                       When this is clean destroyed.

Stanza 7           Time hath no tide but must abide  
 The servant of Thy will;  
 Tide hath no time, for to Thy rhyme  
 The ranging stars stand still.  
 Regent of spheres that lock our fears  
 Our hopes invisible,  
 Oh 'twas certes at Thy decrees  
 We fashioned Heaven and Hell!

The poem relates specially to the first story in the collection, which is "The Disturber of Traffic." The thought conveyed is that Time and Tide and the forces that move the planets have implications that are to be apprehended in artistic images only, their real nature being too fearful to contemplate:

Stanza 9           A veil to draw twixt God His Law  
 And Man's infirmity,  
 A shadow kind to dumb and blind  
 The shambles where we die;  
 A rule to trick th'arithmetic,  
 Too base of leaguings odds --  
 The spur of trust, the curb of lust, 52  
 Thou handmaid of the Gods.

This presents the Muse as the creator of a veil that prevents the perception of the ultimate truth.

The metre, iambic tetrameter alternating with iambic trimeter, is common in Kipling's verse. In stanza 7 there is a variant, with an opening spondee that accentuates the concept "Time." This variant is repeated in the antithetical third line to accentuate the concept "Tide," and induces a certain impressiveness of tone; the assonance of the long vowels holds attention on the related thought. These lines are the most lyric in the poem.

In stanza 9 the rhythm and rhyme are maintained by the use of archaic stress and pronunciation. The final syllable of "infirmity" is endowed with a pronunciation to correspond with "where we die." "Mystery" in stanza 5 is given an analogous sound and emphasis. There are other archaisms, of pronoun, verb and noun, and there is no reason why these forms should be considered appropriate in a song to his Muse; indeed, they detract from the poem's attempt at seriousness, as in stanza 10:

Who art in sooth that lovely Truth  
 The careless angels know.

A possible explanation is that Kipling considered it reverent to address his Muse as though she were the Supreme Being, and therefore in his song used the diction of the Authorized Version, to which there are several allusions. For example, stanza 5 compares with Genesis 1, I, 2:

In the beginning God created the heaven and  
the earth. And the earth was without form,  
and void; and darkness was upon the face of  
the deep.

53

Structurally the poem is unpleasing; to hold the lines to the metre demands a dislocation of natural speech rhythms, exemplified by trying to make "Our hopes/invis/ible" consonant with "The serv/ant of/Thy will." The diction does not conduce to seriousness of thought despite the archaic tone, and the following is nonsensical:

Yet may I look with heart unshook.

The poem does not embody a consistent feeling for its subject, but it presents a view of the artistic purpose of the stories that follow. The creating of a simulacrum was Mulvaney's function and that of the author of John Chinn's ideal imperialism. It is the effect of the nostalgic view of the "White Hussars'" Mess in Peshawar. Yet on the sea, man's plight may be seen despite the painting of the veil.

Stanza 9 reveals the poet's fear of death, and of the "shambles where we die." This is a powerful image because of the connotation of the word "shambles" at the time of composition. Tompkins<sup>54</sup> demonstrates that it then implied a place of carnage, of blood and butchery; in this sense it had been used by William Drummond: "Earth turns a hideous shamble, a Lake of Blood." It now connotes disorder. Both meanings are present because the change occurred early in Kipling's life, and the poem was inserted in several editions of his works, each one being revised by him personally.

"Th'arithmetic" is the numerical sequence of the years that measure life, and recalls the truth that man dies in multitudes. The poem asserts that it is necessary that this fact, which

represents only another of the laws of physical nature, should not be contemplated.

There is an account by Rider Haggard of a conversation with Kipling that demonstrates his thoughts on death and reveals the significance of this poem:

Rudyard, apparently, cannot make up his mind about these things. On one point, however, he is perfectly clear. I happened to remark that I thought this world was one of the hells. He replied he did not think, he was certain of it. He went on to show that it had every attribute of hell, doubt, fear, pain, struggle, bereavement, almost irresistible temptations springing from the nature with which we are clothed, physical and mental suffering, etc., etc., ending in the worst fate man can devise for man, Execution!

55

The poet's function was to obscure this. Tompkins insists that Kipling's metaphysical view was that one was not meant to see too clearly. A considerable spiritual significance may be deduced from the analysis of the two poems and the story. These, and other pieces by him, convey the warning of what attends a too intense concern with the forces ranged against the person, or with the plight of the individual being.

It has emerged in the interpretation of other stories that work is essential to personal integrity and identity; therefore, if a man becomes unfit for work his plight is immeasurably worsened. This was the outcome of Dowse's perpetual staring at a flow determined by the natural force of planetary magnetism. The drift of the water is presented in this story as an image of physical laws, and as a symbol of God's governance of those laws. Since Kipling believes that there exists a supreme physical force, identifiable as God's immanent Will, the movement of the tides in the Flores Strait must be seen as representing both. What Kipling considered to be the effect of contemplating them is evident in another passage from Haggard's diary:

I said that I did believe that, as a result of much spiritual labour, occasionally there is born in one a knowledge of the nearness of God and of his personal, embracing Love. He replied that occasionally this had happened to him also, but the difficulty was to "hold" the mystic sense of this communion -- that it passes ... R's explanation of this phenomenon of the soul is that God meant it to be so, -- that He doesn't mean that we should get too near to Him, -- that a glimpse is all that is allowed; I think R. added because otherwise we should become unfitted for our work in the world.

56

The story poses a question: whether work has any real significance or value in terms of an ultimate reality. In answer it presents two images. One is the silly lights bobbing in the channel, setting human artefacts against the permanency of natural phenomena. The other is the Britomarte and her mapping of the visible world. This activity is a positive response to the question; for it involves men in constructing graphic and useful representations of the tides; and with the community of her working crew, she renders any abstract gazing or isolated contemplation impossible.

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CHAPTER VIITHE "LAW" AND THE SEA

There is a comment by Kipling's biographer, Carrington, on the significance of the ship as a poetic image:

The image of the ship was to recur frequently in his later writings ... Whatever its origin, the image haunted Kipling's fancy for forty years...The ship was an expression of the Law, of that undefined nomos which provided him with a sort of stoical substitute for religion.

1

It was the Royal Navy and its ships that maintained the imperial Law in which Kipling believed. For many decades, for many generations in terms of naval architecture, his connection with them gave him material for short stories, verses and essays; there was also one play.

The stories written in India demonstrated the professional officer, the civil servant, and soldiers of the British and Indian Armies, facing the predicaments of their milieu. Subsequent Indian stories had such predicaments in their settings, but, more consciously than the earlier work, they displayed an imperialist political theme. The poetry cited in Chapter II is evidence of Kipling's concern with public issues, and represents the positive commitment to which he refers in his autobiography.<sup>2</sup>

In the last stories, written after the Great War, the setting and subject may extend to matters concerning the State, but the speculation focuses on different themes. These stories are not the product of a political commitment, for that commitment had lapsed.

Kipling's connection with the Royal Navy started early in the last decade of the 19th Century. Numerous stories relate to his experience of Naval life; the first was "Judson and the Empire," published in 1891; the last, "A Naval Mutiny," published

in 1931. There are several series of essays on Naval subjects; two of them relate to stories studied in this chapter. A Fleet in Being was written as the result of his trips with the Channel Squadron at the end of the pre-Dreadnought era.<sup>3</sup> Another series was commissioned by the Ministry of Information during the Great War, for issue to British and American newspapers. They appeared in 1915, being subsequently assembled with later essays and published as Sea Warfare.<sup>4</sup>

### Judson

Kipling was most hospitably treated at Simonstown, and from this vantage-point produced "Judson and the Empire," a humorous story about an encounter between gun-boats on the Zambezi. Prior to the start of the very entertaining plot, there are comments on the relative merits of the British and Portuguese systems of colonial government, to the considerable disadvantage of the latter. The similarity with Conrad has been noted. In "Heart of Darkness," Conrad says of the Portuguese:

To tear treasure out of the bowels of the land was their desire, with no moral purpose at the back of it than there is in burglars breaking into a safe. 5

Kipling's observation on Portuguese East Africa demonstrates a view of colonial incompetence. It lacks Conrad's seriousness:

They had built no roads. Their towns were rotting under their hands; they had no trade worth the freight of a crazy steamer; and their sovereignty ran almost one musket-shot inland when things were peaceful. 6

The action is related directly; there is no secondary narrator. The dramatic dialogue presents a light-hearted view of the Navy, and renders the sequence of events handsomely. Life at sea, and environment and incident are depicted vividly. Character is seen only in glimpses. Nevertheless, the young Naval officer is shown convincingly. An Admiral visits his first command, a "Flat-iron":

... the bow-anchor was varnished instead of being painted, and there were charts other than the Admiralty scale supplied: the Admiral was well pleased, for he loved a ship's husband -- a man who had a little money of his own and who was willing to spend it on his command. Judson looked at him hopefully. He was only a Junior Navigating Lieutenant under eight years' standing. He might be kept in Simon's Bay for six months, and his ship at sea was his delight. The dream of his heart was to enliven her dismal official grey with a line of gold-leaf and, perhaps, a little scroll-work at her blunt barge-like bows.

'There's nothing like a first command, is there?' said the Admiral reading his thoughts. 'You seem to have rather queer compasses though. Better get them adjusted.'

'It's no use, sir,' said Judson. 'The gun would throw out the Pole itself. But -- but I've got the hang of most of the weaknesses.'

'Will you be good enough to lay that gun over thirty degrees, please?'

The gun was put over. Round and round and round went the needle merrily, and the Admiral whistled.

'You must have kept close to your convoy?' 7

Judson's eagerness is demonstrated in a devotion to his ship and in a confident, expectant, tone of address. The latter is particularly evident when he speaks to the Admiral, whose benign authority is brought out in narrative and dialogue. The authenticity of the story makes it an interesting study of the professional Naval officer,<sup>8</sup> and it contains a serious implication that is evident in retrospect from the analysis of a much later story -- the third to be treated in this chapter.

#### Pyecroft

There are six stories and one play in which Emanuel Pyecroft appears;<sup>9</sup> he is depicted in sympathetic relation to the narrator, who appears fictively in each. The most important of them, so far as imperialism is concerned, is "Their Lawful Occasions."

The story is in two parts, corresponding to two phases of a Fleet manoeuvre. There is a great deal of technical detail and Naval jargon, imitative of the actual and in considerable measure correct.<sup>10</sup> An imperialist tone is present in the title, for it is taken from a prayer that describes the functions of the Fleet in relation to the State. As printed in the Book of Common Prayer of 1903, it reads:

Oh Eternal Lord God, who alone spreadest out the heavens, and rulest the raging of the sea; who has compassed the waters with bounds until day and night come to an end; Be pleased to receive into Thy Almighty and gracious protection the person of Thy servants, and the Fleet in which we serve. Preserve us from the dangers of the sea and from the violence of the Enemy; that we may be a safeguard unto our Most Gracious Sovereign Lord, King Edward, and his Dominions, and a security for such as pass on the seas upon their lawful occasions ... 11

Kipling was concerned about technical accuracy in his Naval stories; when it was first published, the one succeeding "Their Lawful Occasions" was prefaced by a letter addressed to the imaginary Pycroft. It demonstrates Kipling's approach to the question of exactness in a realm in which he had no practical knowledge:

The other two tales you checked yourself, viva voce, before last Manoeuvres; but I put some more to them on my own later; and it is very likely that I have not got all the Navy minutiae quite right ... Therefore there may be much that is not technically true; but Hinchcliffe says I have got the spirit all correct. 12

Pycroft's designation is one of the details that are not quite right. He is sometimes regarded as a Petty Officer; but as a Petty Officer,<sup>(a)</sup> he would not have enjoyed the informal relationship that he assumes in his conversations with Lieutenant Moorshed in this story, or with Mr. Vickery in "Mrs. Bathurst."<sup>13</sup>

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(a) A senior rating who has not the status of an officer. Pycroft's language is that of the lower deck, not that of the Gun- or Ward-Room.

Kipling has created a composite person who embodies the senior rating and Warrant rank,<sup>(a)</sup> who has practical efficiency and administrative experience; both qualities are necessary to his literary functions of narrator and guide. Pyecroft represents the stability and confidence that Kipling alludes to in A Fleet in Being.<sup>(b)</sup> An officer of the Imperial German Navy made this comment on the Warrant rank; it supports Kipling's literary representation:

They exercise great influence on the smooth and rapid working of the service, ... They may well be called the backbone of the inner service on board ship.

14

An American Admiral has also affirmed the authenticity of Kipling's portrayal.<sup>15</sup> Both of these are views from a standpoint similar to Kipling's; they are external and objective.

Kipling was self-conscious in his use of specialized technical language, and aware that he was an outsider, despite his long connection with the Navy. Prior to his embarkation on the torpedo-boat in the story, the fictive narrator is described by Pyecroft in a conversation with Moorshed:

'Asn't the visitor come aboard, Sir? 'E told me he'd purposely abandoned the Pedantic for the pleasure of the trip with us. Told me he was official correspondent for the Times; an' I know he's littery by the way 'e tries to talk Navy-talk. Haven't you seen 'im, Sir?'

Slowly and dispassionately the answer drawled long on the night; 'Pye, you are without exception the biggest liar in the Service!'

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(a) Yet Pyecroft has in "Their Lawful Occasions" the functions of a Warrant Officer. A Warrant Officer has the status of an officer, but held by warrant, not by commission. Kipling appears never to have understood the difference between the Navy and the other services in this regard.

(b) See reference 25.

'Then what am I to do with the bag, Sir? It's marked with his name.' There was a pause till Mr. Moorshed said 'Oh!' in a tone which the listener might construe precisely as he pleased.

'He was the maniac who wanted to buy a ham and see life -- was he? If he goes back to the Pedantic --'

'Precisely, Sir. Gives us all away, Sir.' <sup>16</sup>

This shows Kipling's awareness of his own style, and it introduces him, as an imaginary other-self, into the story.

The passage reveals a technique of depicting character; for Pycroft's ability to handle his youthful senior officer is brought out in the method of address. "Then what am I to do with the bag?" is a very tactful contradiction of Moorshed's accusation. The repetitive "Sir,"<sup>(a)</sup> while accentuating his arguments, gives them a respectful formality that dominates Moorshed's attempts to overcome them. Yet the tone is kindly.

The situation is largely invented. Although Kipling had made visits to gun-boats, he attended the Channel manoeuvres on a cruiser and was not on that occasion writing for The Times.<sup>17</sup> The dramatic dialogue is in an idiom represented by spellings that do not form a consistent phonetic system. It is a class variant of Southern English that is intended to typify the speech of Naval ratings. The important question is whether this continual representation of dialect may be recognised as more than an entertaining sub-literature.

Dialect, vernacular, and idiom, had appeared in the work of Charles Dickens; they had also appeared extensively and in great variety in the novels of R.S. Surtees, whom Kipling had read.<sup>18</sup> Surtees was a sports-writer, and his novels look like serial reports on hunt meetings, their unifying factor being the presence of one central character.<sup>19</sup> (If the six Pycroft stories were placed in sequence, the structural effect would be very similar.)

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(a) A Warrant Officer would not address a junior Sub-Lieutenant "Sir."

Another author to compare with Kipling is Captain Frederick Marryatt, whose influence is evident in the many allusions in A Fleet in Being.<sup>20</sup> Marryatt's novels are full of varied sea-life, and they emphasise the idiosyncrasies of mariners. They exemplify the qualities that Leavis ascribes to the style of the English novel. For its tradition, he insisted, was established by a vivid portrayal of life, experience, and incident, and by a presentation of character.<sup>21</sup> Superficially, the Pyecroft stories correspond to this stream of English literature. Pyecroft is such a commanding presence that his personality acquires an existence outside the stories, as does Jorrocks's.

Contemporary with Kipling's sea-stories were tales of Naval life, based on reality but with various invented elements, by authors who were inspired by imperialism, such as "Bartimeus,"<sup>22</sup> (a) and by authors who wrote in another genre, the sea-yarn, such as G.S. Bowles. Bowles's A Gun Room Ditty Box<sup>23</sup> is interesting for its inclusion of verse-headings in the language of ordinary seamen. The work of these authors lacks any real significance, but depicts Naval service in nostalgic and patriotic terms. Though entertaining, it tends to banality. These two writers are meticulous in their accounts of technical matters and in their

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(a) One of the stories in this collection has a serious political theme, however; it is "The Legion on the Wall." The title recalls the stories of the Roman Centurions in Kipling's Rewards and Fairies. The story is constructed upon the poem "Recessional," and treats of the dissolving of empires. It is reminiscent of Kipling in the contrasting of the tradition of the armed services with what "Bartimeus" describes thus: 'You mean all these strikes and rioting -- class-hatred -- this futile discussion about armaments -- brawling in Parliament ... "Lesser breeds without the Law" gradually assuming control ...?' This is how Kipling's political themes influenced one of his contemporaries. It is interesting to observe that the story concludes with a reassuring view of the Fleet, but expresses foreboding over its future.

presentation of character-types; both had been serving Naval-officers. (a)

Kipling is more serious than Marryatt and Surtees, and is not to be classed with the sub-literature of "Bartimeus" and Bowles. "Their Lawful Occasions" possesses an inner significance that is not congruent with the light-hearted activity that it underlies. For within the apparent comedy, the plot renders apprehensible certain political and Naval problems of extreme importance. The story also contains moral implications, although these emerge more clearly in a later story.

The condition of the Navy, and the technology and tactical doctrines governing the manoeuvres that Kipling witnessed, are described in A Fleet in Being.<sup>24</sup> A passage from this work indicates two predilections that reappear in the story: firstly, the global power of the Fleet; secondly, the importance, to the maintenance of imperial government, of the category of Naval and military personnel typified by Pycroft:

And the whole thing was my very own (that is to say yours); mine to me by right of birth. Mine were the speed and power of the hulls, not here only but the world over; the hearts and brains and lives of the trained men; such strength and such power as we and the World dare hardly guess at.

.....

We had a common tradition, one thousand years old, of the things one takes for granted. A warrant officer said something, and the groups melted quietly about some job or other. That same caste of man -- that same type of voice -- was speaking in the commissariat in Burma; in Barracks in Rangoon; under double awnings in the Persian Gulf; on the Rock at Gibraltar -- wherever else you please -- and the same instant obedience, I knew, would follow on that voice.

25

But in the story, there is a shattering of the edifice depicted in the essays.

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(a) Although Bowles appears to have retired early, as a Sub-Lieutenant. Admiral Charles Beresford, a kindly man, wrote the preface to this book, which Bowles produced when a member of Trinity College, Cambridge.

Kipling's creative writing differs from that of Marryatt and Surtees in other respects. Their subject-matter was part of a literary tradition, and of itself added no new dimension to the short story and novel. Marryatt's literary representation of the Navy includes few tactical or technical advances. Surtees, though he refers to changing social and economic conditions,<sup>26</sup> is largely occupied in characterizing the hunt-meetings of the different counties, and their followers. Kipling, by contrast, reveals the technological and sociological changes of the 19th Century, and he brings to the short story a highly complex Naval technology; despite the limitations of his understanding, his stories contain an artistic expression, an intuitive imagery, of the power of machinery and weapons. "Their Lawful Occasions" also reveals a sensitive awareness of the class conflict that had accompanied the appearance of industrial and military invention. Pyecroft's sympathies lie with his young superior, but not with the established hierarchy. Moorshed embodies a contradiction; for he has great personal wealth, and is in a position to ignore the authority of rank and the barriers of class. These inclinations are concomitant with his youth.

Kipling's continued use of the idiom of the service-rating gives emphasis to his literary view of the class conflict.<sup>27</sup> Again, there is a divergence from the actual; although Pyecroft expresses the essential point, as a Warrant Officer he would have spoken more formally:

The Right Honourable Lord Gawd Almighty  
Admiral Master Frankie Frobisher, K.C.B.,  
commandin' Blue Fleet, can't be bothered  
with one tin-torpedo-boat more or less; ...  
Our Mr. Moorshed done his painstakin' best --  
it's his first command of a war-canoë, matoor  
age nineteen<sup>(a)</sup> (down that alley-way,  
please!), but be that as it may, His Holiness  
Frankie is aware of us crabbin' ourselves  
round the break-water at five knots, an'  
steerin' pari passu, as the French say ...  
If He'd given Mr. Hinchcliffe, our chief  
engineer, a little time, it would never

---

(a) Pyecroft was over forty.

have transpired, for what Hinch can't drive he can coax; but the new port bein' a trifle cloudy, an' 'is joints tinglin' after a post-captain dinner, Frankie come on the upper bridge seekin' for a sacrifice ... Knowin' Frankie's grovin' to be badly eroded by age and lack of attention, (a) I didn't much panic; but our Mr. Moorshed, 'e took it a little to heart.

28

Structurally, this statement and its effect are necessary to the story. The plot is set in motion by the Admiral's comments, and the course of events derives from Moorshed's reaction, which he explains to the narrator:

'You didn't happen to hear what Frankie told me from the flagship, did you? His last instructions, and I've logged 'em here in shorthand, were' -- he opened a neat pocket-book -- ' "Get out of this and conduct your own damned manouevres in your own damned tinker fashion! You're a disgrace to the Service, and your boat's offal."'

29

The torpedo-boat, left behind by the Blue Fleet in Weymouth, remains hidden from the sight of the opposing Red Fleet, which has occupied the breakwater. Moorshed therefore acquires a potential power of destruction out of all proportion to his nominal tactical value.

The story stresses the predicaments that appear when un-conformable youth conflicts with rank and class, and when initiative conflicts with established procedures and hierarchies. They are amplified by Kipling's intuitive presentation of certain events that occurred in two subsequent wars, events that were to overturn conventional practice and run counter to his concept of the "Law."

There is a greater perspective of the main characters than the brevity of allusion allows in many of his earlier works.

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(a) This metaphor expresses more than one physical condition, as well as the psychological.

Of particular interest is the fictive narrator, a literary man in a bewildering environment, to which he endeavours to accommodate and with which he pretends familiarity. He is interesting because Kipling's technical knowledge was actually a literary invention.<sup>30</sup> This narrator exhibits a peculiarly feminine reaction to the physique of the seamen. He insists on stressing their stolidity and dependability in images that conflict with the overtone of manly resource, action, and hard-living:

'This,' said Mr. Pycroft, who received me on his chest as a large rock receives a shadow, 'represents the Gnome arrivin' cautious from the direction o' Portsmouth,

.....

At this point I reclined without shame on Mr. Pycroft's bosom, supported by his quivering arm .

.....

A hand caught me by the slack of my garments, moved me in generous arcs through the night, and I rested on the bottom of the dinghy.

.....

So far as I remember, it was Laughton whom I hugged; but the men who hugged me most were Pycroft and Moorshed, adrift among the fishy nets.

31

From which may be deduced an extreme degree of sensitivity to other presences, but these descriptions of physical contact add a degree of helplessness to the picture of his confusion.

The technique with which Kipling leads the reader to an appreciation of Pycroft's personality is to express a large part of the narrative and dialogue through him. He is a remarkably quick-witted being, resourceful and competent. He possesses a wide vocabulary, with the ability to use it. These qualities are illustrated at the beginning of the story, when the primary narrator describes his own personal movements in Portland. The fortuitous reunion begins the adventure:

'Thus we're a non-neglectable fightin' factor which you mightn't think from this elevation; an' m'rover, Red Fleet don't know we're 'ere. Most of us' -- he glanced proudly at his boots -- 'didn't run to spurs, but we're disguised pretty devious, as you might say. Morgan, our signaliser, when last seen, was a Dawlish bathing-machine proprietor. Hinchcliffe was naturally a German waiter and me you behold as a squire of low degree; while yonder Levantine dragoman on the hatch is our Mr. Moorshed. He was the second cutter's snotty -- my snotty -- on the Archimandrite -- two years -- Cape Station. Like-wise on the West Coast, mangrove-swampin', an' gettin' the cutter stove in on small an' unlikely bars, an' manufacturin' lies to correspond. What I don't know about Mr. Moorshed is precisely the same gauge as what Mr. Moorshed don't know about me -- half a millimetre, as you might say. He comes into awful oppulence of his own when 'e's of age; an' judgin' from what passed between us when Frankie cursed 'im, I don't think 'e cares whether he's broke tomorrow or -- the day after. Are you beginnin' to follow our tattics? They'll be worth followin'.'

32

This is the brusque and colloquial language of the Naval rating, and it demonstrates Kipling's technique of describing one character through the perceptions of another. The young officer is depicted by Pyecroft, who describes those facets of his personality that have significance for the plot, thus obviating the lengthy history that would be necessary in recounting either his background or his professional career. The other figures on the gun-boat are also projected through Pyecroft's consciousness of them.

Pyecroft's dramatic participation is more complex than that of Mulvaney. It represents a more advanced literary technique. Although he perceives events and explains them to the primary narrator, in contrast to the 'Soldier' stories, both narrators are present within the action. The episodes are described in sequence directly by the character who is supposed to be Kipling. Pyecroft describes to him, other episodes that are outside the time-scale of the story or beyond immediate perception. He reveals

motives, reviews actions, elucidates technical and tactical matters, and places the other seamen in their essential contexts; he acts, to summarize, as an omniscient guide. The narrator, Kipling, is established in his fictive role in order to create an illusion of reality.

Of the other presences, Moorshed is the most important. He is a different type of officer from Judson; he is several years younger, and much junior to him in rank. He is sensitive to criticism, and resents it regardless of the circumstances of its utterance. He combines an uncivil manner with a lack of respect for seniority. He is an accomplished practitioner of deception and ruse; he is wayward, and has little regard for social attitudes and conventions.

The Sub-Lieutenant is not, in fact, very competent, nor is he as professional as Judson. He is dirty and lazy, and knows neither the range nor speed of his ship. This is an intentional glimpse of his nature, because it is precisely this lack of respect for professional demands that motivates his unconformable approach to tactics. He exemplifies the story's effective relating of personality to probabilities of motive and action.

"Their Lawful Occasions" possesses an organic unity that governs an intricate dramatic structure, yet there is a wide display of external actuality that sustains the interest. One significant aspect of this actuality is that the Fleet depicted was thought to be unchallengeable. The implications of contemporary beliefs in the interpretation of meaning in this story are important; for Kipling shows that they were not wholly justified.

The scenes and incidents, because of their general obscurity, are as difficult to apprehend as communications between units of the Fleet at that time. (Here again the scene is authentic.) Episodes are not rendered more coherent by Kipling's use of night-time or a fog-bound settings for much of the dramatic action. But this background is in artistic accord with the theme, an element of confusion being necessary to Moorshed's stratagem.

If the action depicted is difficult for the reader to follow, it is wholly obscure to the personnel of the opposing Fleet. Hence, a flotilla-leader reveals his secret code to the 'enemy,' whose gun-boat is mistaken for a larger and more modern vessel of an allied flotilla. Information on deployment is given to those against whom the deployment is intended, and a protective screen of destroyers is absent because of misdirected signals. Finally, two major units are 'destroyed,' because the presence of the attacking torpedo-boat was neither anticipated nor believed, even when seen.

There is a close consonance of theme, imagery, plot, episode, and motive. The changing sea-scapes are arranged within an ordered dramatic sequence in which there is little explanatory exposition. The progress of the action is thus unretarded, and the final episode is attained with a momentum that does not falter.

In the climax there are two layers of irony, one of which conveys the seriousness of the underlying theme. To place his claim to sinkings beyond doubt, Moorshed attaches a wooden torpedo to the rudder of each cruiser and stencils the ships' sides with his initials:

... 'Perishin' 'Eavens above.' Look at the Devolution's semaphore!' Two black wooden arms waved from the junior ship's upper bridge. 'They've seen it.'

'The mote on their neighbour's beam, of course,' said Pycroft, and read syllable by syllable:

"Captain Malan to Captain Panke. Is sten-cilled-frieze your starboard side new Admiralty regulation, or your Number One's private expense?" Now Cryptic is saying, "Not understood." Poor old Crippy, the Devolute's raggin' 'er sore.

'"Who is G.M.?" she says. That's fetched the Cryptic. She's answerin': "You ought to know. Examine own paintwork." Oh Lord! they're both on to it now. This is balm.'

33

The pun on "beam" and the crossing of the clauses of the aphorism demonstrate Pycroft's awareness of the scene's comedy. He has an intelligence capable of perceiving similarities of meaning in wholly different contexts: the sense of the Biblical expression

is, after all, applicable. The pert semaphore question and the flippant response are made with no realization that both ships have been put out of action in the manoeuvres. But beneath the levity there lies the certainty that in these circumstances, both ships would have been destroyed in real war. Of the cruisers' ineptitude, the floating dummies at their sterns are symbols.

The cruiser-captain's shock and disappointment evidence the foreboding within the work, as do the reactions of his first-lieutenant. Kipling here repeats a refrain that occurs often in the essays: "I remembered that this was only play, and caught myself wondering with what keener agony comes the real defeat."<sup>34</sup>

The ruse by which Moorshed achieves his objective is defined by yet another seaman, whose presence gives to the story a wider variety of incident. He belongs to the locality in which the attack takes place, being the skipper of a Brixham trawler with which the gun-boat had collided. At first, all that is heard through the fog is a disembodied Devonian voice.

There follows an entertaining monologue that demonstrates the author's sensitivity to certain human types, to their motives and reactions. The trawler-skipper, having understood Moorshed's plan, replies to Pyecroft, who had just explained the Lieutenant's purpose and had proffered a £5 note as the reward for assistance:

'Lard! What's fivers to me, young man? My nevvv, he likes 'em; but I do cherish more on fine drink than filthy lucre any day o' God's good weeks. Leave goo my arm, yeou common sailorman! I tall 'ee, gentlemen, I baint the ram-faced, ruddle-nosed old fule yeou reckon I be. Before the mast I've fared in my time; fisherman I've been since I seed the unsense of sea-dangerin'. Baccy and spirits -- yiss, an' cigars too, I've run a plenty. I'm no blind harse or boy to be coaxed with your forty-mile free towin' and rum atop of all. There's none more sober to Brix'am this tide. I don' care who 'tis -- than me. I know -- I know. Yonder'm two great King's ships. Yeou'm wishful to sink, burn, and destroy<sup>(a)</sup> they while

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(a) This expression, which derives from Admiralty instructions, demonstrates the fisherman's knowledge of the Navy.

us kips 'em busy sellin' fish. No need to  
tall me so twanty taime over. Us'll find  
they ships! Us'll find 'em, if us has to  
break our fine new bowsprit so close as  
Crump's bull's horn!

.....

'Us'll go look for they by hand. Us'll  
give they something to play upon; an' do  
'ee deal with them faithfully, an' may the  
Lard have mercy on your sowls! Amen. Put  
I in dinghy again.'

35

Kipling's portrayal of countrymen and seamen by representing their idioms and defining their motives is one of the most convincing aspects of his study of personality. Although no precise phonetic representation is given, he achieves an approximation of the appropriate dialect. In this passage the mode of expression heightens the humour, as does the rhythm and punctuation within the paragraphs. There is a gradual development of thought and feeling, concluded by a terse anti-climax with a contrasting rhythm. The first paragraph expresses the argument with which the skipper convinces himself; the second, short, paragraph expresses the urgency of action. The terminal blessing shows his fervid response to this urgency. Comedy is heightened by the brief and final imperative.

#### Premonition

The verses interspersed between the two parts of the story impart an ironic sense to the second part. In later collected editions of the poems, a third verse is placed between the two that appeared with the story:

Stanza 1      The wind went down with the sunset --  
                  The fog came up with the tide,  
                  When the Witch of the North took an Egg-shell  
                  With a little Blue Devil inside.  
                  'Sink'; she said, 'or swim,' she said,  
                  (It's all you will get from me.)  
                  And that is the finish of him!' she said,  
                  And the Egg-shell went to sea.

Stanza 2  
(or 3, in  
the en-  
largement)

The wind got up with the morning,  
And the fog blew off with the rain,  
When the Witch of the North saw the Egg-shell  
And the little Blue Devil again.  
'Did you swim?' she said. 'Did you sink?'  
she said.

And the little Blue Devil replied:  
'For myself I swam, but I think,' he said, 36  
'There's somebody sinking outside.'

The later stanza, forming verse 2 in the enlarged version, reads:

The wind fell dead with the midnight --  
The fog shut down like a sheet,  
When the Witch of the North heard the  
Egg-shell  
Feeling by hand for a fleet.  
'Get!' she said, 'or you're gone,' she said,  
But the little Blue Devil said 'No!  
The sights are just coming on,' he said, 37  
And he let the Whitehead go.

The repetition of "she said" gives a wave-like motion to the rhythm.

The poem is a brief dramatic narrative. The "Witch of the North" is an allegorical figure representing the changed technology and ethics of sea-warfare. She also embodies a prescient view of both. The "Egg-shell" and the "Blue Devil" are images of the torpedo-craft and its pilot. The Egg-shell evokes the fragility of the gun-boat and submarine; "Blue Devil" suggests a magical navigating genius, whose nature is revealed in the moral indifference expressed in the last line.

The implication of the second quatrain of each verse is that the weapon is experimental, and that the vessel's lack of robustness, its slowness and minuteness, render its presence apparently absurd in the manoeuvres of a Fleet. The meaning of the final quatrain is that its presence would not be absurd. The additional verse is largely explanatory, though it weakens the allegorical effect by introducing too much precision, by giving the designer's name as a designation for the torpedo.

The poem evidences Kipling's association with popular literature, for it has the structure of the medieval folk-ballad and contains the traditional facets of this genre, such as myth, allegory, and war. The first four lines of each of the three verses

function as a refrain, advancing the narrative by incremental repetition. The last four lines of each present the action in dramatic dialogue. The metre consists of the most traditional stresses in English poetry -- iambs and anapaest, though with some variation in the line and paragraph. The alliterative 's' and 'sh' in the second quatrain of each verse evoke a sense of submersion and subterfuge, and are even suggestive of the sound of compressed air -- with which torpedoes are released into the water. The short syllables and the non-resonant consonants whisper expectantly about the coming destruction. The harsh morality of war, the bad weather, the obscurity, are present in imagery such as "wind," "god," "blew off," "midnight," "sheet," "sink or swim," "get or gone." The malevolent tone is amplified by repeated phrases accentuated by internal rhyme.

The effect of the poem is to endorse the seriousness of intention in the story and to give the exciting, varied, and venturesome picture of Naval life a menacing significance.

This intention is revealed by the inventive element. In the concluding paragraph, the narrator states that he will endeavour, at Pyecroft's request, to produce an account of the actual events. He assures the reader that in writing it he had not exaggerated, but had toned down, the original.

This is not true: artistically, he enlivens the typical events that the story contains with vivid incident, and diverges from the probable. For example, he describes Moorshed's achievement as being nine torpedo-strikes on each cruiser, but this type of boat would have carried nowhere near eighteen torpedoes.<sup>38</sup> Of greater importance; the starting-point of the plot depends on Moorshed's deliberate misconstruing of what the Admiral shouted to him. Although this response accords with his personality, it is highly unlikely that it would in real manoeuvres have been carried to an extreme. It is not that easy to ignore an Admiral's intention. This invented response is made the focal point of the early part of the story in order to allow Moorshed to escape from reality, to allow the dramatic theme to diverge from the normal codes and procedures of Naval tactics. What the setting presents, however, is a picture of the reality that its protagonist disrupts.

In a later story, written about the Great War, it is the moral theme that diverges from codes and procedures, from a system of ethics that had generally been thought to govern man's activities on the high seas.

#### Maddingham

In "Sea Constables," the subject is man at war. An emotional opposition to Germany, which emerges in much of Kipling's work, is very evident. The story has similarities with "Their Lawful Occasions"; even the title contains an ironic reminiscence of the happier story, but as "Constables," the patrol maintains no "Law," it merely pursues a neutral seaman and forces upon him a very unheroic death.

The action takes place over a longer period and over a much wider sea-scape than the Pyecroft story; but unity, of space, tone, and time, is achieved by the device of reporting the action in its entirety. The work was written in October 1915 and concerns the Auxiliary Fleet, with which Kipling was well acquainted. He had published essays about it after various tours of the flotillas at Harwich and Dover, and the story derives its authenticity from these visits.<sup>39</sup>

The major difference between the two stories is one of tone; it is a difference that illustrates the change in the author's view of that aspect of imperialist activity that the Royal Navy represented to him. There is little humour, no patriotic idealism, and no high spirits; instead, there is tiredness, pain, and illness. The wonder of varied incident is replaced by the tensions that accompany the fear of death. The plot concerns the exacting of vengeance on a neutral vessel suspected of an intent to supply oil to German submarines. This is identical with the theme of Conrad's "the Tale";<sup>40</sup> even the setting of the final act -- the Irish coast -- is the same.

The moral problem corresponds; and in both stories, the neutral's captain is callously allowed to die. In Conrad's story the murder of the entire crew of the neutral vessel is asserted to be justifiable because of an unverified suspicion. His

story is of about the same length as Kipling's, but the narrative structure is less complex. Kipling's episodes are related by four men who have all had a part in the drama; Conrad has one narrator, the Captain of the British vessel, throughout.

The setting of "Sea Constables" is a London restaurant where four mariners have arranged a dinner. They each recount their following of the neutral vessel round the coast of the British Isles; Maddingham had had the last and most critical duty. One of the four, a regular officer, Lieutenant Tegg, holds an Admiralty judicial appointment. It is Tegg who had managed and directed the sequence of events, a responsibility that he gradually discloses to the others. He had also given the individual participants their various functions, and it is revealed that he knew his characters well.

The entire chase is reported in the dramatic dialogue of the four participants, and there are references to a fourth auxiliary officer, Jarrott, who had also assisted. The succession of narratives, each narrator being identified with a particular episode, establishes and maintains interest in a journey that is essentially tedious. It also displays the sequence of events from different standpoints.

There is, in the narrative diction, no presentation of a vernacular; all four participants are professional men. Nevertheless, the idiom of the mariner is introduced from time to time, and there is a dialect rendering of the two Frenchmen. Dialogue displays character:

'And David Jarrott's a mine-sweeper,' Maddingham mused aloud. 'So you turned our Neutral over to him, Winchmore, did you?'

'Yes, I did. It was the end of my beat -- I wish I didn't feel so sleepy -- and I explained the whole situation to Jarrott, over the rail.' 'Gave him all my silly instructions -- those latest ones, y'know. I told him to do nothing to imperil existing political relations. I told him to exercise tact. I -- I told him that in my capac'ty as Actin' Lootenant, you see. Jarrott's only a Lootenant Commander -- at

fifty-four, too! Yes, I handed my Uncle Newt over to Jarrott to chaperone, and I went back to my -- I can say it perfectly -- pis-ca-to-rial party in the bay. Now I'm going to have a nap. In ten minutes I shall be on deck again. This is my first civilised dinner in nine weeks, so I don't apologise.'

He pushed his plate away, dropped his chin on his palm and closed his eyes.

'Lyndnoch and Jarrott's Bank, established 1793,' said Maddingham half to himself. 'I've seen old Jarrott in Cowes week bullied by his skipper and steward till he had to sneak ashore to sleep. And now he's out mine-sweeping with Cordelia! What's happened to his -- I shall forget my own name next -- Belfast-built two-hundred tonner?'

'Goneril,' said Portson. 'He turned her over to the Service in October. She's - she was Culana.'

'She was Culana, was she? My God! I never knew that. Where did it happen?'

'Off the same old Irish corner I was watching last month. My young cousin was in her; so was one of the Raikes boys. A whole nest of mines, laid between patrols.'

'I've heard there's some dirty work going on there now,' Maddingham half whispered.

'You needn't tell me that,' Portson returned. 'But one gets a little back now and again.'

'What are you two talking about?' said Tegg, who seemed to be dozing too.

'Culana,' Portson answered as he lit a cigarette.

'Yes, that was rather a pity. But ... what about this Newt of ours?'

'I took her over from Jarrott next day -- off Margate,' said Portson. 'Jarrott wanted to get back to his mine-sweeping.'

'Every man to his taste,' said Maddingham.

41

In this passage, there is a digression from chronicling the pursuit, presented as disconnected thought. Frequently, the company has to recall the narrator to the course of his story. The purpose of these extended allusions is to evoke the reality of total war at sea, and to bring home its true nature by repeatedly contrasting the sailors' present duties with their normal lives.

The implication is that these sailors, amateurs, are earnest and competent businessmen, and that the employment of such men by the Admiralty makes war a businesslike activity. Kipling thus carefully prepares for the ruthlessness of the final act.

The dialogue reports action and exhibits the participants' reflections on the nature of sea warfare. Significant incident is stressed by repetition, such as the destruction of the Culana. Significant features of the seamen are stressed by descriptions of activity, such as minesweeping, Jarrott's preference. A Quaker, his beliefs allowed him only the most dangerous of war-work. There is a convincing view of character. Maddingham is the most talkative presence; Tegg, with his dominating view of the origins and intentions of the action, refers discreetly to his control of the participants and their absent colleague.

The speakers, though participants in the action, are themselves spectators. Only Tegg knew the planned course of events and their probable termination; only Maddingham, the exact nature of the neutral's end. It is at the dinner that Maddingham hears for the first time of the earlier part of the pursuit and learns of the real purpose behind Tegg's Court of Inquiry. Only at the dinner do they perceive the others' reactions to total war. Winchmore's narrative ends with a series of brief disjointed statements, the voice falling at the end of each. The evident mental wandering is the effect of a tiring mind. He dozes, though he is brought back into the conversation as Maddingham takes up the story. The account of the complicated manoeuvre is then left to one speaker, and the paragraphs lengthen to include in places excerpts from conversations between Maddingham and the Neutral. Maddingham's narrative is concise and swiftly flowing, and presents an uninterrupted sequence of episodes up to the end of the action.

Although the story creates typical figures, historically there is doubt as to the likelihood of the main incident. However, at the time, there were rumours of German submarines being provisioned or re-fuelled by neutral coasters in the Irish Sea; rumours on which Conrad based his story. The actual tasks of the

Auxiliary Fleet were observing, submarine-hunting, and mine-sweeping.<sup>(a)</sup> The inventive element lies in the assembling of participants in these activities in one place. Each of the four men interprets a part of the course of events, Tegg perceives some of its inner significance, but not all.

The most important of the absent figures is "Uncle Newt." A man of apparently advanced middle age who had encountered Maddingham before the war, he is depicted as amiable, considerate of his pursuer's discomfort, and genuinely surprised at both the attitude of his last escort towards him and the nature of his own end. He is sympathetically drawn in some detail, even to the knitted muffler with which he contrives to stem the cold. This homely particular contrasts with the picture of Maddingham's ruthlessness. From the last scene of his life, he departs a tragic figure, the illness that kills him being described by his enemy. The word "neutral" is given an extremely ironic connotation.

Kipling inserts numerous images that evoke the condition of war. There is the waiter's severed limb. He had been maimed at the Battle of Guise, and pathetically assures the diners that his uncle intended to present him with a more adequate artificial replacement as a Christmas gift. There are other images of violence:

'... I told him I was'nt doing this for amusement -- it was business. Then I ordered him into port. He said: "S'pose I don't go." I said: "Then I'll sink you." Isn't it extraordinary how natural it all seems after a few weeks? If any one had told me when I commissioned Hilarity last summer what I'd be doing this spring I'd -- I'd ... God. It is mad, isn't it?'

'Quite,' said Portson. 'But not bad fun.'

'Not at all, but that's what makes it all the madder ...'

42

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(a) Conrad participated in this work, being brought out of retirement to command a sloop. A photograph of one of his Special-Service ships appears as the frontispiece to the Gresham edition of The Nigger of the Narcissus.

Of this madness the vessel's name, Hilarity, appears to be symbolic. There is here a noting of the change from situations of peace to those of war. This change is one of the themes of the story,<sup>(a)</sup> and it creates dramatic irony. For it is expected that the war scenes will show men eagerly at work in their patriotic duties. Instead, they show them employing destructive weapons in what they have come to regard as a business activity. That the neutral has not understood the nature of the new morality, his response to Maddingham reveals:

"You think you've got patriotism. All you've got is uric acid and rotten spite!" 43

The statement adds another layer of irony to the situation, because there was no patriotism in Maddingham's intentions, nor idealism in his actions. He merely wished to kill the neutral. Even the display of seamanship accentuates the aggressive hostility that presides over Maddingham's motives, and his sarcasm heightens its effect:

"Excuse me, but I understand you are bound for Antigua?" He was, he said, and as he seemed a little nervous about my falling aboard him in that swell, I gave Hilarity another sheer in -- she's as handy as a launch -- and I said: "May I suggest this is not the course for Antigua?" By that time he had his fender overside, and all hands yelling at me to keep away. I snatched Hilarity out and began edging in again. He said: "I'm trying a sample of inferior oil that I have my doubts about. If it works all right I shall lay my course for Antigua, but it will take some time to test the stuff and adjust the engines to it." I said: "Very good, let me know if I can be of any service," and I offered him Hilarity again once or twice -- he didn't want her -- and then I dropped behind ... ' 44

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(a) i.e. it is present either by implication or in overt statement throughout, and imparts tension to the dramatic dialogue, the plot, and the moral theme. It is ironic because in the moral sense there is no fundamental change.

One purpose of steaming behind an escorted craft is to allow it first access to any uncharted minefield.

Conrad's figure, the Commanding Officer, sends a steamship and its crew to destruction, having sensed what he defines and represents as a moral malignancy aboard her. Kipling does not explain Maddingham's act on moral grounds; for he perceives none, and in this he is completely honest. In re-fuelling an enemy submarine, the neutral was committing a hostile act, but neutrals assisted both belligerents, as Kipling and Conrad knew. The motive in Conrad's story is a response to the public horror of U-Boats. The effect on Kipling of this public horror is different. While in his essays<sup>45</sup> and poetry<sup>46</sup> he was able to present a propagandist view and condemn what he believed to be the enemy's lack of principle, this story displays an acceptance of the conditions of total war, and advances no principle except that of business.

Taking "Sea Constables" as a final episode, the preceding sea-stories and essays acquire an enormous cynicism; for this late story demonstrates that within man's nature there exists the innate tendency to reject the "Law" that Kipling had expressed -- as Carrington observed -- in the image of the ship, and that war presents the conditions in which to rend the constraining ethical structure.

It is of relevance to note here that Moorshed perceived flaws in the structure of Naval convention, and that Judson deliberately flouted the rules of navigation in smashing channel-buoys on the Zambezi. This anarchic tendency resulted in their successes and produces the humour that invests both stories.

In "Sea Constables," the process of disruption is taken further, but it produces no humour. The conventions of sea warfare might have achieved the impounding of the neutral and the internment on suspicion of its skipper -- what Maddingham at first understood to be his duty. He discovers, however, that the "Law" as represented by Lieutenant Tegg, R.N. does not allow him to do this because of the policy of political compromise. The Admiralty Court forces the neutral into a position where he has to furnish his escort with the explanation of any

divergence from a declared course. This decision allows Maddingham his full measure of ruthlessness. It is the opposite intention of the "Law" as conceived in Kipling's earlier work, the work from which he has been identified as an imperialist writer.

That even the rules of war are no constraint, Maddingham explains; he recalls the final act in the neutral's cabin, in Cloone Harbour, where he found him suffering from bronchial pneumonia:

'If he'd been a wounded belligerent, I might have taken him aboard, though I certainly should'nt have gone a yard out of my course to land him anywhere; but as it was, he was a neutral -- altogether outside the game.'

.....  
 "'Why, if you leave me now, Mr. Maddingham," he said, "you condemn me to death, just as surely as if you hanged me."'

'This is interesting,' Portson murmured. 'I never imagined you in this light before, Maddingham.'

'I was surprised at myself -- 'give you my word. But I was perfectly polite. I said to him: "Try to be reasonable, sir. If you had got rid of your oil where it was wanted, you'd have condemned lots of people to death just as surely as if you'd drowned 'em." "Ah, but I didn't," he said. "That ought to count in my favour." "That was no thanks to you," I said. "You weren't given the chance. This is war, sir. If you make up your mind to that, you'll see that the rest follows." "I didn't imagine you'd take it as seriously as all that," he said -- and he said it quite seriously, too. "Show a little consideration. Your side's bound to win anyway." I said: "Look here! I'm a middle-aged man, and I don't suppose my conscience is any clearer than yours in many respects, but this is business. I can do nothing for you."

'You got that a bit mixed, I think,' said Tegg critically.

'He saw what I was driving at,' Maddingham replied, 'and he was the only one that mattered for the moment. "Then I'm a dead

man, Mr. Maddingham," he said. "That's your business," I said. "Good afternoon." And I went out.'

'And?' said Winchmore, after some silence.

'He died. I saw his flag half-masted next morning.'

47

The abrupt indifference of Maddingham's exterior attitude is matched by the terse brevity of the concluding sentences. The neutral's tone is that of an appeal; it carries the speaker's assumption of common humanity in his opponent. He is incredulous when the appeal is rejected.

Tegg alludes to the logical inconsistency in Maddingham's attitude. For having lectured "Uncle Newt" on the morality of war, he had disregarded the few constraints with which its brutality was moderated, and had adopted in their place, the ethics of business.

Maddingham had originally expected that there would be a change from the attitudes of his previous activity. Describing his first contact with the neutral, he states:

'... I'd blacked myself all over for the part of Lieutenant Commander R.N.V.R. in time of war, and I'd given up thinking as a banker. If it had been put before me as a business proposition I might have done better.'

48

The point here is that he had at first endeavoured to change his personality into one suited to the demands of war, to adapt to a different system of ethics. He accepts the condition of the new setting, but realises that no fundamental spiritual change is required. The principles of an ambiguous morality are to be adopted where there is no restraint over the most brutal instincts.

It has become axiomatic in interpreting Kipling's short stories, that they be regarded as containing no words that are not intended to convey meaning. This is implied in Kipling's statement on his technique, where he described how the stories were drafted, revised, then reduced, cut, and cut again.<sup>49</sup>

What, therefore, is the significance of the waiter's severed hand in the scene before the commencement of the narrative? Demonstrably, that no code of war ethics reduces its tragic effect or prevents the cruellest maiming. After the conclusion of his narrative, Maddingham beckons to the restaurant's proprietor, a gesture that symbolizes the summoning of men to the new moral order, in which war is conducted as business.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, both the proprietor and the waiter express themselves his "debtors." The story imaginatively recognises the existence of the new order, rejects the notions of humane behaviour, the "Law" of war, the "Law" of the sea, and any sentiments considered war-like and patriotic.

The moral theme governs character, imagery, and the pathetic fallacy; the first time that bad weather is described in detail, with gale, fog and squall, Maddingham expresses his hatred of the neutral. A related feature is the assessment of character by those within the story. Tegg deliberately places Maddingham on the final stage of the pursuit of the neutral; and it is recorded that he knows Maddingham well. The other figures -- Winchmore, Portson, and the absent Quaker, Jarrott, could not, as they are depicted in the story, be envisaged in the role played by Maddingham. The imagery of vindictiveness at sea is one with the moral theme. The entire dialogue is convincing in its presentation of competent, experienced, amateur naval officers, and is aided by an infusion of technical detail.

The effect is different from Conrad's version; Kipling's narratives are more direct than the soliloquy of the protagonist in "The Tale." The long monologue of the Commanding Officer is expressed to a woman in a quiet room. It therefore does not exhibit the vividness and brusqueness of dialogue that personifies Kipling's figures. An extract shows this:

"... One envies the soldiers at the end of the day, wiping the sweat and blood from their faces, counting the dead, fallen into their hands, looking at the devastated field, the torn earth that seems to suffer and bleed with

them. One does, really. The final brutality of it -- the taste of primitive passion -- the ferocious frankness of the blow struck with one's hand -- the direct call and the straight response. Well, the sea gave you nothing of that, and seemed to pretend that there was nothing the matter with the world."

She interrupted, stirring a little.

"Oh yes. Sincerity -- frankness -- passion -- three words of your gospel. Don't I know them!"

51

Conrad's story is more reflective; it demonstrates a sensitive conscience that has meditated on the treachery of the sea. In none of Kipling's stories is there expressed any envy of the "taste of primitive passion" of trench warfare in Flanders and France.

Conrad seeks, as Kipling does not, to present a motive for the neutral's activities, yet the degree of sympathy evoked by Kipling for the victim is more acute. The attitude of Conrad's Commanding Officer to the neutral governs the moral tone, whereas the attitude to the neutral in Kipling's version is ambivalent. Kipling avoids any explanation of psychological reactions; in his story, these elements are intrinsic to the narratives, and apprehensible in image, allusion, and symbol. The unity of every aspect of the work with the theme, and the importance of that theme, make "Sea Constables" one of the most significant and timeless of representations of war at sea in English literature.

CHAPTER VII

1. CARRINGTON, C.E. Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Work (London: Macmillan, 1955), pp. 334-335.
2. KIPLING. Something of Myself, pp. 90-92.
3. KIPLING. Readers' Guide, II, pp. 1013-1044.
4. Ibid., V, pp. 2261, 2313.
5. SHERRY, N. Conrad and His World (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), p. 58.
6. KIPLING. "Judson and the Empire," p. 330.
7. Ibid., p. 332.
8. KIPLING. Readers' Guide, III, pp. 1259-1260.  

There are references here to the various events that might have been in Kipling's mind when he wrote the story.
9. Ibid., IV, pp. 1700, 1836.  

The play ran only very briefly.
10. Ibid., IV, pp. 1726-1754.
11. Ibid., IV, p. 1726.
12. Ibid., IV, p. 1758.
13. KIPLING. "Mrs. Bathurst," p. 355 et seq.  

The story opens with a discussion in a railway-vehicle on the line to Simonstown.
14. KIPLING. Readers' Guide, IV, p. 1862.
15. Ibid., I, p. 21.  

Admiral Chandler, U.S.N., stated, "Pyecroft is very real to me even though he is almost too perfect in his role, as all good characters in fiction must be, because I knew his double, in our Navy ..."
16. KIPLING. "Their Lawful Occasions," pp. 111-112.
17. KIPLING. Readers' Guide, II, pp. 1013, 1017.

18. KIPLING.  
The knowledge of Surtees' works is evident in "My Son's Wife," in which the main character reviews the substance of the novels, pp. 346-347.
19. SURTEES, R.S. Mr. Sponge's Sporting Tour (London: Folio Society, 1955). Hawbuck Grange (London: Folio Society, 1950).
20. KIPLING. Readers' Guide, II, p. 1022.  
. A Fleet in Being; references to Marryatt are given in this analysis.
21. LEAVIS, F.R. The Great Tradition (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948).  
There is repeated reference to the received tradition of English fiction, which he opposes.
22. "BARTIMEUS" Naval Occasions (London: Penguin, 1936), pp. 54-60.  
First published 1914.
23. BOWLES, G.S. A Gun-Room Ditty Box (London: Cassell, 1898).  
His characterization is unconvincing. There is no seriousness of theme; humour is attempted but banality achieved. Kipling quotes from Bowles's verse on p. 127 of "Their Lawful Occasions."
24. KIPLING. Readers' Guide, IV p. 1701.
25. KIPLING. A Fleet in Being (London: Macmillan, 1898), pp. 34-35.
26. FABER, R. Proper Stations: Class in Victorian Fiction (London: Faber, 1971), pp. 59-68.
27. DUNMAN, J. "Kipling and the Marxists," Kipling j., no. 159 (Sept., 1966), pp. 5-10.  
"... I never wavered in my belief that if people wanted to be socialist writers, Kipling was by far the most important example for them to follow."
28. KIPLING. "Their Lawful Occasions," pp. 107-108.
29. Ibid., p. 113.

30. KIPLING. *Lettres de guerre à André Chevrillon, 1916-1919*, by Rudyard Kipling. An English translation of the war letters. (Folder 257, Kipling Collection, University of Cape Town, Library).

In one letter, 22nd June, 1916, he admits that he had no real understanding of technical matters: "The literary temperament is not gifted with mechanical aptitude."

31. KIPLING. "Their Lawful Occasions," pp. 117, 121, 139, 145.

32. Ibid., pp. 109-110.

33. Ibid., p. 149.

34. Ibid., p. 154.

In A Fleet in Being, he frequently refers to the real thing, as opposed to manoeuvres, and there is a sense of foreboding even here; e.g. pp. 22-23.

35. Ibid., pp. 137-138.

36. Ibid., p. 128.

37. KIPLING. Verse, pp. 646-647.

38. KIPLING. Readers' Guide, IV, p. 1752.

No more than three tubes were installed in vessels of this type; with spares, a total of six torpedoes could have been carried.

39. Ibid., V, p. 2265; VII, p. 3118.

40. CONRAD, J. "The Tale," Great Short Stories of the War (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1950), pp. 775-795.

41. KIPLING. "Sea Constables," pp. 33-35.

42. Ibid., p. 38.

43. Ibid., p. 45.

44. Ibid., p. 41.

45. KIPLING. The Fringes of the Fleet (London: Macmillan, 1915), especially the essays "The Auxiliaries," and "Patrols, I."
46. KIPLING. Verse  
An example is the poem "Beginnings," p. 673.
47. KIPLING. "Sea Constables," p. 47.
48. Ibid., p. 40.
49. KIPLING. Something of Myself, pp. 207-208.
50. KIPLING. "Sea Constables," p. 48.
51. CONRAD. "The Tale," pp. 780-781.

## CHAPTER VIII

### HIS PERSONAL DAEMON

Gilbert's assertion that "the only way to deal with Kipling is to insist upon the absolute relevance of politics to art"<sup>1</sup> is valid if it means that imperialism pervades much of Kipling's creative writings and must therefore be considered in analysing their meaning and significance. Kipling was a political and military essayist as well as a writer of fiction. In A Fleet in Being,<sup>2</sup> he employs an affective language to review national policy, history and character, and to depict what he saw and understood of the Navy; in his essays on the Army and the Navy in the Great War,<sup>3</sup> he adopts the same approach.

His political and military interests have provoked many antagonisms among the critics. Yet, in his imaginative presentation of these subjects, he achieves much more than the intention that he affirmed in his autobiography.

In the stories of the British Army in India, and of the Royal Navy, what he frequently presents is the non-commissioned officer's or private soldier's view of a predicament. It is an imagined view, although it renders what must be regarded as Kipling's serious concern, and it has a large measure of plausibility. The stories of Army life are unique in their subject-matter. Whether they had any redeeming effect on conditions, it is difficult to establish: what is known is that Field-Marshal Lord Roberts consulted him about the thoughts and attitudes of the ordinary soldier.<sup>4</sup>

These social implications demonstrate a similarity between Kipling and other 19th-Century authors. Faber describes the value of the novel in the study of social history and alludes to the intentions of certain Victorian writers:

But, whether deliberately or unconsciously, they exaggerated features of the social system, both for the sake of humour or pathos, and in the hope of stimulating revival or reform.

Of Kipling's efforts, he states:

Private soldiers and able seamen were also recruited from the lower class; their uniform conferred some glamour, but little social prestige. Sailors always enjoyed a kind of popularity in the days when Britannia ruled the waves; but the army was less favoured and later in the century, Kipling had to work quite hard to establish the private soldier in his countrymen's esteem. 5

This was obviously one of Kipling's subsidiary purposes; for many of his stories and poems concentrate the attention upon the deplorable plight of such men, but what their presence embodies is not only social significance. The explanation of military, political, or social significances does not adequately interpret the themes of his creative work, and the critical investigation cannot be limited to these factors.

His desire for order and security on the moral, political, and psychological planes is very evident in his depiction of imperial service. Yet he shows that most men fail to attain such order and security in their personal lives. Gilbert draws a parallel with Ernest Hemingway that adds to the appreciation of this phenomenon. Comparing Kipling's story "Without Benefit of Clergy" to A Farewell to Arms, he asserts:

Hemingway often acknowledged his literary indebtedness to Kipling ... Both Kipling and Hemingway, for example, draw the same conclusions which by now have become almost philosophical commonplaces of this century and which are admirably epitomized in Albert Camus' vision of an absurd universe, ...

In this universe, in which there are only two basic truths -- man's desire for order and his knowledge that he can never achieve it -- the human being must learn to live with the absurdity of this enormous contradiction without, on the one hand, accepting the easy answers he finds all about him, or, on the other, abandoning the search for meaning even when confronted with the certainty of failure in that search. 6

The responses of Kipling's protagonists to this contradiction are not, however, invariably positive or constructive. He seldom paints idealist pictures of men; John Chinn is one of the few. What Kipling often demonstrates is envy, absurdity, viciousness, stupidity, stubbornness, and other human failings. He shows men doubting their religion and blaming their misfortunes on God, instead of adopting the attitude of self-reliance that he considered to be essential to survival. This is the subject of his poem "Natural Theology":

#### Conclusion

This was none of the good Lord's pleasure,  
For the spirit he breathed in Man is free;  
But what comes after is measure for measure  
And not a God that afflicteth thee.

As was the sowing so the reaping  
Is now and evermore shall be.  
Thou art delivered to thine own keeping,  
Only thyself hath afflicted thee. 7

Despite his proclamation of the "Law,"<sup>8</sup> and of the qualities that he considered to be essential in those who undertake imperialist work, there is an ambivalence in his moral standpoint. For the stories and poems reveal that this service and these qualities are not, in the actual world, always compatible. The problem is accentuated in war conditions, but it is pervasive. In "Loot," he portrays an old soldier advocating methods of obtaining booty. It is not sufficient to say that this is a detached view, or, as Carrington affirms,<sup>9</sup> that the poem is a critical approach to a rascal talking about his experiences. The dramatic monologue personifies Kipling's notion of the way that men react when they are freed from conventional restraints, as soldiers were, often:

If you've ever stole a pheasant-egg be'ind the keeper's  
back  
If you've ever snigged the washin' from the line,  
If you've ever crammed a gander in your bloomin'  
'aversack,  
You will understand this little song o' mine.  
But the service rules are 'ard an' from such we are  
debarred.  
For the same with English morals does not suit,  
(Cornet: Toot! toot!)

W'y, they call a man a robber if 'e stuffs 'is marchin'  
clobber

With the --

(Chorus) Loo! Loo! Lulu! lulu! Loo! loo!

Loot! loot! loot!

10

Were it not that the poem "If"<sup>11</sup> was written some years later, this might be viewed as a distortion and an echo of the stoic self-reliance that it expresses. The self-reliance here is of an entirely different nature! The intrusion of the cornet, with the derisive "toot," represents a response to an idealised mode of behaviour. It ridicules a system of ethics that the ballad portrays as irrelevant in conditions of war. The monologue is delivered by a man of a class that is accustomed to a struggle for existence and familiar with the actualities of battle. The question posed by him is: if you are fortunate enough to kill your enemy before he kills you, and are then ordered to bury him, why should it be a crime to take his belongings?

Yet Kipling's "Law" was an ethical system constituted so as to govern man's attitudes and relations to society, to preserve the integrity of his personality, and to stave off moral and mental degeneracy. The "Law" would permit him to carry out constructive work; it would give him freedom; for he would know that under it, he would suffer no repression -- rulers were also to be under the "Law." This was the idealist view of imperialism. The "Law" appears in "Recessional," and it is implied in many of the short stories. Frequently, however, the short stories show that it does not govern men's actions, and that the individual is often predisposed to reject its concomitant morality.

This rejection, and Kipling's personal scepticism about the effectiveness of the ethical structure that he posits as essential to imperial service, deflect the perspective of his literary conspectus of imperialism and reveal in his work meanings that were not part of the asserted intention. The focus of his stories veers several points; for example, from the external factors of the Empire and State, to their effect; from naval or military activity, to the inner consciousness of the characters who are involved in it. In "Simple Simon," Sir Francis Drake is

represented as speaking to a fortune-teller during a lull in the battle with the Armada:

'... "Mistress," he says to my Aunt, "all you foretold on me was true. I've opened that road from the East to the West, and I've buried my heart beside it."

"I know," she says. "That's why I be come."

"But ye never foretold this"; he points to both they great fleets.

"This don't seem to me to make much odds compared to what happs to a man," she says.

"Do it?"

"Certain sure a man forgets to remember when he's proper mucked up with work. ..."

12

But even as the focus intensifies on the nature of personality, the external factors and political speculations are continually re-asserted. His belief that a creative source existed outside his consciousness is a guide to the ambiguity. Tompkins refers to this belief as "inflowing mystery": "The impulse is 'given'; the artist's response is faithfulness and craftsmanship."<sup>13</sup> It was something that Kipling had attempted to define for Rider Haggard, who recalled, in the entry in his diary of the 18th May 1918:

I commented on the fact that he had wide fame and was known as 'the great Mr. Kipling,' which should be a consolation to him. He thrust the idea aside with a gesture of disgust. 'What is it worth -- what is it all worth?' he answered. Moreover he went on to show that anything which any of us did well was no credit to us: that it came from somewhere else: 'We are only telephone wires.' As example he instanced (I think) "Recessional" in his own case and She in mine. 'You did'nt write She you know,' he said; something wrote it through you!' or some such words. 14

This represents Kipling's view of literary inspiration, and it is therefore relevant to note what he said when discussing the technique of composition. In Something of Myself, he recalls writing the Jungle Books:

In the stillness, and suspense, of the winter of '92 some memory of the Masonic Lions of my childhood's magazine, and a phrase of Haggard's Nada the Lily, combined with an echo of this tale. After blocking out the main idea in my head, the pen took charge, and I watched it begin to write stories about Mowgli and animals which later grew into the Jungle Books.

Once launched there seemed no particular reason to stop, but I had learned to distinguish between the peremptory motions of my Daemon, and the 'carry-over' or induced electricity, which comes of what you might call mere 'frictional writing.'

15

Imperialism was a main subject of his experience; another was the professionalism of men that he had encountered in its service. He presents a picture that is in all essential details true to the observable actuality of this policy and activity. Within the picture, a core of meaning is imaginatively implied in the subjective perceptions of his fictive characters, whose personalities are revealed in their responses to the environment and to other characters.

The first-person narrator who appears in many of the stories is not an embodiment of Kipling, nor are the personifications; for though they may represent his convictions, a good deal of the meaning in what they utter is involuntary. Much of the significance in the narratives and dialogues is not realized by the primary narrator, and much of the intuitive and speculative truth implied is beyond the author's present awareness. He could not, for example, have known the full import of Dirkovitch's forecast, and the destruction of capital ships at their moorings -- the fate of the two cruisers in "Their Lawful Occasions" -- in the Second World War, occurred several years after his death.

There are political, social, moral, psychological, truths present often simultaneously in one image, or in a passage of narrative, dialogue, or verse. He perceives this, and attributes the richness of implication to the motions of his "Daemon." The inner reality of the author's fictive situations thus may have several facets; it is a question of interpretation whether one or another predominates, but they are all facets of imperial predicaments. What the stories and poems do not reveal is a

persistent resolving of difficulties, a consistent political attitude, a moral resource to serve all situations, or a definable philosophy. Very many aspects of the human response to conditions are explored, including the brutal, the disgusting, the inadequate, the weak, the degenerate, as well as the admirable. Even John Chinn is shown to be a heavy drinker, despite his youth, and to be true to his historical archetype in this characteristic!

In a further reference to his "Daemon," Kipling writes:

Most men, and some most unlikely, keep him  
under an alias which varies with their literary  
or scientific attainments ... Note here. When  
your Daemon is in charge, do not try to think  
consciously. Drift, wait, and obey.

16

What this alludes to is the freedom given to his imagination to govern his technical abilities. It also alludes to a feature of his works that has been evident throughout this analysis; that is, the personification of their themes and issues.

Maddingham embodies the regression to ruthlessness "which same with English morals does not suit." Not only does Kipling perceive this aspect of modern warfare, he advocates it, but through his characters, not directly. This is revealed in the series of essays that he wrote about the activities that form the setting of "Sea Constables." In one of the essays, he attributes these words to a trawlerman who is involved in auxiliary service:

'I never though I'd like killin' men,' he  
reflected. 'Never seemed to be any o' my  
dooty.' But it is -- and I do!

17

Whether it is a factually reported statement or not, Kipling considered it apposite. He explains that the Admiralty had respected the law of the sea, particularly towards neutrals, and urges upon it a much harsher policy:

Nor is it any lie that, had we used the Navy's  
bare fist instead of its gloved hand from the  
beginning, we could in all likelihood have  
shortened the war ... . It is no lie that we  
continue on our inexplicable path animated,  
we will try to believe till other proof is  
given, by a cloudy idea of alleviating or  
mitigating something for somebody -- not  
ourselves.

18

This is a significant statement; what he meant by "bare fist" is demonstrated by Maddingham.

In "The Man Who Was," Dirkovitch personifies Kipling's convictions about the nature of the feared invader, and his doubts over the future of British influence in Asia. The Cossack embodies the author's fears of a rival imperialism, of a political and moral abyss, of psychological disintegration.

Stewart<sup>19</sup> asserts that there is general agreement among critics that the greatest of Kipling's powers is his intuitive penetration into primitive consciousness; Dobrée<sup>20</sup> refers to his contact with the deepest and oldest layers of human consciousness; Eliot<sup>21</sup> states that Kipling was a prophet, that his mind was intuitive, and that his genius lay in his powers of observation, description and intuition. Kipling's awareness of these intuitive powers leads him to attribute his creative imagination to an external and mystic source. The "Daemon" is revealed as a personification; the imaginative strength of the stories and poems depends upon direct or implied personifications.

This conclusion refers back to the way in which the emphasis of subject or meaning appears to vary. The impulse of imagination is allowed to dictate the course of the stories and poems. The author invents the setting and consciously creates the artistic formal structure. The speculative and intuitive imagination ranges within this structure, over a truth so immense as to comprehend global strategy and politics and their timeless or contemporary moral implications, and the inner mind of the lowest private soldier.<sup>(a)</sup> The imagination is not constrained within any intention so limited as the displaying of political or psychological significances.

The extent of the imperial setting is another factor of his creative power. Kipling and Conrad did not choose to be restricted to the domestic background. Their fictive scenes are so varied and vivid that they appear to be products of their imaginations;

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(a) The personification may be created as an official, a senior or junior officer, a seaman, an NCO, a private, a native, an animal, or a machine.



The falling pitch of the opening cadences, and the long syllables, impart a tone of melancholy and loss. There is a quickened rhythm in the last two lines, which reply angrily to the lyric evocation of misery and death. This pattern recurs in each stanza, the third and fourth lines appearing as a sudden realisation of the extent of the tragedy. In short, quick syllables, they raise the pitch of the end of each stanza to an embittered questioning of the several separate iniquities. There is an incremental build-up of anger. The image of the youth dying in his own dung is exact; for this is how the Government of India provided for the wounded.<sup>25</sup> The poem represents the mood of a public reaction to intolerable incompetence. Within a structural and formal discipline, the elegy contains a mood of intense outrage. It may have had an effect on the careers of some of those who were responsible for the disaster.<sup>26</sup>

Many of the poems and stories written after this deal with the sufferings of men who had been destroyed in mind and broken in body by the Great War.

#### Moral Discipline and Artistic Honesty

The analysis of stories and poems does not support Boris Ford's accusation that Kipling "reveals, in every line he wrote, a sensibility entirely devoid of moral discipline and artistic honesty." It shows the contrary. The freedom that he allows to his imagination, and the genuine display of the moral implications of imperial service have been evident throughout the analysis. On Kipling's artistic discipline, Conrad wrote:

Mr. Kipling has the wisdom of the passing generations, -- and holds it in perfect sincerity. Some of his work is of impeccable form and because of that little thing he shall sojourn in Hell only a very short while.

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18. Ibid., p. 69
19. STEWART, J.I.M. Rudyard Kipling (London: Gollancz, 1966), p.111.
20. DOBREE Rudyard Kipling: Realist and Fabulist, p. 28.

Dobree is here quoting André Maurois, who ascribed to Kipling "a permanent, natural contact with the oldest and deepest layers of human consciousness."

21. KIPLING. A Choice of Kipling's Verse; made by T.S. Eliot with an essay on Rudyard Kipling (London: Faber, 1941), pp. 5-36.

In a speech to the Kipling Society in 1958, T.S. Eliot concluded: "He seems to me the greatest English man of letters of his generation." He also commented on the nature of the criticism in this speech:

"I suggest that the fact that Kipling was an intuitive and not an intellectual, may go to account for his being underrated by intellectuals who are not intuitives."

Kipling j., XXVI, no 129 (March, 1959), pp. 9-12

22. KIPLING. Verse, pp. 386-392.
23. REEVES, J. Georgian Poetry; selected and introduced by James Reeves (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962).

This collection includes a selection of the war poems of various writers who are described as having the attributes that belonged to the "Georgian" school.

24. KIPLING. Verse, pp. 300-301.
25. BRADDON, R. The Siege (London: Cape, 1969), p. 129.

"The Medidjeh, with six hundred casualties on board and two crammed lighters in tow, had reached Basra festooned with stalactites of excreta, and exuding a stench that was offensive from a distance of a hundred yards ... On her decks, and on the exposed decks of her lighters, men lay huddled in pools of blood, urine and faeces, their bodies shined with excrement, their wounds crawling with maggots, ... and their thighs, backs and buttocks leprous with sores.

Replying to Chamberlain's urgent cable, Nixon has therefore reported: 'Wounded satisfactorily disposed of. Many likely to recover ...'"

Braddon is here quoting from the Report of the British Government's Commission of Enquiry.

26. Ibid., p. 332.

The Commander-in-Chief was Major-General Sir Percy Townshend, about whom Braddon discovered the following:

"So he bombarded everyone, from Lord Cuzon to Winston Churchill, with requests for military appointments; but was rejected by them all. When so eminent a man as Haig had described him as a semi-lunatic, and the King Emperor himself had grumbled that he should have remained with his troops at Kut, to share their fate, there could be, and was, no hope for him, so he became a Member of Parliament."

27. JEAN-AUBRY, G. Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters, 2 vols (London: Heinemann, 1927), II, p. 208.

Letter to R.B. Cunninghame Graham; 5th August, 1897.

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