Kipling’s Empire:

The Social and Political Contexts of the Shorter

Fiction 1886-1906

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by

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ABSTRACT

*Kipling's Empire: The Social and Political Contexts of the Shorter Fiction 1886 - 1906*

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The thesis explores the relation between Kipling's shorter fiction and the various cultural and political environments in which he wrote - from the Punjab, to Vermont, the Cape of Africa, and Sussex, England. After considering the problems of Kipling criticism past and present, the early chapters trace the European philosophical basis of administrative methods in the Punjab, and, in turn, the influence of the forms and languages of government upon Kipling's writings. Outlining the intellectual and political confrontations of British India, the initial parts of the thesis highlight the resistance of the Punjab, and Kipling's writings, to Liberal reform and its utilitarian emphasis. The middle chapters cover the Vermont years, discussing the relation of the stories to an American political context riven by social division - between the industrial East and the rural West, and the various factions of a newly modernised and emergent international power. The fiction is shown to engage with the confrontation between the agrarian Populism of the West and the hegemony of Wall Street, opposing the political influence of rogue speculators and financiers in late nineteenth-century America. The American experience also contextualises the celebration of the fortitude, asceticism, and selflessness of the British empire in the Indian stories of the period. Later chapters consider the impact of the Boer War upon Kipling's work, revealing how, in the areas of race, religion, and culture, the war in South Africa precipitated a crisis of representation for British imperialists, which is reflected in Kipling's poetry and contributed to a change of focus in the stories. The final two chapters discuss Kipling's ambivalent response to social reform and modernisation in Edwardian England, citing medical and scientific works to illustrate how the stories play an influential part in, and are often cynical about, the re-emergence of a national bucolicism in the early years of the century.
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Preface

Given the animus of much Kipling criticism over the last century, commentators on his work have to rely to an unusual extent upon their own instincts and analytical judgements. In modern literary studies, the common disavowal of perhaps the most influential and important author of the late-Victorian period is not due simply to critical neglect, but also stems from the unspirited deference of intelligent readers to a long history of assumptions and prejudices. Despite the impassioned bouts of critical argument it occasionally provokes, Kipling's work has rarely enjoyed a consistent or a sustained period of scholarly attention. In recent years, cultural and post-colonial studies have prompted a resurgence of interest, but the writings are still frequently viewed as the shrill outpourings of an imperial propagandist.

Apart from a brief introduction on the topic, this work is not so much concerned with the loss of Kipling to literary studies or the enduring controversy of his views, as with the recovery of Kipling's history and his complex response to the social and political issues of his day. It is not an apology for Kipling's politics, but an attempt to illustrate how a knowledge of the relation of his writings to their historical setting enables a proper understanding of the range and the sophistication of his work. Such an approach, while not shying away from a colonial past understandably repellent to many readers, dispels the view of Kipling as a narrow-minded demagogue.

If my approach is viewed as 'historical', the term requires at least some modification. While I attend to the historical dimension of Kipling's narratives and the ongoing narrative of his life, the social and political contexts of the writings are
perceived through measured glimpses, or 'samples' of history, as revealed in a number of works of science, philosophy, and polity. This format of selection and presentation enables a many-sided approach to the writings, sustaining attention to Kipling's storytelling, the poetry (frequently associated with the fiction), developments in the political context, the critical reception of the stories, and an ongoing theoretical argument taken up in the opening pages. By following the chronological order of the publication of the writings, and of the developments of Indian, American, and Anglo-African political history, I have established a kind of 'storyline' - a biographical scheme that leads us through Kipling's life and works. It should, however, be noted that strict continuity and comprehensiveness is occasionally sacrificed in order to preserve the focus of the study. The most obvious restriction in scope is my consideration of the shorter fiction from 1886 to 1906. This excludes the juvenilia and, most obviously, the later works. There are two other disruptions to the time-scale over this twenty-year period, which occur between 1890 and 1892, when Kipling lived in London, and 1897 to 1899, when he returned from America before settling at Burwash. In the terms of my thesis, these are 'salutary' omissions, enabling me to pass over a number of longer works and a volume of poetry (The Light That Failed, Barrack-Room Ballads, Captains Courageous, and Kim) in favour of closer attention to the shorter fiction.

I have quoted from the Uniform Edition throughout, this being the most widely-available edition in Kipling's day, and one that is still reasonably accessible. It has the additional merit of being the text used by R.E. Harbord in The Reader's Guide to Rudyard Kipling's Work, which brings my quotations and page numbering into conformity with this important eight-volume guide to the fiction. The Uniform printings vary in small textual details from the first editions of the works (Kipling was
a meticulous reviser of his own writings) but not as significantly as many subsequent editions. Where I have departed from the Uniform Edition, it has been to quote from works not published in that series. In each case I use the earliest printings of the relevant texts. On the occasion I quote from the poetry, I use the Methuen first editions.

In the case of Kipling's journalism and correspondence, I have quoted directly from the archives at the University of Sussex Library and the India Office, and also from Thomas Pinney's *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling* and *Kipling's India: Uncollected Sketches 1884-88*, both of which, though selective, are reliable and well-annotated volumes. Often I deliberately invoke a terminology consonant with the works I discuss. This occurs, for example, on the occasions where I use the word 'England' for Britain, which was used almost exclusively by Kipling, or, in describing the events of 1857 as the 'Indian Mutiny'. I emphasise that such terms are employed to preserve accuracy and coherence in describing the imperial and intellectual context.
Introduction

i. The Early Critics

Soon after his rapid rise to fame in the 1890s, and the laudatory reviews that accompanied his arrival on the literary scene, many critics became increasingly wary of Kipling's political opinions and the supposed 'coarseness' of their expression in his work. Spearheaded by the satirist Max Beerbohm, who plagued him from the turn of the century onwards, and Robert Buchanan, who penned the influential 'The Voice of the Hooligan', Kipling attracted persistent and highly vocal detractors. Opposition hardened during and after the war in South Africa, when Kipling adopted an unashamedly high profile as an imperial spokesman and pro-war propagandist. Aside from the thorny issue of his politics, there was, as the century wore on, increasing wariness of his conservative literary style. At the time of his death in 1936, his writings received little serious critical attention. Bonamy Dobrée best summed up these wilderness years when he commented in 1927: 'It will only be possible to give [Kipling] his rightful place when the political heats of his day have become coldly historical.'1 Illustrating the depths to which his reputation had sunk in the eyes of most readers, Dobrée added: 'They are inclined to take too literally Mr. Max Beerbohm's vision of him dancing a jig with Britannia upon Hampstead Heath (after

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swapping hats with her), and have thought her as much belittled by his bowler as he is
made ridiculous by her helmet.\textsuperscript{12} Thirty years earlier, Buchanan had complained that,
in Kipling's work he found:

\begin{quote}
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.\textsuperscript{3}
\end{quote}

As the century wore on, the caricature eclipsed the writings themselves, and Kipling
was increasingly remembered only as the subject of Beerbohm and Buchanan's myopic
portraits.

In 1941, T.S. Eliot published an appreciation of the verse, prompting a renewal of
interest, and further appraisals by writers such as George Orwell, Edmund Wilson,
and Lionel Trilling. Although a resurgence of scholarly interest was firmly underway,
the imperial politics of the works dominated the critical agenda. Despite his own
misgivings about an author who at various intervals he had both admired and
detested, Orwell was quick to refute 'the shallow and familiar charge that Kipling was

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 45.

\textsuperscript{3}Robert Buchanan, 'The Voice of the Hooligan' (1899), in Roger Lancelyn Green, ed., \textit{Kipling: The
a "fascist";\(^4\) a charge that had gained support from no less than Lionel Trilling, who wrote:

[Kipling's] 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.\(^5\)

Trilling later softened his views, commenting in 1963 that if he were to now write on Kipling he would do so 'less censoriously and with more affectionate admiration'.\(^6\)

Trilling's retraction was a warning to all readers of Kipling, whose politics aroused strong emotions and frequently provoked imbalanced judgements. Even Orwell's spirited defence was compromised by his argument that Kipling was a 'good bad poet';\(^7\) a 'shameful pleasure, like the taste for cheap sweets that some people carry into middle life.'\(^8\)

C.S. Lewis also had moral and aesthetic reservations about Kipling's work. Although he opened his 1948 discussion with the comment: 'I have never at any time been able to understand how a man of taste could doubt that Kipling is a very great artist',\(^9\) he admitted that from time to time he became 'sick, sick to

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\(^5\) Lionel Trilling, 'Kipling' (1943), *Kipling's Mind and Art*, p. 91.


\(^7\) 'Rudyard Kipling', *Kipling's Mind and Art*, p. 83.


death of the whole Kipling world.'\textsuperscript{10} Love of the inner-circle was the element of Kipling's work that most troubled Lewis. Edmund Wilson had similar moral and political misgivings. While judging Kipling 'among the few genuine masters of his day',\textsuperscript{11} he nonetheless conceded that there was something rancorous about his work, claiming that his life and books were 'shot through with hatred.'\textsuperscript{12}

Wariness has persisted in one form or another for the remaining years of the twentieth century. As recently as 1972, Elliot Gilbert noted the considerable ignorance and embarrassment provoked by mention of Kipling's work in critical circles. The title of Gilbert's 1972 study, \textit{The Good Kipling}, itself alludes to the common discomfiture. A quotation from Ernest Hemingway, it arose from the American author's need to qualify his admiration for Kipling with a distinction between the 'good' and the 'bad' works.\textsuperscript{13} Gilbert comments on the typically 'apologetic' tone adopted by many admirers of Kipling's work:

I have suggested that when people apologize for quoting from Kipling's poems and stories, what they are really trying to do is to dissociate themselves from his political attitudes...\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., p. 99.

\textsuperscript{11} Edmund Wilson, 'The Kipling that Nobody Read' (1941), \textit{Kipling's Mind and Art}, p. 18.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 21.

\textsuperscript{13} Elliot L. Gilbert, \textit{The Good Kipling} (Manchester, 1972), p. 4.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 7.
In 1967, Bonamy Dobrée again returned to the critical fray with his work *Rudyard Kipling: Realist and Fabulist*. Noting a change in critical opinion, he opened his book with the comment: ‘Rudyard Kipling, it is now coming to be generally acknowledged, has been more grotesquely misunderstood, misrepresented, and in consequence denigrated, than any other known writer.’\(^{15}\) Critical works of the 1960s and early 1970s, such as Louis Cornell’s *Kipling in India* (1966), Gilbert’s *The Good Kipling* (1972), and, to some extent, Dobrée’s own volume, had begun to address the political aspect of Kipling’s writings with a measure of calm and an awareness of its centrality to his work. Arguably it was Noel Annan’s essay of 1960, ‘Kipling’s Place in the History of Ideas’, that prompted a more intense consideration of Kipling’s political and intellectual context. Annan urged a more sophisticated assessment of the sociological ideas at work in the fiction, asserting their complexity and originality:

> His understanding of society resembles that of a sociologist - and, what is more odd, it owed nothing to the theories of society then current in England. He is indeed the sole analogue in England to those continental sociologists - Durkheim, Weber, and Pareto - who revolutionised the study of society at the beginning of this century. The same problems which forced them to invent new methods of analysing human behaviour led him to conclusions similar to theirs.\(^{16}\)


Whether or not the comparison with Weber and Pareto was justifiable, here was a distinguished scholar associating Kipling with the eminent sociologists of the early-twentieth century. It was a claim that went some way to undoing the damage of Trilling's fatuous comment that Kipling had 'none of the mind of the few great Tories.17 Granted a place in the history of ideas, the writings were set to receive the critical attention they had long merited.

ii. Theoretical Readings

Since the early 1980s, reference to Kipling most frequently occurs in the field of post-colonial studies. At this point, it is worth explaining how and why the methodology of the present thesis differs from the psychoanalytical approach commonly adopted in post-colonial criticism. Since the publication of Orientalism in 1978, Edward Said has had a major influence upon post-colonial theory. However, in the early 1980s and 1990s, the comparatively textual and historical focus of Said's work was supplemented by theorists such as Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, who adopted psychoanalytical concepts of language and the self to illuminate relations of authority and subjection in colonial contexts.18 The key term in Bhabha's work is

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17 'Kipling', ibid., p. 91.
18 For a recent study of Kipling's fiction influenced by psychoanalytical theory, see Zohreh T. Sullivan's Narratives of Empire: The Fictions of Rudyard Kipling (Cambridge, 1993), which invokes Lacan to show that Kipling's enforcement of a 'familial trope' upon India causes a suppression of desire (an absence or lack) that subsequently manifests itself in images of bodily mutilation and the dialectic of blindness and sightedness in the stories. Sullivan argues that in Kipling's autobiography, Something of Myself, this 'suppression' gives rise to an ellipsis and self-
'hybridity', which alludes to the strange, displaced, and troubled appearance of statements of authority in the colonial situation. The term has been taken up by subsequent critics, allowing a more fluid and pluralistic understanding of imperial power and authority. It has itself also been considered a throwback to a period of imperial domination and Victorian racial theory.\textsuperscript{19} This challenge to Bhabha's terminology shows that, without due attention to problems of historical influence implicit in the designation 'post-coloniality', critics are liable to treat complexities of race, culture, and nationality with an undue level of simplification. Such reductiveness not only does a disservice to history but is doomed to repeat its mistakes, imposing censorship that is a paradigm of colonisation, reorganising the 'territory' of the writer's past. As she explains: 'If India becomes for Kipling a recurring image of the alien Other that needs (like language and the unconscious) to be controlled, ordered, ruled and colonized, that need is in part a displacement of an even less acknowledged inner need for definition, boundaries, control and order' (\textit{ibid.}, p. 47). Lewis D. Wurgaft's \textit{The Imperial Imagination: Magic and Myth in Kipling's India} (Middletown, Connecticut, 1983) also adopts a psychoanalytical approach to the history of Kipling's Punjab. For a firmly historical reading, see Ann Parry's \textit{The Poetry of Rudyard Kipling} (Buckingham, Philadelphia, 1992) which details the influence of changing imperial policy upon Kipling's verse. By using critical reviews and chronicling early details of publication, Parry documents Kipling's troubled relation with the literary and political establishments. He emerges as the bard of the 'visionary' imperialists, intent upon a federated and socially inclusive empire, acknowledging the role of the working classes and the importance of co-operation between ruling nations.\textsuperscript{19} See Robert J.C. Young's \textit{Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race} (London, 1995). Young argues that the modern critical use of the term 'hybridity' shows that 'we are still locked into parts of the ideological network of a culture that we think and presume that we have surpassed.' (\textit{ibid.}, p. 27).
upon the critical enterprise the unwieldy taxonomy associated with empire and imperial rule. It is this lack of close engagement with history that accounts for the naivété of much theoretical writing in the post-colonial idiom, which glibly assumes its own freedom from racial and political prejudice. Even a critic as conscientious as Edward Said sometimes falls into the habit of generalising precariously about readers, cultures, and historical contexts. Here, for example, is Said on the cultural predisposition of different races to read in different ways:

An Indian or African scholar of English literature reads *Kim*, say, or *Heart of Darkness*, with a critical urgency not felt in quite the same way by an American or British one.20

Now, the critical urgency of readers and readings is an issue informed by a range of factors completely ignored in this racial and nationalistic view of the question (Said's use of the word 'scholar' is revealing, pointing to matters of class, economics and social privilege that lie virtually unconsidered; even before questions of gender and personal biography are addressed). To claim that Africans and Americans read differently because they are Africans or Americans, and that the difference is uniform throughout the complex divisions of African or American society, is ultimately to propose an extremely narrow view of culture, identity and interpretation. The rhetoric of cultural and racial 'alterity', much described by cultural theorists, is re-inscribed in the very terms of the critical enterprise. It is simply not true to claim that, because they have a different experience of empire from the British reader, the Indian scholar

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articles on Kipling by Indian scholars, such as C.D. Narasimhaiah and Sukeshi Karma, adopt what Said would consider a less politically urgent approach, even downplaying and defending the imperial emphasis of the writings. As Gauri Viswanathan's

21 Sukeshi Karma's *Kipling's Vision: A Study in his Short Stories* (Delhi, 1989) takes an existential view of its subject, arguing that 'The most striking feature of Kipling's vision is its uncanny affinity with that of the poets of the Romantic Period' (*ibid.*, p. 9). This reading, in which the texts and the interpretive approach are located firmly within a British scholarly tradition, completely neglects the political implications of the writings. Karma's reading of 'The Man Who Would Be King' typifies this de-politicisation of Kipling, positing that Dravot and Carnehan's imperial aspirations are 'not merely a desire to gain social and political supremacy, but to attain perfection of the self' (*ibid.*, p. 46). See also the essays by Indian writers collected in *The Literary Criterion* XXII (1987), particularly the introductory piece by C.D. Narasimhaiah, which actually proposes that there is an overemphasis in Britain upon Kipling's imperialism, and that this has fed back into the Indian establishment to hamper critical work: 'The Indians, of course, took the cue as we have invariably done, from the British and dubbed Kipling an imperialist. Sheer ingratitude!' (*ibid.*, p. 1). Jamiluddin's *The Tropic Sun: Kipling and the Raj* (Lucknow, 1974) takes a similarly gentle line on Kipling's imperialism:

Even the political philosophy which Kipling espoused can not be dismissed as merely sabre-rattling jingoism, or 'Chi-chi-imperialism'. It had its limitations but it had its healthy points also. Love of work, of action, of discipline, of playing for the team, of playing the game - who can deny that this is a noble ideal. And if at places [sic] he is irritating to us Indians, we try to forget the old controversies and see only as we read, the pageant of life in the by-gone India that his pages reveal (*ibid.*, p. 209).

Of course, there are a great many Indian writers who, quite justifiably, cannot 'forget the old controversies' with such ease. To cite these examples is not to deny the vast number of perceptive and politically cogent readings of Kipling by individuals of colonial background, of which Said's own
recent work shows, British and Indian studies of English literature are deeply enmeshed in a common imperial past, which renders a such a narrow view of interpretive contexts inadequate. Although accounting for the enormously significant 'emergence of formerly colonial subjects as interpreters of imperialism', Said risks excluding a range of interpretations, on both sides of the imperial equation, each of which shows varying degrees of resistance and consent to the colonial undertaking.

Let us return again to Homi Bhabha, whose notion of 'hybridity' purports to dispel such narrow interpretations of colonial authority and resistance. In Bhabha's work, rather than the 'noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions', colonial power is rethought, somewhat obscurely, as the 'production of hybridization'. In his essay 'Signs Taken For Wonders', he endeavours to illustrate this 'hybridity' or 'hybridization' by referring to the common literary motif of the discovery of the English book in the colonial wilds. Such a 'discovery' occurs, for example, in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, where Marlow uncovers a volume on seamanship in the midst of the Belgian Congo. Bhabha explains that, while these discoveries of the English book in the wilds suggest an epiphany; a realisation of English power, the alien circumstances of the discovery also reveal the glaringly

work is an example, but merely to illustrate that it is impossible to make totalising claims about the critical practices of any given culture or race.

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23 *Culture and Imperialism* p. 77.

displaced, distorted, and 'hybrid' nature of colonial language and authority. Invoking Derrida and Lacan, he argues that the English book in the wilds is a signifier that never achieves an absolute meaning or 'presence'. As he himself puts it: 'What is “English” in these discourses of power cannot be represented as a plenitude or “full” presence; it is determined by its belatedness.'

Bhabha's fraught account of the discovery of meaning in colonial history invites an obvious question: at what point and in what circumstances is it possible to achieve a consistent and coherent view of the history of empire? The answer lies, presumably, in a heuristic separation of critical activity from the imperial past that so distorts signification. However, such an assumed theoretical distance is only attainable at the cost of denying the complexity of history and literary texts, precluding close attention to the details of imperial writings. What more can be said about the contents of the 'discovered' text, but that it repeats the endless frustrations of imperial power and presence? These English books might well be 'signs taken for wonders', but to imagine writings to be purely symptomatic of a universal predicament of representation is to place a critical embargo on history. Challenging 'the idea of the English book as universally adequate', such an argument constructs itself as universally adequate, mistaking its own signs for wonders. By claiming authority for his own English book, Bhabha implies that he himself has stepped outside the circle of misrecognition

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25 Ibid., p. 32.

26 The danger of retaining the idea but not the substance of history stems from Bhabha's legitimate attempt to assert cultural commonality, which, he claims, exists 'not because of the familiarity or similarity of contents, but because all cultures are symbol forming practices' ('The Third Space', in Jonathan Rutherford, ed., Identity, Community, Culture, Difference [London, 1990] pp. 209-210).
he associates with colonial history. Such a triumph over history is liable to lapse into the kind of 'moral superiority' Abdul JanMohammed attributes to ruling colonial societies. The aggravating superiority of tone common to much post-colonial theory, which is nowhere more evident than in the glib naming of 'otherness' popular among theorists, stems largely from this disavowal of the relevance of the texts of the past, except as tokens of psychological and linguistic dysfunction. As Sara Suleri comments: 'Much like the category of the exotic in the colonial narratives of the prior century, contemporary critical theory names the other in order that it need not be further known...'. This naming of otherness amounts, she argues, to a 'conceptual blockage that signifies a repetitive monumentalization of the academy's continuing fear of its own cultural ignorance. 

Fear of their own cultural ignorance is not a trait exhibited by the authors of one recent book on post-colonial writing. According to the writers of The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures, philosophical traditions can be summarily reduced to a few simple catch-words and phrases. The term 'European theory' denotes any commitment to 'false notions of the universal', while 'post-colonial theory' is thought to embrace a range of cultural traditions that span the globe and liberate peoples from the clutches of rationalism. Even more exasperatingly, each

29 Ibid., p. 12
31 Ibid., p. 11.
of the nuanced and differentiated modes of inquiry constituting 'European theory' is shown to be the hazy manifestation of philosophical truths of which post-colonial theory is the authentic embodiment. In a kind of intellectual expansionism, a case is made for the appropriation of the principles of feminism, post-modernism, marxism, and so on, by post-colonial theorists, asserting their special privilege in each critical domain.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 174-175.} It is not difficult to see how recent critical writings on Kipling, influenced by such approaches, exhibit a literary and historical bias that has little to do with his work itself. Closer attention to a few recent critical studies of\textit{Kim} illustrates the presupposition and misreading caused by a commitment to theory that inadequately addresses the political context and content of the works.

\textit{Kim}, the Critics, and the 'Post-' in 'Post-Colonialism'

\textit{Kim} has always proved a problem for readers, who have been traditionally unable to resolve the 'attitude' of the novel to Kim's collaboration with the English authorities - did Kipling regret the involvement, or did he see it as the only and the most admirable course of action for the hero? The question resurfaces in various guises, most famously in Edmund Wilson's claim that the ending is a moral, artistic, and political failure, in which Kipling could not face the possibility of Kim proving disloyal to the British.\footnote{The Kipling that Nobody Read', \textit{Kipling's Mind and Art}, pp. 29-30.} According to Wilson, the crisis of loyalties invoked by Kim's association with the Lama and his collaboration with the English is inadequately represented by Kipling. He claims that the conflict 'comes to nothing' and that 'the
two forces never really engage.'34 Ironically, critics have traditionally viewed this conflict between the Eastern and the English worlds of the novel in anything but political terms, regarding Kim’s collaboration as an insignificant detail, incidental to the descriptive element of the book. To its earliest readers, the novel was first and foremost an extravagant exhibition of artistry and scenic evocation. In 1948, Rupert Croft-Cooke argued that Kim’s involvement in the Great Game spoils the story, which otherwise has all ‘a great painting’s imaginative proportions’.35 He takes particular exception to the episode in Lurgan's shop, in which Kim's talent for disguise and skills of observation are perfected, labelling it both irrelevant and disruptive to the proportions of the 'scene-painting'.36 In a *Blackwood's Magazine* review published in 1901, J.H. Millar commended the 'kaleidoscopic quality... of Mr. Kipling's genius', arguing that '[Kim's] secret lies in the wonderful panorama it unrolls before us' and the variety of the 'feast' spread before the reader.37 Writing in 1904, George Moore argues even more bluntly that the Lama and Kim are 'but pegs whereon Mr. Kipling intends to hang his descriptions of India.'38

Given these evidently flawed readings of *Kim*, the possibility arises that Wilson's criticism of the absence of conflict between the different strands of the story is determined by a legacy of critical misinterpretation, which traditionally places too much emphasis on the scenic and descriptive side of the novel. Wilson claimed that

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34 Ibid., p. 29.
36 Ibid., p. 69.
Kipling's fiction 'does not dramatise any fundamental conflict because Kipling would never face one.'\textsuperscript{39} Perhaps it would be more accurate to claim that Kipling's work appears (to Wilson) not to dramatise any fundamental conflict because critics themselves have been unaware of a conflict or the possibility that Kipling could face one. This critical presupposition is a problem of recent responses to \textit{Kim} and to Kipling's work in general.

Edward Said's reading of the novel has proved among the most influential of recent years. According to Said, when Kipling wrote \textit{Kim} he was 'untroubled by the notion of an independent India'.\textsuperscript{40} In speculating upon Kipling's intentions and historical limitations, Said goes even further, arguing that he was first and last 'a historical being',\textsuperscript{41} who could no more have questioned the right of the white European to rule 'than he would have argued with the Himalayas.'\textsuperscript{42} Stressing that in the late 1890s there were 'no appreciable deterrents to the imperialist world-view held by Kipling' (a questionable point in itself), he cautions against reading \textit{Kim} as if its author had access to the ideas of Fanon or Gandhi.\textsuperscript{43} The problem with this approach is, yet again, an insistence upon historical limitations and constraints that are not allowed as a possible influence upon the critic's own undertaking. It also requires, of course, a questionable emphasis upon conscious authorial intention.\textsuperscript{44} Only by

\textsuperscript{39} 'The Kipling the Nobody Read', \textit{Kipling's Mind and Art}, p. 32.

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Culture and Imperialism}, p. 176.

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 163.

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 162-163.

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 176.

\textsuperscript{44} David Spurr's analysis of the problem of 'voice' in colonial texts is a useful caution against such an inflexible view of intention and historical influence. In \textit{The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse...
adopting such an unaccommodating approach to questions of intention and historical
determinism can Said arrive at such an unambivalent reading of Kipling's fiction, on
which he comments:

Kipling's fiction..., because it is set in an India dominated by Britain, holds nothing back from the expatriate European. *Kim* shows how a white Sahib can enjoy life in this lush complexity; and, I would argue, the absence of resistance to European intervention in it - symbolised by Kim's abilities to move relatively unscarred through India - is due to its imperialist vision.\textsuperscript{45}

The novel depicts an 'absence of resistance' to European intervention, which Said considers to be reflected in a corresponding 'absence of conflict'\textsuperscript{46} between the two main strands of the narrative - the lama's quest for the river that frees him from the wheel of life, and Kim's initiation into the Great Game of political intrigue and espionage along the north-west frontier. Again the focus has returned to the famous intrusion of the Great Game, which, in this reading, is considered neither sufficiently disruptive nor conflictual (in fact, each of these supposedly disparate quests is forced

\textsuperscript{45} Culture and Imperialism, p. 192.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p. 192.
together into a *literal* economy when the lama funds Kim's 'education'). By arguing that the writing of *Kim* served a 'basically obfuscatory end',\(^{47}\) Said makes an *a priori* judgement, based upon his view that, as an imperialist writing in the 1890s, Kipling could really have had no other objective. Such an opinion hardly supports his view that the novel is a an 'aesthetic milestone' along the way to Indian independence.\(^ {48}\)


\(^{48}\) *Ibid.*, p. 196. For a different view of *Kim*, see Mark Kinkead-Weakes's essay 'Vision in Kipling's Novels', *Kipling's Mind and Art* (pp. 216-234). Kinkead-Weakes argues that the investiture of Kim as a secret agent marks his initiation into a system of colonial observation and description that reduces people and events to a 'quantitative catalogue', emptying the world of 'all life and beauty' (*ibid.*, p. 224). According to Kinkead-Weakes, the asceticism of the Lama 'decisively alters the vision of the book', infusing the political dimension of the narrative with a 'sense of loss' (*ibid.*, p. 225). By identifying a strand of the novel that detracts from the beautification of India, the reading contradicts Said's view that *Kim* lays India bare for the enjoyment of the European.

A more recent and theoretically informed version of this argument is to be found in Sara Suleri's *The Rhetoric of English India*. Challenging Said's reading of the novel, Suleri argues that 'Kim's collaboration [with the English] is... emblematic of not so much an absence of conflict as the terrifying absence of choice in the operations of colonialism' (*ibid.*, p. 116). While, in Said's opinion, the novel unconsciously participates in the rush to 'orientalise' India and idealise the figures who orchestrate the Great Game, Suleri argues that the book *dramatises* the workings of colonial language and action. As she puts it: '[t]he brilliance of *Kim* lies in its ability to represent cultural multifariousness while at the same time illustrating that its historical context must inevitably lead back to the monolith of the Great Game' (*ibid.*, p. 119). This inevitable return of all contextual roads to the Great Game conveys the 'immanence of tragic loss' (*ibid.*, p. 113). Much as Kinkead-Weakes noticed that the Great Game demands an observational and descriptive impoverishment, Suleri argues that Kim is 'taught to interpret according to the monolithic needs of imperial ideology, which substitute the acquisition of information for nuanced readings of culture' (*ibid.*, p. 122). Far from
The unfortunate consequence of Said's nevertheless intelligent and informed reading of *Kim* is its influence upon a range of less careful critics, who take the strict view of Kipling's political and historical entrenchments to less tolerable extremes.\(^\text{49}\) The critical enterprise becomes overlaid with a habitual disavowal of history and textual nuance. For example, Gail Low's recent study of Kipling and Rider Haggard, *White Skins/Black Masks*, almost entirely ignores the relation of Kipling's work to its historical context. In her reading of *Kim* as a fantasy of cross-cultural disguise, she applies theory in such a way as to elide the actual historical workings of empire and imperial rule. Unambiguously viewing the novel as the blunt expression of Kipling's racism, Low applies a 'universal', psychoanalytical model of colonial authority to analyse its racist ideology. Using a 1912 edition, whose date she repeatedly cites, as if portraying the supine opulence of India as an 'epiphanic' possibility for the stilted residents of metropolitan Britain, the 'abundance of [Kim's] narrative is perpetually arrested by the potential dischronology embodied in [the Great Game's] cessation of cultural reading' (*ibid.*, p. 1).

\(^\text{49}\) Benita Parry argues that 'Kipling's India is reified under Western eyes as a frieze or a pageant, and romanticized as an object of sensuous and voluptuous pleasure to be enjoyed by Europe' ('The Contents and Discontents of Kipling's Imperialism', *New Formations* VI (1988), 55. Convinced that Kipling could have not have envisaged an independent India, she insists that any challenge to British authority in his work is merely 'a pre-emptive reply to Indian opposition' (*ibid.*, p. 55). If the stories appear at times generous to Indians, it is merely the case that '[a]n alien perspective on the universe is made known and dispelled' (*ibid.*, p. 60). Turning again to *Kim* and the Great Game, predictably she finds 'no dialogue' between the competing strands of the narrative (*ibid.*, p. 59). The Lama's quest for the purifying river and Kim's initiation into the secret service 'easily cohere' as mutual ventures. Despite recognising the 'irreconcilable roles Kim must play as apprentice spy and chela to a holy man', Parry argues that the novel concludes 'without any engagement with the competing commitments', acting to 'abolish conflict' (*ibid.*, 59).
to clarify its historical location (*Kim* was first published in volume form in 1901) Low pays little regard to the historical context in which the works were actually written and first published. Her spurious dating of *Kim* implies its publication in post-Edwardian England, when British Liberalism and Indian nationalism had formed a double-pronged attack on imperial values. Such a historical positioning of the novel is bound to reflect badly on its political meanings, implying that it is a work of nostalgia for empire.

Interpretive slips of this kind invariably arise when psychoanalytical theory is applied to widely different textual and historical conditions. Not surprisingly, it is when Low employs Bhabha's libidinalised model of colonial discourse that she is guilty of the most glaring misreadings of *Kim* and its political context. Drawing on Bhabha, she describes the ruling white society in the colonial situation as subjects 'caught between the twin modes of narcissism and aggressivity in the Lacanian model of Imaginary identification.'50 The affirmation of difference through the racial stereotype is re-interpreted as a fetish: 'an object which allows the fetishist to mask lack'.51 Kipling's work, and *Kim* in particular, is read as an example of a racist discourse that repeats 'a fixed set of traits (which are said to be the properties of the racial or cultural group in question) across differing histories, cultures and geographies.'52 However, this 'libidinalised' account produces an unreasonably static and ahistorical view of Kipling's fiction. In Low's reading, the influence of this broad

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psychoanalytical model of identity as an imaginary identification of self and other, demands the unambivalent view of Kipling's India as an object of desire in which boundaries are established and fantasies of transgression are acted out. The theoretical position itself predetermines that the India of such 'racist discourse' is rendered 'as an extravagant spectacle much in the same manner as costumed pantomimes like the *Forty Thieves*.\(^{53}\) Here the voluptuous difference and the opulence of India is a racial fetish that, through the magical fantasy of cross-cultural disguise, enables the colonial authority represented by Kim to act out its fantasies of possession. The libidinal drama is traced back to the ego or the completion of the disrupted identity of the coloniser: 'it appears that cross-cultural dress is invested with a magical fantasy of wholeness that can make good colonial alienation and lack.'\(^{54}\) Again an India of 'lush complexity' is taken as the unequivocal core of the narrative, providing the mastery implied by Kim's untroubled, even 'pleasurable' intimacy with its deepest and most forbidden recesses.

There is actually much to suggest that cross-cultural disguise is not such a pleasurable business in the novel. *Kim* is a much more complex and ambivalent work than the *Forty Thieves*. However, the theoretical focus upon racial and libidinal demarcations shifts Low's attention away from elements of the text resistant to a straightforward interpretation. Insisting that the novel 'obsessively returns to a fundamental racial and cultural faultline', \(^{55}\) Low inaccurately dubs *Kim* a crude stereotype or 'pantomime', whose characters unequivocally reflect the racist attitudes


of the author. For example, she argues that Father Victor and the Reverend Bennett's reminders of Kim's racial identity are unambiguous affirmations of racial superiority:

As soon as Kim's ancestry is accepted, colour is invoked by Father Victor as the reality behind his appearance. Kim is revealed as truly white: "You see, Bennett he's not very black" (Kipling, 1912: 121). Bennett who had formerly dismissed him with 'little boys who steal are beaten', now alters his tone: 'it is possible I have done the boy an injustice. He is certainly white.... I am sure I must have bruised him' (Kipling 1912: 122). A racial truth determines all other truths of language, power and culture.56

Low is here guilty of a serious misreading, resulting from inattention to what the text actually states about Bennett and Victor. Their racist comments are not simply endorsed in the narrative, but are interspersed with reminders of their ignorance and the narrator's abhorrence of their views: Bennett looks at the lama with 'the triple-ringed uninterest of the creed that lumps nine-tenths of the world under the title "heathen"'.57 They are 'uncurried donkeys' next to the 'dignified and unsuspicious' lama.58 Again, when on page 214 of her book Low names these characters Father Victor and Father Bennett, her mistake suggests a failure to note the sectarian difference that their proper titles imply. The doctrinal and religious tensions implicit to

56 Ibid., p. 214. I have preserved Low's parenthetical dating to illustrate my reservations about her approach to history.

57 Kim (1901), p. 124.

58 Ibid., p. 124.
these titles (in this context the Catholic 'Father' and the Anglican 'Reverend') have a crucial bearing upon the passage Low cites. Bennett and Victor's hatred of each other's theology, coupled with their respect for each other's personal views is meant to highlight the hypocrisy of their narrow and dogmatic response to the 'heathen' ways of the Lama and Kim: 'Bennett's official abhorrence of the Scarlet Woman and all her ways was only equalled by his private respect for Father Victor.'\(^59\) Without understanding and attending to these aspects of Western culture and history, how is it possible to even begin considering their relation to another culture? Not surprisingly, given this basic misreading the cultural positions actually described in the text, Low is able to claim that 'Kim's passage from one religious culture to another is conducted with the supreme ease of changing clothes.'\(^60\) Such a view is only possible if a highly simplified model of Kim's 'religious culture' is adopted. It is worth noting also that Kim's surname is O'Hara, a point that further complicates the assertion, at the beginning of the novel, that he is 'English'. Low cites this declaration of Kim's 'Englishness' as a chief evidence of Kipling's racism. However, Kim's partial 'Irishness' clearly introduces a complexity to the issue of race overlooked in Low's reading.

Although a full consideration of *Kim* and the questions raised by these critical accounts is outside the scope of this introduction,\(^61\) many of the issues of historical

\(^{59}\) *Ibid.*, p. 120


\(^{61}\) For a recent article discussing the political context of *Kim*, see Ann Parry's 'I Am Still a Sahib', *The Kipling Journal* LXIX (1995), 11-23. Parry argues that the novel refers specifically to the Indian context of the late 1890s, advocating the 'Forward School' of military policy along the north-west frontier, which proposed a more ruthless suppression of tribesman who might come under Russian
context, close reading, and 'post-colonial theory are implicit to the readings of the short stories that follow. In undertaking a contextual study of the fiction, I aim to show how Kipling’s close engagement with his various social and political environments fed into the stories, enabling complex ironies and allusions that are frequently ignored by modern critics. Approaching Kipling’s fiction without due recognition of its ambivalence and self-questioning results in a critical bias that merely reveals the prejudices of the reader. To persist in the vein of much post-colonial theory, is to speak with the voice of the hooligan on matters of history.

For an illuminating account of the compositional details surrounding the writing of the novel, see Margaret Peller-Feeley’s ‘The Kim That Nobody Reads’, *Studies in the Novel* XIII (1981), 266-281. Peller-Feeley shows that between the manuscript and the published editions of the novel Kipling ‘reduced the spurious grandeur of English characters’, re-drafting passages to ‘yield egalitarian implications and cut racism’ (*ibid.*, 266). Peller-Feeley’s article contradicts the view that Kipling wrote without consciousness of his own prejudices and those of his imperial epoch.
INDIA
The Non-Regulation System and the Utilitarian Scholarship of British India

i. Indian Beginnings

Born in Bombay in 1865, Kipling's earliest memories of India were of the sights, sounds, and smells of the Bombay fruit market, to which he was taken by his 'ayah' (nursemaid). It was she who introduced the infant to the 'menacing darkness of tropical eventides' and the 'voices of night-winds through palm or banana leaves.' Her counsel was replete with the fascination and fear of the East that would form the most enduring, and at times disturbing, element of his literary work. Moreover, she sang and told stories in the vernacular to the child, who, returning to his parents with her words and imaginary worlds 'all unforgotten', had to be reminded to "Speak English now to Papa and Mama." His ayah, and Meeta, the Hindu bearer, first nurtured his childlike inquisitiveness and taste for stories. It was Meeta who took him to the Hindu temples, holding his hand while he looked at the 'dimly-seen, friendly Gods.' It was his ayah who told him about the hand of a dead child that was dropped in the garden by a vulture - an episode his mother forbade him to discuss.

1 *Something of Myself* p. 2.
While the rest of the Anglo-Indian community often deemed the societies and religious practices of ayahs and bearers harmful to Anglo-Indian children, Kipling was always grateful for the glimpse of another world and the rich tradition of storytelling they lavished upon him. Meeta and his nursemaid openly introduced him to the language and customs that most Anglo-Indians thought sinister and dangerous. Translating his words 'out of the vernacular idiom that one thought and dreamed in', he was a child who drifted linguistically, spiritually, and emotionally between separate and 'dimly-seen' worlds, forming the vaguest impressions of colour and scent that were to provide his first recollections in *Something of Myself*. In 1871, aged five, he was sent to England to receive his schooling. After the colours and the mysteries of his childhood in India, separation from his parents and the prospect of life in England

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4 Kipling's affectionate memories of his ayah and bearer contrast remarkably with the opinions of Aberigh Mackay, who, in a typically paranoiac discussion of Indian nursemaids, explains their corrupting influence on Anglo-Indian children. Mackay claims that the ayah and the bearer frequently 'orientalise' the children of the English, denying them English speech and company:

Baby is debarred from the society of his compatriots... so Baby lisps his dawn paean in soft Oriental accents, waking harmonious echoes among those impulsive and impressionable children of Nature who masque themselves in the black slough of Bearers and Ayahs; and Baby blubbers in Hindustani... Very soon Baby will think from right to left, and will lisp in the luxuriant bloom of Oriental hyperbole (*Twenty-One Days in India, being the Tour of Sir Ali Baba, K.C.B*. [London, 1890], pp. 91-93).

Mackay's treatise on Anglo-Indian parenthood culminates in the assertion that the bearer has, beneath the folds of his waist cloth, a 'little black fragment of the awful sleep-compellor' (ibid., p. 95). Using such drugs, Mackay claims, the bearer tranquillises and ultimately poisons the baby.

5 *Something of Myself*, p. 3.
was a trauma he never overcame. His torrid years at Southsea are famously described in 'Baa Baa, Black Sheep'; a story set in the grey world of Lorne Lodge, the dismal 'house of desolation', where he endured six unhappy years of bullying and loneliness.

In 1878, he was sent to the United Services College, Westward Ho!. Even as a schoolboy at U.S.C. he was a 'black sheep', ill-matched to his colleagues in temperament, intellect, and physical aptitude. Short-sighted, impractical, and bad at sports, he was clearly unsuited for the military career for which the college groomed its charges. Photographs taken during these years show him to be physically in advance of his years, sporting a moustache and looking more like man of forty than a boy of twelve or thirteen. The only student in the college to wear spectacles (earning him the nickname 'Giggers' or 'Gig-lamps') he was manifestly at odds with his surroundings and his adolescent company. Given the Pre-Raphaelite leanings of his family, reflected in his own juvenilia, his difference was tempered with a strain of rebelliousness that thrust him into the company of a few like-minded and precocious individuals. The antics of the group were later recollected in *Stalky & Co* (1899), which valorises the forging of pacts against teachers and the credulous world of outsiders.

In 1882, at the age of sixteen, Kipling returned to India to begin work as sub-editor on the *Civil and Military Gazette*, a newspaper serving a small community of Anglo-Indians in the Punjab. Upon landing at Bombay, the city of his birth, he explains that the scene made him 'deliver in the vernacular sentences whose meaning [he] knew not',  and that, after the rail journey to Lahore, where he was to live with

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his family, his 'English years fell away, nor ever... came back in full strength.' The episode reveals the extent to which homecoming was, for Kipling, always at the same time an experience of departure and estrangement - the fragments of the vernacular were unintelligible to him, while the England whose language he spoke and in which he had lived for eleven years simply 'fell away', never to return in full strength. Arriving at Lahore to be reunited with his parents, he was nevertheless emotionally, culturally, and politically adrift.

Returning to the Punjab burdened with worries of rejection, Kipling found in place an administrative and intellectual framework that supplied his need for complete identification with a group of like-minded Anglo-Indians, a fixed political programme, and a working agenda. Yet he also found that this political constitution of the Punjab, so different from the rest of British India, and which he came to espouse with the fervour of a religious creed, gave moral and political licence to the intimate, and at times sensual, proximity to India that he craved. Moreover, as will be illustrated, the political tradition of the Punjab was replete with its own distinctive set of values and rhetoric, which encompassed the whole of the literary and intellectual scene, particularly in the sphere of journalism, which provided Kipling with his own peculiar literary baptism.

This opening chapter discusses Kipling's attitudes and political commitments after two years in the Punjab, by which time he had begun to develop a style of writing that

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7 Ibid., p. 39.

8 In his autobiography, Kipling writes: 'For - consider! - I had returned to a Father and Mother of whom I had seen but little since my sixth year. I might have found my Mother "the sort of woman I don't care for," as in one terrible case that I know; and my Father intolerable' (ibid., p. 40).
drew its inspiration from the colonial and administrative setting of the province. Almost immediately, he was welcomed into the arms of the Anglo-Indian community, sharing their belief in a mission of rule with youthful gusto. This was, however, a ruling elite of whom he could have known little before his departure to England so many years earlier. He was encountering British India afresh, and appears to have been genuinely enthralled by the privileges and the precariousness of the lifestyle, which, as he would soon chronicle in his own stories, wavered so perilously between colonial responsibility and cloying sensuality. Commenting on the pleasures of his new way of life, he writes: 'I gave myself indeed the trouble of stepping into the garments that were held out to me after my bath, and out of them as I was assisted to do. And - luxury of which I dream still - I was shaved before I was awake.' Alongside the indulgence, there was also a widespread fear among Anglo-Indians of physical and mental illness, and of increasing political turbulence. Faced with these anxieties, Kipling sought moral anchorage at the Punjab Club. The Club was, in Kipling's own words, the 'whole of [his] outside world.' Apart from the works of political history he found to hand, it was here that he absorbed the political values and ideals of the province; in the company of 'picked men at their definite work - Civilians, Army, Education, Canals, Forestry, Engineering, Irrigation, Railways, Doctors, and Lawyers...'. From such folk, the bridge-builders and administrators of the land, he absorbed the political lore of the Punjab, hearing endless tales of the bureaucracy and
legalism that was increasingly restricting the customary administrative latitude granted to the province.

This administrative lore of the Punjab Club had its origins in an earlier phase of British rule, dating back to the authoritarian mode of government established in the province after its annexation in 1848. Aged nineteen, Kipling explains his political views, by then unfashionable, to his liberal cousin:

But (and here you will think me wrong perhaps) never lose sight of the fact that so long as you are in this country you will be looked to by the natives round in [sic] you as their guide and leader if anything goes wrong. Therefore comport yourself as such. This is a solemn fact. If anything goes wrong from a quarrel to an accident the natives instantly fly to a European for "orders". If a man's dying in the road they won't touch him unless they have an Englishman to order 'em. If there's a row in the city the native policeman will take his orders from the first wandering white man he sees and so on *ad infinitum*. This is only the sober truth.\(^2\)

Despite his obvious embarrassment about such racial generalisation ('here you will think me wrong perhaps') Kipling reminds Burne-Jones that his disbelief in native competence is merely an assertion of 'solemn fact' and 'sober truth'. Kipling's recourse

to the sober ethos of the Club indicates the extent of its conservatism and its influence upon his thinking. The self-consciousness of tone also intimates some degree of sympathy with an opposing viewpoint - an early portent of the ambivalence and self-questioning integral to the fiction.

In the early 1880s, under the liberal vicereigns of Lords Ripon and Dufferin, these slurs upon Indian competence were challenged by successive measures of reform, which aimed to increase the executive power of educated Indians in the running of the land. The response of the Punjab Club to these changes revealed how fiercely the civil service defended its rights and racial assumptions. In the controversy surrounding the Ilbert Bill, the culmination of reform and the eventual downfall of Lord Ripon, he felt directly the strength of resistance to liberal policy and the necessity of conforming to prevalent attitudes and opinions. In his autobiography, he describes how one evening he was hissed at by members of the Club for the soft line his newspaper, the Civil and Military Gazette, had recently taken on the Ilbert Bill. He was quickly learning the penalty of departure from the dominant conservative outlook of the province. As he explains: 'It is not pleasant to sit still when one is [eighteen] while all your universe hisses you.'

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13 The Ilbert Bill, named after the Legal Member of Council, was controversially introduced in February 1883. Reforming certain areas of the legal process, it incidentally granted native authorities the power to try British subjects. After initially opposing the Bill with numerous items of 'stern disapproval' (Something of Myself, p. 32), the Civil and Military Gazette re-adjusted its position, proclaiming that the Bill should be allowed to pass.

14 Something of Myself, p. 51. I have corrected Kipling's error about his age in the printed text. At the time of the incident he was eighteen, not, as he wrote, twenty.
Kipling immersed himself in the administrative ideals of the Punjab, allowing them to shape his views on writing and the executive value of the written word. After only three years in the province, he considers his own journalistic and literary ambitions to be far less important than the achievement of practical results in the administration of the land, identifying with the Indian Civil Service and proudly describing the influence of his own writings upon government:

What I mean is that the population out here die from purely preventable causes; are starved from purely preventable causes; are in native states hideously misgoverned from their rulers' own folly and so on... You see, if once you set the ball a rolling you can generally get two or three men infinitely better than yourself with twenty years' experience to help it along. They only want the prodding and therefore it is your bounden duty, for the performance or nonperformance of which your conscience holds you answerable, that you keep your pen-point sharp and clean [emphasis Kipling's] and try all you know to get a style that commands attention and the power of writing faciley [sic]. It mayn't be literature (there's ample time for that in the next world, where one of the delights of Paradise will be printing your poems on rubbed rough edged paper and reading laudatory reviews of 'em in the Celestial Intelligencer) but it may save men and cattle alive and lead to really tangible results.\[15\]

\[15\] To Margaret Burne-Jones, 27 September 1885, Letters, vol. 1, pp. 92-93.
He not only subordinates his literary ideals to the ideals of the ICS, but considers himself, as a journalist, to be a functioning component of the administration. Writing is portrayed as an act of civil responsibility, undertaken in the spirit of a physical work for the good of the province; while literary and intellectual pursuits are considered the pastime of irresponsible dilettantes. Even this early on, portending his later role as the literary spokesman of the empire, he earnestly wishes for his work to have a material relevance and impact upon the workings of the world. His comments to Burne-Jones invoke many of the key themes and motifs of his time in the Punjab: the valorisation of men with twenty years of first-hand experience, the disavowal of literary and intellectual pretensions, the disbelief in the capacity of the native rulers for proper government, and, typically, a lightly sardonic invocation of Celestial Paradise, which is reserved for the eternal enjoyment of the literary doyen. Such a light-hearted dismissal of literary and metaphysical aspirations strikes a discordant note alongside the aesthetically, intellectually, and spiritually rounded overtures of Liberal statesmen during the period, who propounded self-government, instituted through acquaintance with British philosophical, literary, and religious traditions. Most significant of all is Kipling's encomium on the clean and sharp pen-point, which, as I shall explain, is a common motif of the manly aesthetic in the writings of the Punjab. The 'clean' and sharp pen is again a weapon to be wielded against the ills of a backward and recalcitrant people. The ambivalent metaphor of the pen as a sword, to be sharpened and cleaned ready for action, fully encapsulates the dualism of administrative ideology in the province, which is caught between compassionate intervention and a strong-handed suppression of native rule. The 'cleanliness' of the pen, italicised by Kipling in the passage, also suggests corruptions, of a departmental or sexual kind that can
threaten the virile, purposive work of the writer. These corruptions of the 'pen' and the administrative department form a crucial, obsessive fascination in Kipling's early fiction and poetry. The pen is the source of administrative rigour, but also of slippage between cultures and people. It is a highly sexual motif, suggesting the fears of despoliation, of uncleanness, latent in the intimate programme of personal government characteristic of the Punjab. Before considering the ambivalence of Kipling's view of writing here, I shall first explain the administrative system and the philosophical contests from which it derives.

In the writings of ex-officials, the Punjab is frequently associated with the so-called 'non-regulation' system of administration favoured by the brothers Henry and John Lawrence, who, along with Charles Greville Mansel, governed the province after its incorporation into the British Raj in 1849. After a series of disputes between the two Lawrences, the Governor-General intervened in 1852, offering Henry the post of political agent in Rajputana and appointing John Lawrence governor of the Punjab. Gradually John Lawrence perfected the legal and administrative

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16 In *Magic and Myth in Kipling's India*, Lewis Wurgaft considers the psychological implications for the Anglo-Indian community of the well-documented dispute between the Lawrence brothers, arguing that their struggle is itself a heroic narrative exemplifying the Punjab method of strong rule (*ibid.*, p. 85). Wurgaft pays little attention, however, to the non-regulation system itself, which had an equally mythic status and arguably a more direct material influence on the thinking of the province. The non-regulation system was a conscientiously organised programme of abridgement and simplification in the judicial and legislative spheres, influencing the form and intellectual scope of administrative discourse and Kipling's fictions of the Punjab. Committed to a psychoanalytical reading of history, Wurgaft studies character and ego psychology at the expense of textual and
mechanisms of 'non-regulation' government, which climaxed in an assured and authoritarian response to the Mutiny of 1857, making his name synonymous with a system of rule for which the Punjab would be famed throughout India.

L.S.S. O'Malley, a veteran of the Bengal civil service, writes of the system operating under Lawrence, in which the simplification and abridgement of the law allowed the swift and efficient resolution of conflicts:

Personality was not obscured or overlaid by routine but had full play. All were ready to take the initiative and accept responsibility. There was, therefore, much personal government, but it was by no means a substitute for government by law. One of John Lawrence's maxims was "Do a thing regularly and legally if you can do it as well and vigorously in that way as irregularly and illegally." ¹⁷

The non-regulation system encouraged personal initiative and responsibility. These are the values that reverberate through the young Kipling's comments to his cousin on the governing instincts and obligations of the Englishman. Lawrence's half-ironic endorsement of irregular and illegal conduct informs Kipling's fiction and poetry, in which the mysterious code of human existence, usually capitalised and yoked to the definite article so as to be written 'The Law', has an existence superior to the impermanent regulations of the statute book or the parliamentary history of a nation.

As O'Malley goes on to explain, this commitment to 'personal' government is rigorously supported in the spheres of jurisprudence and polity. The code of procedure drafted by Montgomery and Temple compresses the systems of British and Indian law into a manual of instantly comprehensible directives:

The officers under him [John Lawrence] were required to follow a code (drafted by Sir Robert Montgomery and Sir Richard Temple) which explained the main provisions of the several systems of Indian law on such matters as inheritance, marriage, adoption, the disposition of property by will or otherwise, and also set forth the chief principles to be observed in other branches of law, such as contracts, sale, debt and commercial usage. There were full provisions for the admission of evidence; there were also complete arrangements for reference to arbitration and for ascertaining local custom. Formalities and technicalities were kept to a minimum, for every other consideration was made subordinate to the necessity for making justice cheap and quick, sure and simple.  

In keeping with this wariness of 'formalities and technicalities', the historical and political writings of Anglo-Indian officials lay constant stress upon the importance of abridgement and simplification, idealising radically summarised accounts of local custom and the qualities of flexibility and personal responsibility. The preservation of the Anglo-Indian community is retrospectively attributed to the predominance of

\[18 \text{Ibid., pp. } 58-59.\]
these qualities in the civil administration, granting these characteristics, and the administrators who embody them, almost mythical status in British India. Conversely, the proliferation of legislative and procedural complexities is portrayed as a threat to the civil order:

The Non-Regulation system with its simple methods of administration and avoidance of complicated forms and procedure was peculiarly suited to aboriginal races. The danger of applying the elaborate Regulation system to primitive peoples, and the injustice which it might inflict on them, were forcibly brought home to the government of India by the Santal Rebellion of 1855.19

In the writings of civilians and historians of the Punjab, non-regulation recurs as a mythical guarantor of social stability, particularly among the warlike tribes of the frontier. With its rejection of complicated civil procedure and legislation in favour of direct action, the system is accredited with the salvation of the Raj in the darkest hours of 1857. As O'Malley explains: 'it is no exaggeration to say that the saving of India was in a large measure due to the Non-Regulation system in the Punjab.'20 Given the increasing disaffection of the rural masses and the political empowerment of western educated Indians in the late-nineteenth century, many Anglo-Indians believed that the

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19 *Ibid.*, p. 55. The Santals were a famously peaceful folk in the province of Bengal, whose unredressed civil disputes prompted a minor uprising against the British.

only safeguard against future 'rebellion', was a return to the authoritarian methods of the non-regulation system.

Non-regulation made a close personal involvement in the affairs of the colonised peoples an essential component of British rule. The code drafted by Robert Montgomery and Richard Temple attended closely to the 'several systems of Indian law', initiating the myth of omnipotent and incarnate authority that pervades the history of British rule in the Punjab. The Punjab Administration Report of 1854 offered the following portrait of the exemplary civil judge, stressing the need for an intimate, yet highly public and visible acquaintance with the people:

In the opinion of the natives, the first and best qualification of a judge is not legal lore or logical acumen, but a knowledge of the position and insight into the character of the persons who come before him... The [exemplary] judge associates with the people, lives, moves, and has his being among them, not only by social intercourse but in the transaction of business, and this not of one kind but of many. He must therefore observe rustic society in its every phase. The same influences affect the parties as well as the judges. Every suitor and witness acts under the eye of his neighbour, in the presence of many of his acquaintances... 21

According to this 'village system', the authority of the judge depends less upon learning or intellect than the 'opinion of the natives', which passes the final verdict on the right of the Englishman to judge and, ultimately, to rule. Such a picture of the colonial

21 Quoted from S.S. Thorburn's The Punjab in Peace and War (Delhi, 1904), pp. 167-168.
hierarchy, openly acknowledging the dependency of the British Raj upon the loyalty of the peasant proprietors, introduces a deep ambivalence and insecurity into the system of the Punjab. The 'social intercourse' necessary to the pacification of the native was also a source of anxiety for the British, who risked 'corruption' by the intimacy they courted with India. It was possible not only to be judged and found wanting by the village community, but to lose one's cultural bearings; to be swept away by the mysteries of savage custom - to 'go native'.

Something of this double anxiety of power in a situation of apparent powerlessness is evident in the Biblical reference to St Paul among the Athenians. Paul's defence of Christianity before the Areopagus was, in the administration report, taken to parallel the work of the English judge, whose presence among the Indian people (the Athenians) was endowed with evangelical overtones. However, the Biblical echo also suggests that, like Paul, the judge was at the mercy of the people, who could reject and scourge him for his teaching. The judge was a representative of Christ, living and moving among the unredeemed, which further reminded the British that the saviour 'came to that which was his own but his own did not receive him.' This fear of rejection and mastery by the unregenerate masses underlies the curious fluctuation between compassion and despotism in the non-regulation system, which, in the intellectual and literary spheres, wavers between sympathy and a 'martial' view of government and the written word.

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22 This fear of corruption accounts for Mackay's suspicions of the Ayah (see note 4 above).

23 Called before the Areopagus to give an account of his teaching, Paul explains: 'The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands... "For in him we live and move and have our being." As some of your own poets have said, "We are his offspring"' (Acts 17. 24-28).

24 John 1. 11.
The adoption of a formal and rhetorical strategy that accurately reflects the necessary urgency and intimacy of the political situation is evident in the writings of S.S. Thorburn, district officer and political commentator of the Punjab.

In 1886, the year that Kipling began publishing the sequence of stories 'Plain Tales From the Hills', Thorburn published *Musalmans and Money-Lenders*, in which he urged that the government 'partially revert to the "paternal" system of the early Lawrence school.' Thorburn warned that increasing legislative complexity was causing widespread discontent amongst the peasant proprietors of India. He argued that by granting the peasantry individual rights in land, and elaborating the legal system until it was 'profitably comprehensible only to the superior intelligence of money-lenders and legal practitioners', the government raised the credit whilst offering little legal protection to the indigent and uneducated agriculturalist. This induced borrowing and the voluntary alienation of land rights in settlement of debt, causing the 'steady displacement of the hereditary landholders by the trading castes'; a process that, if left unchecked, would promise widespread disaffection and possibly rebellion among exploited Indians. Thorburn's work constituted a return to the 'oriental' school of administration, which acknowledges the importance of the ryot's loyalty to the British imperial undertaking, and consequently urges a greater understanding of Indian agricultural society, customs, and institutions. However, this was to be achieved by close experience, not by intellectual deduction or theorising.

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26 *Musalmans and Money-lenders* (Delhi, 1886), p. 98.

Thorburn's rejection of complex procedural and legislative institutions, to which he attributed this massive erosion of rights in land, was accompanied by a corresponding disavowal of recondite statistical and deductive methods of government and historiography. His work sets out to revive the 'paternal' tradition of the province, rejecting theoretical and systematic approaches in favour of personal experience and initiative. The programme was a radical departure from the positivistic ideology operating elsewhere in India. Anti-technological, anti-progressive, and anti-liberal, Thorburn's scholarship has more in common with Thomas Carlyle than with the utilitarian school of polity represented in India by James and John Stuart Mill. Heroes and hero-worship were fundamental components of the Punjab ideology, rendering Carlyle's work, with its admiration for the strong man ruling alone, an appropriate philosophical counterpart of the political programme of the region. In terms of the language and the philosophy behind 'political' works such as those of Thorburn, the rugged prose and veneration of the man of letters as a hero and leader of men squared perfectly with the thinking of Carlyle in *Heroes and Hero-worship* and *Past and Present*. Thorburn, and the rest of the Punjab's admiration for John Lawrence is in keeping with the hero-worship Carlyle thought essential to civilisation. In *Past and Present*, he argues that hero-worship is 'the soul of all social business among men;... the doing of it well, or the doing of it ill, measures accurately what degree of well-being or of ill-being there is in the world's affairs.' Moreover the hero, like Shakespeare or Johnson, could be a man of letters. Not surprisingly, such a belief was attractive to Kipling, who sought to make an impact on the material world through his

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28 Carlyle is discussed more fully below.
writings. To Carlyle, literature was a 'quarrel', an 'internecine duel',\textsuperscript{30} providing a martial view of the written word perfectly in keeping with the administrative requirements of the Punjab. Thorburn's view of language and writing echoes this martial philosophy, identifying a sparse, rigorous mode of rhetoric with the efficient running of the land. In his admiration for the heroic concision of John Lawrence, whose pen-driving wore his eyes to blindness, Thorburn perpetuates the view of language and writing as a warrior-like exploit, urging that the sword and the pen be placed on a more equal footing in the running of the land:

John Lawrence, who barely wrote a redundant word, literally wore his eyes to blindness by pen-driving. In his statue on the Mall in Lahore he stands with a pen in one hand and a sword in the other and asks the Punjabis, 'By which will you be governed?' Though the symbolism intended is evident, the effect is unfortunate, as giving too high a place in administration to the power of the pen.\textsuperscript{31}

The greater equivalence between the sword and the pen urged by Thorburn is typical of the martial style of prose and leadership valorised in the Punjab. In the proper hands, such as those of a John Lawrence, who 'barely wrote a redundant word', the pen is like a sword, uplifted to rebuke or strike down its opponents. Thorburn almost

\textsuperscript{29} Thomas Carlyle, \textit{Past and Present} (1843), quoted from \textit{The Works of Thomas Carlyle} (London, 1897) vol. X, p. 34.

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 104.

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{The Punjab in Peace and War}, p. 156.
regrets the too-liberal symbolism of the statue on the Mall: for him, the sword and
the pen are equal and mutually defining concepts, the pen should be used with the
thrusting, martial intensity of the sword, while the military power represented by the
sword should be infused with the intellectual acumen and guile represented by the
pen.32 The non-regulation system was founded on just such a balance of civil and
military authority, which Thorburn's approach to language and government sustains.
As Thorburn perceived it, the modern India outside of the Punjab was increasingly
reliant upon a soft-headed, bureaucratic 'pen-pushing' for the filing of reports, the
collation of data, and the intensifying centralisation of legal and administrative
process. For him, as for many other commentators in the Punjab, the rambling excess
of the pen had become the Achilles heel of British dominion in India. Statistical and
theoretical modes of government, of the kind proposed by liberal statesmen and
theorists, were the ineffectual outpourings of pompous intellectuals with no real
experience of the land or peoples. Beneath Thorburn's prose, as beneath the early
writings of Kipling, there is a lusty contempt for any outward display of learning or
intellectual faculty. Nevertheless, despite Thorburn's onanistic association of
excessive pen-driving with blindness, the business of centralisation was well
underway in the late-nineteenth century. The ideals of non-regulation - individual
responsibility, initiative, and powers of equity - were increasingly abandoned in

32 In *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1841), Carlyle writes: 'I will allow a thing to struggle for itself in
this world, with any sword or tongue or implement it has, or can lay hold of. We will let it preach
and pamphleteer, and fight, and to the uttermost bestir itself, and do, beak and claws, whatsoever is
in it; very sure that it will, in the long-run, conquer nothing which does not deserve to be conquered'
favour of legislative and procedural uniformity. Thorburn attributes the demise of non-regulation to administrative changes instituted in 1866, when a Chief Court was established in Lahore, a regulation code of civil procedure was extended to the province, and the ideals of non-regulation were abandoned in favour of procedural uniformity:

[T]he land-revenue settlements had been completed and every field in the province mapped, registered, and assessed to a fixed sum exacted twice a-year, rain or no rain; then a Chief Court, with 500 subordinate courts, administering laws and rules adapted from every statute book in Europe, regulated the affairs of everybody, and to interpret and misinterpret those laws and rules a multiplying locust-swarm of pleaders had settled on the land. As the Government, courts, lawyers, and money-lenders were satisfied, complaint was unseemly from the people, the mere producers, who refused to be educated or to take the trouble to understand the system...33

Such criticism of statistical and legalistic methods was a direct assault on the liberal and utilitarian tradition in British India, which enjoyed a resurgence in the late-nineteenth century; most popularly and persuasively in the writing of William Wilson-Hunter. Eminent administrator, member of the Viceroy's council, and compiler of the *Imperial Gazetteer* (a statistical survey of the Indian empire) Hunter inherited a utilitarian commitment to deductive and statistical methods.

Hunter's enthusiasm for statistical inquiry owes much to the two dominant figures of liberal philosophy and polity in British India: James and John Stuart Mill. In *A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive*, John Stuart Mill dismisses the inference of truths from personal experience, asserting the necessity of deducing general, systemic principles from the collection and collation of available facts. Mill argues that 'Whenever the evidence which we derive from observation of known cases justifies us in drawing an inference respecting even one unknown case, we should on the same evidence be justified in drawing an inference with respect to a whole class of cases.' The 'Deductive Method' is responsible for 'all the theories by which vast and complicated phenomena are embraced under a few simple laws, which, considered as the laws of those great phenomena, could never have been detected by their direct study.' Mill's attack on 'erroneous inference from sense' and his 'complete reliance' upon the general proposition embodies the classic utilitarian emphasis upon ratiocinative extrapolation from available data. The

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34 John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive* (1843) [hereafter referred to as *A System of Logic*], *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1977), vol. VII, p. 284. Taken in the context of his work at the India Office, Mill's belief in inference was rather apt: the Orient was similarly remote, and British conceptions of it were therefore, according to his reasoning, dependent upon the inference of general principles from more local, accessible facts. What Mill terms the 'codification' of vast and complicated phenomena (*ibid.*, p. 462) has obvious associations with jurisprudence in British India. See Eric Stokes *English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford, 1959), pp. 219-33, for the influence of Bentham and utilitarianism upon the drafting of the Indian Penal Code.

35 *A System of Logic*, p. 462.


'codification' of vast and complex phenomena has obvious associations with juridical and administrative codification in British India, setting this utilitarian philosophical tradition at loggerheads with the rough methods of the Punjab.

As 'the science of science itself', Mill's definition of 'logic' and the deductive method has an overarching applicability to all human experience that makes it particularly relevant to the social and political sphere; an application Mill undertakes in *Considerations On Representative Government*. As Chief Examiner at the East India Office, he was in a position to recommend a political programme that concurred with these philosophical arguments, establishing a correspondingly remote and mechanical theory of government. Mill argues that government is a 'science', following universal 'principles and rules' that, in extension to the colonies, require only slight modification. In the colonies, English systems of legislation and financial policy 'require modifications solely of detail, to adapt them to any state of society sufficiently advanced to possess rulers capable of understanding them.' Here was a philosophical precedent for the codification and centralisation of power occurring in the India of the later nineteenth century. The utilitarians sparked a legacy of codification that culminated in the enactment of the Indian Penal Code in 1860,

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38 Ibid., p. 10.

39 John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, vol. XIX p. 393. It is a curious paradox that Mill's liberal belief in the universal capacity of humankind to achieve some level of orderly, civilised society results in a governmental programme disrespectful of the culture and history of colonised peoples, taking for granted the 'superiority' of British learning and knowledge. This dismissal of indigenous traditions and institutions is most famously illustrated in Macaulay's well-known disparagement of Indian literature, the 'Minute On Indian Education'. 
which, following the Mutiny, was far less attentive to Indian custom and law than Macaulay's original draft of twenty years earlier. The enactment of the Penal Code was accompanied by an aggressive spate of legislation during the sixties and seventies that was an attempt, through a programme often overtly liberal and reformist in character, to assert the conformity and cohesion the Mutiny had challenged.  

Mill's ratiocinative methods were the philosophical counterparts of centralised, machine rule. As he argues, even space itself could be charted, calculated, and chronicled through the deductive method. Facts of astronomy were inaccessible to direct observation, so were 'proved indirectly, by aid of the inductions founded on other facts which we can more easily reach. For example, the distance of the moon from the earth was determined by a very circuitous process. If the moon could known through the workings of the mind, how much less was the geographical remoteness and cultural difference of the Orient an obstacle to the principles of logic! John Stuart Mill's celebration of deductive methods and philosophical detachment in authority owes much to his father, who, in the preface to the *History of British India*, extends this utilitarian principle of rational deduction into a justification of his own credentials to write on India without ever having visited the subcontinent and without knowledge of its languages. The utilitarian commitment to centralised and impersonal authority is embodied most fully in Bentham's *Panopticon*, which proposes a system of incarceration, or an 'inspection house' designed to maximise the visibility and thereby the control exercised over its

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41 *A System of Logic*, p. 286.
inmates. Bentham stresses that the identity and the motives of the operator of the panopticon are unimportant; asserting the primacy of the system itself as the means of discipline and authority. Such an objective of systematic scrutiny underlies the political agenda of late-Victorian India. Even though Eric Stokes argues that elements of the utilitarian legacy persisted even in the procedural codification of the Punjab under the Lawrences, it is clear that Temple's code, and equally importantly its depiction in the work of historians, was drafted in a spirit contradictory to the statistical and deductive rationale of the utilitarians. In the work of such historians of the Punjab, as in the original code of non-regulation and the writings of Kipling himself, personal experience and initiative are prized far more highly than powers of deduction or surveillance. In fact, the 'gothic' elements in Kipling's early fiction, and the use of disorientating narratorial frames, might be considered in some measure to resist this ideology of complete visibility and surveillance.


43 See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London, 1975). Foucault describes the Panopticon as 'a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it' (ibid., p. 201) again illustrating the de-personalisation of authority in the utilitarian tradition. Ironically, both James Mill and Bentham argued on the basis of economic utility for the emancipation of the colonies. Nevertheless, as in the case of Hunter, their philosophies were enmeshed in the situation of authority and control over the colonies. See also Klaus Knorr, *British Colonial Theories* (Toronto, 1944), pp. 251-267 for the influence of Mill, Bentham, and radical philosophy on colonial practice.

44 *English Utilitarians and India*, pp. 245 - 248.
In the late-nineteenth century, the scholarship of William Wilson-Hunter illustrates the persistent legacy of utilitarianism and scientific positivism underlying the liberal administrative programme. Much as Thorburn's work adopts a methodology in keeping with an intimate, autocratic mode of government, the form and methodology of Hunter's *Annals of Rural Bengal* reflects the programme of comprehensive surveillance it associates with the effective and stable rule of India. These provincial histories were not politically neutral, detached accounts of historical conditions, but were enmeshed in the material circumstances upon which they commented; deriving their intellectual and methodological programmes directly from the modes of government they describe. The material conditions of government produce or emphasise, in each case, a distinct philosophical tradition and historiography, frequently deriving from the political policy and administrative province with which they affiliate themselves. In turn, this influences the form, language, and intellectual methodology of the works, suggesting a close interaction between scholarship, writing, and the government of the land. To be an intellectual in British India was, these books suggest, to occupy a position of power and material responsibility.

Hunter's eclectic mixture of anthropological, juridical, philological and evolutionary speculation culminates in a final plea for a similarly detailed and 'accurate' assessment of contemporary India, suggesting the material implementation of the philosophical and scholarly programme undertaken in the pages of the volume itself. In the conclusion of the work, Hunter urges the development of more adequate machinery 'for discovering the pressure of the population', using statistical measures to accurately deduce and monitor the conditions of the various 'forest-tribes' of India:
Statistics form an indispensable complement of civilisation; but at present we have no reliable means of ascertaining the population of a single district of rural Bengal, the quantity of food it produces, or any one of those items which as a whole render a people prosperous and loyal, or hungry and seditious.  

Rugged systems of government, of the kind associated with the Punjab, Sind, and the North-West Frontier province, are dismissed as 'systems of non-inquiry', ill-equipped to undertake the sophisticated work of scholarship required for the accurate documentation and surveillance of India. Annals of Rural Bengal asserts the political ideal of a comprehensively mapped, surveyed, and, effectively, subordinated India; identifying the achievement of this objective with the philosophical and statistical method it affirms. When Hunter discusses the racial intolerance of 'Sanskrit literature subsequent to the Vedic hymns', he performs a multiple ideological task; suggesting his intimate acquaintance with Indian history and culture, while

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46 Eric Stokes explains the important role of Fitzjames Stephen, law member for India (1869-1872), in the codification of British law in India and the establishment of a 'great administrative machine' based on the utilitarian model of Bentham (English Utilitarians and India, pp. 280-281). Stokes adds: 'It was from the time that Stephen was in India that a central secretariat was established to collect and disseminate statistical information. The first census of British India was undertaken in 1872. From this work, headed by W.W. Hunter, there eventually emerged the massive Imperial Gazetteer of British India (ibid., p. 281). Hunter's role in this monumental undertaking illustrates how far utilitarian theory was instrumental in the running of the land.

47 Annals of Rural Bengal, p. 103.
simultaneously debunking it and implying the racial enlightenment of his own liberal culture and politics. Similarly, when he examines, through Sanskrit literature, the origins of racial differentia amongst 'Brahmanized Aryans', suggesting the likelihood that 'the Greeks and Persians were sprung from errant Kshatryas who had lost their caste',\textsuperscript{48} he implies a British knowledge of Indian history superior to the knowledge of the Indian people themselves, while at the same time implying the mutual origins of the two cultures in a common Greco-Persian stock. This justification of British commonality with the 'noble', Aryan caste, is typical of the racial muddle that underpins Hunter's liberalism, which looks to an indigenous system of caste differentiation to assert a measure of equality between the races of the governed and the governing peoples. The Indo-Aryan was historically proven an able ruler over the dumb, toiling masses of Indian 'aborigines', and was therefore, he implies, fit to accept a measure of governing responsibility under the present British rulers.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p. 103. Hunter's anthropological and philosophical speculations are indebted to Henry Maine, legal member in India from 1862-1869, who, in \textit{Ancient Law} (London, 1861), \textit{Village Communities in the East and West} (London, 1871), and 'The Effects of Observation of India on Modern European Thought' (London, 1875), uses the study of Sanskrit and comparative jurisprudence to argue that India comprised Aryan institutions arrested at an early stage of development. For more on the influence of Maine, see Eric Stokes, 'Administrators and Historical Writing' in C.H. Philips, ed., \textit{Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon} (London, 1962) pp. 385-403. Maine's contribution to anthropological theory is usefully considered in J. W. Burrow, \textit{Evolution and Society} (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 144-169, which places scientific positivism in its geological and anthropological context.

\textsuperscript{49} Hunter uses Sanskrit literature to explain the intellectual superiority of the Aryan Bengali over the Indian 'aborigine', whose lack of philosophical acumen he blames for their servitude:
Hunter's racial vindication of the Indo-Aryan was not undertaken without an element of intimidation for the modern rulers of India. These close racial counterparts of the British and former rulers of the country had, after all, lapsed into 'effeminacy' and governmental 'sloth', refusing to 'share their light with the people who dwelt in darkness [the 'aborigines']', and ultimately falling victim to successive waves of conquest. Such, implicitly, was the fate in store for those who would scupper liberal objectives.

'In every point in which two races can be compared, the aborigines, called in early Sanskrit literature Dasyans, were painfully inferior. Their speech was of a broken, imperfect type. The Aryan warrior used to pray for victory over 'the men of the inarticulate utterance' and 'of the uncouth talk'... Of [their] language, the most striking features are its multitude of words for whatever can be seen or handled, and its absolute inability to express reflex conceptions of the intellect, the absence of terms representing relationship in general, and conspicuously the relationship of cause and effect; its meagreness in giving utterance to the emotions, those higher forms of consciousness in which passion is happily blended with reflection; and its total barrenness of any expressions to shadow forth the mystery of man's inward life' (ibid., p. 113).

The emphasis on philosophical and intellectual prowess, those 'higher forms of consciousness', is entirely in keeping with the liberal intellectual and political programme, in which the education of Indians along western lines was thought essential to any role in government. The high value Hunter attaches to 'reflection' and the 'the mystery of man's inward life' implies the metaphysical and philosophical nature of the education he deems a prerequisite for government. As Gauri Viswanathan argues, such a philosophical and metaphysical programme resulted in the development of the study of English literature in India, which in turn contributed to the establishment of English literature as an academic discipline in the British educational system. See her work, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* for more on this influence.

50 *Annals of Rural Bengal*, p. 139.
As a hugely ambitious work of history, drawing on a limitless range of disciplines and methods, *Annals of Rural Bengal* is a formal testimony to the possible scope of British rule, which Hunter associates with a copious knowledge of all areas of Indian culture and history. In keeping with the implications of Mill's *A System of Logic*, a methodological and statistical approach is deemed infinitely superior to the rugged authoritarianism of, for example, the Punjab. Compendious knowledge translates, ultimately, into a massive programme of surveillance, achieved through the impersonal machinery of statistical inquiry.

The devaluation of personal agency underwrites Hunter's notions of historiography,\(^5\) influencing his view of the function and limits of the writer. His views on the historical role of the individual are incompatible with those of the non-regulation provinces, as he makes clear in his criticism of the veneration of Lawrence in the Punjab:

Bengal must have become a British province although on some other field than Plassey, and the Mutiny would assuredly have been put down, even had no Lawrence stood in the gap in that great and terrible day of the Lord.\(^5\)

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\(^5\) Eric Stokes comments of Lyall, Maine, and Hunter: 'While their teaching was to reduce history to the interplay of impersonal forces and to discountenance the supreme role of the individual hero, their final lesson, even in Lyall's case, was a moral parable for the future handling of Indian affairs.'

'Administrators and Historical Writing', *Historians of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon*, p. 403.

Such a thinly-veiled attack on the cult of Lawrence and the non-regulation system asserts a linguistic as well as a political opposition to the highly personalised and vigorous opinion of writing and history in the post-Mutiny Punjab. It results in a historical and political approach that downplays the individual and emphasises the role of wider systems and mechanisms. Hunter warns that: 'In untwisting one strand from the cable that binds age to age, we are apt to overestimate the part which the isolated fibre played in the making of the rope', challenging the discourse and the practice of personal government in the Punjab.

In terms of their scholarly and intellectual traditions, the various provinces of British India adopted conflicting and sometimes confrontational positions. Much as Hunter's work subordinates personal experience to deductive and extrapolatory methods, denouncing the simple paternalism still operating in the Punjab, the Central, and the North-West Provinces, the officials and historians of Kipling's province, in their turn, denounce those sophisticated and scientific methods of scholarship consonant with the extensive enactments and policies of the regulation provinces. The idealisation of concepts of flexibility and programmes of legislative simplification in the civil service of the Punjab directly influences the formal and political characteristics of its scholarly, literary and journalistic output. The historical and administrative writings of the province frequently adopt formal and rhetorical strategies which re-duplicate the principles of simplification and directness that they uphold in the political scene.

Kipling's work engages with a dominant protocol of representation that prizes, above all else, the capacity to deliver detailed information in a radically summarised

and codified form, enabling the swift and effective translation of theory into practice. It belongs to this tradition suspicious of technicalities; favouring practical and personal initiative over exhaustive theory and legislation. Kipling's penchant for epigraphs, aphorisms, dialect, the ballad form, and perhaps most strikingly of all, his principal commitment to the genre of the short story reflects in some measure the ideology of compression and directness he absorbed in the Punjab. In the early fiction, the intense philosophical rumination and finely wrought prose characteristic of nineteenth-century British literature are stripped away in favour of a sparse, rugged style, which is the vehicle for blunt, self-confident expression of a narrator who knows, with certainty, the inside truths of British India.

ii. Kipling's Mutiny Men: Lawrence, Carlyle, and 'In the Year '57'

In keeping with the inscription on Lawrence's statue on the Mall in Lahore, Kipling asserts the governing power of the pen, and the necessity of a sparse written style that is the counterpart of uncomplicated and authoritarian government. In the political domain, the non-regulation system was the model for Kipling's views on government and writing. Like Thorburn, he favoured a return to John Lawrence's style of administration, in which personality and initiative were given free play. Aside from the official works of history and the guidance of the Club, he learnt the administrative merits of knowing and dealing directly with the people by observing his father, who, Kipling noticed, completed 'about twice as much work as other men'\textsuperscript{54} simply because he knew and understood the ways of Indian folk. However,

\textsuperscript{54}To Margaret Burne-Jones, 28 November 1885-11 January 1886, \textit{Letters}, vol. 1, p. 100.
like Thorburn he recognised that centralisation and procedural uniformity were increasingly consigning the last vestiges of non-regulation to the history books:

In this country everything is done by personal influence - the personal influence of the Englishman. Only our government doesn’t recognize the fact and goes centralizing and centralizing at Simla until the District officers - the little kings of the counties - are reduced simply to machines for compiling statistics and lose touch with the people. A man who has the confidence of the natives can do anything whether he is Civilian or Unofficial.\textsuperscript{55}

Much as Thorburn scorned 'machine rule', Kipling laments the ongoing transformation of the District Officer into a machine for compiling reports. To Kipling, the British administration was an alien system that merely rested on the surface of a much deeper and fathomless native life:

Underneath our excellent administrative system; under the piles of reports and statistics; the thousands of troops, the doctors; and the civilian runs wholly untouched and unaffected the life of the peoples of the land - a life as full of impossibilities and wonders as the Arabian nights.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., pp. 99-100.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p. 99.
India was a land of fantasy and desire, akin to the fictional worlds of the Arabian Nights. Yet it was also a land of mystery and terror, in which the troops, the doctors, and the civil servants were barely in control, a land in relation to whose vast cultural and historical legacy the laws and the government of the British appeared insignificant. The passage expresses the underlying paradox of desire and fear engendered by non-regulation, which asserts an intimacy with 'wild' and ancient India, yet in so doing ultimately calls in question the authority of the governing race, whose systems of law appear disconcertingly inadequate to the task of government, needing radical abridgement and revision. The 'piles of reports and statistics' are no longer a testimony to the weight and authority of British civilisation and intellectual endeavour, but simply a muddle of papers spread on the surface of chaos, as if to hide the 'ungovernable' mystery of India from a fear-stricken administration.

Kipling's commitment to the administrative ideal of John Lawrence and the non-regulation system is perhaps best indicated by a little-known, unsigned and uncollected item that he published in the Civil and Military Gazette in two parts on May 14 and 23, 1887. Entitled 'In the Year '57',57 and evidently published to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the suppression of the Indian Mutiny, the article illustrates the unrepressed adulation of John Lawrence, his government, and his swift and strong response to the uprising, which was such a potent and prestigious moment for the rulers of the Punjab. Kipling here invokes one of the most powerful mythologies of the province, so deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness of the Anglo-Indian community, to document the ills of the modern administration and urge

57 The article is included in Kipling's scrapbooks at Sussex (The Kipling Papers, 28/4). I quote directly from the newspaper.
a return to the methods of Lawrence. But even more significantly, the piece hovers between the modes of historical writing and fiction to indicate the intellectual and philosophical components and forebears of the pre-Mutiny style of government in the Punjab.

It opens in the modern day setting of an Indian records office, with the narrator, a historian or journalist who can safely be taken as Kipling, reading and delivering various speculations and comments on a file of letters written in July 1857 during the tumult of the Mutiny by John Lawrence and his fellow-administrators. The fictional scenario of an editor/historian sorting through a mass of intractable sources is highly reminiscent of the Carlyle of *Sartor Resartus*, a philosophical reference whose implications will be further discussed. This narratorial device enables Kipling to not only document occurrences in Lawrence's office, but to comment upon the specific terms of the correspondence, the mechanisms of the administration, and, even more pointedly, the type of language and expression deployed by Lawrence and his men. The piece opens with the almost stock deprecation of the Babu, the educated Indian keeper of the papers, who, Kipling suggests, has little respect for the sacred file he hands over so contemptuously:

The file was nearly a foot thick, and as fresh in appearance as if it had just been put into the record-room.

"All that is worth keeping of the Mutiny papers" said the Babu. Proceedings of the Government of the Punjab - July '57 - selected."

There was obviously little sentiment about the Babu. As he slapped the
file down on the table, there showed on the rim of a fat white docket the initials "J.L.".

The nonchalance of the Babu implies a disrespect, among educated Indians and their liberal patrons, for the historical evidences of British authority. As a kind of political counter-challenge, 'In the Year '57' launches a defence of Lawrence-worship in the Punjab, attacking the 'dark' forces of reform that would erase both the memory and the mythological status of John Lawrence:

Nothing written by John Lawrence's strong hand should ever fade, and it seemed quite natural, therefore, that the rugged characters should be black and fresh as ever. The ink he used must have been better than the ink-powders of a degenerate to-day.

The 'rugged characters' of Lawrence's strong hand remain permanently 'black and fresh'. Even the ink-powders of the modern age are affected by the effeminate culture of the liberal, the Babu, and the dilettante. The 'degenerate' colours of the inkstand invoke the racial typologies of British India, which portray the dark-skinned tribesmen as more virile and vigorous than their pale-skinned, educated counterparts of the provinces further south. More significant than the strong, dark colour of Lawrence's prose, however, is its stylistic roughness, which is an apt counterpart of the rough and ready government administered under the non-regulation system. The narrator is

58 'In the Year '57', Civil and Military Gazette, May 14, 1887, p.4.
59 Ibid., p. 4.
repeatedly awe-struck by the brusque, untidy written style of Lawrence, in which real names are substituted for 'scratchy scrawly'\textsuperscript{60} initials, and the conventions of tidiness, formal organisation, and grammatical correctness are sacrificed to the higher requirements of the day. John Lawrence is a man with a practical purpose, for whom conventional systems, whether of language or political procedure, are of little importance. His flouting of the laws of rhetoric is not only legitimised by the narrator, but accorded a heroic grandeur as the fitting vehicle of his virile authoritarianism:

"J.L." wrote illegibly, but he had his hands full just then... [He] dates his dockets very carelessly; but, as he is saving a Province, he may perhaps be forgiven.\textsuperscript{61}

At first, the narrator despairs of ever making sense of the disorganised, 'hopeless muddle'\textsuperscript{62} of paperwork. As he pointedly comments, 'The Mutiny men have no notion of filing...'.\textsuperscript{63} The poor arrangement of the letters renders it impossible to observe method in dealing with the correspondence. As sheets 'tumble out' and 'flutter onto the floor', he offers the following remarks on the futility of the historian's task:

The file opened slowly and fell apart into more than a hundred and fifty letters - blue, white and yellow - stacked in any order, and all bearing the

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., p. 4.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., p.4.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., p.4.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., p. 4.
date of the month of July. It was impossible to observe method in dealing
with the mass. One was forced to dip as into a luckybag.64

This rejection of the possibility for comprehensive and systematic scholarship is
integral to the intellectual and political debate of late-nineteenth century India, in
which liberal statesmen such as Hunter propound intensely scholarly and theoretical
methods of research and government. This type of scholar and scholarship is satirised
further on in the article, when the narrator describes a letter written to Lawrence by
an expert on the Pushtoo language and the tribesfolk of Afghanistan. The copious
document is, significantly, 'a neatly written letter enclosing two very clever water­
colour sketches of two ruffians, who appear to be cross-bred between Pathan and
Zouave' (emphasis mine).65 The expert's plan is to recruit from the strong, warlike
peoples of Afghanistan, traditionally admired but also feared by Anglo-Indians, to
form a regiment to assist in the British onslaught against the mutineers at Delhi. His
water colour paintings, damned by Kipling's faint praise of their 'prettiness', illustrate
a proposed uniform for the Afghan recruits. The narrator wryly observes that one of
the pictured Afghans bears the helpful title 'private' - 'in case anyone should mistake
him for a thief'.66 The fear of the northern tribesman, along with the detached
intellectuals and liberals who underestimate their volatility and power, is a recurrent
anxiety in Kipling's writing and in the ideological climate of the period. Hence
Kipling's resentment that an outsider, from the province of Bombay, and more

64 Ibid., p. 4.

65 'In the Year '57' (part two), Civil and Military Gazette, May 23, 1887, p. 4.

66 Ibid., p. 4.
especially, an intellectual, should interfere in the affairs of Lawrence's Punjab at this
desperate hour, when experience and authority were most needed:

Who was the daring man that fancied "J.L." would like to look at water-colour pictures in the middle of his office-work? Some one who wrote a femininely delicate hand, and had much to say. Raverty is his name - Lieutenant H.G. Raverty, of the 3rd Bombay Native Infantry. What right has a Bombay man to thrust his oar into our troubled waters of the north?

Kipling's dismissal of Raverty's 'femininely delicate' writing and his effeminate penchant for water-colours, reflects the contempt of the Punjab for the intellectual and liberal outpourings of the regulation provinces. The 'feminine' delicacy of the epistle is highly appropriate, the narrator sardonically implies, to the systematic and detailed mechanisms of thought, writing, procedure, and government of territories unaccustomed to the rigours of the frontier province. The Bombay man has no right to meddle in the affairs of the wild and restless north, where, under Lawrence, peace reigns and will in turn be established in the rebellious south. The north-south opposition is a telling affirmation of the integrity of the modern Punjab, and an indictment of the increasing influence of other, southern provinces under the

67 Bombay was frequently lampooned for its soft-headedness. Commenting on domestic arrangements in the province, E. H. Aitken ironically remarks: 'Some of us even put on our own clothes.' (Behind the Bungalow, [London, 1899], pp. 135-136).
centralised system of the later century. The men of the north remain a strong and steadying influence across India:

Follows a glimpse of a city in the South [Delhi], tinged with fire and crumbling to rubbish under the blows of a sun-smitten, sickness-stricken army. To this succeeds a quiet city in the extreme North [Lahore], very quiet and very strong, a buttress of defence guarded by clear-eyed men who speak slowly, and whose words carry far across the din between north and south.68

The far-travelling words of the northern rulers, which quell the southern storm, are yet another association of strong government with succinct and measured language. 'In the Year '57' culminates in yet another reference to the words on Lawrence's statue at Lahore: "Will you be governed by the Pen or the Sword."69 Kipling, like Thorburn, believes in an association of both forms of power, in which language is wielded with the ferocity, yet also the sparing of the sword.

But there is more to 'In the Year '57' than this straightforward lionisation of martial and linguistic belligerence. The article/fiction also displays an intense awareness of the intellectual and cultural origins of the non-regulation system, offering in itself a theory of language and representation derived from this model of administrative discourse in the Punjab. As already suggested, the valorisation of rough language and virile authoritarianism strongly invokes Thomas Carlyle, whose

68 'In the Year '57' The Civil and Military Gazette, May 23, 1887, p. 4.
69 Ibid., p. 4.
anti-positivistic, anti-utilitarian, and pro-Islamic writings are a powerful intellectual counterpart to the principles of language and authority expounded under the system of non-regulation. In *Signs of the Times*, perhaps his most vehement attack on the principle of utility and the mechanisation of politics, Carlyle offers the following caustic remarks on codification, the pet project of the Benthamites and utilitarians:

Nay, so devoted are we to this principle [of admiring the 'mere condition of the machine']... that a new trade, specially grounded on it has arisen among us, under the name of 'Codification,' or code-making in the abstract; whereby any people, for a reasonable consideration, may be accommodated with a patent code; - more easily than curious individuals with patent breeches for the people does *not* need to be measured first.70

Aside from his opposition to machine rule, Carlyle's admiration for Islam, Mohammed, and the Koran (a controversial admiration in nineteenth-century England), squares perfectly with the respect for Islam cultivated among the civilians of the Punjab, whose population was, and remains today, predominantly Muslim. His comments on Mohammed, whom he considered one of the great heroes of world history, focus upon his rugged upbringing, and the virile simplicity with which he founded a faith and wrote the Koran. Indeed, Carlyle's admiration for the Koran, like Kipling's awe at the correspondence of Lawrence, centres upon its rough-hewn prose and dishevelled form:

It [the Koran] is the confused ferment of a great rude human soul: rude, untutored, that cannot even read; but fervent, earnest, struggling vehemently to utter itself in words. With a kind of breathless intensity he strives to utter himself, the thoughts crowd on him pellmell: for very multitude of things to say, he can get nothing said. The meaning that is in him shapes itself into no form of composition, is stated in no sequence, method, or coherence; - they are not \textit{shaped} at all, these thoughts of his; flung out unshaped, as they struggle and tumble there, in their chaotic inarticulate state.\textsuperscript{71}

Clearly Kipling had these words in mind when he wrote of the correspondence of John Lawrence, which is similarly a tumbling, unsequential mass of prose. Without 'method or coherence', the writing of Lawrence is ultimately, like the Koran, the 'confused ferment of a great rude human soul.' Kipling's assertion that '[t]he letter is incomplete... Everything is incomplete, fragmentary, jumbled, leading nowhere'\textsuperscript{72} is a direct echo of Carlyle's opinions on Mohammed and the Koran, associating the rugged, inchoate textuality of Lawrence's administration with the virile spirit and language of the founder of Islam. 'In the Year '57' therefore involves multiple points of cultural reference; invoking the Anglo-Germanic scholarship of Carlyle, while at the same time invoking Islam and the Indian empire. Moreover, in its advocacy of hero-worship and reverence for the strong, able governorship of Lawrence, 'In the Year '57' recalls Carlyle's admiration for the rugged, uncomplicated leadership of

\textsuperscript{71} Heroes and Hero-Worship (1841), The Works of Thomas Carlyle, vol. V p. 66.

\textsuperscript{72} Civil and Military Gazette, May 14, 1887, p. 4.
Abbot Samson of the monastery of St Edmundsbury. Carlyle writes in *Past and Present*:

> With iron energy, in slow but steady undeviating perseverance, Abbot Samson sets to work... His troubles are manifold: cunning *milités*, unjust bailiffs, lazy sockmen, he an inexperienced Abbot; relaxed lazy monks, not disinclined to mutiny in mass: but continued vigilance, rigorous method, what we call the 'eye of the master,' work wonders. The clear -beaming eyesight of Abbot Samson, steadfast, severe, all-penetrating, - it is like *Fiat Lux* in that inorganic waste whirlpool; penetrates gradually to all nooks, and of chaos makes a *kosmos* or ordered world.\(^{73}\)

In his own, peculiar province, the abbot Samson too has a band of 'mutinous' men to keep down; the abbots of the monastery. The 'eye of the master,' the steadfast, severe all-penetrating gaze of Samson restores order to the inorganic whirlpool of the abbey. Kipling may even have had this dramatic passage in mind when he imagines the steadying, all-penetrating gaze of Lawrence restoring order after the Mutiny:

> It is no longer the rush of an evil dream that we are looking at, but a length of great living frieze, where the figures are fixed for the moment as they slide by, in strenuous, labouring attitudes - strong, hopeful, despairing, agonized, or coldly and bitterly masterful, as Fate has laid their burdens upon them... One face recurs and recurs; and on that face

there is no outward sign of trouble, nothing but determination and sleepless vigilance.\textsuperscript{74}

Apart from the stylistic echoes, in the compound words and dramatic imagery of 'In the Year 57', Kipling also includes a direct reference to Carlyle's historiographical techniques, and also to the title of Carlyle’s work, commenting: 'after a while, as one turns the letters over[,] the sense of the distance that separates the affable, eloquent, impartial, educated Present from the hard-pressed, brutal and sternly practical Past, dies away.'\textsuperscript{75}

Ultimately the failure of a systematic, ‘theoretical’ approach to the historical material in Kipling's text is granted a kind of legitimacy by the admiration which is accorded to the formal and grammatical inconsistencies of Lawrence's own correspondence, dashed off in a moment of crisis for a higher, practical purpose. The administrative flexibility valorised in the administrative sphere is endorsed in the formal characteristics of 'In the Year '57', influencing the scope and direction of the narrator's account. Qualities of personal adaptability and responsibility exemplified in the civil service of the Punjab are re-duplicated in the fluid and digressive style of the article and in the implicit devaluation of theoretical principles and scholarly ‘regulations’. This public renunciation of theory contrasts with the liberal endorsement of statistical inquiry that concluded Hunter’s account of rural Bengal.

The intellectual and administrative confrontations of the Punjab underscore the whole of Kipling's work for the \textit{Civil and Military Gazette} and the \textit{Pioneer}, informing

\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Civil and Military Gazette}, May 23, 1887, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Ibid.}, p.4.
both his journalism and his fiction. These political conflicts, involving key methodological and rhetorical assumptions, had a direct influence upon Kipling's views and his literary style. In all of his subsequent work, the conflicts of the Punjab and the anxieties of the non-regulation system lent to his writing its characteristic ambivalence and self-questioning.
CHAPTER TWO

The Rawalpindi Conference and the Visit of Abdur Rahman in Kipling's Journalism

i. A British Durbar

During the 1880s, the near obsessive newspaper coverage of the Afghanistan question brought home to the British Raj the full extent to which power in India depended upon the pacification of rulers and peoples unversed in the constitutional principles of crown rule. Because of its crucial strategic position between the British in India and the Russian forces in Central Asia, the conciliation of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan, was essential to the protection of India from Russian invasion. Yet Afghanistan was considered by the British a largely unknown and volatile land, prone to brutality and revolt. Moreover, the loyalty of the current Amir was as frail and uncertain as his own grasp on power. The situation brought home the precariousness of British rule, which, regardless of military support, ultimately relied upon favourable diplomatic relations with volatile neighbouring states. Afghanistan and its mysterious ruler, Abdur Rahman, raised problems for British diplomacy that preoccupied Kipling and the Punjab during his years in India.

Lack of information about the Amir and his people compounded the fear of many Anglo-Indians when, in 1885, the British government ordered a conference or 'durbar' at Rawalpindi to initiate negotiations between Lord Dufferin (the Viceroy) and Abdur
Rahman. As the special correspondent of the Civil and Military Gazette, Kipling was despatched to write a series of reports upon the durbar, which focused upon the tensions of the encounter between the Viceroy and the Amir. During the conference, the Punjab, its people, and its politics, took on a special significance; at least in the minds of the Anglo-Indian community, who saw their province again take centre stage in an urgent matter of British negotiation. With its history of strict, uncompromising rule, the Punjab boasted the perfect credentials for such a fraught diplomatic encounter.

The Rawalpindi conference of 1885 was intended to provide a sufficiently respectful and impressive welcome for the Amir, while, at the same time, offering an intimidating show of military power in a series of displays and processions designed to convince the Amir of Britain's ability to back its strong words with deeds. In fact, more than anything else, the conference or 'durbar' of 1885 merely emphasised the enormous chasm between the ceremonial representation of British power and the people whose loyalty and obedience was sought. The Rawalpindi conference illustrated how far the British, in terms of their strategies of self-representation, asserted their authority in increasingly impersonal, elaborate, and ultimately militaristic terms. Kipling's articles portray the inadequacy of the British durbar in bridging the cultural and political differences of the East and the West.

At the heart of the Rawalpindi conference was the grand durbar, a meeting of officials and other eminent persons conducted in the full splendour of ceremonial dress and ritual. The practice of holding durbars was inherited by the British from their Mughal forbears in India. It was adopted in the belief that this ceremony of incorporation, traditionally practised between Asian rulers and their subjects, would
enable the British to identify themselves with the native aristocracy, establishing a
feudatory view of India that preserved continuity with Mughal rule. In the courts of
the Mughal emperors, and in its subsequent use by Hindu and Muslim rulers of India,
the central ritual of the durbar was an act of incorporation, in which the giving of
nazar (gold coins) and peshkash (various items of high value) was responded to by
the Mughal ruler with the giving of a khelat: a gift, principally of clothing, which
symbolised the incorporation of the recipient, through the medium of the fabric, with
the body of the giver.1 As Bernard S. Cohn argues, the British frequently
misconstrued these acts, regarding them as economic in nature, which implied the
buying of political favours and powers. Consequently, those aspects of the ceremony
deemed incompatible with British law and principles were gradually eliminated or
substituted for acceptable, anglicised variants on the feudatory theme. By the time of
the Imperial Assemblage, held at Delhi in 1876 to mark the proclamation of Victoria
as Kaiser-i-Hind, all vestiges of personal intimacy or rituals of incorporation between
ruler and ruled had been erased from the ceremony. Kipling's father was responsible
for the design of uniforms and decorations at the Delhi assemblage, which were of a
flamboyantly feudal character, involving laurel wreaths, imperial crowns, gargoyle-like
eagles, and specially designed flags, banners, and coats of arms for the Indian princes
and chiefs. Val Prinsep despaired of his commission to paint the event, commenting

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1 See Bernard S. Cohn's 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence
Ranger, eds., The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge, 1983). The amount of nazar and peshkash
offered to the ruler were carefully regulated according to the rank and status of the giver. Though the
khelat consisted chiefly of clothing, it could also include horses, elephants, and other tokens of
authority (ibid., p. 168).
on the 'hideosity' of Lockwood Kipling's designs.\(^2\) As curator of the Lahore Museum and a teacher of art, Kipling's father was directly involved in the re-discovery of Indian art and crafts during the nineteenth century, playing a part in the 'invention of tradition' by which the British consolidated their rule. This indicates how far Rudyard understood the aesthetics of the Raj.

Although the Rawalpindi conference attempted to establish personal trust and friendship between the two parties, it was conducted in terms that evoked all the philosophical and ideological contradictions of late-Victorian polity. On the one hand, the conference incorporated the traditional ceremonies of the durbar, such as the giving of the *khelat*, implying a keen knowledge of oriental history and tradition, while on the other, it displayed the nonsense of such cultural proximity by culminating in an aggressive display of military power. As Cohn suggests, the proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India ('Kaiser-i-Hind') at the Imperial Assemblage of 1876 is the culminating point in the absorption of Mughal ceremonies by the British, which are 'desacralised' and used to portray India as a feudal province of England under the direct authority of the queen.\(^3\) The oriental origins of the queen's imperial title, 'Kaiser-i-Hind', in itself suggests the dual terms in which the British rulers of India sought to represent themselves to their colonial subjects and to independent Asian rulers such as the Amirs of Central Asia.\(^4\)

It could be argued that, in line with the temper of administrative thinking since 1857, the traditional ceremonies of the durbar fell victim to the utilitarian, contractual


view of rule prevalent in the later years of the nineteenth century. Before turning to
Kipling's highly sceptical reports, it is worthwhile to consider the opinions of the
Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, on the Rawalpindi meeting. Although enthusiastic about the
design of the conference, Dufferin was cynical about the traditional meanings of the
durbar. For him, the ceremonies and rituals of the conference were fitted to the needs
of the political moment, relating more to exigencies of diplomacy than metaphysical
concepts of succession, continuity, and kinship. Adopting a strictly pragmatic
approach to the occasion, he asserted that the durbar had 'fairly answered the purpose
for which it was prepared', and was 'amply sufficient for our purpose.' On first
arriving at the site of the conference, Dufferin was convinced that arrangements were
among the most impressive he had ever seen. Confident that the spectacle would have
the desired effect upon the Amir, he described the visual effect of the 'splendid march
past':

The Amir and I took up our positions within a few yards of the spot
where the Sikhs piled their arms on their final surrender. Including the
Contingents of Punjab Chiefs, there were more than twenty thousand
men present; and while all this spectacle was going on in front, railway
trains kept moving backwards and forwards in the background as a
further witness to the might of civilization.

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5 To Kimberley, April 6, 1885, (The India Office Collection, MSS. Eur. f. 130/2, "Viceroy's
Correspondence with the Secretary of State", p. 64).

6 Ibid., p. 63.

7 Ibid., p. 63.
In the visual terms of the march past, civilisation was an issue of 'might'. The 'might of civilization' was a concept that would appeal to the barbaric thirst for power and the curious hankering for progress that Dufferin considered the hallmark of the Afghan mind. In keeping with this objective of representing civilisation in terms of power, the military spectacle, backed by the image of the railway, endowed conquest and surrender with a palliating offer of material development and progress. The dignitaries were situated close to where the Sikhs surrendered their arms in the war of 1848-9, which led to the British conquest and annexation of the Punjab, while the passage of the trains in the background implied the technological progress that was the source of victory and the reward of surrender. The native contingents paraded before the Amir, dragging the 'deadly guns' of their conquerors, similarly portrayed surrender to the British in terms of participation in the rule of a superior civilisation.

Dufferin's confidence in the visual spectacle is allied to a ridicule of the traditional associations and meanings of the durbar. Although the giving of the khelat is viewed as the 'Coup d'oeil' in terms of 'the purpose for which it was prepared', Dufferin scorns the show of opulence inside the tents: 'All the Rajahs had stuck on their heads every diamond they possessed, including probably those belonging to their wives.'8 The 'handsome khelat' presented to the Amir comprises 'every sort of curious gewgaw', calculated to achieve its intended effect in appealing to this savage taste for extravagant display. Dufferin imagines that, once clear of the formal constraints of the durbar, the Amir will abandon any show of nobility, and delight in his gifts with infantile relish:

8 To Kimberley, April 11 (ibid., p. 64).
While they [the gifts] were being laid out on the ground before him, our guest affected to be unconscious of what was going on, but I fear that when he got them home, he spent a whole afternoon in examining them with the delight of a child, and admitted that no one had ever had such a 'khelat'.

The noble bearing of Abdur Rahman is seen as a sham undertaken for the benefit of his entourage and his British hosts. To Dufferin, the ceremonies of the durbar had no intrinsic merit as expressions of the relationship between ruler and ruled. Beneath the ceremonial trappings, he saw merely an acquisitive and economic function that faithfully echoed the aspirations of the British themselves. Privately disrespectful of the durbar, the Viceroy was nonetheless convinced of its hold upon the oriental imagination, confident that the British in India could exploit its ceremonies and traditional associations to win over the Amir.

Kipling is far less convinced of the British power to 'plumb the oriental mind', achieving a mastery of traditional forms and ceremonies that might dupe or gull the people of the East. For his first major journalistic assignment on the Civil and Military Gazette, Kipling was despatched in late March of 1885 to Rawalpindi on the north-western frontier. From here, he began filing reports on the 'Pindi Conference', describing the circumstances of the Amir's arrival and the events of his reception by the British. The assignment was, to quote his father, Kipling's 'first big thing' as a

\[9Ibid., p. 63.\]
As soon as he arrived at Rawalpindi, it was clear that preparations were not running smoothly. The rain began to fall heavily, delaying the arrival of the Amir and spoiling the condition of the camp. Along with the other officials and onlookers, Kipling was forced to play an interminable game of waiting, intensified by ceaseless and unsubstantiated reports of the Afghan ruler's imminent arrival. The rain was a depressing sight that merely added to the overall futility of the conference. Asserting the cosmic insignificance of the event, he ironically remarked: 'Man durbars but Jupiter Pluvius downpours'. The grand durbar had developed into a farce; a 'comedy' of anticipation, misinformation, and false report, played out amidst the 'dust and confusion' of Rawalpindi. This was certainly not the effect that the British durbars were intended to produce. The logistics and physical planning of the event were meant to convey the 'order and discipline' of British rule. To Kipling, however, the rain-drenched, bedraggled spectacle of the Rawalpindi conference was more likely to arouse pity than respect. As he suggests in his comments on the preparations: 'some drenched coolies are decorating the station, with mournful

10 John Lockwood Kipling to Edith Plowden, 16 March 1885, (The Kipling Papers, 1/11).

11 Entries in Kipling's diary between April 1 and 6 indicate his ill-health and impatience with the conference: 'wrote yet another Special, am beginning to object to this rain and never seem to get to sleep... wonder how much longer this is going to last. Camp in an awful condition. I myself not much better... I must shut up with a click before long. Too little sleep and too much seen' (Rudyard Kipling's Diary', Thomas Pinney, ed., Something of Myself and Other Autobiographical Writings [Cambridge, 1990], p. 208).


13 Ibid., p. 78.
bunting and depressed laurel boughs... The red cloth is weighted with an unromantic brick, lest it should take unto itself wings.\textsuperscript{15} Far from being a testimony to British discipline and control, the durbar was a testimony to the futility and impermanence of the imperial machinery, weighted down 'with an unromantic brick' lest it should be wiped from the surface of the land. Later he claimed to remember nothing of the conference or his reports upon it.\textsuperscript{16}

Unlike Dufferin's account of the durbar, Kipling's version of events is charged with reverence and respect for the inscrutability of the Amir. Abdur Rahman is 'not to be spoken lightly to, so that it is impossible to say for certain what he thinks.'\textsuperscript{17} At the conference it is possible to observe the Amir, but 'no muscle on his face shows any kind of emotion.'\textsuperscript{18} This inability to discern the response of the Amir implies a deep distrust of the interpretive framework offered by the conference. The distrust is entirely in keeping with Kipling's renunciation of the administrative and representational methods of the Raj in the late-nineteenth century. The durbar is no longer, as it was in Mughal times, a declaration of the complete visibility of the kingdom and its assimilation into the body of the ruler. Instead it represents the confusion, and to some extent, the humiliation of the British, revealing the mutual incomprehension of two equally distinct and bemused peoples.

\textsuperscript{14}Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', \textit{The Invention of Tradition}, p. 198.
\textsuperscript{15}Kipling's India: Uncollected Sketches 1884-88, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{16}His diary entry for March 18 runs: 'Here came in the Pindi Conference and my work thereat. Whereof I retain no remembrance' ('Rudyard Kipling's Diary', \textit{Something of Myself and Other Autobiographical Writings} p. 207).
\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., p. 101.
\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p. 101.
If the scene could be reproduced on canvas, it would be ridiculed as wildly impossible. Usbeg lancers and locomotives cheek by jowl: tartars and telegraphs, jostling each other; western civilisation and eastern savagery, blended in the maddest fashion, and on the just and unjust alike, the ceaseless pitiless rain. No words in my power could do justice to the tableau.19

The tableau of confusion underlined the remoteness of the Raj and the absurdity of its attempts to invoke the ceremonial traditions of the East. In Kipling's portrait, the trains and telegraphs are risible additions to the frontier scene (compare this with Dufferin’s admiring view of the passing locomotives). Civilisation and 'savagery' were blended in 'the maddest fashion'. Neither of the two races emerged from the encounter with their dignity intact or their racial superiority asserted. Echoing Matthew 5. 45, the 'ceaseless pitiless rain' falls on each people alike.

Kipling regarded the military review as the centrepiece of the conference. The procession of British and Indian regiments, each equipped with the latest rifles and heavy artillery, would communicate far more to the Afghan peoples than rain-drenched bunting or fine speeches. As he explains, recalling the inscription on Lawrence's statue once again: 'The sword is mightier than the pen by far to an Afghan; and each bayonet and field piece will carry far more weight with our guest, [the Amir] than the courteous preambles of the conference proper.'20 Neither

20 Ibid., p. 103.
'courteous preambles' nor traditional ceremonies would provide so striking an example of authority as the sight of the Indian soldiers willingly serving in the conquering army of the British:

Here are contingents of well-drilled, well-armed men in a conquered country, playing their bands, giving their words of command, and above all dragging their artillery, the deadly guns of the English, under the very noses of their rulers.\textsuperscript{21}

Nevertheless, even in the military display, he despairs of the uniformity and impersonality of British power. The review is an 'interminable nightmare', composed of living bodies fashioned into a relentless marching machine:

Finally, one loses all idea that the living waves in front are composed of men. It has no will, no individuality - nothing, it seems, save the power of moving forward in a mathematically straight line to the end of time. It was a positive relief to cast one's eyes to the end of the parade ground, and watch the columns, ragged and extended, in their scramble down the side of the road.\textsuperscript{22}

Given this terror of precision, it comes as a 'positive relief' to look away from the organised spectacle and focus upon the soldiers in the distance, who 'scramble down

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 103.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 100.
the side of the road' in flagrant disregard of orderliness and rules of formation.\textsuperscript{23}

Chaos, whether among the surging native crowd, the scramble at the end of the parade ground, or the Afghan tents, is preferable to the interminable uniformity of the review. The disarray of the Afghan soldiers and their tents is again a reprieve from the mechanical order of the British:

They are picturesque - immensely so. The Usbeg lancers, in their mustard-hued coats, shaggy caps and strange accoutrements, would make an artist's fortune. So would some of the interiors of the tents, where rich carpets, quaint Persian Aftabas, turquoise-studded brow and breast bands, Russian Samovars, orange peel and slices of red raw mutton lie about in picturesque profusion...\textsuperscript{24}

The scattered possessions are evidences of human lives, passions, and tastes - reflected in the strange accoutrements and half-eaten foods. Of course, the admiration is double-edged, implying the disorderliness of the Usbems at the same time as celebrating their spontaneity. Nevertheless, the delight in the tents reflects in Kipling a loss of cultural anchorage; suggesting that the only distinguishing point between the two peoples is to be found in the drab material usages of personal cleanliness, hygiene, and discipline - all of which appear, in the light of the grand rhetoric and

\textsuperscript{23}Kipling noted in his diary: '[r]eview and phantasm of hundreds of thousands of legs all moving together have stopped my sleep altogether' (\textit{Something of Myself and Other Autobiographical Writings}, p. 208).

\textsuperscript{24}\textit{Kipling's India: Uncollected Sketches} 1884-88, p. 96.
flamboyant design of the conference, trivial marks of civilisational ascendency. Kipling's comments on the Usbegs have further unsettling implications for the British Raj. For example, he describes a group of roguish-looking fellows:

In their own country they [the Usbeg lancers] must be beau ideals of ruffianly caterans. On their best behaviour in British territory they are simply amusing boisterous Fridays, and a Robinson Crusoe sort of tour through their tents is a novel and very amusing experience.25

Taken in the context of his views on the durbar, the reference to Crusoe, whose 'empire' is a matter of goat-skins, log-fires, and bullets, is yet another disavowal of British bunting and fine oratory. The reference to Defoe's shipwrecked colonialist implies the extreme isolation as well as the authority of the Englishman. It also suggests a problem of knowledge and power in British India, where, given the reassuring presence of the military and the legislature, the Usbegs are merely boisterous Fridays, whose lives, histories, and cultures remain undisclosed to the Raj. While on one level, power guarantees the visibility of the colonised peoples, it disrupts and distorts knowledge of those people, their customs, and their cultures. This view gives rise to Kipling's scathing remarks on the opinions of dignitaries, for example, in his article on the Jubilee celebrations at Lahore in 1887:

[D]ignitaries are not interesting. They lack originality, and their opinions on the Jubilee are monotonous. It was among the crowd of natives,

25 Ibid., p. 96.
melting and reforming at the wave of the constable's baton, that one
heard the most amusing things...  

As in the articles on the durbar, the surging, boisterous humanity of the 'native crowd'
is preferable to the monotonous views of the official.

In a newspaper article published in the Civil and Military Gazette on 27 October
1887, Kipling conducted an interview with a Dr O'Meara, a dental surgeon of Upper
India who, two months earlier, had travelled to Cabul in order to treat the Amir of
Afghanistan. Taking as its keynote Dr O'Meara's assertion that "...[y]ou cannot
govern Afghanistan like India..."  
the article builds up a picture of a people ruled
instead by the fear of execution. In O'Meara's consistent side-stepping of Kipling's
questions about the Amir's grisly methods - "[n]ever mind what I saw beyond what I
am telling you..."  
the article betrays fascination with the forbidden fruit of
despotic government. In the writings of British India, tales of despotic proclivity often
served to justify the unwieldy legislature and uniformity of the modern administration,
offering at the same time an escape from the tired routine of machine rule. In the
Punjab, fascination with Abdur Rahman reflected the traditional admiration of the
province for single-minded authoritarians who, like Mohammed in Heroes and Hero-
Worship, united a people and preached a faith in adverse and dangerous conditions.

26 Ibid., p. 95.

27 'To Kabul and Back: Mr O'Meara's Experiences', Civil and Military Gazette, 27 October 1887.

Quoted from Kipling's India: Uncollected Sketches 1884-88, p. 274.

28 Ibid., p. 274.
Reports on Afghanistan satisfied an appetite for 'benevolent' despotism ingrained in the Punjab tradition.

The cultivated doctor, finely educated and skilled in medicine, implies an English acknowledgement and acceptance of Abdur Rahman's authority. The power of the Amir is absolute: "...[t]hey say in Cabul that he knows everything that is going on. I know myself that everything I did, and every walk and ride I took, were reported to him...". Yet to O'Meara, the Amir's power is a source of comfort - to the extent that he regards the trip as "...exceedingly pleasant..." and Cabul "...a nice spot to spend a holiday in...". The jargon of the refined, cultivated traveller, enjoying a holiday beyond the frontiers of British jurisdiction, suggests a continuity between each system of rule, implying that in Afghanistan the Anglo-Indian might be more a gentleman of leisure and 'taste'; more ardently an 'Englishman', than he is allowed to be in British India. Nevertheless, the absurdity of this show of English refinement in Afghanistan is reflected in O'Meara's recollection of a pledge made by the people of Cabul to Mr Pyne, the Amir's Engineer. The people promise that, when Mr Pyne marries an English memsahib, they will "...lay down a mall, a pukka English mall, three miles long, for the couple to drive up and down..." illustrating in one measure their hospitality and also their wry acceptance of the incompatibility between the customs and practices of each culture.

29 Ibid., pp. 272-273.

30 Ibid., p. 274.

31 Ibid., p. 275.
As described by Dr O'Meara, the Afghan durbar still retains its customary power and executive authority, contrasting with the assemblages and conferences of the British:

'...I have seen men taken away somewhere, outside gardens; and I suppose... but I could tell nothing from the Amir's face. Justice isn't executed in his presence, you know. There was no visible emotion on the faces of the men round him. If he said anything directly to them, they said it was good and right; but you could never judge anything by looking at the Durbar.'32

The workings of the durbar are not 'visible' to the eye, nor can they be perceived 'by looking.' Here again Kipling invokes the unfathomable terrors of the unknown and the undisclosed in the rule of the Amir. The swords and daggers of the Afghan durbar have a veiled but terrible purpose, unlike the proudly-displayed 'gew-gaws' of the British 'khelat'. In keeping with the promise of swift judgement, the durbar is marked by accessibility and physical proximity:

'...any living man in the kingdom, so far as I could see or learn, could make his way to the Durbar, get within about three or four yards of the Amir, hand in his petition, or speak to him personally...'33

32 Ibid., p. 272.

33 Ibid., p. 272.
The swift and decisive judgement of the Amir offers a frank alternative to the isolated and bureaucratic procedure of the British in India.

Kipling's disillusionment with modern India prompted him to write 'The City of Evil Countenances', which is a sustained assault on liberal theories of race and administration. Although an offensive article in terms of its racial content, it nevertheless offers an unflattering account of the role of the British in India, which has little in common with the progressive and emancipatory view propounded by many liberals. Suggesting the hostility of the Afghan population of the city to English law, and their incapability of moral or social advancement, Kipling describes them as 'calibans', upon whom no English virtue will stick:

...neither security to life and goods, law, order, discipline, or the best blood of England wasted on their care, reconcile the calibans of the city of evil countenances to the white stranger within their gates. And tomorrow we do honour to the ruler of Afghanistan and its dependencies at Jumrood.34

Peshawur is a turbulent menagerie of the East held back from violence by the English: 'Here the wild beasts obey their keepers to admiration; and after all they are well looked after...'.35 The terrible analogy also implies the voyeuristic pleasure of the observer, who is in awe of the sleek power and beauty of the 'wild beasts',

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34 'The City of Evil Countenances', Civil and Military Gazette 1 April 1885, Kipling's India: Uncollected Sketches 1884-1888, p. 85.

35 Ibid., p. 84.
acknowledging complicity in the depraved conditions of the town. The main road teems with 'magnificent scoundrels' and 'handsome ruffians' who are as attractive to Kipling as they are dangerous to the Raj. The legacy of the non-regulation system, with its respect for robust physicality, persists in this admiration for the 'animal' vigour of the town - so attractively untheoretical and unpredictable. Although he is repulsed by the 'evil countenances' of the Afghan peoples of the city, whose faces are those of 'dogs, swine, weasels and goats, all the more hideous for being set on human bodies, and lighted with human intelligence,' Kipling wishes to mingle among them, to 'study' them, grateful that the protection of the Raj enables him to do so for at least 'half an hour at a stretch.'

In Peshawur, it is the work of the government to feed, water, and impose some measure of order upon the 'beasts': an example of the unprogressive side of the non-regulation ethos, which frequently demanded of the administration only the barest material framework of civil order. According to the conservative civilians of the Punjab, basic requirements of sanitation and drainage were more urgent than educational reforms and programmes of self-rule. In this respect, the metaphor of the menagerie is double-edged, implying a work of containment and restraint that is severely limited in its recourse to justifying ideals of 'civilisation' and 'progress'. The circus-work of the frontier, along with its implications of vicarious and voyeuristic pleasure for the strolling observer, is a calculated affront to the political liberalism of the nineteenth century, which, in keeping with its utilitarian influences, extinguished

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36 Ibid., p. 84.
37 Ibid., p. 83.
38 Ibid., p. 83.
the bestial, desiring component of human nature from the equation of government, withdrawing to the fortress of system, routine, and logic. At the time of its publication, the controversial element of 'The City of Evil Countenances' was its denial of the possibility for moral or political evolution under the auspices of British government. This was the purpose of Kipling's unholy pride in the bestial achievements of English rule in the city; it was the sharp end of a vast political and philosophical contest, nine-tenths of which was submerged beneath tropes and metaphors that were intended to convey a specific ideological commitment within the range of Anglo-Indian attitudes, not to simply endorse a united front against the 'savage' races of the world.

ii. Fictions of Oriental Rule

Fascination with the durbar and the summary justice of the East has an important influence upon Kipling's work, implying an alternative system of value that constantly challenges the normative judgements of the Raj. Before discussing Plain Tales from the Hills (1888), it is worthwhile illustrating the relation between these journalistic articles and Kipling's fiction by referring to a slightly later story, 'The Amir's Homily', first published in Life's Handicap (1891). Echoing the words of Dr O'Meara, 'The Amir's Homily' opens with the assertion that Afghanistan cannot be governed as if it were England:

His Royal Highness Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan, G.C.S.I., and trusted ally of Her Imperial Majesty the Queen of England and Empress of India, is a gentleman of whom all right-thinking people should have a
profound regard. Like most other rulers, he governs not as he would, but as he can, and the mantle of his authority covers the most turbulent race under the stars.39

The opening sentence, employing Abdur Rahman's new title - 'his royal highness' - and the eastern designation of the queen as 'empress', invokes the complex work of assimilation attempted by the British in India, which is further implied by the detail of the G.C.S.I. conferred upon the Amir.40 As a holder of the Star of India, the Amir is initiated into the feudal and monarchical tradition of England by way of the British Raj: a convoluted and arduous path to the respectability that Kipling urges - with a detectable ambivalence of tone - he receive among 'right-thinking people'. It is this notion of 'respectability' that the story begins to call in question, implying that British expectations need to alter dramatically in relation to the Amir and his people.

39 Life's Handicap, p. 332.

40 In his letters, Lord Dufferin explains his reluctance to confer the Star of India upon the Amir. His comments are remarkable for their illustration of the difficulties faced by the British in imposing their feudal and monarchical symbols upon India. The award of the Star contravenes the many points of honour that exist in the East. The Viceroy explains:

I had already considered the propriety of giving him the Star of India, but I had hesitated to propose it, as having seen it worn by some of the Rajpoot Chiefs at the Durbar, he might regard it as a badge of inferiority, or as the assertion of some kind of suzerainty on our part. Moreover, he would have had to kneel to receive the collar which he might not have relished, for if we had left out that part of the ceremony, the other chiefs who had gone through it would have been sure to have remarked the omission, and a very bad impression would have been produced (To Kimberley, April 6, 1885, MSS. Eur. f. 130/2, "Viceroy's Correspondence with the Secretary of State", 64).
Given the reference to the symbols of ritual incorporation; the feudal honours and the dual titles of the Queen/Empress,⁴¹ the ensuing 'homily' to the Amir's government might be expected to praise Abdur Rahman's loyalty to British systems, values, and methods. However, it does precisely the opposite, chronicling his passing of the death sentence upon a destitute man - 'a trembling, haggard wretch, sore with much buffeting"⁴² - guilty of stealing three rupees. The execution of this 'bastard scum',⁴³ is hardly in the spirit of the British legislature, at least in insofar as it is invoked by the opening description of the titles and honours bestowed by the Queen. Ironically, 'profound regard' is nevertheless encouraged on the basis that the Amir is a despot, whose society is untouched by European codes of conduct, values, and systems. Immediately after describing the official investiture of the Amir, he explains, forthrightly, that 'His Highness rules by the only weapon that [Afghan peoples] understand - the fear of death, which among some Orientals is the beginning of wisdom.⁴⁴ Ultimately, to Kipling the Amir is a formidable man, to be feared and respected, contrasting markedly with Dufferin's portrayal of the Afghan ruler as a petted and petulant child.

⁴¹ The basis of entitlement to Indian royal titles was 'specified by acts of loyalty, outstanding and long-term service in the government, special acts of charity such as endowing schools and hospitals, contributions to special funds and "good" management of resources leading to the improvement of agricultural production' ('Representing Authority in Victorian India', The Invention of Tradition, p. 181).

⁴² Life's Handicap, p. 334.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 335.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 332-333.
It is worth noting Kipling's enhancement of the information supplied by Dr O'Meara in writing this story. In the interview of 1887, O'Meara informed him that "'[the Amir] holds a durbar wherever he happens to be and he shifts his quarters a good deal from Pagham to the Baber gardens, about half a mile from the city, and back again...]'". Kipling sets the durbar of 'The Amir's Homily' in the Baber gardens, emphasising the physicality and sensuousness of the gathering:

It happened upon a day in Kabul that the Amir chose to do his day's work in the Baber Gardens, which lie a short distance from the city of Kabul. A light table stood before him, and round the table in the open air were grouped generals and finance ministers according to their degree. The Court and the long tail of feudal chiefs - men of blood, fed and cowed by blood - stood in an irregular semicircle round the table, and the wind from the Kabul orchards blew among them.

The Amir's durbar has little in common with the assemblages of the British, which exploited heraldic ceremonies inimical to this vision of men 'cowed by blood' and cooled by the scented breeze of the orchards. The justice of the Afghan durbar is both romantic and dangerous: 'The privilege of open speech is of course exercised at certain personal risk.'

45 'To Kabul and Back', Kipling's India: Uncollected Sketches 1884-88, p. 271.
46 Ibid., p. 334.
47 Life's Handicap, p. 333.
In his description of the 'irregular semicircle' surrounding the Amir, Kipling remains close to his journalistic source, who describes "...a rough sort of semicircle..." around the leader. Similarly, his account of the workings of durbar is close to that provided by O'Meara, who explains, "...He received letters all day long, from all parts of the country, wrote his remarks at the bottom of the paper, and passed the letter on to the official who recorded it...". Compare this to the account in the story:

All day long sweating couriers dashed in with letters from the outlying districts with rumours of rebellion, intrigue, famine, failure of payments, or announcements of treasure on the road; and all day long the Amir would read the dockets, and pass on such of these as were less private to the officials whom they directly concerned, or call up a waiting chief for a word of explanation.

The 'sweating' and bustling physicality of the couriers has its counterpart in the wind that blows in from the Kabul orchards, implying a virile physicality lacking in the theoretical school of British administration and essential to the government of 'the most turbulent race under the stars.' Judging the case of the thief, the Amir recalls his own destitution and near-starvation before he became ruler. Recalling again the non-regulation system under John Lawrence, which urged the participation of British civil servants and judges in the life of the Indian people, enduring their hardships and accepting the austere conditions of a newly annexed, 'uncivilised' province, the

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49 Life's Handicap, p.334.
privations of the Amir emphasise the virile struggle that qualifies a man to hold authority. Despite knowing that he was the prince of Afghanistan, he 'wrought day by day as a coolie, bearing burdens, and labouring of [his] hands, receiving four annas wage a day for [his] sweat and backache.'\textsuperscript{50} The prince's effort and endurance; his 'sweat and labour', establish his right to rule and yield an experience of the people essential to government. Thwarting the liberal and humanitarian expectations of his readers, whose interpretation of the monarchical and feudatory symbols of incorporation into the British system imply loyalty to its moral and political assumptions, Kipling's story refutes the permanence of European systems of belief and polity. Hence the rule of the Amir is described as 'personal government, as it was in the days of Harun al Raschid of Blessed memory, whose times exist still and will exist long after the English have passed away.'\textsuperscript{51} The eclipse of English government remained a crucial and permanent theme of Kipling's work.

In his Indian journalism and fiction, Kipling identified with a tradition of rule averse to sophisticated forms of representation and government. The non-regulation system prompted admiration for the strong-handed methods of figures such as John Lawrence and the ruthless rulers of eastern lands. The price of this admiration was a corresponding dread of initiation into the dark secrets of 'native life', as it existed beneath the endless administrative reports and statistics. This was the uniting element

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., p. 336.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p. 333.
in all of Kipling’s work for the *Civil and Military Gazette*, including the various stories he published in the newspaper.
CHAPTER THREE

The Plain Tales and the Power of the Pen

i. Theorists and Adventurers in the Frontier Fiction

In January 1888, Kipling published his first volume of stories, Plain Tales from the Hills, most of which had already appeared in the newspaper series of the same title. Not only did the volume command the praise of an already converted readership in India, but in London it won the admiration of, among others, Henry James, Arthur Quiller-Couch, and Andrew Lang, who recognised that an author of originality and acute insight lay behind these vignettes of life in India. The admiration was, however, neither universal nor without reservations. Many subsequent critics have echoed Oscar Wilde's famous opinion that the stories give the impression of sitting beneath a palm tree reading life by 'superb flashes of vulgarity'\(^1\) - a double-edged praise that, while admitting the power of the stories, implies a limitation of depth and range of vision. To Wilde, Kipling was 'a genius who drops his aspirates', our 'first authority on the second-rate'.\(^2\)

The stories are actually far more closely related to the specific political debates of the late-nineteenth century Punjab than has been recognised, adopting a point of view entirely consonant with the non-regulation system and the rejection of theoretical...
government. They are thoroughly unsympathetic to the ratiocinative influence of the India House Utilitarians, consistently attacking the legacy of Bentham, James and John Stuart Mill, and the scientific method of policy-making bequeathed to Kipling's generation of colonial leaders in the Punjab. In one story, 'The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin', the scientific positivism of Spencer and Comte is vilified by a narrator who boasts, sardonically, that his own story is a 'Tract', and that 'Making a Tract is a Feat'.³ The comment ridicules the newly intellectualised milieu of the Punjab, in which tract-making and policy-making were rendered increasingly indistinguishable by the proliferation of law-courts and legal complexities. Describing the mental collapse of Aurelian McGoggin, a newly arrived civilian who reads Spencer and Comte, the story repudiates any commitment to scientific, theoretical, or materialistic explanations of India and its political life. For his absurd intellectual devotions, McGoggin should, we are told, have had his bottom smacked by his Mamma.⁴ Formulated many miles from the frontier, in 'a Town where there is nothing but machinery and asphalt and building - all shut in by the fog',⁵ McGoggin's positivism imposes no limits of nature or experience upon the rational and deductive powers of the civilian. As Kipling puts it, such a man 'grows to think that there is no one higher than himself, and that the Metropolitan Board of Works made everything.'⁶ McGoggin's downfall results from his inability to 'accept any order without trying to

³ *Plain Tales from the Hills* p. 107.


better it.\textsuperscript{7} This, the narrator emphasises, is 'the fault of his creed.'\textsuperscript{8} Kipling's own 'Tract', is written to illustrate that the commitment to theoretical, philosophical and administrative perfection, far from increasing the efficiency of government, produces an arrogant and maladjusted species of governor.

Through overwork, McGoggin eventually succumbs to a severe bout of aphasia that wipes his mind clear of memories and his mouth of speech, 'as a mother wipes the milky lips of her child.'\textsuperscript{9} Such a curtailment of speech aptly denies the otiose theoretical language and ratiocinative pretensions of government in the era of codification and machine rule. McGoggin is left 'wondering whether he would be permitted to reach the end of any sentence he began',\textsuperscript{10} his desecrated speech forced into conformity with the incoherence and incompleteness that characterised the authoritative scrawl of John Lawrence and the Mutiny Men. Administrators such as McGoggin, Kipling implies, should embrace imperfection; of themselves, of their work, and of the colonised land and its peoples. India requires a slackening of moral and political standards.

As the narrator of another story, 'Thrown Away', explains - the official, civilising programme of the Raj is only maintained by an unofficial policy of \textit{laissez faire}:

\begin{quote}
Now India is a place beyond all others where one must not take things too seriously - the mid-day sun always excepted... Flirtation does not
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{7}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 110.

\textsuperscript{8}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 110.

\textsuperscript{9}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 113.

\textsuperscript{10}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 113.
matter, because every one is being transferred and either you or she leave
the Station, and never return. Good work does not matter, because a
man is judged by his worst output and another man takes all the credit of
his best as a rule. Nothing matters except Home-furlough and acting
allowances, and these only because they are scarce. It is a slack country
where all men work with imperfect instruments; and the wisest thing is to
escape as soon as ever you can to some place where amusement is
amusement and a reputation worth the having.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 16-17.}

India is a 'slack country' where men work with 'imperfect instruments' and nothing
must be taken 'too seriously'. As the story itself eventually reveals, the real picture is
quite different: things matter \textit{intensely}, only they must be handled with a discretion
and courage lacking in those fastidious about reputations and the finer points of
personal honour. In 'Thrown Away', the lack of a proper sense of proportion results in
the suicide of 'The Boy', a young soldier, who is morally crushed by the careless
remark of a feckless woman. In a bid to soothe the feelings of The Boy's family, the
Major and the journalist, who narrates the story, employ themselves in the formulation
of an elaborate lie, staging The Boy's death from cholera. Not only is India a 'slack
country', it is a country in which facts are dangers to be resisted and sometimes
officially suppressed. The Major and the journalist, for whom lying is self-confessedly
a 'profession', work conscientiously and tirelessly to fashion a convincing scenario for
The Boy's death. In effect, their efforts reveal the irony of the injunction to take
nothing 'too seriously.' The sanity of the Raj and the respectability of the empire are
such serious matters that elaborate deceptions must be fashioned to save the whole enterprise from chaos and despair. It is the duty and the responsibility of the Major, the journalist, and implicitly the author to 'lie' in the service of the sirkar, much as Marlow keeps back the truth from Kurtz's 'Intended' in Heart of Darkness. As the Lawrences had discovered in the newly annexed Punjab, strict adherence to the letter of the law must be sometimes, however painfully, sacrificed to the higher cause of civil order.

By recommending the use of personal initiative and unofficial methods, the non-regulation system encouraged a disrespect of normal procedure and a penchant for an irreverent and sometimes illicit approach to political affairs. This association of statecraft with the elaborate hoax or deception is a crucial theme of Plain Tales from the Hills; for example, in the Strickland stories, where cunning and disguise are rendered integral to the policing of the province. Kipling's first volume of poetry, when it was published in India, was itself packaged in the form of an official document - a playful hoax at the expense of departmental bureaucracy.

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12 For other Plain Tales that relish the hoax or the elaborately crafted deception see 'Pig', in which an official, exploiting the rusty cogs of administrative bureaucracy, wreaks an elaborate revenge upon a colleague who cheats him over the purchase of a horse. Another, less malicious example is 'A Bank Fraud', in which a bank-manager conceals the truth of his accountant's incompetence and official notice of dismissal, knowing him to be dying. See also 'His Wedded Wife' for a story incorporating themes of gender, disguise, and revenge.

13 When it first appeared in 1886, Kipling took great care over the appearance of Departmental Ditties. The poems were issued in a light-brown, wire-stitched docket in imitation of a government envelope. This was tied with red tape and enclosed twenty six verses printed on one side of the paper only. It was an arrangement that 'would have deceived a clerk of twenty-years' service' ('My First
In the story 'In the House of Suddhoo', the ratiocinative and systematic approach to government provides an inadequate safeguard against the superior powers of the hoaxter and extortioner, who turns the colonial administrator and the law itself to his advantage. Although it is usually read as a mystical, 'gothic' tale, the mention of the Indian Penal Code at the beginning and the end of the story suggests a far more terrestrial sphere of reference. The original title 'Section 420 IPC' (Indian Penal Code) emphasised this point, suggesting the anchorage of events in the real political situation of the Punjab. This reference to the immediate legislative context has been neglected by critics. By invoking the Penal Code, Kipling recalls India's utilitarian law-

Book', *Something of Myself and Other Autobiographical Writings*, p. 176). On the front of the docket, were printed the words: 'On Her Majesty's Service Only. To all Heads of Departments and All Anglo-Indians / Rudyard Kipling Assistant / Department of Public Journalism, Lahore District. The Civil and Military Gazette Press' (See E.W. Martindell, *A Bibliography of the Works of Rudyard Kipling* [London, 1923], p. 9). The mischievous address to 'all Heads of Departments and Anglo-Indians' from the 'Department of Public Journalism' ironically invokes the traditional contempt of the Punjab for departmental drudgery. Moreover, a closer inspection of the spurious 'address', insignias, and inscriptions on the envelope would have hinted at the irreverent treatment of bureaucracy and officialdom in the poems it contained. Significantly, the words 'on Her Majesty's service only' are printed with a line scored through, implying the service of an authority other than the Queen, while, in a similar vein, the words 'majesty's' and 'departments' do not appear, being over-stamped by the ornamental title of the volume itself. This over-scoring, over-stamping, and obscuring of official inscriptions implies the service of a cause in India other than that of the Queen, which might nevertheless be undertaken under the auspices, indeed, using the *stationary*, of the British government.

14 In *Rudyard Kipling: An Attempt at Appreciation* (London, 1899), G.F. Monkshood sets the tone of early responses, commenting that: 'In reading Suddhoo there comes again a shuddering
makers, whose philosophy is so clearly at odds with the disposition of the narrator -
an impetuous civilian who flouts the principle of administrative detachment, entering
the house of Suddhoo and its labyrinthine corruptions. Of all the Plain Tales, it is 'In
the House of Suddhoo' that most powerfully depicts the terrors and the attractions of
the political and philosophical latitude claimed by the Punjab. In its blunt reference to
Benthamite codification, the story invokes the ratiocinative principles of utilitarianism,
which it brings to bear upon a question of magic and extortion, ultimately finding the
Code an inadequate regulator of British and Indian affairs.

In the story, the seal-cutter, a tenant in Suddhoo's house uses the telegraph system
to receive reports on the health of his landlord's ailing son. Claiming that he receives
the information by magical powers, the seal-cutter demands large sums of money from
Suddhoo for the performance of magic rituals, at which he presents an impressive
display of his fake powers - including ventriloquism and fire-breathing. Standing in
direct opposition to this extortion and mysticism is the Indian Penal Code, with all its
overtones of logic, rationality, and theoretical acumen, which are qualities
represented, Suddhoo believes, by his friend, the narrator. Suddhoo calls upon the
help of the narrator, a minor civil servant, to ensure that the 'magic' is 'not breaking
any law of the sirkar, whose salt he ate many years ago.' However, the narrator

remembrance of that lurid genius Edgar Poe and his imaginings of things darksome and full of
dread... Mr Kipling seems to acknowledge and anticipate the shudder that will greet these gazings
into the windows of the East and into its inmost life' (ibid., p. 156). More recently, Elliot Gilbert has
argued that it 'is not a story of the supernatural' (The Good Kipling, p. 68). However, Gilbert's
emphasis upon the humiliation of the narrator at the hands of Suddhoo's tenants again fails to reflect
the important legislative references of the narrative.

15 Plain Tales from the Hills p. 153.
has no such reverence for the Penal Code. Far from discouraging the fake rituals, he admits that he 'didn't know anything about the state of the law' but 'fancied that something interesting was going to happen.'\textsuperscript{16} He is fascinated by the hoax, its perpetrator, and its methods. Assuring the old man that magic is 'highly commended'\textsuperscript{17} by the government, he arranges to attend one of the seal-cutter's performances, so as to observe the skill of the 'sorcerer'. This predilection for \textit{jadoo} (magic), especially illegal and exploitative \textit{jadoo}, obviously contravenes the abiding spirit of rational and intellectual objectivity in which the Code was drafted. Willingly subjecting himself to the illegal, irrational, and emotive happenings of Suddhoo's house, the civilian is himself almost convinced by the sorcerer's performance: 'I felt the hair lift at the back of my head, and my heart thump like a thermantidote paddle... Luckily the seal-cutter betrayed himself by his most impressive trick and made me calm again.'\textsuperscript{18}

In the end, the narrator becomes an accomplice under the legislature that he is supposed to represent to the people of India. By dint of his presence at the ceremony, he is guilty under the Code of assisting the seal-cutter and extorting money from Suddhoo. This prevents him from reporting the crime, and hence the Code itself ultimately assists the extortion:

\textit{Now, the case stands thus. Unthinkingly I have laid myself open to the charge of aiding and abetting the seal-cutter in obtaining money under}

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 146.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 146.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 150.
false pretences, which is forbidden under Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code. I am helpless in the matter for these reasons. I cannot inform the police. What witnesses would support my statements? Janoo refuses flatly, and Azizun is a veiled woman somewhere near Bareilly - lost in this big India of ours. I dare not again take the law into my own hands, and speak to the seal-cutter; for certain am I that, not only would Suddhoo disbelieve me, but this step would end in the poisoning of Janoo, who is bound hand and foot by her debt to the bunmia.\(^{19}\)

The expropriation of Suddhoo, in which, as the passage reveals, the bunmia (money-lender) and the legislature ultimately conspire, is a neat allegory of the societal and economic malaise that Thorburn documented in the Punjab of the late-nineteenth century (*Mussalmans and Money-Lenders* first appeared in 1886; the year in which 'In the House of Suddhoo' was first published in the *Civil and Military Gazette*.) In line with Thorburn's argument, Suddhoo is a 'hereditary simpleton', for whom rights in property and land are a curse, throwing him upon the mercy of an ill-considered and ineffectual bureaucracy. Nor does the Penal Code establish the intellectual or political authority of the civilian, who ventures into the house despite the strictures of the legislature. Knowing nothing 'about the state of the law', there is, of course, the unofficial business of Janoo and Azizun, the prostitutes who live in the house, and whose sexual mystery is as fatally inviting as the elaborate extortions of the seal-cutter. Like Kipling himself, the civilian/narrator is attracted to the life beyond the 'piles of reports and statistics' that comprise the Raj, succumbing to desires and

fascinations that place him beyond the pale of respectable society and the governance of its traditions. It is in the nature of Kipling's ironic view of the Indian Penal Code, which is concomitant with his renunciation of the India House Utilitarianism and all its political adjuncts, that he should portray basic human urges and interests in opposition to British law.

Given this loosening of philosophical and judicial constraints, it is inevitable that the language, form, and subject matter of the Plain Tales should appear inscrutable and sometimes controversial to the early reviewers. Although, in the words of Andrew Lang, the very scenes of the stories were 'strange', more like scenes 'from another world than merely another continent', their whole political agenda and idiom implies, ironically, that there is actually a close cultural proximity between British and Indian societies. By losing sight of historical and political references, such as those more overtly inscribed in Suddhoo's sufferings under Section 420 IPC, critics have frequently read the stories in the manner of Lang - as an exhibition of weirdness that underscores the incompatibilities of East and West.

Early reviewers of *Plain Tales from the Hills* were uncertain what to make of the volume. It was a collection of stories that balked literary, moral, and political conventions. Signalling his discomfiture with the book, one critic bemoaned the inscrutability of the title, urging that it be changed for the British markets:

*Could there be a much less attractive title than Plain Tales from the Hills? Residents in British India and subscribers to the Civil and Military Gazette may know what it means, and hasten to get hold of the book*

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accordingly, but to the untravelled inhabitants of London and the United Kingdom generally it would seem almost as hopeful to undertake the perusal of a volume entitled *Straight Talk from Beulah*.

The uncomprehending reviewer was right to point out the inscrutability of the book to the 'untravelled inhabitants of London and the United Kingdom.' There was little in the stories that corresponded with the experiences and expectations of a prospective readership in Britain and Europe (a point emphasised by the recommendation of the volume to Sunday-travellers on 'a cross-country journey').

For reasons of sexual propriety, the stories presented a special challenge to the reviewers. Lang thought the volume 'more a man's book than a woman's book'. He explains:

> The 'average' novel reader, who likes her stout volumes full of the love affairs of an ordinary young lady in ordinary circumstances, will not care for Mr. Kipling's brief and lively stories.

Nevertheless, Kipling's unusual view of the 'potentialities of passion' would keep the reader interested: The 'loves of secluded native widows,' and the 'habits of damsels whose house, like Rahab's, is on the city wall' would 'keep the English reader awake

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and excited.\textsuperscript{25} In their depiction of inter-racial liaisons, the Plain Tales were thought to 'lift the veil' from a 'society so immeasurably distant from our own' and to offer 'glimpses of unknown depths and gulfs of human existence'.\textsuperscript{26} They were thought to depict a carnival of illicit and tantalising glimpses into 'native' sexual life.

The stories are actually far more complex than the early reviews suggest, exploring both the hypocrisies and the political consequences of the sexual life of the Raj. The first and perhaps the finest of the volume, 'Lispeth', establishes the emotional and political range of Kipling's handling of this theme. Far from providing an illicit 'glimpse' into a forbidden world, the story asserts the universality of sexual desire and the legitimate right of an Indian woman to a British husband. A hill-girl, converted to Christianity at the age of five weeks, Lispeth is later orphaned and placed in the care of the Kotgarh Mission. As a young woman, she saves the life of an Englishman whom she discovers one day while out walking. She nurses him back to health, falls in love with and makes plans to marry him. The Englishman, a butterfly-collector and a globe-trotter, encourages her 'pretty' attentions.

At this point, Lispeth is tacitly disowned by the missionaries, who fear her 'at heart a heathen'.\textsuperscript{27} However, her feelings are \textit{not} denounced by the narrator, who undertakes, through a series of sardonic comments, to expose the hypocrisy of the missionaries and the Englishman. After describing the lecture given to Lispeth by the Chaplain and his wife on the 'impropriety' of Lispeth's conduct, there is a cutting irony in his observation that:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{25} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 48.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Anonymous article (1890), \textit{Kipling: The Critical Heritage}, p. 51.
\item \textsuperscript{27} \textit{Plain Tales from the Hills}, p. 5.
\end{itemize}
It takes a great deal of Christianity to wipe out uncivilised Eastern instincts, such as falling in love at first sight.28

The remark has the effect of placing every cultural distinction and judgement of the story in inverted commas. The narrator concedes that Lispeth is 'a savage by birth', but then, by explaining that this savagery reveals itself in complete, irrepressible honesty - '[b]eing a savage by birth, she took no trouble to hide her feelings' - he adopts the condemnatory jargon of the missionaries (and possibly some of his readers) only to outlaw its use for racist purposes and redefine the 'prejudice' as a form of approval. Given that the missionaries lie to Lisepth, instructing the Englishman to promise that he will return to marry her, in the full knowledge that he is to leave India and marry a girl in England, the word 'savage' now implies the honesty of the East and the hypocrisy of the West. Further dismissing the religious hypocrisy of the missionaries, the narrator ironically judges Lispeth’s spiritual ‘improvement’ in terms of its effect upon her sexual desirability:

Whether Christianity improved Lispeth, or whether the gods of her own people would have done as much for her under any circumstances, I do not know; but she grew lovely. When a Hill-girl grows lovely she is worth travelling fifty miles over bad ground to look upon.29

28 Ibid., p. 3.
29 Ibid., p. 2.
At the end of the story, after Lispeth renounces Christianity and returns to her own people and gods, her tragedy is emphasised by its effect upon her beauty. In the last sentence of the story, she is described as a 'bleared, wrinkled creature, exactly like a wisp of charred rag'. The administrative lore of the Punjab renders it entirely natural to assert the sexual desirability of Indian women. The unforgivable sin of the missionaries is their unresponsiveness to, in Lang's phrase, the 'potentialities of passion' between the Raj and the people of India. The Christian faith and its exponents at the Kotgarh mission are 'cold', lacking the sexual spontaneity that the narrator deems inseparable from Lispeth's honesty:

Look, You have cast out Love! What Gods are these
You bid me Please?.../ your cold Christ and tangled Trinities.

As a 'stately goddess', with a 'Greek face', who might easily be mistaken for 'Diana of the Romans going out to slay' Lispeth transcends boundaries of time, place, race, and caste - she is a legitimate lover for the white European, and her feelings for him are equally valid and acceptable to the narrator.

The extent to which Kipling's views on sexual relations were influenced by the political ideology of the Punjab is revealed by the stories of Strickland, the police officer whose undercover work involves a close knowledge of the people and their ways. Strickland achieves results for the police department because of his sexual

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30 Ibid., p. 8.
31 Ibid., p. 1.
32 Ibid., p. 2.
prowess and readiness to explore the forbidden places of India. This is implied by the comment that he:

dabbled in unsavoury places no respectable man would think of exploring - all among the native riff-raff. He educated himself in this peculiar way for seven years, and people could not appreciate it.  

For some 'mysterious', though, by virtue of its insistence, tacitly obvious reason, Strickland's ways and works are mistrusted by other Anglo-Indians. They cannot appreciate his dabbling in unsavoury places, holding him a 'doubtful sort of man'. Inter-racial sexual encounters are an essential part of Strickland's undercover adventures, and are the reason for the widespread suspicion of his 'dabblings.' The first of the Strickland stories in the volume, 'Miss Youghal's Sais', is headed with the epigraph: "When man and Woman are agreed, what can the Kazi do?" implying, much as does the narrator of Lispeth, that sexual desire will be regulated neither by cultural boundaries, institutions, nor departmental routine. At the end of the story, respectably married and confined to his office work, Strickland 'fills in his departmental returns beautifully.' Such an ironic conclusion indicates Kipling's disrespect for the conventional duties and values of the Raj.

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33 Ibid., p. 27-28.
34 Ibid., p. 27.
35 Ibid., p. 27.
36 Ibid., p. 34.
Even though Strickland's marriage is based upon a pledge to renounce his former wanderings and to confine himself to his departmental returns, a later story in the volume, 'The Bronkhorst Divorce Case', tells how he 'broke his promise to help a friend.' In other words, Strickland's loose interpretation of his marital pledge enables him to work on the Bronkhorst divorce case, which ultimately saves the Bronkhorst marriage, and thereby preserves the respectable face of Anglo-Indian society. When a false charge of adultery is brought against the innocent and long-suffering Mrs Bronkhorst by her husband, who bribes a collection of Indians to support his accusation in the law-courts, Strickland goes 'fantee', or native, using his powers of disguise to mingle with the Indians and thereby disprove the case against Mrs Bronkhorst. Ironically, Strickland succeeds where the law-courts fail (another token of the ascendancy of personal guile and cunning over the legislature) averting the collapse of the Bronkhorst marriage. Strickland's success is entirely dependent upon his rejection of conventional legal and political methods. He breaks his promise to his wife, and, disguised as a sweeper, forms a sexual attachment with an Indian woman in the employment of Mr Bronkhorst: 'Whether the sweeper made love to Janki, Mrs Bronkhurst's ayah, is a question which concerns Strickland exclusively.'

In court, Strickland possesses the intimate knowledge, and therefore authority, that can only be provided by his adventures with the ayah:

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38 Ronald Hyam argues that the influx of English memsahibs to India after the Mutiny reflected an attempt, on the part of Whitehall, to maintain the sexual standards of the Raj (Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience [Manchester, 1990], p. 119).

39 *Plain Tales from the Hills*, p. 250.
Then began the panic among the witnesses. Janki, the *ayah*, leering chastely behind her veil, turned gray, and the bearer left the Court. He said that his Mamma was dying and that it was not wholesome for any man to lie unthriftily in the presence of 'Estreeken *Sahib*.  

The phrase 'leering chastely' aptly and economically conveys the suggestion of erotic adventure implicit in the comment that his under-cover work is the sport his soul 'lusted after'. The running of the land incorporates activities and proclivities conventionally considered 'beyond the pale' of ordinary society. Although Strickland invokes the Lawrencian tradition of the civil judge who lives, moves, and has his being among the people, he also implies the unofficial guile necessary to the official legislature and ordinary life of the Raj. The Plain Tales suggest that it is not only natural, but politically necessary to wander into the alleys and side-gullies of the native quarters; to seek intimacy with native India and to enjoy the spontaneity of sexual adventure with its mysterious and attractive women.

A number of critics have recently considered the issue of inter-racial sex, prohibitions, and punishments in 'Beyond the Pale'. The story tells how Trejago, an 'Englishman', ventures into the native quarters for 'dream-like' nights of sexual pleasure, with Bisesa, a fifteen year old Hindu widow. At the end of the story, Bisesa's hands are cut off as punishment for the illicit relationship by her uncle, Durga Charan. Trejago, caught visiting Bisesa, receives a thrust to the groin from a sword or

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dagger that leaves him thereafter with a 'slight stiffness' in the right leg. His lameness is subsequently attributed, by his peers, to a 'riding strain'. In one of the more impressive readings of the story, Robert H. Macdonald argues that 'Beyond the Pale' presents the reader with 'an object lesson in behaviour', yet, through a hierarchy of conflicting discourses, 'suggests the contradictions of the dominant ideology.' Macdonald suggests that the ultimate tragedy of the story is the 'disparity in the punishments of imperial master and subject race', which imply that 'the lesson to be learned is not so much for the white man, nor even for the reader, as for the black...'. According to Macdonald, Bisesa's partly healed stumps reveal the appalling injustice, inequality, and contradiction of the 'dominant ideology.' Nevertheless, he argues, through the language of the story 'ideology attempts to retrieve itself from contradiction.'

The problem with this otherwise perceptive reading, is that there is no such 'dominant' society in 'Beyond the Pale'. In fact, the important cultural code of the story is Hindu - and the penalty of Trejago's defiance of this code is a thrust to the groin or, implicitly, a castration equally as terrible as Bisesa's punishment. By overlooking the references to Hinduism, critics such as Macdonald misunderstand Trejago's fate and its implications for the Raj. As a widow, Bisesa is forbidden by religious custom either to remarry or to have sexual relations. This means that she and

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42 Ibid., p. 179.
43 Ibid., p. 179.
44 'Discourse and Ideology in Kipling's "Beyond the Pale"', Studies in Short Fiction, XXIII (1986), 413.
46 Ibid., p. 416.
Trejago are transgressing prohibitions clearly defined and formidable to themselves, and, I suggest, to Kipling's earliest readers - who understood the ominousness of the 'Hindu Proverb' quoted at the beginning of the story: 'Love heeds not caste nor sleep a broken bed. I went in search of love and lost myself.' According to the most severe interpretation of Hindu religious practice, Bisesa should, if she decides against sati (ceremonial burning) live a life of tonsure. J.N. Farquhar explains the custom among widows:

About 500 B.C. it became the rule that only childless Hindu widows should marry, and from about the time of the Christian era, it has been the law that no Hindu widow, not even a virgin child-widow, shall marry. Some three or four centuries later the practice of sati became recognized as legitimate, i.e. when a man died, his widow was allowed to mount the pyre and be burned along with his body if she wished to do so. Widows who did not mount the pyre had thenceforward to live a life of serious asceticism. In many parts of India to-day, as soon as a woman is widowed, her hair is shaven away and she must live tonsured all the rest of her life.

47 Plain Tales from the Hills p. 171.
48 J.N. Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements in India (London, 1913) p. 401. Writing in 1914, Farquhar explains that 'no educated Indian to-day would wish to revive the practice [of sati]', though he explains that burnings do sometimes occur and that '[w]hen such a thing happens, the Hindu community still thrills with reverence and sympathy' (ibid., p. 402). During these years, Pandit Isvara Chandra Vidyasagara led a popular agitation in favour of allowing Hindu Widows to remarry. The Indian government legalised such marriages in 1856 (ibid., p. 402). Nevertheless, custom
Despite these strictures, Trejago's first meeting with Bisesa is augured by the 'faint tchink of a woman's bracelets' behind the grating at the end of Amir Nath's Gully. Finely arrayed, even in her confinement, Bisesa renounces the ascetic rules of the Hindu faith, and Trejago, who knows only too well the meaning of the bracelets, defies the social and religious customs of the Gully. The narrator emphasises the religious significance of the bracelets in his description of the object-letter sent to Trejago: 'A broken glass-bangle stands for a Hindu widow all India over; because, when her husband dies, a woman's bracelets are broken on her wrists.' Trejago, who knows 'too much', is able to interpret Bisesa's message, which 'no Englishman should be able to translate'. Nevertheless, he fails to reckon with the religious culture implicit in the object-letter.

proved a persistent adversary. As late as 1909, articles on the tonsure were appearing in the Indian Social Reformer, and M.A. Subramaniam published The Tonsure of Hindu Widows. In the 1880s, around the time of Kipling's story, groups of Hindus in various parts of the country began to open and maintain Homes for Hindu Widows. The earliest Home outside the Christian Church was opened near Calcutta in 1887 by Sasipada Banerjea. Pandita Ramabai opened a Home in Bombay in 1889, and the Hindu Widows' Home Association, managed exclusively by Hindus, was established at Poona in 1896 (Modern Religious Movements in India p. 403). These social reforms indicate the strength of feeling surrounding the plight of Hindu widows such as Bisesa in 'Beyond the Pale'. To the first readers of this story in India, Bisesa's virtual imprisonment would have invoked a religious and social debate far more emotive than is apparent to a modern readership.

49 Plain Tales from the Hills p. 172.
50 Ibid., p. 173.
51 Ibid., p. 171.
52 Ibid., p. 173.
At the outset of the story, the narrator commands that boundaries of race and caste be respected - that the White should 'go to the White and the Black to the Black.' Yet it becomes increasingly clear that the reason for this injunction is not racial incompatibility, at least in the crude sense of racial 'superiority' or 'purity' of blood, but the real dangers of the penalties imposed by the different social environments of Bisesa and Trejago, which are mutually uncomprehending and destroy a relationship otherwise intoxicating to Kipling. The Hindu epigraph itself implies the dangers of ignoring the social code, asserting the intractable force and the pleasure of human love - between all castes, races, and religions - yet also the self-loss that is the penalty of disobedience to rules and prohibitions. The important point about the ending of the story is that judgement is exacted not by the Raj or Trejago's fellow Anglo-Indians, who are the rulers and the lawmakers of the country, but by Durga Charan, Bisesa's uncle. The punishment is a castration that is only intimated in the text, and faintly rumoured among Trejago's peers. His sexual transgression and its tragic consequences are explained by a riding-incident - a fiction constructed to disclose yet also to deny the real consequences of his actions: 'There is nothing peculiar about him, except a slight stiffness, caused by a riding-strain, in the right leg.' He can still be reckoned by his peers 'a very decent sort of man'; the kind who 'pays his calls regularly.' It is not the 'dominance' of British society or 'ideology' that is asserted by this turn of events, but the recklessness of an Englishman who imperils a Hindu widow, and the hypocrisy of a ruling race that perpetrates fictions about its tragedies, failures, and

punishments. For Kipling, the 'safe limits of decent everyday society'\textsuperscript{56} are a mutual deception - an avoidance of duty and responsibility. In terms of 'dominant ideologies', the story offers a disturbing choice - between a Hindu society that administers tonsure, and an Anglo-Indian society that avoids the implications of its rule, its misreadings, and its misadventures.

ii. Allahabad and the New India

Despite the Punjab's traditional association of strong leadership with virile and purposive penmanship, the stories in \textit{Plain Tales from the Hills} are radically suspicious of the written word and the authority of the text. They are scattered with references to lost works, doubtful attributions and authorships. In 'Wressley of the Foreign Office', the writer of the 'best book of Indian history ever written' sinks five packing cases of his \textit{magnum opus} to the bottom of a hill-tarn.\textsuperscript{57} Lispeth's Englishman returns home and writes a book on the East that makes no mention of the girl who saved his life. In the final story of the volume, a manuscript of doubtful reliability is inherited by the narrator, then filed safely away for 'reference', its contents undisclosed. Stories are told 'from the outside - in the dark - all wrong'.\textsuperscript{58} They are partial and untrustworthy.

Such distrust of sources and attributions expresses the discursive anxieties of the non-regulation system, which, though it valorised the power of Anglo-Indian

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 171.
\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 316.
\textsuperscript{58} 'False Dawn', \textit{ibid.}, p. 42.
penmanship, called in question the forms, methodologies, and epistemologies of English writing. It produced an uncertainty about the authority of authorship that clashed with Kipling's earlier belief in the power of the written word in the Punjab. In his letters to Margaret Burne-Jones, he had seen his writing as something through which he could exercise a form of imperial authority and responsibility. But in the final story of the volume, which concerns loafers and literary impostures, this belief in the political relevance and responsibility of the literary writer comes under sustained pressure. The story, 'To Be Filed For Reference', tells how the narrator, a journalist or editor, befriends a dying Englishman, McIntosh Jellaludin, who has renounced Anglo-Indian society, converted to Islam, and taken an Indian wife. Close to death, Jellaludin entrusts to the narrator the manuscript of the Book of Mother Maturin, his work on 'native life' paid for in 'seven years' damnation.\(^59\)

'Mother Maturin' was actually the title of Kipling's own unpublished novel of 'native life'. Writing to his Aunt, Edith Macdonald, in 1885, Kipling comments on the manuscript: 'It's not one bit nice or proper but it carries a grim sort of moral with it and tries to deal with the unutterable horrors of lower class Eurasian and native life as they exist outside reports and reports and reports.\(^60\) Here again is the opposition between interminable but respectable bureaucracy, 'reports and reports and reports', and the attractions of the native quarters. *Mother Maturin* was, he explained to his former editor, Kay Robinson, filled with the 'heat and smells of oils and spices, and puffs of temple incense, and sweat, and darkness, and dirt and lust and cruelty, and

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\(^{59}\) Ibid., p. 335.

\(^{60}\) To Edith Macdonald, 30 July-1 August 1885, *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 83.
above all, things fascinating innumerable. In other words, it was a relentless, unmediated account of lives and lusts only hinted at in the Plain Tales. Attributing the work to the fictional apostate Jellaludin suggests Kipling's increasing association of writing with a loss of authority and cultural bearings. The story itself is a proof against authorial control, each character submitting their narratives to some other authority: Jellaludin relinquishes control over his work when he hands it on to the narrator, and the narrator is incapable of taking sole editorial responsibility for the manuscript, enlisting the help of Strickland, who is equally uncertain of the authenticity of the work: 'he said that the writer was either an extreme liar or a most wonderful person.'

Something of the controversial nature of Kipling's lost manuscript, and his feelings about it, can be deduced from his association of the work with the disreputable Jellaludin, who shares many of the author's own literary and cultural predilections. Like Kipling himself, Jellaludin is an admirer of Swinburne and other Pre-Raphaelites, whom he quotes liberally when drunk, making him a friend 'worth cultivating.' The phrase is ironic, hinting at the obvious lack of cultivation that Jellaludin displays in his life beyond the pale. Despite an Oxford education and a knowledge of the Classics, Jellaludin's literary heritage only recurs in garbled attempts at quotation. Books are no longer tokens of 'cultivation'; nor safeguards against the attractions of 'native life.' In the hands of Jellaludin, who sells them 'for bottles of excessively filthy country-

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61 Ibid., p. 83.
62 Plain Tales from the Hills, pp. 335-336.
63 Ibid., p. 326.
liquors, they merely indicate the shame of his fall from grace. Although a companion, Jellaludin is an embarrassment to the narrator: 'Unluckily, one cannot visit a loafer in the Serai by day. Friends buying horses would not understand it.'

Similarly, *Mother Maturin* was a work that Kipling decided ought not to see the light of day. It was, like the fictitious author he created for the work, a blot on the respectable landscape of British India, and, perhaps for this reason, to be coyly filed for later reference. Kipling had, it seems, begun to venture into realms of thought on the Raj that were more apt to the thinking of the disreputable loafer than to the fastidious editor/narrator of the final Plain Tale.

Kipling ended his first collection with a story that dramatised his anxiety about the cultural and political orientations of his writing. There were material reasons for the self-questioning: he was about to leave the Punjab and move to Allahabad, a quite different region of India, whose political, religious, and literary life he knew little about. After absorbing the values and political lore of the Punjab, which provided him with material and an audience for his stories, he was now venturing into an unfamiliar province to work on the all-India *Pioneer*.

While his work for the *Civil and Military Gazette* had reached a local community of only seventy, excluding military personnel, his work for the *Pioneer*, 'then a power in the land', was destined to reach the whole of British India. Moreover, through his editorship of *The Week's News*, 'a weekly edition of the *Pioneer* for Home

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64 Ibid., p. 328.

65 Ibid., p. 328.


67 *Something of Myself*, p. 57.
consumption', he was to reach a wider audience in Britain. The prospect of a more diverse audience for his writing meant probable changes to its angle of vision. Kipling had envisaged the 'evil day' of his transfer to Allahabad as early as 1884. Writing to his aunt, he outlined the changes to his personal and professional circumstances that the move would signal, pledging to remain for as long as possible in Lahore:

...I find that Allahabad is 800 miles from Lahore and I should be as completely out of the family as though I were in England, a thing that I certainly don't desire till the time comes - my own time that is. The Parents of course are torn two ways and the Pater says "E'en settle it yourself." So I've consumed about half a pound of tobacco in the momentous question and hinted as politely as possible that I'd rather stay where I am. I'm beginning to know the Province. ...I'm afraid I shall have to leave my first love just when I've got all the reins into my hand and begin again on another paper where all the work is done differently and in all the minutiae of newspaper "fixings" there are vast differences.

The Punjab and the Civil and Military Gazette were his 'first love', which enabled him to get 'all the reins' into his hands; satisfying the craving for administrative responsibility and imperial work he desired in his early Indian years. His reservations

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68 Ibid., p. 52.

69 To Edith Macdonald, 30 July-1 August 1885, Letters, vol. 1, p. 82.

70 To Edith Macdonald, 17 September 1884, Letters, vol. 1, p. 76.
about the move were also partly due to the family-life he enjoyed in Lahore. In his autobiography, he describes the domestic bliss of the Kipling household:

I do not remember the smallest friction in any detail of our lives. We delighted more in each other's society than in that of strangers; and when my sister came out, a little later, our cup was filled to the brim. Not only were we happy, but we knew it.  

In many respects, the transfer was a demotion; ending the freedom he had enjoyed as 'fifty percent of the editorial staff' on the Civil and Military Gazette. On the Pioneer of Allahabad he was troubled by the constant presence of a chief proprietor who:

...spent several months of each year in his bungalow over the way. It is true that I owed him my chance in life, but when one has been second-in-command of even a third-class cruiser, one does not care to have one's Admiral permanently moored at a cable's length.

The move to Allahabad, when it eventually came, heralded an intense period of self-evaluation. As Kipling himself explains, he was alienated from the cultural, religious, and social life of the region:

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71 *Something of Myself*, p. 40.

[T]he North-West Provinces, as they were then, being largely Hindu, were strange 'air and water' to me. My life had lain among Muslims, and a man leans one way or other according to his first service. The large, well-appointed Club, where Poker had just driven out Whist and men gambled seriously, was full of large-bore officials, and of a respectability all new.\(^{73}\)

Aside from this new impediment to his relations with Indians, he no longer had recourse to the all-important fraternity of the Club, which, next to his family, had been his most treasured source of guidance, security, and inspiration. At Lahore, the Punjab Club had been the centre of his world, enabling him to fraternise with the builders of empire. He could depend upon its reproof when he 'tripped over detail'\(^{74}\) or appeared disloyal to the political lore of the province. Allahabad offered no such helpful camaraderie, guidance, or reproof. After Lahore, where he belonged to 'a specialized community who did not interest any but themselves', \(^{75}\) and worked on a minor provincial newspaper with a small circulation, the large-bore respectability and high-profile life of Allahabad came as a shock. As a famous writer on the all-India newspaper he could no longer enjoy the 'decent obscurity' of the Punjab, which had enabled him to find his feet as a writer and 'get used to [the] noise and crowds' that were to trouble him so much in the final months of his stay in India. Arriving in

\(^{73}\) Ibid., pp. 69-70.

\(^{74}\) Ibid., p. 45.

\(^{75}\) Ibid., p. 68.
Allahabad he realised that he had become public property, and was now at the mercy of a wider, uncomprehending readership:

If you had your name placarded up and down 2,200 miles of line and written big in every newspaper in India and were yourself invited to dinner parties for people to look at and ask "how do you write those - er - things?" you wouldn't feel happy. I am just now overtaken with an immense discontent and dissatisfaction with all that I have turned out and the Plain tales have put the coping upon my unrest.\textsuperscript{76}

Immensely unhappy with his new life and surroundings, Kipling's mood filtered through to his work on the \textit{Pioneer}, which began to oscillate between petulance and apathy. He began to take his journalism less than seriously, and so was despatched to the Native States as a travelling correspondent. The \textit{Pioneer} was unnervingly dependent upon the government and its representatives at Simla for its reporting, and expected a measure of journalistic circumspection in recompense for the official patronage. As Kipling explains:

I felt that I did not quite fit the \textit{Pioneer}'s scheme of things and that my superiors were of the same opinion. My work on the \textit{Weekly} was not legitimate journalism. My flippancy in handling what I was trusted with was not well-seen by the Government or the departmental officialism, on which the \textit{Pioneer} rightly depended for advance and private news,

\textsuperscript{76}To Margaret Burne-Jones, 25 January-24 March 1886, \textit{Letters}, vol. 1, p. 152.
gathered at Simla or Calcutta by our most important Chief Correspondent. I fancy my owners thought me safer on the road than in my chair; for they sent me out to look at Native State mines, mills, factories and the like.  

Kipling willingly exchanged the high-profile 'respectability' of Allahabad for the native states, where he could re-acquaint himself with an India untouched by official reports and statistics. In a letter to Burne-Jones written at the beginning of 1888, he expresses an obvious relish for his newly-acquired role as a 'vagabond on the face of the earth'. Describing his recent travels in Rajputana, Kipling writes:

I feasted in fine linen and came to desolate way side stations where I slept with natives upon hay bales and clean forgot that there was a telegraphic world without. Oh it was a good clean life and I saw and heard all sorts and conditions of men and they told me the stories of their lives, black and white and brown alike, and I filled three note books and walked "with death and morning on the silver horns" and knew what it was to endure hunger and thirst.  

Rajputana was a place in which he could forget the official, 'telegraphic world' he had begun to deplore. Kipling's invocation of moral cleanliness in the phrases 'clean life' and 'clean forgot' hints at the personal soiling he now associated with the official life of

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77 Something of Myself, p. 73.

thethe Raj. India was moving in a direction he no longer understood or appreciated. A famous writer and an editor on the most important British newspaper in India, he was becoming, against his will, a player in the official world he had cavilled at from the 'decent' seclusion of the Punjab. His tour of Rajputana was an escape into areas of India comparatively unregulated by the British Crown. It reinstated the 'wonderful and awful' vision of India he knew best. At the time, these were regions whose loyalty to the Raj was, to say the least, uncertain. Writing in 1894, William Lee-Warner described the fragile political relations between the native states and the British Crown. Any account of the states was, he suggested, inevitably an account of 'India under Home Rule', and, as such, it was necessary to clearly define the constitutional arrangement if the empire was to survive. In the articles Kipling wrote for the Pioneer, collected under the title Letters of Marque, he was far less willing to urge any such political interference. Commenting upon the 'Hat-marked Caste', the few Anglo-Indians living and working in the native states, he was delighted by their ignorance of Simla. As one genial civilian remarked: "Oh Simla! That's where you Bengalis go. We haven't anything to do with Simla down here." Free of the troublesome interference of the administrative capital, they were 'a bigger and more large-minded breed.' To the Kipling sequestered in Allahabad, this freedom was an inspiration. Taking Tod's Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan (1829), as his 'guidebook', he gleefully described the blood-feuds and the 'intrigues and of unruly

79 Ibid., p. 151.
81 Ibid., p. vii.
82 From Sea to Sea, vol. I, p. 130.
princes and princlings\textsuperscript{84} that filled the pages of Rajasthan's history. In Jeypore, he marvelled at the despotic rule of Jey Singh, founder of the city:

He was a traitor, if history speak truth, to his own kin, and he was an accomplished murderer, but he did his best to check infanticide; he reformed the Mahometan calendar; he piled up a superb library and he made Jeypore a marvel.\textsuperscript{85}

After Jay Singh came a successor 'lightened by all the lamps of British Progress', who 'converted the city... into a big, bewildering, practical joke'.\textsuperscript{86} In Rajputana, much as he had done in his coverage of the Rawalpindi Durbar, Kipling valorised rule 'as it was in the days of Harun al Raschid.' It was both a reaction against the increasing sophistication of the Indian Nationalists and their sympathisers in the Indian government.

Kipling distilled much of his sense of isolation from the culture and society of Allahabad into 'Baa Baa, Black Sheep', one of his most important stories of that final year in India. Towards the middle of 1888, he moved into the home of Alexander and Edmonia Hill as a paying guest. It was here that he wrote 'Baa Baa, Black Sheep'. Although traditionally read as account of his childhood suffering at Southsea, the story also represents his unhappiness in the North-West Provinces in terms of the

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., p. 131.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., p. 9.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., p. 10.

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., pp. 10-11.
unhappiness of a child, Punch, sent home to England and placed in the 'care' of the cruel Aunty Rosa. The story begins with the epigraph, 'When I was in my father's house, I was in a better place', evoking his father's house at Lahore, where he had idealised and rigorously defended the privacy and integrity of the 'family square.' As Kipling subsequently suggests in his writings, Lahore was certainly for him a 'better place' than Allahabad. In the story, Punch finds himself 'demoted'. Like Kipling on the Pioneer he is discouraged from voicing his opinions and ideas so freely:

There was no special place for him or his little affairs, and he was forbidden to sprawl on sofas and explain his ideas about the manufacture of this world and his hopes for the future... As the unquestioned despot of the house at Bombay, Punch could not quite understand how he came to be of no account in this his new life.

Deemed 'unfit to trust in action as he was in word' Punch's plight reflects the suspicion and watchfulness with which Kipling, as an outspoken critic of the British government, was received on the Pioneer. The 'departmental officialism' equally frowned upon his political and journalistic 'vagaries.' In 'Baa Baa, Black Sheep' Punch escapes from the gaze of Aunty Rosa during his walks with Uncle Harry, where he would explore all Rocklington. After learning to read, he discovers alternative imaginative worlds and is able to pass 'into a land of his own, beyond reach of Aunty

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87 Wee Willie Winkie and Other Stories, p. 271.

88 Ibid., pp. 282-283.

89 Ibid., p. 302.
Rosa...  

On the *Pioneer*, Kipling finds a similar consolation in his fictional writings and in his travels throughout British India and the Native States.

In a letter to his cousin written soon after his arrival in Allahabad, he makes perhaps the most telling connection between exile in Southsea and life in the Hindu city, recalling the brief annual stay at the home of his aunt, which had granted him temporary respite from the House of Desolation:

> I fancy from what I can make out of the movements of my folk in the north, that I shall come home next year for a while and then we will sit in the mulberry tree and hide pieces of bread and pork dripping under the dining room sofa and slide down the drawing room table and flatly deny the existence of any such objectionable being as "Mr Rudyard Kipling" or of so womanly wise a soul as "Miss Margaret Burne Jones."  

The reference to the mulberry tree and the construction of a slide fits perfectly with the description of the visits he gave in his autobiography many years later:

> [T]here was the society of my two cousins, and a sloping mulberry tree which we used to climb for our plots and conferences. There was a rocking-horse in the nursery and a table that, tilted up on two chairs, made a toboggan-slide of the best.

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90 Ibid., p. 287.


92 *Something of Myself*, p. 12.
By longing for that month of paradise at The Grange all those years later, the letter to Margaret Burne-Jones clearly implies a connection in Kipling’s mind between his feelings in Allahabad and the loneliness of his years at Southsea.

There were serious political reasons for Kipling’s wariness of Allahabad. It had become a focal point and a base for the Indian National Congress. In the very year that Kipling arrived, a number of important meetings of the Congress were scheduled to occur in the town. Indian Nationalism, almost entirely ignored in Kipling’s fiction of the period, was fast becoming a viable political force that neither he nor the government could so easily overlook. In one of the last and the finest stories he published in India, ‘On the City Wall’, he began to address the nationalism increasingly winning the support of Hindus in Allahabad and the other major cities of India. The story tells how the Anglo-Indian narrator - a cynic about Indian self-rule - unwittingly assists in the escape of an imprisoned revolutionary, Khem Singh. At the heart of the story is the Mohurrum mourning-festival, at which there is an outbreak of violence between Hindus and Muslims. The furore created by the religious fanatics enables Lalun, who is an important player in the bid to free Khem Singh, to organise his swift passage through the streets and out of the city.

Before turning to the story, it is worthwhile noting that the Hindu-Muslim violence described at the Mohurrum has a direct bearing upon the question of Indian nationalism and self-rule as it appeared in the 1880s. The Indian National Congress founded in 1885 was a modest, non-militant organisation with a retired civil servant, Allan Octavian Hume, as its chief organiser. Membership largely consisted of English-educated graduates, meaning that the crucial issue for the party during these early
years was a widening of the base of support among the different classes and religious communities of India. Now, significantly, the main obstacle to national unity was Indian Islam, whose adherents remained persistently outside and at loggerheads with the Congress.93 One in every five Indians was a Muslim, placing Islam in the minority and rendering the congress a predominantly Hindu organisation.94 Clearly, any story describing a clash between these two great religious communities refers at its very heart to a nationalist faultline, which lends an additional complexity to its handling of the topic of Indian independence.

Although Kipling remained 'south of Delhi'95 for the rest of his time in India, the Punjab continued to provide the backdrop for most of his tales. 'On the City Wall' is set in Lahore, but it is a Lahore gradually changing beyond recognition. The story describes a land 'full of educational and political reform'96 in which the narrator bluntly dispels any belief in the ability of India to govern itself, confidently asserting that the country will 'never stand alone'.97 The Mohurrum festival gives, he argues, 'ample chance for trouble',98 illustrating the unruliness of India's divided population. The peace of the city during such festivals is, he explains, fully in the hands of the British authorities, who are only taken by surprise when they 'are weak enough to

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95 The phrase is used contemptuously by the Pathan narrator of 'Dray Wara Yow Dee', *Soldiers Three and Other Stories*, p. 231.


allow it."\(^{99}\) It is a city completely subordinated to the will of the local administration, whose peace can be preserved with precautions merely 'adequate',\(^{100}\) but, should the occasion require it, he later describes 'the line of guns that could pound the City to powder in half an hour.'\(^{101}\) Despite these confident proclamations, the narrator is, like Kipling himself, a complex Sahib, who is far less admiring of British rule than many critics have suggested.

The story opens with a description of Lalun's brothel, perched, like Rahab's in Jericho, upon the city wall. Untroubled by the 'rude' remarks passed by English folk upon women of Lalun's profession, the narrator goes on to describe his own visits to the 'salon', and his friendship with Lalun and Wali Dad, an English-educated Indian. Wali Dad explains that, outside of a Freemason's Lodge, he has never seen such gatherings as those that take place in Lalun's house during the nights of latter April and May. Knowing that Lalun is 'not in the least inclined to orgies',\(^{102}\) the narrator asks the purpose of these meetings. Wali Dad informs him that they simply talk: 'Its like the Athenians, always hearing and telling some new thing.'\(^{103}\) Even though the narrator can give numerous and lengthy description of her possessions,\(^{104}\) and can translate her songs for the benefit of the English reader,\(^{105}\) there is a great deal about Lalun of which he is unaware. Lalun's mysterious clientele includes educated Indians,

\(^{99}\) Ibid., p. 339.

\(^{100}\) Ibid., p. 340.

\(^{101}\) Ibid., p. 335.

\(^{102}\) Ibid., p. 327.

\(^{103}\) Ibid., p. 328.

\(^{104}\) Ibid., pp. 326-327.

\(^{105}\) Ibid., p. 330.
university 'M. A.’s' and ‘red-eyed priests',\textsuperscript{106} who live in the secret world of nationalist conspiracy.

Although the narrator is himself attracted to Lalun and her society, he urges Wali Dad to give up ‘dreaming dreams', and take his place in the world.\textsuperscript{107} Lalun retorts that, in her house, she and Wali Dad are heads of state and that the Sahib shall be their Vizier. Her joke, suggesting a reversal of the real conditions of the British Raj, is precisely what the narrator believes cannot occur in modern India. However, from the outset of the story, Kipling indicates that the conviction of the permanence of the Raj is an illusion. In the description of Lalun’s house, he intimates dangers awaiting the unsuspecting admirer of India’s tranquillity and calm:

Lalun's house was upon the east wall facing the river. If you fell from the broad window-seat you dropped thirty feet sheer into the City Ditch. But if you stayed where you should and looked forth, you saw all the cattle of the City being driven down to water, the students of the Government College playing cricket, the high grass and trees that fringed the river bank, the great sand-bars that ribbed the river...\textsuperscript{108}

The prefatory warning of a sheer and deadly drop from the window contrasts disconcertingly with the peaceful and idyllic scene promised if the observer remains safely seated. Staying ‘where you should’, in avoidance of personal harm, is a

\textsuperscript{106}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 327.
\textsuperscript{107}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 338.
\textsuperscript{108}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 322.

provocative and threatening concept in relation to the story's treatment of Indian nationalism. The potential for disruption and physical damage lurks beneath even the most seductive and romantic vision of India. Wali Dad lies in the window-seat for 'hours at a time', which, taken in the context of its great height and danger, implies the precariousness of his position as an educated Indian. He explains to the narrator that '[t]hanks to your Government, all our heads are protected...'. However, in the aftermath of the riot, Kipling includes a detail that reveals the limits of the 'protection' of Indian heads:

In the centre of the Square of the Mosque a man was bending over a corpse. The skull had been smashed in by a gun-butt or bamboo-stave.

'It is expedient that one man should die for the people,' said Petit grimly, raising the shapeless head. 'These brutes were beginning to show their teeth too much.'

Some servants of the Raj are evidently too willing to take violent steps to quell Indian unrest. The whole city waits in eager expectation of a violent Mohurrum, and the British Infantry and Native Cavalry are 'all pleased, unholily pleased, at the chance of what they called "a little fun"'. During the riot, Indians are 'swept down side-

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109 Ibid., p. 322.
110 Ibid., p. 330.
111 Ibid., p. 351.
112 Ibid., p. 341.
113 Ibid., p. 346.
gullies' by soldiers, arm in arm, singing 'Two Lovely Black Eyes'\textsuperscript{114} while the paper tazias rock 'like ships at sea'\textsuperscript{115} and the men from the Club arrive in evening-dress with makeshift weapons. Beneath even the most ritualistic and local scenes of religious confrontation, there exists, Kipling suggests, a subterranean capacity for genuine evil and brutality from all three sides in the racial and political equation. It is this realisation that inspires the claim of Petit, in justifying the smashed skull, that the Indians are 'brutes', for whom it is expedient that one of their number should die (echoing the words of Caiphas to the Sanhedrin, before the crucifixion). Petit's ironic quotation from the Bible underlines the hypocrisy of the gulf between the methods and the civilising pretensions of the Raj. Even the officer's name, Petit, with its connotations of 'petting' and 'pettiness' emphasises the horror of his views upon the dead man. These are the views and the actions of a modern day army, whose captains call "all natives 'niggers'"\textsuperscript{116}, which, besides being extreme bad form, shows gross ignorance.

Given this view of the subterranean potential, even passion for, violence and anarchy among the various factions of India, there is an added complexity to the narrator's recognition that he has become, in the end, Lalun's Vizier. While Salman Rushdie is right to argue that, in 'On the City Wall, 'the Indian Kipling manages to subvert what the English Kipling takes to be the meaning of the tale,'\textsuperscript{117} he adopts a rather simplistic view of this 'English Kipling'. In fact, Kipling not only distrusts the

\textsuperscript{114}Ibid., p. 351.
\textsuperscript{115}Ibid., pp. 342-343.
\textsuperscript{116}Ibid., p. 336.
\textsuperscript{117}Soldiers Three and In Black and White, (Penguin Edition) p. xiii.
Congress, which he believes is constructed upon a precarious Hindu-Islamic faultline, but also the British Raj, which is constructed upon the unsteady foundations of its own complacency and ignorance of India. Although the story includes the following repudiation of Indian nationalism -

Overmuch tenderness... has bred a strong belief among many natives that the native is capable of administering the country, and many devout Englishmen believe this also, because the theory is stated in beautiful English with all the latest political colours.\(^{118}\)

- it is nevertheless a mistake to assume, as does Rushdie, that such a lack of sympathy meant a corresponding admiration for the Raj and the English. In fact, the story implies quite the opposite: the narrator describes Wali Dad as 'a young Mohammedan who was suffering acutely from an education of the English variety and knew it.' \(^{119}\) (italics mine)\(^{119}\) He spends his time 'reading books that are of no use to anybody.' \(^{120}\) (my emphasis)\(^{120}\) In other words, it is simply not the case that 'the superior culture of England'\(^{121}\) is subverted in the story. From the outset, English culture is far from 'superior', being represented by a Supreme Government that sends men who 'write

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\(^{118}\) *Soldiers Three and Other Stories*, p. 324.


books upon [India's] ways and works, denouncing or praising it as their own ignorance prompts.¹²²

In fact, in the opinion of the narrator the 'superior culture' belongs to Khem Singh and his revolutionaries, who would 'administer the country in their own way - that is to say, with a garnish of Red Sauce.¹²³ It is not with pleasure, but regret that he notes the silence of the Indian press when such men are imprisoned:

No one protests against his detention, because the few people who know about it are in deadly fear of seeming to know him; and never a single newspaper 'takes up his case' or organises demonstrations on his behalf, because the newspapers of India have got behind that lying proverb which says the Pen is mightier than the Sword, and can walk delicately.¹²⁴

It should hardly be surprising by now to observe Kipling's use of the pen and sword opposition, but in this context it is very surprising indeed. The passage goes as far as to advocate, or at least to mourn the lack of, armed resistance to the British. The

¹²² Soldiers Three and Other Stories, p. 324.
¹²³ Ibid., p. 324. Louis Cornell argues unconvincingly that, in the story, Khem Singh is merely the 'tool' of the nationalists, whose choice of 'so blunted a weapon' indicates Kipling's blindness to the real aims of the nationalists (Kipling in India, pp. 153-154). The point of Khem Singh's presence in the story is the admiration he inspires in the narrator, for whom he represents an India where battles were fought between armies motivated by higher objectives than the mere 'sport' of the religious conflict at the Mohurrum festival.
¹²⁴ Soldiers Three and Other Stories, pp. 325-326.
narrator suggests that if educated Indians were to relinquish their pens and recover their swords, their nationalism might be more laudable and effective. The idea is repeated in the complaint of Wali Dad:

There will never be any more great men in India. They will all, when they are boys, go whoring after strange gods, and they will become citizens - "fellow citizens" - "illustrious fellow-citizens". What is it that the native papers call them?125

Such a belief in the value of armed resistance places the opinions of Wali Dad and the narrator in line with Kipling's own, where strong deeds traditionally commanded more respect than brave words. Of course, Wali Dad is quite mistaken about who, and of what kind, the 'great men' of India would be - it was English-educated Indians like himself that would lead the country to independence. However, it must be understood that this wrong-headedness is the subject of the story and is challenged by the ending, in which the narrator unwittingly escorts the escaped revolutionary out of the troubled city.126 It is at this final moment of the story, when the Sahib is out-smarted by Lalun and the revolutionaries, that he disproves his own opinions on the inadequacy

125 Ibid., p. 332.

126 Louis Cornell understates the importance of this conclusion, arguing that 'the ostensible climax... where the reporter discovers that he has unwittingly helped a revolutionary to escape from the police, is too minor an incident, placed too close to the end of the tale, to seem in proportion to the rest of the story' (Kipling in India, pp. 152-153). Such a misreading of this important passage results from a lack of attention to the underlying cynicism about the Raj, which prepares the way for the narrator's discovery of his own credulousness, rendering it perfectly 'proportionate' to the rest of the story.
of the nationalists and the ineffectiveness of any resistance apart from armed resistance. Kipling had begun to imagine, however incompletely, a guile and a statecraft that would render the British merely Viziers to the Wali Dads of India.

This reading is supported by the two journalistic accounts of Mohurrum festivals that inspired the description of the riot in the story. In the first account, written in 1885, Kipling describes himself being swept away by the enthusiastic rush of a crowd...

...all attempts at flight were useless. The rush behind - an extremely courteous and considerate rush - allowed no return; and so the wandering Englishman was carried along by streets he knew not; through unfamiliar archways, and chowks in the centre of an ever-growing procession. Worst of all, it was impossible to make oneself heard - even had there been any-one near who could have set the stray one on the home track.

He is rescued by a 'respectable native gentleman' who has an extraordinary ability to command the people, prompting Kipling to speculate on the possibility that he might make an able and effective ruler of India. Struck by the 'grace and dignity' with which 'that native gentleman took charge of the alien' he is incredulous that '[t]omorrow

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127 These were confusingly entitled 'The City of Two Creeds' and 'The City of the Two Creeds', appearing in the Civil and Military Gazette on 19 and 22 October 1885, and 1 October 1887 respectively.


129 Ibid., p. 588.
or the next day' such a man will be 'lumped indiscriminately with a score of others as a "native subordinate"'.

In the later article, written during the Mohurrum festival of 1887, he again laments the calm of the city, attributing the infrequency of trouble to modern schemes of education and local self-government. The peace of the city is 'almost dullness' as he longs for the usual 'processional conflict' and 'dissipations', which Lahore has given up 'under the benign influence of a native municipality and the education of the university'. Nevertheless, he is convinced that there remains a subterranean, mysterious India untouched by these reforms:

The yard-wide gullies into which the moonlight cannot struggle are full of mystery, stories of life and death and intrigue of which we, the Mall-abiding, open-windowed, purdah-less English know nothing and believe less.

Disappointed that '[b]eyond the city walls lay civilization in the shape of iced drinks and spacious roads...', Kipling looks deeper into the scene, until he finds a crowd gathering around a local Hajii. In the light of his disillusionment with the spacious roads and iced drinks laid down by the English, the Hajii's attentive crowd represents...

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130 Ibid., p. 588.
131 The City of the Two Creeds, Kipling's India: Uncollected Sketches 1884-88, p. 266.
132 Ibid., p. 266.
133 Ibid., p. 267.
134 Ibid., p. 268.
an India untroubled by differences of politics, religion, or caste - the hand of the prostitute (Lalun) falls to rest almost in the manner of a benediction upon the head of the chaprassi's mother:

He sat in a flower and pot-plant decorated veranda, on a handsome carpet, with stretched cloths above his head. All classes had come to hear him, from the chaprassi to the native gentleman who owned a horse. Just across the road, Jezebel, in all the insolent affluence of beauty bedecked with lorn and tikkah looked out of the window to listen, and into a recess below the window the chaprassi hoisted his bleary-eyed shrivelled mother, old and hideous as Gagool, that she might be clear of the crowd. Jezebel dropped the hand that supported her chin and as it fell, it touched the head of the chaprassi's mother and there rested.\(^\text{135}\)

This mystical India has a presence in Kipling's writing that outlives the civilised trappings of the English. It recalls the 'dimly-seen, friendly Gods' of the local temples, which remained among his earliest memories of Bombay. Although he left the country soon after writing 'On the City Wall', he consistently returned to India in his fiction. Stylistically and thematically, he inherited from those years in the Punjab an aversion to theoretical forms of philosophy and polity, which were integral to the non-regulation system. Predominantly Hindu and committed to the nationalist cause, Allahabad prompted an acknowledgement of the changes dawning in the country and the possibility of a new India.

\(^\text{135}\) Ibid., p. 269.
AMERICA
CHAPTER FOUR

Vermont Years:

_The Day's Work_ and the Problem of American Capital

i. Populists and Industrialists

Early in 1889, Kipling left India, returning to England after a tour of the Far East and the United States (funded in part by a series of articles for the _Pioneer_, which were later collected in the two-volume edition _From Sea to Sea_). On his travels he visited Rangoon, Singapore, and Japan, arriving at San Francisco on 28 May. After travelling to Washington, Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, where, at Elmira, he interviewed Mark Twain, Kipling sought a passage to England, arriving in London at the beginning of October, 1889.

In his autobiography, Kipling termed his London phase 'The Interregnum'; an interval or stopping-over point on the wider course of his life and career as a writer. Lasting from the end of 1889 to the middle of 1891, his stay in the capital was brief, but was accompanied by an extraordinary rise to fame, and correspondingly dramatic moments of personal crisis. These years saw the publication of _The Light That Failed_ (1890), _Life's Handicap_ (1891), and _Barrack-Room Ballads_ (1892), which continued with the themes of the earlier Indian fiction, remaining true to the literary and intellectual ethos of the Punjab (significantly, Dick Heldar's angst in _The Light That Failed_ involves the question of fidelity to his experience of the East, and resistance to the aesthetic and political compromises of fame and fortune). Comprising two novels
of extremely uneven quality (including the collaborative effort, *The Naulahka*), a volume of poetry, and only one volume of short stories, the works of the London years fall mostly outside the remit of the present study. Hence, as explained at the outset, I have chosen to omit detailed attention to this period in favour of the next major phase of Kipling's career. Nevertheless, the personal connections Kipling established in London were to have a lasting effect upon his life and to prompt his move to America. In London, Kipling met Wolcott Balestier, an attractive, energetic, and enigmatic young American, with whom he established a close friendship and wrote *The Naulahka*. Late in 1891, Kipling undertook, on doctor's orders, a long sea voyage in order to improve the persistent low spirits and poor health that troubled his London years. Arriving at Lahore in December, where he hoped to spend Christmas with his parents, he learned of the death of Balestier from typhoid. He was devastated by the news, and returned at once to England. On 18 January, soon after the funeral of his friend, Kipling married Wolcott's sister, Caroline, in an extremely low-key ceremony, at which the only relative present was Ambrose Poynter. It was, in the words of Lord Birkenhead, a 'quiet, almost surreptitious'\(^1\) marriage. Henry James, who disliked Caroline, described the ceremony as 'a dreary little wedding with an attendance simply of four men.'\(^2\) The newly-weds embarked on a voyage around the world on 2 February 1892, which was cut short with the news, at Yokohama, of the loss of almost £2000 of Kipling's savings, caused by the collapse of the New Oriental Banking Corporation. The couple retreated, in straitened financial circumstances, to the Balestier family home at Brattleboro, Vermont.

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In the America of the 1890s, Kipling encountered a culture and a people entering a decisive phase in its political history; a period that contributed significantly to the identity and the political dominance of the US throughout the subsequent century. This was the latter part of America's 'Gilded Age', where industrial development meant free scope for the investor and an increasing awareness of the role of capital in society. It was the age in which Rockefeller, Vanderbilt, Frick, and Carnegie made their millions and acquired an unprecedented influence upon the political affairs of the country. This was also the period in which notorious manipulators of the stock exchanges such as Jay Gould and Jim Fisk prospered, issuing 'watered' stock in companies, and wasting no opportunity to fix the markets against the interests of competitors. A combination of factors led to this ascendancy of capital. Immediately after the Civil War, around $7,000,000 was contributed to the economy by returning veterans looking for goods on which to spend their savings and pensions. The ongoing construction of the railroads stimulated a demand for the steel that, due to new manufacturing processes, was cheaply available for the first time. Steel-making generated a greater demand for coke, and the scene was set for Carnegie and Frick, railroad man and coke processor, to establish their industrial empire.

In many respects the rural tradition of the country gave rise to a political system barely equipped for the transition to an industrial epoch. In 1860, 60% of the population worked on farms, even by 1900, the figure remained a significant 37%.

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4 Christine Bolt, *A History of the U.S.A.* (London, 1974), p. 445. According to the 1860 census, five out of every six Americans were rural dwellers. Given that the term 'urban' was applied to many
Whatever the gradual demographic changes, the outlook was predominantly rural. The problems of the industrial working class seemed as remote from the mass of Americans as the slums and factory districts that they inhabited. The large numbers of foreigners that flocked to these urban centres confirmed the impression that the political agitations of the cities were somehow 'un-American', allowing the industrialists carte blanche in the suppression of trade unionism and calls for the eight-hour day. Organisations such as the Order of the Knights of Labour and the American Federation of Labour, both of which rose to prominence in the 1880s, did little to challenge the dominance of the money-men, adopting a cautious line on workers' rights and discouraging strike action. A more militant labour movement, the American Railway Union, faced the united resistance of employers and the intervention of federal government, which sent troops against strikers and imprisoned its leader, Eugene Victor Debs.5

The most powerful response to the hegemony of Wall Street and the disaffection of the cities came from the rural West. The Farmers' Alliance sought to represent the interests of agriculturalists against the industrial East. The Alliance took an aggressive stand against high finance, industry and urbanisation, focusing their anger upon the railroads and the preferential treatment offered to business corporations by the rail system. When, in the 1870s, the promise of cheap land, abundant harvests, and the availability of credit transformed the Great American Desert into a place of opportunity for pioneering farmers, they borrowed heavily from the industrial East.

places that were simply villages in the countryside, even this figure is an understatement (Brogan, *The History of the United States of America*, p. 420).

Capital was poured into the West from cities such as Boston and New York, and mortgages on Western lands became desirable investments. After huge losses of cattle in the winter of 1886-7, and ten years of subsequent crop failures beginning with the summer of 1887, business optimism waned and the free-flowing credit dried up. Added to this, the value of wheat declined dramatically in the early 1890s, reaching its lowest point in 1894. Capitalism and all the trappings of industrial development were perceived by the farmers to be the root cause of the collapse. They committed themselves to a political movement and a form of political rhetoric that drew upon the rural and Biblical traditions of the East and the South. By the time of the Omaha Convention of 1892, the year of Kipling's arrival in America, the newly formed People's Party had transformed the beliefs of the farmers and the Farmers' Alliance into a viable mechanism for change at national level.

In his preamble to the Omaha Convention, Ignatius Donnelly described 'a nation brought to the verge of moral, political, and material ruin', condemning the spectacle of 'land concentrating in the hands of the capitalists'. The Convention marked the year of Kipling's arrival in the country, and it was this conflict between traditional and urban America that informed his views on culture and society in the period. He saw the political situation in terms of a simple opposition between corrupt capitalism on the one hand, and subversive Populism on the other.

Kipling shared the popular discontent with the cities. They were ugly, vast and lawless. Landing at San Francisco on his first visit to the United States in 1889, he

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6 _ibid._, p. 435.

7 _A History of the U.S.A._, p. 165.
witnessed the murder of a Mexican in the Chinese quarter,\textsuperscript{8} and saw 'a Chinaman who had been stabbed in the eye and was bleeding like a pig',\textsuperscript{9} leading him to conclude that, '[t]he white man in a lump is bad'.\textsuperscript{10} He blamed the reckless profiteering of investors and industrialists for what he saw:

[A] certain defect runs through everything - workmanship, roads, bridges, contracts, barter and sale and so forth - all inaccurate, all slovenly, all out of plumb and untrue. So far the immense natural wealth of the land holds this ineptitude up; and the slovenly plenty hides their sins unless you look for them. \textit{Au fond} it's barbarism - barbarism plus telephone, electric light, rail and suffrage but all the more terrible for that very reason.\textsuperscript{11}

Despite his views on the moral and material ruin of the cities, Kipling equally scorned the agrarian optimism of their chief detractors, the Populists. The great western themes of agrarian resurgence were such an area of controversy for Kipling that he wrote very little on the countryside. In what he did write of rural America, it is possible to detect a cynicism and paranoia that derives from his association of the farms with the Populist movement. For example, in \textit{Something of Myself} he describes his surroundings in Vermont:

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{8} \textit{From Sea to Sea}, vol. I, p. 489.
\item \textsuperscript{9} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 473.
\item \textsuperscript{10} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 482.
\item \textsuperscript{11} To William Ernest Henley, 18-19 January 1893, \textit{Letters}, vol. 2, p. 86.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
It would be hard to exaggerate the loneliness and sterility of life on the farms. The land was denuding itself of its accustomed inhabitants, and their places had not yet been taken by the wreckage of Eastern Europe or the wealthy city folk who later bought 'pleasure farms'. What might have become characters, powers, and attributes perverted themselves in that desolation as cankered trees throw out branches akimbo, and strange faiths and cruelties, born of solitude to the edge of insanity, flourished like lichen on sick bark.12

Not surprisingly, he made few friends among the common folk of Vermont. To him they were bent upon intrigue and prone to madness. Two articles he wrote at the time, 'In Sight of Mount Monadnock' and 'Leaves From a Winter Notebook', dwell alternately upon the beauty and the destructiveness of the landscape, associating the countryside with mental disequilibrium and even with murder.13 Such writing inverted the pastoral conventions of the Populists, a succession of whose candidates invoked the fertile American landscape in their campaigns against the arid and uncompassionate leaders of industry. Compare Kipling's account of Vermont to the gilt-edged agrarianism of William Jennings Bryan, who, in his campaign for bimetallism, exhorted the countryfolk:

12 Something of Myself, p. 117.

13 The two articles are reprinted in Letters of Travel (1920), pp. 3-15, and pp. 102-116.
You come to us and tell us that the great cities are in favour of the gold standard; we reply that the great cities rest upon our broad and fertile prairies. Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country... we will answer their demand for a gold standard by saying to them: You shall not press down upon the brow of labour this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.\textsuperscript{14}

The open prairies of Bryan's speech are places of social, economic, and spiritual growth. The cities were, he claimed, built, ultimately, upon the moral and material achievements of the farms; entirely contradicting Kipling's view of rural America. For Kipling, Vermont had none of the 'redemptive' qualities that typified the Bible-thumping Populism of politicians such as Jennings Bryan. On the contrary, it was irredeemably lost and dangerous to dwell upon, like the endless and lonely thoughts of its people. Kipling later became embroiled in his own personal conflict with the folk of Vermont,\textsuperscript{15} which only confirmed his suspicions that the farms were sites of social upheaval. It is a telling fact that the only story he set in Vermont, 'A Walking Delegate', is also his most direct attack on Populism.

In the story, a group of horses debate their subservience to humankind after hearing the promise of agrarian resurgence delivered by a 'yellow' horse from Kansas.

\textsuperscript{14} The History of The United States of America, pp. 444-445.

\textsuperscript{15} In 1896 he filed a lawsuit against his brother-in-law, which further provoked the hostilities of the local community. See Frederic F. Van de Water, Kipling's Vermont Feud (Weston, 1937).
This state was the home of American Populism. The first People's Party was formed in Kansas, and it was here that the term 'populism' was coined. Kansas was the 'banner Populist state'. As his colouring is meant to suggest, Kipling's 'delegate' is both cowardly and sensationalistic. Through the diatribe of the horse, Kipling parodies the themes of pastoral regeneration and claims for the solidarity of the workforce that characterise the Populist movement:

'\[W\]e take our stand with all four feet on the inalienable rights of the horse, pure and simple - the high-toned child o' nature, fed by the same wavin' grass, cooled by the same rippling brook - yes, an' warmed by the same gen'rous sun as falls impartially on the outside an' the inside of the pampered machine o' the trottin'-track, or the bloated coupe-horses o' these yere Eastern cities. Are we not the same flesh and blood?'

In 1892, as presidential candidate of the Populist party, General James B. Weaver of Iowa, took his stand on the same 'inalienable rights'. He declared that it was the 'mission' of Populism to 'restore to our government its original and only legitimate function... of assuring to all its citizens - the weak as well as the mighty - the unmolested enjoyment of their inalienable rights.' There are also echoes of Kansas Populists such as Mary Lease and Grant Otis in the rhetoric of Kipling's horse. Lease

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17 Ibid., p. 99.
18 The Day's Work, pp. 58-59.
protested, in a speech of March 1891, reported in the *Kansas City Star*, that '[t]he great common people... are slaves, and monopoly is master. The West and South are bound and prostrate before the manufacturing East.'

Otis promised, in a public letter of 1890, that '[w]hen the American people shall... organise for 'work' as we organise for 'war'! Then will we behold PROSPERITY such as the world has never witnessed.

These emotive rather than lucid appeals were frequently ridiculed in the press, and Kipling's story no doubt partakes of this trend of attacking the 'tumbleweed' politics of Kansas. In 1892, Weaver and his fellow campaigners travelled widely throughout the states, enlisting support where they could. Kipling's walking delegate suffers the abuse typically meted out by states hostile to the visiting Populists.

Not surprisingly, the politics of Kansas have little relevance to the horses of Vermont. Their experience is industrial, as they remind the yellow horse: "'[d]er's no wavin' brooks ner ripplin' grass..."' in the cities, and "'[t]ime's what dey hunt in N'York..."' eventualy they round upon the interloper from Kansas, beating him and driving him from their pastures, which, it can safely be assumed, Kipling thought the best method of staving off trade-unionism in the US:

'...America's paved with the kind er horse you are - jist plain yaller-dog horse - waitin' ter be whipped inter shape. We call 'em yearlings an' colts

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Ibid., p. 44.

Ibid., p. 47.

Weaver was rotten-egged in Macon, closing his southern tour in Pulaski, Tennessee, despite the threats of the Klu Klux Klan (*ibid.*, pp. 97-98).

*The Day's Work*, p. 63.
when they're young. When they're aged we pound 'em - in this pastur'... 24

'The Walking Delegate' suggests a composite portrayal of the Populist campaigner. Kipling himself maintained that this was the case in a letter of December 1894, explaining that it referred to 'a kind of populist not confined to America'. Perhaps he had forgotten, or chose not to admit, that in the manuscript he identified the horse as Eugene Victor Debs. In a cancelled passage at the end of the manuscript, Kipling wrote:

'He's no lamb. His real name's Eugene V. Debs and don't you bring him up here any more. This isn't a wholesome pasture for his make of horse.'

(underlining Kipling's) 26

Debs' imprisonment followed a strike at the Pullman Palace Car Company. When the ARU boycotted Pullman cars and trains pulling them, the government accused them of acting in restraint of trade and sent troops against the strikers. The beating of the yellow horse clearly suggests that Kipling supported the ruthless methods of the government in its handling of the Pullman Palace dispute. Kipling had, it can be safely argued, a hostile attitude to American socialists. However, he shared their contempt for the financiers and speculators who increasingly dictated American policy.

24 Ibid., p. 76.
26 British Library, MS. 45541, p. 190.
His suspicion of the boardroom and the investor is reflected in many of the stories of *The Day's Work*. Perhaps the clearest resistance to the interference of capitalists and the boardroom comes in 'Bread Upon the Waters', where an experienced and loyal Chief Engineer, McPhee, gains revenge upon an unscrupulous band of executives who dismiss him when he refuses to sail in accordance with their lucrative but dangerous shipping schedule. The executives, Holdock, Steiner and Chase, are the epitome of rogue entrepreneurialism, painting over the pitted plates of a cheaply acquired freighter, the *Grotkau*, puttying up a crack in her propeller that 'ye could ha' put a penknife to', and setting her to sea with a poorly fed, overworked, and discontented crew. McPhee is taken under the wing of a rival shipping giant and fellow-Scotsman, McRimmon, becoming the instrument of McRimmon's plan to financially cripple Holdock, Steiner, and Chase. McRimmon receives a handsome reward for salvaging the *Grotkau* when, as he expects, the propeller breaks, the ship is abandoned, and McPhee, whom he has strategically positioned for this purpose, tows the derelict ashore. The narrator of the story is invited to the home of the McPhees to celebrate their receipt of a portion of the salvage money, which, although a welcome boon for his friends, is a continual source of discomfort and worry to the narrator himself. As so often in Kipling's work, the teller of the story is excluded from the world he describes. However, in 'Bread Upon the Waters', the exclusion is directly attributed to issues of wealth and social elitism.

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28 For an illuminating discussion of this narratorial estrangement in the early Indian stories see Daniel Karlin, 'Plain Tales?' in Phillip Mallet, ed., *Kipling Considered* (Basingstoke, 1989), pp. 1-18. Karlin argues that, while in *Departmental Ditties* Kipling portrays himself as an insider to
At the beginning of the story, even before their windfall, the McPhees already have a taste for the high life. The narrator is a personal friend of Janet McPhee, whom he conveys westward to the theatre, where she introduces him to 'a new world of doctors' wives, captains' wives, and engineers' wives...'. Although Janet is accustomed to such company and entertainment, the narrator, a humble writer of pamphlets, is not. On a previous visit to the home of Holdock, of Holdock, Steiner, and Chase, he is monitored lest he 'went away with coats from the hat-rack.' Janet McPhee has no such troubles with the Holdocks, inviting Mrs Holdock into her home to talk 'scandal'. Her fraternisation with the owners of the company that eventually dismisses her husband, indicates the perils of the society she enjoys. When the narrator first meets Mrs McPhee after their windfall, she already takes a similar pride in her own hat-rack, worth 'thirty shillings at least'. Her taste for the gentle flirtations of high society little abated, she sends a dinner invitation to the narrator written on paper 'almost bridal in its scented creaminess.' Mr McPhee has similarly extravagant tastes, falling for the grandiose style of a pamphlet concerning the prosaic matter of cabin ventilation, which is 'composed in the Bouverie-Byzantine style, with

Anglo-Indian society, by the time of *Plain Tales from the Hills*, he had begun to dramatise his isolation from India and the Anglo-Indian community in the narration of the stories. Karlin's views correspond broadly with my own discussion of Kipling's political estrangements, which became more acute when he reached Allahabad.

baroque and rococo embellishments'. The 'composer' of the pamphlet is the narrator, and its commissioners are Holdock, Steiner, and Chase, signalling at once the narrator's ambivalent position as a critic of wealth who is nevertheless in the pay of the most roguish boardroom of them all. The work earns him 'seven pounds ten, cash down - an important sum of money in those days.' In the manuscript version of the story, Kipling includes a passage that expresses the writer's contempt for the firm and his own self-abasing duty:

The Holdocks never approached literature in the right spirit, and Mr Holdock wanted to cut out half the poetical quotations from the pamphlet till I made clear that they were not to be charged for as original matter.

The pamphlet he eventually writes is entitled 'Comfort in the Cabin'; a title that shows he understands the market: transatlantic travellers of refined tastes and delicate constitutions. If it were not for his own implications of the fickleness of high society, there would be something inherently 'comforting' about the social rise of the McPhees, with their benevolence and ready cash. But as it stands, too much has been said about snobbery, exclusion, and rank materialism to lay to rest anxieties about the corrupting power of capital. The McPhees are uncomfortable players in the world of high finance; a discomfiture emphasised by the description of the enriched engineer, who

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34 Ibid., p. 282.
36 British Library, MS. 45541, p. 91.
shakes hands 'in a new and awful manner - a parody of old Holdock's style when he says goodbye to his skippers.'\textsuperscript{37} At the end of the story, McPhee retires from his post and pledges to travel in future only as a passenger. However, in the epilogue, the image of McPhee and his wife sacrificing the pleasures of a first-class cruise to tend to a sick woman in the second-class saloon and mix with the engineers, suggests that although they have ascended socially, their philanthropic impulses are not the norm in this new social circle.

Wealth and leisure are enemies of the selfless devotion to duty valorised in \textit{The Day's Work}. McPhee remains a passenger 'for exactly twenty-four hours, and then the engineers' mess 'joyfully took him into its bosom'.\textsuperscript{38} It is in the daily devotion to duty that men and women are safe from the corrupting influence of wealth and commerce. The peril of riches is suggested in the name itself of McPhee's employer, McRimmon, which invokes the Biblical story of Naaman the Syrian, who, when healed of leprosy, promises Elisha that he will not serve any gods other than the Lord, but asks pardon in advance for bowing down in the House of Rimmon when attending the king in his worship.\textsuperscript{39} The moral compromise implicit in the idolatrous act of bowing down to Rimmon, has an obvious bearing upon the issue of capital in the story. Despite being 'worth the windy side o' twa million sterling',\textsuperscript{40} McRimmon is a social outcast, or, as McPhee puts it, a 'lonely man.'\textsuperscript{41} The newly enriched McPhee is imperilled by the

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{The Day's Work}, p. 283.
\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 316.
\textsuperscript{39} 2 Kings 5. 17-18.
\textsuperscript{40} \textit{The Day's Work}, p. 292.
\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 292.
loneliness and hatred that has come to dominate McRimmon's dealings with Holdock, Steiner, and Chase. McRimmon is deeply anti-Semitic; a hatred that motivates his plot to 'break that Jew-firm'. His banshee-like baiting of young Steiner, conducted 'in a screech ye could hear to the Hoe', emphasises the destructiveness of his feelings. The mutual loathing of the shipping giants is ultimately portrayed in the inhuman terms of vulture and carrion: Steiner looks 'angry enough to eat' his rival, while McRimmon, 'chuckle[s] and whistle[s] in his dry old throat'. Neither would be comfortably placed in the home of Janet McPhee.

Many of the stories of The Day's Work were initially published in McClure's Magazine, Cosmopolitan, and Pearson's, which were to become, within roughly five years, the chief platforms of the 'muckraking' tradition of American journalism. Muckraking involved the '[e]xposure of corporation and trust rascality' in American life. In his autobiography, Kipling describes his first meeting with Sam McClure, whose magazine became the foremost campaigner against corporate intrigue and corruption. He, like Roosevelt, was in advance of his age, for he looked rather straightly at practices and impostures which were in the course of being

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42 Ibid., p. 314.
43 Ibid., p. 314.
44 Ibid., p. 314.
46 Filler argues that 'credit for the sponsorship of muckraking does undoubtedly belong to McClure and McClure's' (ibid., p. 82). For more on Samuel McClure, his admiration for Kipling, and his sponsorship of the Muckrakers, see The Muckrakers, pp. 80-89.
sanctified because they paid. People called it 'muck-raking' at the time, and it seemed to do no sort of good. I liked and admired McClure more than a little, for he was one of the few with whom three and a half words serve for a sentence, and was as clean and straight as spring water.\textsuperscript{47}

The straight-talking McClure instantly appealed that side of Kipling still awed by the strong words and heroic deeds of John Lawrence's Punjab. Kipling's Indian, English, and American experiences increasingly merged into a rich pattern of mutual commentary.

ii. Anglo-American Stories

Although he sympathised with the Muckrakers, his nationality and political commitments lent his criticisms of American life a slightly different meaning from those of the American campaigners. He frequently used the example of American venality to illustrate, by comparison, the honest achievements and sound polity of hardworking Englishmen overseas. For him, the day's work was best done in the outer reaches of the British empire, far from the ravages of financiers and speculators. Unable to identify with either the American capitalists or the reformers, Kipling reasserted his commitment to the English middle and upper-classes. Commenting upon American literary society, he urged the editor of \textit{The Scots Observer} and \textit{The National Observer}, W. E. Henley, to promote wariness of the United States:

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Something of Myself}, p. 125.
Don't spare the rod in your criticisms of anything. This 'ere is the land where "everything goes" and the lawlessness leaks into the books as it does into all the other things. Only, there's no force at the back of the incessant posing to be free - only common people doing common things in the cheapest and most effective way for immediate results.48

The American illusion of progress was the work of 'common people' doing things shabbily. With an obvious measure of irony in his echo of the Creed and reference to Torquemada and the Inquisition (an irony too easily overlooked in Kipling) he goes on to assert his commitment to the British publications and literary institutions that maintained a conservative aesthetic, moral, and political outlook:

I believe in the critic, right or wrong so long as there is a critic and a canon. I believe in the Saturday Review, the Spectator, the Athenaeum, and all the Quarterlies. I believe in Mudie,49 in the British Nation, in Mrs Grundy, in the Young Person, and in everything else that sits on the head of talent without form or rule. I believe in Torquemada and the Inquisition; in everything Doctor Johnson said about anybody and in all things that have authority and decency to back 'em. For they are necessary, and now I know why.50


49 Charles Edward Mudie (1818-1890) owner of the largest circulating library in England, who censored books by refusing to stock those of which he did not approve.

50 Ibid., vol. 2, p. 112.
It was this respectable and conservative England that he evoked in *The Day's Work*. In the two stories of Anglo-American relations in the volume, he reveals the enormous gulf existing between each nation's view of capital and society. The first, 'An Error in the Fourth Dimension', tells how Wilton Sargent, the son of an American railroad magnate, settles in England in the hope of becoming 'just a little more English than the English'.

Purchasing Holt Hangers, he learns with delight that England stands ready to receive him, discreetly and contentedly accommodating his wealth:

If he had money and leisure, England stood ready to give him [Wilton Sargent] all that money and leisure could buy. The price paid, she would ask no questions. He took his cheque-book and accumulated things - warily at first, for he remembered that in America things own the man. To his delight, he discovered that in England he could put his belongings under his feet; for classes, ranks and denominations of people rose, as it were, from the earth, and silently and discreetly took charge of his possessions. They had been born and bred for that purpose - servants of the cheque-book.

The discretion of the 'servants of the cheque-book' contrasted with the social turbulence provoked by wealth across the Atlantic, where the capitalist had become a controversial and hated figure. To Kipling, the English working-classes were content

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51 *The Day's Work*, p. 319.

with their social position, and only too happy to instruct Wilton of each person's 'decreed position in the fabric of the land.'\(^{53}\)

The harmonious integration of wealth extends to the enterprise of the railroads, a considerable source of controversy in America. The trains of the Great Buchonian Railway are an accepted part of the English landscape, passing 'with a bee like drone in the day and a flutter of strong wings at night.'\(^{54}\) The regular and punctual operations of the railway are not only proverbial, but sacred to the locals. They are a solemn institution that Wilton violates when, in a gesture of 'American' impulsiveness, he flags down one of the trains in mid-flight. His recklessness is apparently symptomatic of American industry and capitalism. Wilton's father had 'striven to wreck, before capture, the railways of his native land,'\(^{55}\) and the narrator suggests that 'some touch of the old bandit railway blood'\(^{56}\) still infects his son. Hastily established in the scramble to build railroads across the vast distances of the country, Wilton's American tracks are not 'permanent-way', the synonym applied to the English lines, and feature 'curves that that the Great Buchonian would have condemned as unsafe in a construction-line.'\(^{57}\) They represent the shoddy workmanship and profiteering that Kipling reviled in his letter to Henley. Wilton stops the English train because, in one of the 'rapid and purposeless flights of thought'\(^{58}\) typical of Kipling's Americans, he desires to collect a priceless scarab from his London chambers in order

\(^{53}\) Ibid., p. 319.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., p. 318.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., p. 318.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., p. 318.

\(^{57}\) Ibid., p. 319.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., p. 328.
to prove its authenticity to Hackman of the British Museum. Wilton's devotion to the scarab, a glimpse of the America in which 'things own the man', contrasts with the poise and the nonchalance of the Englishman, Hackman, who had 'a way of carrying really priceless antiquities on his tie-ring and in his trouser pockets.\textsuperscript{59} Hackman, Kipling suggests, is accustomed to his wealth and social position, treating valuable property with a salutary touch of irreverence. In other words, Englishmen, whether of Wilton's estate or the British Museum, are in awe neither of property nor wealth, observing levels of honesty and trustworthiness unknown in America.

The story culminates in the attempt of the Great Buchonian Railway, with the full consent of the House of Lords, to press for the building of a fourteen foot brick wall around Wilton's estate. The theme reflects an underlying pleasure in describing Americans in a situation of powerlessness, which is, of course, an indication of the actual power that the United States had begun to display in its relationship with Britain and its influence upon international politics. It was shortly after this story was first published that Grover Cleveland was to call the bluff of Salisbury and the British Cabinet over the boundary dispute in Venezuela. In fact, the Venezuela crisis, over which the two nations contemplated war in 1895,\textsuperscript{60} was only one of many flashpoints in Anglo-American relations during these years.

In 'My Sunday At Home', Kipling's fear of American domination inspires an extremely 'possessive' treatment of the English countryside and a malicious joke at the

\textsuperscript{59}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 322.

\textsuperscript{60}The dispute concerned the frontier between Venezuela and British Guiana. On the 17 December 1885, President Cleveland raised the prospect of war by denouncing British foreign policy and asserting America's right to defend Venezuela against a British military action.
expense of another American visitor. The story tells how an American doctor, on his first visit to the country, is manhandled by an English 'navvy', who is eventually subdued by the villagers of Framlynghame Admiral. The doctor meets the narrator on a train, and, after enlarging upon the beauties of New York, looks out upon the 'ordered English landscape wrapped in its Sunday peace'. The England he views is a 'garden of Eden', the original land of the Pilgrim Fathers awaiting the return of its American inheritors. It is a place of leisure and recuperation. In fact, he has come to visit a fellow-countryman who has 'retired to a place called the Hoe... to recover from nervous dyspepsia. According to the doctor, England is 'soothing', a 'Paradise', the most 'sumptuous rest cure in his knowledge'. How anyone in England 'could retain any nervous disorder pass[es] his comprehension. Nevertheless, his comments on Hardy's fiction - 'And so this is about Tess's country, ain't it? I feel just as if I were in a book.' - imply the fictitious nature of his impressions of England, which are subsequently unravelled through a series of farcical and rather improbable events.

61 Ibid., p. 341.
62 Ibid., p. 351.
63 Ibid., p. 342.
64 Ibid., p. 342.
65 Ibid., p. 342.
66 Ibid., p. 343. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was first published in 1891, about three years before 'My Sunday at Home'. Tompkins considers 'My Sunday at Home' a 'reaction to Hardy's tragic artistry' (J.M.S. Tompkins, *The Art of Rudyard Kipling* [London, 1959], p. 46). Such a reading over-emphasises the importance of the reference to Hardy, the point of which is to satirise the doctor's romantic opinions and, in turn, to criticise the trivialising attitude of America towards England on the broader international front.
Misinterpreting the guard’s announcement onboard the train: 'Has anybody here a bottle of medicine? A gentleman has taken a bottle of poison (laudanum) by mistake the doctor rashly administers an antidote to a 'navvy' who is merely drunk (the guard meant that someone had taken poison 'away with 'im, in 'is 'ands' and was now 'wirin' from Woking'). Convulsed with the pain induced by the unnecessary medication, the navvy grips the American by the collar, fixing him to the platform until he can exact his revenge. C.S. Lewis suggests that 'My Sunday at Home' contains some of Kipling’s finest descriptions of the English countryside - so fine that they almost overpower the central episode. However, I would argue that the dominance of the scenery is crucial to the meaning of the story, which ultimately concerns rights of national belonging and ownership. It is a scenery that overpowers and excludes outsiders who would ‘thrust an inexpert finger into the workings of an alien life’. This is illustrated by the narrator’s own appreciation of his surroundings:

I was well content to be alive - to abandon myself to the drift of Time and Fate; to absorb great peace through my skin, and to love my country with the love and the devotion that three thousand miles of intervening sea bring to fullest flower. And what a garden of Eden it was, this fatted, clipped, and washen land! A man could camp in any open field with more sense of home and security than the stateliest buildings of foreign cities

67 The Day's Work, p. 343.
68 Ibid., p. 344.
70 Ibid., p. 348.
could afford. And the joy was that it was all mine inalienably - groomed hedgerow, spotless road, decent grey-stone cottage, serried spinney, tasselled copse, apple-bellied hawthorn, and well-grown tree.71

The narrator's joy in the countryside is inspired, to a substantial extent, by his belief that he possesses the land: 'it was all mine inalienably'. The notion instils in him a feeling of 'home and security' that the 'alien' can never enjoy. Secure in the conviction of ownership, he is content to abandon himself to the 'drift of Time and Fate' - an abandonment that leads him to comment:

[S]o long as a man trusts himself to the current of Circumstance, reaching out for and rejecting nothing that comes his way, no harm can overtake him. It is the contriver, the schemer, who is caught by the law, and never the philosopher. I knew that when the play was played, Destiny herself would move me on from the corpse; and I felt very sorry for the doctor.72

The ironic fatalism of the narrator implies a lack of responsibility for the events unfolding in the midst of the countryside. He is content to 'drift', like the 'philosopher', with Destiny herself as his guide. Unlike Wilton Sargent, he owns but is in no sense owned by the land. He can abandon its delights as freely as he can enjoy his rightful 'possession'. At one point in the story, he leaves, after only a matter of hours, the

71 Ibid., pp. 351-352.
72 Ibid., p. 352.
room he rents at the village inn: 'a blessed inn with a thatched roof and peonies in the
garden'. He is confident that the ancient and settled order of England will remain
eternally for his enjoyment. The idea of an England untroubled by social discord and
turbulence is emphasised by the description of the navvy, whose aggressive stride
hardly disturbs the calm of the unchanging countryside:

On my way to the station he passed me in great strides, his head high
among the low-flying bats, his feet firm on the packed road metal, his
fists clenched, and his breath coming sharply. There was a beautiful smell
in the air - the smell of white dust, bruised nettles, and smoke that brings
tears to the throat of a man who sees his country but seldom - a smell
like the echoes of the lost talk of lovers, the infinitely suggestive odour of
an immemorial civilisation.

The sharp breath of the navvy makes for a disconcerting contrast with the 'beautiful
smell in the air'. It is an enraged breath that is unable to disturb the pacific aroma of
England, which is, the narrator extemporises, the 'infinitely suggestive odour of an
immemorial civilisation.' Nevertheless, subsequent events call in question this
philosophical detachment and belief in the settled tranquillity of the land.

At the end of the story, the whole village rallies to the feudal assertion of 'each
man's decreed position in the fabric of the realm'. The villagers act to subdue the

73 Ibid., p. 355.
74 Ibid., p. 356.
navvy when, in a final devastating attack upon the social order, he attacks the local Squire, believing him to be the doctor:

'You thought I was dead, did you?' roared the navvy. And the respectable gentleman came accordingly, inarticulate with rage.

'Ere's a man murderin' the Squire,' the driver shouted, and fell from his box upon the navvy's neck.

To do them justice, the people of Framlynhame Admiral, so many as were on the platform, rallied to the call in the best spirit of feudalism. It was the one porter who beat the navvy on the nose with a ticket-punch, but it was the three third-class tickets who attached themselves to his legs and freed the captive.75

Obeying the promptings of their innate 'spirit of feudalism', the villagers lock the labourer in the lamp-room until the constable arrives, prodding the 'berserk' prisoner with agricultural implements to prevent his escape through the window. Even before his own ill-conceived attack upon the hierarchy of the land, it is clear that he is moved by a completely different spirit from that of the villagers - a new spirit of industrial trade-unionism. His reaction to the doctor parodies the rhetoric of working-class solidarity, pitting the forces of the 'English workin' man' against the interference of outsiders or 'anarchists', reasserting his right to the support of the state and to monetary compensation:

75 Ibid., p. 358.
'You've settled me now, you damned anarchist. Takin' the bread out of the mouth of an English workin' man!...

...There's justice, I tell you, in England; and my Union'll prosecute too. We don't stand no tricks with people's insides 'ere. They gave a woman ten years for a sight less than this. An you'll 'ave to pay 'undreds an 'undreds o' pounds, beside a pension to the missus...' 76

Despite the empowerment of the working man represented by the threat of union action and the claim for compensation, for Kipling England remained an essentially 'feudal' land in which malevolent social forces would be swiftly subdued. 77 It was a place of social calm and cohesion, upon which lay the 'peace of Nirvana'. 78

Nevertheless, the ending of the story presents an alternative possibility. Hearing the commotion caused by the rampaging navvy, a 'young man' arrives and asks the narrator if the 'prisoner' is drunk, to which he ironically replies: "Well, the symptoms,

76 Ibid., p.350.

77 It is worth noting Arnold's abrasive views on the empowerment of the unions and the working classes in America during the late nineteenth century. Arnold believed that the wealth of the United States raised the standard of living for the majority of Americans. He explains: 'a working man's clothing is nearly as cheap as in England, and plain food is on the whole cheaper. Even luxuries of a certain kind are within a labouring man's easy reach' ('Civilisation in the United States', The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold [Ann Arbor, 1960-1977] vol. XI, p. 354). However, in so improving the plight of the working classes, Arnold believed that the American system created a culture of mediocrity and an ignorance of 'civilised' values: '...their average man is a danger, and ... his predominance has brought about a plentiful lack of refinement, distinction and beauty' (ibid., p. 364).

78 The Day's Work, p. 348.
so far as my observation has gone, more resemble those of Asiatic cholera than anything else." Hearing this judgement, the young man, 'swiftly as had the American, ages before... leap[s] upon the platform, crying, "Can I be of any service? I'm a doctor..."', at which the navvy groans "Another bloomin' doctor!" The point of this final comic moment is that the newly arrived doctor is 'an Englishman', which at least partly undermines the narrator's confident assertions of Anglo-American incompatibility. The Englishman is just as guilty as the American of misunderstanding an ironic remark, and thrusting an inexpert finger into the workings of an 'alien life'. The American's misunderstanding of the guard's announcement stems, Kipling implies, from an alienation traced back even to his use of the English language: 'Then he swore comprehensively at the entire fabric of our glorious Constitution cursing the English language, root, branch, and paradigm, through its most obscure derivatives.' However, in this final episode, the error is made by an Englishman, who speaks his native language and whose social position exactly parallels his American counterpart. If the English doctor can make the same mistake as the American visitor, then the philosophical 'drift' of the narrator might not be so feasible as he proclaims, rendering his 'inalienable' ownership of the land a less than certain affair.

These stories reveal the irony and complexity of Kipling's identification with the English people. The land and its echoes of immemorial civilisation, rather than the

79 Ibid., p. 359.
80 Ibid., p. 359.
81 Ibid., p. 359.
82 Ibid., p. 346.
people or their immediate political reality, dominate his view of the country. This oddly detached vision of England is highlighted in the story by the ironic extemporisations of the narrator, which at once reveal and parody his own separation from the land and its peoples. Although he celebrated middle-class England and the harmony of the land, there were overtones of social discord that undermined any idealistic or possessive view of the nation. In The Day’s Work, the land of his birth and his literary apprenticeship offered a clear alternative to the American and Anglo-American malaise, but it was equally influenced by the problem of capital besetting the United States.

ii. Indian Stories

In the Vermont fiction, Kipling portrayed India as an escape from the social and political ills of America, depicting a country in the grip of economic changes, alternately plagued by famine then transformed by the taming of rivers and the building of bridges. India was governed by an English people who resisted the temptation to personal profit and the hegemony of the money-men. The heroic relievers of famine in 'William the Conqueror' live in a state of stoic indifference to wealth. Martyn's ramshackle bungalow, furnished with unmatching chairs 'picked up at sales of dead men's effects;' it's walls flaking and its windows 'darkened with

83 Ibid., p. 185.
wasp's-nests, reveals the inadequacy of his 'six hundred depreciated silver rupees a month'. India offered a reprieve from the flagrant materialism of America:

Thus did people live who had such an income; and in a land where each man's pay, age, and position are printed in a book, that all may read, it is hardly worth while to play at pretences in word or deed.

India was a place of testing, in which the rewards of faithful service were of an enduring value that surpassed monetary payment. In 'William the Conqueror', romantic love is the recompense for hard work and diligent duty, filling the void left by the 'depreciated silver rupee'. Despite the impoverishment of civilians such as Martyn, Kipling suggests that the empire might be hardened by its new-found austerity. After all, William, the woman who can 'look men slowly and deliberately between the eyes', owes her 'manly' qualities to her brother's lack of finances, which prevent him from sending her to the hills during the hot season:

She had 'stayed down three hot weathers', as the saying is, because her brother was in debt and could not afford the expense of her keep at even a cheap hill station.

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84 Ibid., p. 185.
85 Ibid., p. 184.
86 Ibid., p. 185.
87 Ibid., p. 187.
88 Ibid., p. 186.
In addition to its austerity, 'William the Conqueror' celebrates the diversity and the ancestral continuities that Kipling thought lacking in America. As the title of the story itself implies, English and Indian antiquity were now interconnected - the legacy of the Norman Conquest was interwoven, in Kipling's mind, with the legacy of India's past to enrich and to strengthen the fabric of the empire. By virtue of its long history of imperial conquest and rule, India was ethnically and culturally diverse, teeming with different peoples, languages, and beliefs. When William, her lover, and seemingly the whole of the Punjab's civil service migrate southwards to combat the famine, they realise something of the vastness and diversity of the land:

Then they came to an India more strange to them than to the untravelled Englishman - the flat, red India of palm-tree, palmyra-palm, and rice, the India of the picture-books, of Little Henry and His Bearer - all dead and dry in the baking heat.89

India could surprise and challenge by its 'strangeness', contrasting with the 'overwhelming vacuity'90 of Kipling's adopted homeland. The welcoming of William to the South, 'Oh, I'm so glad you've come! You're a Punjabi too, you know,'91 illustrated a teamwork and solidarity only attainable in the harsh conditions of the British empire.

89 Ibid., pp. 195-196.
90 Something of Myself, p. 121.
91 The Day's Work, p. 198.
This shared ancestral lineage of Britain and India is also celebrated in 'The Tomb of his Ancestors', which describes a remote Indian tribe and their tradition of rule by an English family. As the narrator explains: 'certain families serve India generation after generation as dolphins follow in line across the open sea.'

In the story, John Chinn is the latest in this dolphin-like outpouring of service to the wild interior of central India. So firmly ingrained is the 'Chinn tradition' that Englishmen observe: 'Central India is inhabited by Bhils, Mairs, and Chinns, all very much alike.' The ironic allusion to the 'likeness' of the Chinns is integral to the concept of government asserted in the story. The Bhil folk of John Chinn's regiment are 'pre-Aryan', untouched by the homologising influence of Western society, and, implicitly, the democratic and nationalistic claims of modern, 'post-Aryan' India:

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, Dravidian, and so forth; and in other words, that is what the Bhils call themselves.

The Aryan outsiders have no claim upon the soil, they are of a less ancient and settled stock - 'other natives of the country' who 'broke in' forcibly long ago. Such a view

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92 Ibid., p. 102.
93 Ibid., p. 103.
94 Ibid., p. 103.
95 Ibid., p. 104.
invokes and to some extent challenges the popular racial theory of the period, which
traced the lineage of the dominant Indian class to the Aryan settlers. Even the Rajput
chief, at his investiture, is forced to ceremoniously acknowledge the 'last, last shadow'
of the old rights of the Bhil as 'long-ago owner of the soil'. The English themselves
have no inherent right to authority over the Bhils 'except for love or through family
usage.' Fortunately, the 'little people of the hills' never forget a just and fair
Chinn, loyally embracing their latest representative of the Devonshire stock.
Learning that the tomb of his grandfather, 'Jan Chinn the First', is established as a
sacred place of worship, John Chinn encourages the widespread belief in himself as
the reincarnation of his ancestor, in order to undertake a comprehensive vaccination
programme. Henceforward, Kipling writes, 'that kindly-demi-god would be connected
in their minds with great gorgings and the vaccine and lancets of paternal
Government.'

The austere conditions and measures of rule described in the Indian stories had
their basis in an actual economic crisis faced by the country during these years. In the
early 1890s, India entered a phase of extreme hardship and near-bankruptcy.
Following the international renunciation of silver currency and the subsequent
devaluation of the rupee, India was forced to repay its debts to Britain in gold. The
circumstances became crippling, and in 1892, the year Kipling took up residence in

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96 Ibid., p. 105.
97 Ibid., p. 104.
98 Ibid., p. 106.
99 Ibid., p. 141.
Vermont, 'the rupee stood at its lowest figure, [and] six millions sterling more than would otherwise have been necessary had to be raised by taxation from the Indian Peoples.' This indebtedness resulted in an apparent flurry of trade, with an excess of India's exports over the normal figure for imports. Of course, the 'boom' was easily explainable: the sums due to Britain were remitted in commodities rather than depreciated coinage.

It was against this background of spurious economic buoyancy that Kipling wrote 'The Bridge-Builders', a story in which modern India, newly placed at the economic mercy of the 'fire-carriage', is forced to confront the ancient gods it has begun to disown. The two main characters in the story are Findlayson, Chief Engineer on the great Kashi bridge, and Peroo, his head workman. In the commercial scramble for Indian trade, Findlayson and his assistant, Hitchcock, labour not only to build a bridge, but to protect the enterprise against rogue interests, fending off 'futile correspondences hinting at great wealth of commission if one, only one, rather doubtful consignment were passed.' Findlayson soon learns that the outside interests extend to the highest levels of English society when Hitchcock dashes to London and 'put[s] the Fear of God into a man so great that he feared only Parliament.' Findlayson and Hitchcock are the desperate guardians of good workmanship, protecting their enterprise against the hostile elements and the adverse commercial circumstances threatening the bridge.

101 The Day's Work, p. 485.

102 Ibid., p. 5.

103 Ibid., p. 5.
The head workman, Peroo, similarly guards the honour of the bridge against personal interests:

No consideration of family or kin allowed Peroo to keep weak hands or a giddy head on the pay-role. 'My honour is the honour of this bridge,' he would say to the about-to-be-dismissed.\textsuperscript{104}

Although Peroo is 'worth almost any price he might have chosen to put upon his services', he is paid 'not within many silver pieces of his proper value'.\textsuperscript{105} The volatile economic scene of modern India invited an unprecedented degree of commercial exploitation, in which opportunities for personal profit were increasingly difficult to resist. Even the honest Findlayson allows himself to dream of civil honours and prestige:

The least that Findlayson, of the Public Works Department expected was a C.I.E.; he dreamed of a C.S.I.: indeed his friends told him that he deserved more.\textsuperscript{106}

However, Findlayson's confidence in the work of his hands and the permanence of the empire is challenged when the Kashi Bridge faces the battering of the Ganges in flood.

\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{106} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 1.
When he hears the sand 'whisper and fizz' and sees a 'wall of chocolate-coloured water' arrive as her messenger, he fears that 'Mother Gunga [will] carry his honour to the sea with the other raffle.' In desperation, Findlayson accepts a few pellets of opium from Peroo, which have an unexpectedly powerful effect, convincing him that he has powers of flight and prompting him to dive into the river to save the bridge. Peroo follows in an attempt to save him, and the two are swept downriver, landing upon an 'island of last year's indigo crop'. Upon the island, the two men observe the Hindu gods moving around in the forms of various animals, hotly debating the social and economic consequences of the coming of the fire-carriage and the bridge-builders. The detail of the indigo is highly significant. A crop grown for dye, it had once made fortunes, but became a failing market in the 1880s and was almost killed in the 1890s by German synthetic alternatives. The unstable footing of the gods upon the island of unsold indigo suggests their vulnerability to the economic vicissitudes of the land, implying also the economic vulnerability of the Raj itself. Like the gods, India was poised on a political and economic knife-edge.

The gods have little affection for humankind, which they unflatteringly term 'live dirt'. The great Crocodile, Mother Gunga, pleads for vengeance upon the bridge-builders, whose workmanship mocks her strongest surgings.

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107 Ibid., p. 17.
108 Ibid., p. 18.
109 Ibid., p. 19.
112 The Day's Work, p. 37.
'They have made it too strong for me. In all this night I have only torn away a handful of planks. The walls stand! The towers stand! They have chained my flood, and my river is not free any more. Heavenly Ones, take this yoke away! Give me clear water between bank and bank! It is I, Mother Gunga, that speak. The Justice of the Gods! Deal me the justice of the Gods!'\textsuperscript{113}

Despite the rage of Mother Gunga, it is evident that some of the gods profit by the work of the bridge-builders and would prefer to see their workmanship stand. Ganesh, patron of businessmen and entrepreneurs, makes a compelling economic and material case for the preservation of the bridge, commenting:

'It [the building of bridges] is all for the profit of my mahajun's - my fat money-lenders that worship me at each new year, when they draw my image at the head of the account-books. I, looking over their shoulders by lamplight, see that the names in the books are those of men in far places - for all the towns are drawn together by the fire-carriage, and the money comes and goes swiftly, and the account-books grow as fat as myself. And I, who am Ganesh of Good Luck, I bless my peoples.'\textsuperscript{114}

Ganesh's tolerance of Indian modernisation and commerce is enthusiastically supported by Hanuman the Ape: "Gunga, I have seen my bed at Prayag black with

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., pp. 28-29.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., p. 32.
the pilgrims... but for the fire-carriage they would have come slowly and in fewer numbers..." and also Bhairon, god of the common people: "...never were so many altars as today, and the fire-carriage serves them well...". In effect, although the gods are divine, their anxieties are human, involving the technological and commercial workings of the empire and the wider material world. Upon their island of unsold indigo, they reveal the turbulence of a world in which ancient values are disappearing and the fire-carriage links the extremities of the globe in a precarious economic relationship. Like Hanuman, the British are the "...builder[s] of bridges between this and that...". Not only the gods, but humanity itself faces an emptying of significance due to the coming of the fire-carriage. It is left to Krishna to prophesy the end of the gods:

"The end shall be as it was in the beginning... The flame shall die upon the altars and the prayer upon the tongue till ye become little Gods again - Gods of the jungle - names that the hunters of rats and noosers of dogs whisper in the thicket and among the caves - rag-Gods, pot Godlings of the tree and village-mark as ye were at the beginning. That is the end, Ganesh, for thee, and for Bhairon - Bhairon of the Common People."
The meaning of the panchayat is never fully resolved - Brahm still dreams, and, as Indra comments: "...till he wakes the Gods die not."\(^{119}\) However, the Hindu gods, which are also for Kipling manifestations of the Islamic and Christian deities, are in grave doubt of their future. It needs emphasising that this doubt and discord among the gods does not imply the power and permanence of the British, in fact, quite the opposite. At the end of the story, the appearance of the Rao of Baron, in a luxurious steam-launch, a 'new toy',\(^{120}\) lavish and 'silver plated',\(^{121}\) suggests that new India faces material seductions and inequalities of a kind unheard of before the time of the bridge-builders. Dressed in a 'tweed shooting-suit and a seven-hued turban',\(^{122}\) he is due to attend the sanctification of "...some new idol...".\(^{123}\) Ironically, he turns to the Chief Engineer of the Kashi Bridge for approval of his new-found religious scepticism: "...They are dam-bore, these religious ceremonies, Finlinson, eh?"\(^{124}\) Findlayson does not answer, and the question of change and permanence hangs in the air, troubling the prognosis for new India.\(^{125}\) Findlayson's bridge, like the Rao's

\(^{119}\) Ibid., p. 43.

\(^{120}\) Ibid., p. 46.

\(^{121}\) Ibid., p. 46.

\(^{122}\) Ibid., p. 46.

\(^{123}\) Ibid., p. 47.

\(^{124}\) Ibid., p. 47.

\(^{125}\) For a different view of 'The Bridge-Builders' see Elliot Gilbert, *The Good Kipling*, pp. 126-156. It is difficult to accept Gilbert's argument that 'The Bridge-Builders' is a story in which Kipling is 'convinced of the efficacy of British colonialism' (*ibid.*, p. 153) or that Peroo believes Findlayson to be Brahm, whose dreams animate the world. (*ibid.*, p. 144). Nor is it possible to accept the claim that Findlayson 'provides a bridge from an old world of dying gods to a new and freer life' (*ibid.*, p. 131). The effect of the vision upon Findlayson is deliberately left unstated. Moreover, the appearance of the
India, may appear 'pukka - permanent', but ultimately the economy of the story is as precarious and unstable as the island of indigo.

India allowed Kipling a measure of fictional escapism; a weaving together of national, historical, and anti-capitalistic narratives. However, this fictional re-working of traditions and antiquities became on another level the subject of the fiction. In another collection of stories written during the Vermont years and published as *The Jungle Books* (in two volumes), Kipling explored the relation of fiction and storytelling to the economic and social conditions of the world. For the first time, he set the stories in regions, Central India and the Arctic Circle, of which he had no first-hand knowledge, relying upon literary and scientific sources for his information. The questionable fidelity of these books to the 'jungle', or, the areas of the earth he had never visited, enabled him to dramatise a world governed by fictions, in which storytelling was the source of all political authority and social cohesion. At times the result is playful and ironic, but more often the stories allude to their own extinction in the face of global and economic transformations. Books were actually destroying the Jungle, the hidden and honourable places of the world. Kipling's fiction was inextricably a part of the intellectual, theoretical, and commercial reality he deplored.

Rao of Baraon in his silver-plated launch surely refutes the simplistic view of Findlayson's bridge auguring 'a new and freer life.' Kipling had a more distrustful opinion of wealth and extravagance than Gilbert's reading suggests.

126 *The Day's Work*, p. 3.
CHAPTER FIVE

Vermont Years:

_The Jungle Books_ and the fiction of the Free People

i. Specialist Sources and Imperial Authority

Commenting upon American culture, Kipling observed that, '[e]very nation, like every individual, walks in a vain show - else it could not live with itself...'. The 'vain show' was a species of story, a fantasy each nation promulgated about itself, liberating it from the ugly truths of history. Fiction was an integral element of the national life, redefining the past and legitimising the present, rendering palatable the misadventures of the material world. In his preface to the first volume of _The Jungle Books_, Kipling writes:

> The demands made by a work of this nature upon the generosity of specialists are very numerous, and the Editor would be wanting in all title to the generous treatment he has received were he not willing to make the fullest possible acknowledgement of his indebtedness.

The author portrays himself as merely an Editor who arranges the materials he derives

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1 _Something of Myself_, p. 123.

2 _The Jungle Book_, p. vi.
from a multitude of 'specialists'. However, this description of the 'editorial' process, and hence the authority implied by the editorial privilege, is comically undercut by his listing, further on, of these specialist sources - a baggage elephant, a winter wren, and 'one of the leading herpetologists of upper-India.' The specialists are both animal and human, invoking an authoritative domain of scientific knowledge, only to enmesh that science in the world of fiction, denying it any 'authority' over his own literary writing. The expert of upper India, who sacrifices his life in 'over-application to the study of our Eastern Thanatophidia', must share the limelight with the talking beasts, who remain unconvinced by his scholarly pledge "not to live but know".

As a comic overture to the stories, the preface introduces the significant claim that *The Jungle Books* treat fact as a species of fiction. Specialist sources exist for the works, but they are sources to which the author acknowledges no real obligation or responsibility.

As far back as 1888, Kipling was reading and re-reading his copy of *The Descent of Man*, commenting that 'every fibre... of his body revolted against it'. In his use of specialist sources for *The Jungle Books*, he returned again to the field of Victorian science, parodying the classificatory rigour of popular scientific authorities. He draws heavily upon works of natural history such as R. A. Sterndale's *Natural History of the Mammalia of India and Ceylon* and H. W. Elliott's *Our Arctic Province*, only to

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7 Hereafter referred to as *Mammalia*. 
saturise their languages and methodologies. Kipling's Jungle follows its own physical and behavioural patterns, bearing no relation either to literary conventions or to the findings of Victorian science. In this respect, the stories lampoon a myth of scientific authority that was closely allied to the business of imperial conquest and power. In works such as Sterndale's *Mammalia*, scientific principles and methodologies were rendered accessible and comprehensible to the average reader, whose fascination with the empire gained the respectability and authority of specialist insight. The *Mammalia* was aimed at the 'sportsman of India', who is 'more bothered than enlightened by over-much phraseology and those learned anatomical dissertations which are necessary to the scientific zoologist.' Sterndale writes in the preface:

> The stiff formality of the compiled "Natural Histories" has been discarded, and the Author has endeavoured to present, in interesting conversational and often anecdotal style, the results of experience by himself and his personal friends, at the same time freely availing himself of all the known authorities upon the subject.

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8 In his introduction to the Penguin edition of *The Jungle Books*, Daniel Karlin offers a general account of the 'arbitrariness and inconsistency' with which Kipling treated the information he derived from his sources, concluding that the author has 'cooked his books' (*ibid.*, p. 19 and p. 21). However, he does not consider the political resonances of these sources, which lend an important level of irony to Kipling's arbitrary manipulation of their 'objective' science.

9 *Natural History of the Mammalia of India and Ceylon* (Calcutta, 1884), p. x.


The book was a mixture of science and anecdote, recalling the pleasant atmosphere and conversation of the smoking Club, where fellow-hunters would relate stories of shooting trips and life in the jungle camps. Sterndale clearly understood the market. Thacker, Spink and Co.'s advertisement for the book proudly displayed the remarks of *The Daily News*, which praised the author's combination of scientific objectivity and, as the reviewer affectionately termed it, the 'bosh' of anecdotal zoology. This combination of scientific knowledge and entertaining anecdote produced a potent and attractive form of natural history, in which zoological methods of classification were adopted by Sterndale to assert the racial supremacy of the British in India. At one point in the *Mammalia* he comments that 'there is not much to choose between the highest type of monkey and the lowest of humanity, if we would but look facts straight in the face'. This was science of an unashamedly racial and imperial bias.

For the myths of wolf-children that inspired the Mowgli stories, Kipling was likely to have drawn on writings such as W.H. Sleeman's 'An Account of Wolves Nurturing Children in Their Dens' (1852). Many aspects of Sleeman's account indicate that Kipling was familiar with his research: a boy is reunited with his mother after a sojourn amongst the wolves, much as Mowgli is reunited with Messua; another boy, like Mowgli, returns to the village, where he is regularly visited by wolves, who

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12 *Ibid.*, p. 8. E.H. Aitken's *Behind the Bungalow* (London, 1889) was also influenced by this penchant for human classification. In an advertisement placed at the beginning of Sterndale's work, *Behind the Bungalow* is billed as 'a natural History of the "Native Tribes" who in India render us service' (*A Natural History of the Mammalia of India and Ceylon*, p. 8).

pet and play with him to the astonishment of the locals. Here the similarities end. Sleeman is rooted in the sceptical tradition of nineteenth-century science, dispelling the 'myths' in deference to the facts of the jungle as revealed by scientific knowledge:

I have never heard of a man who had been spared and nurtured by Wolves, having been found; and as [not] many boys have been recovered from Wolves, after they had been many years with them, we must conclude that, after a time, they either die from living exclusively on animal food, before they attain the age of manhood, or are destroyed by the Wolves themselves, or other beasts of prey in the jungles, from whom they are unable to escape, like the Wolves themselves, from want of the same speed.

Sleeman's jungle is ruled by the scientific principle of natural selection, reasserting the authority of Darwinian evolution, with its strict and irreversible boundaries of species and environment. Any incursion into 'foreign' territory is punished by the natural law, the law of the jungle, which retains strict hierarchy and separation between the various portions of the natural order.

It was easy to adapt this strict view of species life and evolutionary limits as a metaphor of imperial jurisdiction; sanctioning the establishment of definite boundaries between the culture of coloniser and colonised. Sleeman implies the formative and irreversible effect of origins, whether they are origins of a natural or a social kind. It is

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14 Ibid., pp. 95-96.
15 Ibid., p. 98.
impossible to live with wolves and then to return to human society. In the same way it is impossible to renounce human society and remain with the wolves for any appreciable time - nature itself polices the boundaries between the two 'societies' of wolves and people, sending its envoys to dispose of the transgressing boy or man. Significantly, in Sleeman's account it is the tiger, a traditionally potent symbol of nature and the Raj, that ends the whole predicament of mis-identification and estrangement, killing the anomalous wolves and children: 'Tigers often spring upon and kill dogs and wolves... They could more easily kill boys, and would more easily be disposed to eat them.'\textsuperscript{16} Sleeman uses the potent and authoritative findings of science to dispel the popular myth, restoring the natural order in the place of the social disruption suggested by the wolf-boy.

'An Account of Wolves Nurturing Children in Their Dens' is ultimately a defence of British imperial reason and progress, which, I suggest, reflects a time of radical uncertainty about British rule in India. Given its attribution to 'An Indian Official', and its original publication in the years leading up to the Mutiny (or War of Independence), roughly coinciding with the Santal 'rebellions', the political relevance of Sleeman's discussion is self-evident. The myth of wolf-boy suggested the fragility of the social arrangement - a child could be taken into the 'care' of wolves, initiated into their ways, and then, plausibly, re-assimilated into the culture and the ways of human society. This was a threatening idea to the British administration, whose own authority was at stake in any allusion to the impermanence of cultural origins or markers. Sleeman's article, by dispelling deviations from the norm and confirming social limits, reintroduces what, to conservative imperialists, appeared a healthy

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. 98.
respect for laws of culture and upbringing. The wolf-boy was, Sleeman confirmed, a monstrosity or a freak, who, once he had transgressed social and behavioural laws, could never be a part of human society again. The myth of the wolf-boy offered reassurance to the Raj in a time of uncertainty - rebels and mutineers were following the trail of the wolf, disobeying the law of the jungle. Hence, Sleeman's accounts are invariably tragic. The wolf-boy is never accepted again by his peers, becoming instead the beneficiary of travelling entertainers or curious Rajahs. He can never be made to wear clothes, smells dreadfully, and shows little affection towards his natural parents or other humans. The wolf-boy's undoing was a fable of monstrosity that sought to consolidate the racial and scientific assumptions of the rulers of India.

In *The Jungle Books*, the laws of species life and social boundaries invoked by the myth of the wolf-boy are entirely subverted. By portraying the moral superiority of the Jungle and the boy raised by wolves, Kipling represents the laws of nature and civilisation as a kind of fiction, in which limits and conventions are constantly being redefined. Storytelling is the basis of Mowgli's society, not merely an adjunct to civilisation or an inferior substitute for empirical or scientific 'fact'. Mowgli's alternate appearances in the Jungle and the 'ploughed lands' prompt a renaissance of folklore, whether among the Free People or the villagers. Buldeo, the hunter of the village

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18 'If any clothes are put on him, he takes them off, and commonly tears them to pieces in doing so' (*ibid.*, 92).


20 Sleeman explains that the wolf-boy never seems to 'care for anyone' (*ibid.*, p. 90). He describes how, in one case, a wolf-boy 'followed his mother for what he could get to eat, but showed no particular affection for her, and she could never bring herself to feel much for him' (*ibid.*, p. 92).
weaves 'cobwebs and moon-talk'\textsuperscript{21} about the Jungle, but the Jungle itself weaves legends and myths in the Law and its various systems of caste and social hierarchy. As a man-cub, a species feared and despised by the Jungle-People, Mowgli's presence in the Jungle disrupts the fictions of the Law, prompting a reinterpretation of the system of caste obtaining in the Jungle and the ploughed lands. In 'Tiger! Tiger!', the narrator comments that 'Mowgli had not the faintest idea of the difference that caste makes between man and man.'\textsuperscript{22} He explains the trouble this causes among the people of the village:

When the Potter's donkey slipped in the clay-pit, Mowgli hauled it out by the tail, and helped to stack the pots for their journey to the market at Khanhiwara. That was very shocking, too, for the potter is a low caste man, and his donkey is worse. When the priest scolded him, Mowgli threatened to put him on the donkey, too...\textsuperscript{23}

Likewise, Mowgli's presence among the Jungle-People challenges their beliefs and values. The \textit{Bandar-Log}, forbidden to the Jungle-People, are acknowledged for the first time in living memory with the arrival of the man-cub. Mowgli forces acknowledgement of the outcast and the untouchable. This is a crucial theme of the stories and is a fundamental challenge to the empirical and political approaches of the scientific sources. If Sterndale's scientific objectivity sought to keep the Jungle at bay,

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{The Jungle Book}, p. 97.

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 95.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 96.
Kipling allows the Jungle-People equivalence with the world of humankind, portraying their scruples and social arrangements as a faithful and often superior counterpart to human social life.

In 'Kaa's Hunting', Mowgli is taught the Law of the Jungle; but it is a lesson he is unwilling to learn. Despite Baloo's teachings on the caste differentiations of the Jungle, he is kidnapped by the untouchables (the Bandar-log) and carried through the tree-tops to the Cold Lairs. The Monkey-People, are, according to Baloo, "...the people without a law - the eaters of everything..."\(^{24}\) a people that "...have no remembrance..."\(^{25}\) This characterisation of the outcasts as monkey-folk owes something to early Aryan portrayals of the aboriginal peoples, who appear in Sanskrit literature as 'the Monkey Tribes'\(^{26}\) or 'the Raw-Eaters'.\(^{27}\) Their customs, their speech, and their eating habits were detested by the Aryans, whose warriors 'used to pray for victory over "the men of the inarticulate utterance" and of "the uncouth talk".'\(^{28}\) According to the Aryan settlers, the 'Monkey Tribes' 'respected not the lives of animals; some of them ate horse-flesh; others human flesh; others, again, fed on the uncooked carcass'.\(^{29}\) Evidently the 'Raw-Eaters' provide the model for Baloo's 'eaters of everything'. Kipling's Bandar-log equally offend the Brahmanised sensibilities of the Jungle-People, handling 'filth' and leaving their own dead out in the open. The Aryan contempt for 'inarticulate utterance' and 'uncouth talk' is again

\(^{24}\)Ibid., p. 50.

\(^{25}\)Ibid., p. 52.


\(^{27}\)Ibid., p. 115.

\(^{28}\)Ibid., p. 113.

\(^{29}\)Ibid., p. 115.
echoed in the folklore of the Jungle-People, who claim that the Bandar-log "...have no speech of their own, but use stolen words which they overhear when they listen, and peep, and wait up above in the branches...".  

Despite their ancient pledge to "...put them out of their mouths and out of their minds...", the Jungle-People are forced to track the Monkey-Folk to the Cold Lairs in order to rescue Mowgli. It is the first occasion in the memory of Baloo that the Jungle-people 'had owned to being interested in the doings of the monkeys.' The Bandar-log succeed in breaking the circle of caste that excluded them from the society of the Jungle-People. When Bagheera and Baloo are forced to enlist the help of Kaa, the sinister and unpredictable python, they are forced to admit the limitations of their own knowledge and teaching. As Bagheera comments: "He knows more than we". Abandoning distinctions of species and society, they enlist Kaa's help even though he is "...not of [their] tribe, being footless - and with most evil eyes". The seeking of Kaa by Baloo and Bagheera clearly disrupts the boundaries of culture and society integral to the scientific sources. The Rock-python is so frighteningly oblivious to distinctions of species that he warns Mowgli: "Have a care, manling, that I do not mistake thee for a monkey some twilight when I have newly changed my coat." 'Kaa's Hunting' exposes the 'fiction' of the Law of the Jungle, revealing the similarities of the Jungle-People, Mowgli, and the Bandar-log. During the fight at the

30 The Jungle Book, p. 51.
31 Ibid., p. 30.
32 Ibid., p. 31.
33 Ibid., p. 81.
34 Ibid., p. 59.
35 Ibid., p. 81.
Cold Lairs, the narrator explains that '[g]enerations of monkeys had been scared into
good behaviour by the stories their elders told them of Kaa, the night thief, who could
slip along the branches as quietly as moss grows, and steal away the strongest monkey
that ever lived...'. This is a radically different view of monkey-society to that
offered by the Jungle-People, who claim that the Bandar-log 'have no speech of their
own', using only 'stolen words'. The Monkey-People clearly have their own stories
and legends, even moral systems or notions of 'good behaviour', which they impart to
their children through ancient stories and legends. The Monkey-People do, in fact,
have 'remembrance'; a history and a folklore of their own. Separate worlds are forced
to recognise their mutual existence in the realm of stories. Significantly, the Bandar-
log are allowed the last word in 'Kaa's Hunting'. In their 'Road Song', they parody the
arbitrary physical and behavioural scruples of Baloo, lamenting the flaccid tails of the
Jungle-People, which 'hang down behind', unlike their own fabulously curved
specimens:

Here we go in a flung festoon,
Half way up to the jealous moon!
Don't you envy our pranceful bands?
Don't you wish you had extra hands?
Wouldn't you like it if your tails were - so-
Curved in the shape of a Cupid's Bow?

36 Ibid., p. 75.
Now you're angry, but - never mind,

_Brother, thy tail hangs down behind!_37

As they 'scumfish'38 through the pines in their 'pranceful bands', the Monkey-People are the epitome of linguistic invention and playfulness; the closest representatives in the stories to fiction itself.39 In this respect, they are not only the evolutionary forebears of Mowgli, but point to his fictional origins and existence. As the stories progress, the Man-Pack increasingly draws Mowgli into its fold, dramatising a return to the hostile realities of the world and the end of the Jungle story.

In 'How Fear Came', which opens _The Second Jungle Book_, the beginnings of the Law are described in terms that invoke the Biblical account of the fall of humankind. Not only the myth, but the circumstances of its telling, develop the theme of the fraught relation between stories and the material world. Hathi's account of the Law places the responsibility for the despoliation of the Jungle firmly upon the Jungle itself. The Jungle teaches man to kill, and man in turn becomes its principal fear. Hathi's story allows humankind an integral place in the formulation of the Law. The Law exists in consequence of man, and fear comes to protect him from the Jungle, reversing the usual scenario of humankind assaulting the wilderness and troubling the animals, which is the conventional view adopted by the Jungle-People. According to Hathi, the story is known only to the tigers and the elephants. However, when Baloo

37 Ibid., p. 84.

38 Ibid., p. 84.

39 Daniel Karlin comments that 'they [the Bandar-log] are disturbingly like the kind of writer Kipling was' (_The Jungle Books_, Penguin Edition, p. 16).
begins to supply details omitted from Hathi's account, Mowgli suspects that he knows more than he claims, and is troubled by his teacher's reticence:

'Then *thou* knowest the tale. Heh? Why have I never heard?'

'Because the Jungle is full of such tales. If I made a beginning there would never be an end to them...'.⁴⁰

Even though Hathi is the Master of the Jungle,⁴¹ Baloo only reluctantly accepts his story, which absolves humankind of guilt, locates the origins of ritual uncleanness at the heart of the Jungle, and undermines the system of caste expounded in 'Kaa's Hunting'. The Jungle-People have, it seems, an extremely selective view of their history, allowing the Law an authority that Hathi's story calls in question. In the events of the drought leading up to the telling of 'How Fear Came', the usual distinctions of caste are suspended throughout the Jungle. Mowgli comments ironically to Bagheera, "'Yes, we be great hunters now... I am very bold - to eat grubs'".⁴² Even Shere Khan is allowed to commit the ritually 'unclean' act of killing a man.⁴³ When Hathi proclaims the Water Truce, each animal is allowed to visit the drinking places without fear of attack from its starving fellows. Hathi's story reveals that the Law, which alters according to the conditions of the land, changes and is changed by the Jungle - it is neither immutable nor permanent. Even the law of the

⁴⁰ *The Second Jungle Book*, p. 28.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 16.

⁴² Ibid., p. 9.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 15.
Master of the Jungle is a species of fiction, shifting with the eddies and currents of the Waingunga. Ironically, during the drought and the proclaiming of the Water Truce, the Bandar-log act wisely and swiftly, travelling northwards, 'for they knew what was coming'. On this occasion, the untouchables display an intuition and a foresight lacking in the Jungle-People.

The limitations of the Law and the Jungle-People are most plainly described in the last of the Mowgli stories, 'The Spring Running', which chronicles the yearly occasion when Mowgli's commands are no longer obeyed in the Jungle. The story is set in the Time of the New Talk, when his friends abandon themselves to an orgy of baying and frolicking. At this time, when the voices and habits of the Jungle-People become strange, Mowgli succumbs to an unhappiness he has never previously felt. He gradually loses his strength and his courage, fearing the wolves and the prospect of dying in the Jungle, where the animals will feed off his corpse. As the ways of the Jungle close to him, he experiences a rush of human feeling and is drawn again to the village to be reunited with his mother and baby brother. Mowgli's return to human society is accompanied by his sexual awakening, which is delicately intimated by his mother's praise of marriage and physical joys: "'Son... have any told thee that thou art beautiful beyond all men?'" But despite the resurgence of these human values and impulses, Mowgli remains inwardly divided. To his mother he is Nathoo, her lost son,

44 Ibid., p. 6.
46 Ibid., p. 278.
but to himself he remains the leader of the Free People. Kipling's manuscript reveals the lengths to which he went in order to preserve this final ambiguity. In an earlier draft of the story, Mowgli breaks more decisively with the Jungle. Resenting his sojourn in the village, the animals question his authority, prompting him to lash them violently with a creeper stem:

But Grey brother had carried a strange story to the council rock saying that Mowgli had been bitten by Tabaqui and was mad... 'Good hunting' he cried but the others sniffed suspiciously for after a day and a night in the smoky hut Mowgli smelt like a man and that smell is never pleasant to the people.

48 Although the Time of New Talk refers to the sexual awakening of Mowgli and the Jungle, it also intimates frustrations of a political kind. At the time the story was written, Anglo-American relations had taken a downward turn. In July of 1895 (the story was first published in September) the Venezuela crisis arose and war loomed on the horizon. It was a Time of New Talk in political circles that led to Kipling's own 'spring running' from Vermont. As an Englishman in America, when relations had become so strained, he perhaps shared Mowgli's feelings of persecution:

'...By night and by day I hear a double step upon my trail. When I turn my head it is as though one had hidden himself from me that instant. I go to look behind the trees and he is not there. I call and none cry again, but it is as though one listened and kept back the answer...' (The Second Jungle Book, pp. 291-292).
They waited in dead silence while Mowgli called up the three one after another and gave each just such a beating as he had given to Grey Brother.49

By rejecting this sour turn of events in the final published version, Kipling retained an equilibrium between the societies of the Jungle and the Man-Pack. This equivalence is integral to the overall repudiation of species law and cultural limits. Mowgli's return to the Man-Pack is neither shameful nor tragic, he returns as the master of the Jungle, inspired and improved by the teachings of the animals. The return inverts the usual fate of the wolf-boy as described by Sleeman. Human law receives the blessing of the Jungle-People, as Baloo urges Mowgli: 'Clean or tainted, hot or stale/Hold is as it were the trail'.

ii. Global Trade and the Loss of Guiding Fictions

The economic and political circumstances of Kipling's fiction, alluded to in the narration of the Mowgli tales, are more fully explored in the two Arctic stories of The Jungle Books. In 'Quiquern', storytelling occurs in the midst of social transformations that imperil the myths and legends of a society. In contrast with the prevailing stories of Mowgli's Jungle, in which the man-pack is greedy and complicitous, 'Quiquern' describes a completely benevolent and gentle people. Set among the Inuit, it tells of the increasingly hostile conditions that are destroying their way of life and threatening their assimilation into the harsh realities of a world ruled by commercial interests. The

49 British Library, MS. 45540, p. 68.
Arctic Circle is the last region on earth cleansed (symbolically through snow and ice) of the world-wide mania for capital. Consequently, the Inuit know nothing of violence or crime: "They came of a very gentle race - an Inuit seldom loses his temper, and almost never strikes a child - who did not know exactly what telling a real lie meant, still less how to steal." The story tells how, when food becomes scarce and the madness of cold and starvation sets in amongst the dogs and the people, Kotuko, son of Kadlu, sets out in search of food for himself and his fellows under the guidance of his tornaq, the mythical 'one-eyed kind of a Woman-Thing' believed to inhabit the rocks and boulders of the Arctic. Kotuko, 'very nearly crazy' with cold and hunger, imagines that the sound of the blood beating in his ears is the voice of the tornaq, who tells him to go north, where she will lead him to good seal-holes. Kotuko sets out on the journey guided by a vision of Quiquern, a 'phantom of a gigantic toothless dog without any hair, who is supposed to live in the far North, and to wander about the country just before things are going to happen.' The 'Thing' leads him to an island of abundant seals, which Kotuko and his female companion feed upon and carry to the village. Ultimately, Quiquern is merely an illusion, produced by the distant image of two of Kotuko's dogs, which earlier bolted under the madness of famine, becoming locked together at the harness.

50 The Second Jungle Book, p. 192.
51 Ibid., p. 198.
53 Ibid., p. 204.
Ironically, the narrator of the story belongs to the outside world whose trade is destroying the society and traditions of the Inuit. The erosion of the Arctic world by the trading men of the South is powerfully described in the introductory poem:

The People of the Eastern Ice, they are melting like the snow -
They beg for coffee and sugar; they go where the white men go.
The People of the Western Ice, they learn to steal and fight;
They sell their furs to the trading-post: they sell their soul to the white.
The People of the Southern Ice, they trade with the whaler's crew;
Their women have many ribbons, but their tents are torn and few.
But the People of the Elder Ice, beyond the white man's ken -
Their spears are made of the narwhal horn, and they are the last of the Men!  

The 'white' folk are trading the souls of the 'last of the Men' - an indictment both of their commerce and their assumption of racial superiority. However, at the end of the story, the narrator reveals that it is only through trade that he himself discovers Kotuko's carving and is able to tell his own story. He explains that Kotuko carved an account of his journey and the famine upon a 'long flat piece of ivory with a hole at one end. Kotuko leaves the carving with Kadlu, who loses it. When it is found by a lake Inuit, it enters the sordid monetary systems of the poem, eventually finding its way into the hands of the narrator, who, in the detail that he 'found' it, portrays himself as both an insider and outsider to the chain of transaction:

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54 Ibid., p. 181.
55 Ibid., p. 215.
When [Kotuko] and the girl went north to Ellesmere Land in the year of
the Wonderful Open Winter, he left the picture-story with Kadlu, who
lost it in the shingle when his dog-sleigh broke down one summer on the
beach of Lake Netilling at Nikosiring, and there a lake Inuit found it next
spring and sold it to a man at Imigen who was an interpreter on a
Cumberland Sound whaler, and he sold it to Hans Olsen, who was
afterwards a quartermaster on board a big steamer that took tourists to
the North Cape in Norway. When the tourist season was over the
steamer ran between London and Australia, stopping at Ceylon, and
there Olsen sold the ivory to a Cingalese jeweller for two imitation
sapphires. I found it under some rubbish in a house at Colombo, and have
translated it from one end to the other.56

The history of Kotuko's people, carved upon the ivory, is eventually priced at 'two
imitation sapphires' by a Cingalese trader who either loses it or discards it on a rubbish
heap in Colombo. This contrasts with the value placed upon relatively humble
commodities by the Inuit:

Amoraq jumped from the bench where she sat and began to sweep
things into the girl's lap - stone lamps, iron skin-scrapers, tin kettles,
deer-skins embroidered with musk-ox teeth, and real canvas-needles such

56 Ibid., pp. 215-216.
as sailors use - the finest dowry that has ever been given on the far edge
of the Arctic circle...\textsuperscript{57}

The humble sweepings of the dowry aptly convey the innocence and portend the
imminent corruption of Inuit society. These are western commodities derived from the
'missionary posts of Exeter and Cumberland Sounds\textsuperscript{58} and the curious system of
exchange whereby 'a kettle picked up by a ship's cook in the Bhendy Bazaar might
end its days over a blubber lamp somewhere on the cool side of the Arctic Circle.'\textsuperscript{59}
As a story passing along this global economic chain, Kotoku's picture-carving
becomes a mere commodity, neither comprehended nor valued at its proper worth.
The ivory upon which Kotuko carves the story quite probably refers to a piece of
narwhal horn of the kind used for the spears of the 'last of the Men' in the verse
heading. Due to its central cavity the narwhal horn is 'only suitable for objects of small
size, and for use as harpoon shafts and other instruments.'\textsuperscript{60} The 'commodification'
of this stalwart material is a further allusion to the decline of the Inuit tradition.

As much as being a story about the Arctic people, 'Quiquern' refers to Kipling's
own society and its values. The story itself invokes some of the principal themes of
imperialism; themes of exploration and discovery, testing, and progress into
adulthood, projecting these ideals among the Inuit and implying their degradation in
the hands of 'the white man's ken'. Kotuko's exploration and discovery of new

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., pp. 214-215.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p. 186.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p. 186.

resources and lands presents the main theme of empire in its most benevolent and altruistic light. The quest is motivated by the desperate need of his community, and is initiated by the mythology of the Inuit, the promptings of the Tornaq, and the visions of Quiquern, in which both he and his people place their faith. The journey of Kotuko and 'the girl' is undertaken in conditions of sexual chastity, ending in a ceremony of marriage that symbolically affirms the 'chastity' of their mission. However, it is ultimately an exploration or discovery undertaken in the grip of the larger forces of a world, from Norway to Ceylon, that prices such a story at two imitation sapphires.

'Quiquern' presents the great themes of imperial adventure as susceptible to the economic vagaries of the wider world. Kotuko and his people are saved, for the moment, by the stories that his people tell about themselves; the myths or the 'illusions' that motivate their progress into other lands. Just as the 'picture-story' of Kotuko is roughly handled by the clamorous hands of the traders and the tourists, the author of imperial fictions is equally prone to the vagaries and corruptions of a world ruled by capital and commerce. The narration of 'Quiquern' implies that the fashioning of stories can be both socially determining and a socially determined practice. The narrator rescues the carving from the rubbish heap, but it is only by the circuitous passage of the story through the trade-routes of the world that he comes into possession of the narrative.

For his information on the Arctic regions, Kipling made use of two works by Henry Elliot: *The History and Present Condition of the Pribilofs Fishery Industries: The Seal Islands of Alaska* (1881), and *Our Arctic Province: Alaska and the Seal Islands* (1886). Much as Sterndale considered the term 'mammalia' to include the human species, chronicling the tribes of British India from the highest type of monkey
to the highest type of man, Elliot's *Our Arctic Province* offers a racial typography of the Arctic races, including the gentle Inuit of 'Quiquern'. These books were a part of the commercial and political intrusion of the 'white men' upon other, less powerful societies. Elliot's book, like Sterndale's, used science for an explicitly imperial purpose - this time urging the continuing American possession and exploitation of the Arctic. In his study commissioned by the Department of the Interior, *The History and Present Condition of the Pribilofs Fishery Industries: The Seal Islands of Alaska*, Elliot asserts the economic importance of the Pribilov islands to the American government:

The theoretical value of these interests of the government on the Pribilov islands, represented by 2,500,000 to 3,000,000 fur-seals, male and female, in good condition, is not less than $10,000,000 or $12,000,000;... this is a permanent principle invested here, which now nets the public treasury more than 15 per cent. annually; a very handsome rate of interest, surely.\(^{61}\)

This economic motive underlies his later work, *Our Arctic Province*. The English edition was printed under the title 'An Arctic Province', indicating the extent of British sensitivity about the American possession of the region. Elliot introduces *Our Arctic Province* with a commitment to scientific accuracy, pledging to 'divest himself of all

individuality,\textsuperscript{62} and to deliver an objective account of the Arctic dispelling the 'fanciful yarns, woven by the ingenuity of whaling captains'.\textsuperscript{63} Ironically, Kipling uses the information provided by Elliot to describe an Arctic that \textit{lives} by its 'fanciful yarns. Despite his pledge to divest himself of the language of fiction or fantasy, Elliot's description of the rookeries is loaded with militaristic jargon, equating the aggressive sexual and territorial instincts of the seal with the human enterprise of imperial conquest:

A constantly sustained fight between the new-comers and the occupants goes on morning, noon, and night, without cessation, frequently resulting in death to one, or even both, of the combatants... These trials of strength... are incessant until the rookeries are mapped out... Many of these bulls exhibit wonderful strength and desperate courage. I marked one veteran - who was the first to take up his position early in May, and that position, as usual, directly on the water-line. This male had fought at least forty or fifty desperate battles, and beaten off his assailants every time... I saw him still there, covered with scars and frightfully gashed - raw, festering, and bloody, one eye gouged out - but lording it bravely over his harem of fifty or so females.\textsuperscript{64}


\textsuperscript{63}\textit{Ibid.}, p. iv.

\textsuperscript{64}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 265-266.
The bulls are 'combatants', or military 'veterans', divided into opposing forces of 'newcomers and occupants', each battling furiously until their territories are 'mapped out', as if designated in the aftermath of conflict by a council of Field Marshals. The seals are anthropomorphically transformed into valiant soldiers, implying heroic actions that have nothing to do with the sordidly sexual motives of their behaviour. They are noted for their 'wonderful strength and desperate courage', and even at the most bluntly sexual moment of triumph, there is a touch of admiration for the roguish swagger of the old campaigner, 'lording it bravely' over his adoring women.

In 'The White Seal', the breeding habits of the rookeries, which involve fierce territorial battles, are used to evoke themes of conquest and dominion integral to the empire. A conservative order of seal, content to languish on familiar beaches and to suffer the predations of man, is shaken out of its complacency by the arrival of a 'white' seal, which, after witnessing the slaughter of its fellows by hunters, sets out to discover new lands 'where no men ever come'. Kotick, the white seal, receives

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65 It is worth noting the conference of imperial powers implied by the title 'The White Seal.' The word 'white' clearly evokes the idea of caucasian race, with the white seal in the story representing the imperial ideology of duty, discovery, and leadership. But there is also the sense in which the word 'seal' denotes a contract or pledge between white races of the world. Hence on this level the title implies an agreement, sealed between the white races of the North Atlantic, giving the phrase, 'the white seal', a similar meaning to the title of Kipling's famous poem 'The White Man's Burden'. The secondary meaning of the title fits with Kipling's increasing commitment to imperial federation during the period, which inspired many of the poems he wrote during the Vermont years (collected in The Seven Seas). For Kipling's empire federalism in the poetry, see Ann Parry, The Poetry of Rudyard Kipling: Rousing the Nation, pp. 53-78.

66 The Jungle Book, p. 142.
little support from his aggressive and narrow-minded fellows, who resent his innocent belief in a story of peaceful seas. In his lone campaign for the territorial interests of his people, Kotick has something in common with Kipling, who found himself a lonely champion of the British imperial cause in America, and would later exhort the American public to 'take up the white man's burden' in the Philippines.

Kipling's description of the rookeries parodies the 'fanciful' metaphor of Elliot's writing, portraying the battles in a comically domestic light. Although a place where rivals eagerly rip into one another's flesh, the rookery of 'The White Seal' is transformed into sunny suburbia, where married and domesticated seals look for perfect homes, bemoaning the intrusions of other 'house-hunters'. Kotick's mother, a gentle and obedient wife, berates her husband for constantly fighting with the other male seals:

'Oh you men, you men!' Matkah said, fanning herself with her hind-flipper. 'Why can't you be sensible and settle your places quietly?' You look as though you had been fighting with the Killer Whale.'

'I haven't been doing anything but fight since the middle of May. The beach is disgracefully crowded this season. I've met at least a hundred seals from Lukannon Beach, house-hunting. Why can't people stay where they belong?'

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67 Ibid., p. 130.
Kipling’s rookery exchanges the sexual instinct of the seals for comically bourgeois objectives: "...We must preserve appearances, my dear...", Kotick’s father reminds Matkah. Nested in ‘the finest accommodation for seals any place in all the world’, the seals are unworried by the cull and the encroachment of the fur-traders, docilely submitting to the men who drive them ‘just like sheep’, to be ‘turned into sealskin jackets later on.’ When Patalamon, one of the hunters, first sees the unusual sight of an albino seal, he interprets the sight in comically superstitious and acquisitive terms, believing that Kotick is the returning ghost of Zaharrof, to whom he owes a quantity of gulls’ eggs. The seals themselves are similarly absorbed in matters of material comfort, cruelly dismissing Kotick and his stories of peaceful seas:

[A] young seal about his own age said: 'This is all very well, Kotick, but you can't come from no one knows where and order us off like this. Remember we've been fighting for our nurseries, and that's a thing you never did. You preferred prowling about in the sea.' ... He had just married that year, and was making a great fuss about it.

Although Kotick eventually finds a place ‘where no men ever come’, the discovery is led by Sea Cow, the Northern manatee, a creature already extinct by the time the

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68 Ibid., p. 130.
69 Ibid., p. 128.
70 Ibid., p. 138.
71 Ibid., p. 139.
72 Ibid., pp. 153-154.
story was written. As Daniel Karlin suggests, the guidance of the manatee provides an 'image of death', suggesting the unlikeliness or 'fictionality' of the redemptive theme. However, more importantly, the extinction of the manatee implies the 'extinction' of all manner of guiding fictions: the end of storytelling itself. Kotick's seals have lost their belief in stories, immersing themselves in the comforts of the world. The disbelief in his dream of new and better lands is not merely a rejection of fable, but invokes human society and its own fables of imperial discovery and conquest, which meet with an equally narrow economic response. At the beginning of the story, there is yet another prefatory reference to the impact of modernity upon storytelling. The narrator is a passenger onboard a steamer, receiving his story from Limmershin, a Winter Wren that he revives after the bird has become entangled in the rigging of the ship. The revival of the bird, the delicate bearer of the story, alludes to the fragility of the narrative in the modern world of steamers and transatlantic journeys. It is the work of the narrator to rekindle fictions threatened by the vagaries of a newly empowered and enriched society.

The parallel between the depletion of the seal reserves and the depletion of the British empire is emphasised in 'Lukannon', the 'sad Seal National Anthem' Kipling places at the end of the story:

I met my mates in the morning (and oh, but I am old!)

Where roaring on the ledges the summer ground-swell rolled.

I heard them lift the chorus that drowned the breakers' song -

The Beaches of Lukannon two million voices strong.

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The song of pleasant stations beside the salt lagoons,
The song of blowing squadrons that shuffled down the dunes -
The song of midnight dances that churned the swell to flame -
The beaches of Lukannon - before the sealers came!74

The 'pleasant (hilltop) stations', 'blowing squadrons', and 'midnight dances' of Lukannon all hark back to imperial India, recalling the civil and military life of Simla. It was an imperial world that was now fading, and was aptly mourned in the song of the dwindling seals. The reference to British India culminates in the final verse with an appeal to the 'Deep Sea Viceroy's, who are unable to unite the 'broken, scattered band' of seals:

I met my mates in the morning, a broken, scattered band,
Men shoot us in the water and club us on the land.
Men drive us to the Salt House like silly sheep and tame,
And still we sing Lukannon - before the sealers came.

Wheel down, wheel down to southward - Oh, Gooverooska go!
And tell the Deep Sea Viceroy's the story of our woe.
Ere, empty as the shark's-egg the tempest flings ashore,
The Beaches of Lukannon shall know their sons no more!75

74 The Jungle Book, p. 158.
75 Ibid., p. 158.
The setting of 'The White Seal' offers a further allusion to the condition of the empire. The events described in the story occur, the narrator explains, 'at a place called Novastoshnah or North East Point on the Island of St Paul, away and away in the Bering Sea.' To set a story in the Bering Sea, in the Pribilov Islands, during the 1890s, was to touch an extremely raw nerve in American political circles. The region was at the centre of a dispute over the fur seal industries and Canadian fishing rights between Britain (Canada) and the United States during the period. The Pribilovs had belonged to the United States since the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867. The Bering Sea dispute began in the mid-1880s when Canadian pelagic sealers, shipping from British Columbia, began catching the island seals in the open waters of the Bering Sea. In 1886, American cruisers began seizing Canadian vessels and charging their masters with violations of municipal law. In 1893, the year of 'The White Seal', the British, or Canadian, legal case in the dispute was upheld by an international tribunal. Along with the Alaskan boundary dispute, with which it was connected and which dominated Canadian-American relations throughout the 1890s, the sealing dispute pointed to a severe rift between the senior powers of the North Atlantic triangle.

As Kipling saw it, all of the nations of the North Atlantic were ready to fight, seal-like, over their territorial claims and counter-claims. The seals of Novastoshna 'fought in the breakers... fought in the sand, and... fought on the smooth-worn basalt rocks of

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76 Ibid., p. 127.

the nurseries, *for they were just as stupid and unaccommodating as men*’ (italics mine).\(^78\) In the manuscript version of the story, Kipling cancelled a postscript referring directly to the dispute:

Now there are two great countries squabbling to find out which of the two shall kill seals by the island of St Paul's in the Bering Sea; and while they are squabbling news has come in that the seal catch this year is small. It will get smaller and smaller till at last the two countries will be left with nothing to argue about. Limmershin told me. Isn't it simple when you know all about it?\(^79\)

The Bering Sea confrontation was not worth 'squabbling' over - an unnecessary testing of the already fragile diplomatic relations between Britain and America. Soon the great nations would be 'left with nothing to argue about.' Since, on another allegorical level, the story is a plea for Anglo-American co-operation, the extinction of the seals is a metaphor of the dwindling resources of the 'great nations' of the North Atlantic Triangle. Ultimately, such a weakening of relations between Britain (Canada) and the United States posed a threat to the future of the empire.

This imperial threat, allegorically represented in the complacency of the seals, is also the theme of 'Rikki-tikki-tavi', which describes how a pet mongoose saves an Anglo-Indian family from the peril of cobras lurking in the garden of their bungalow. The mongoose is adopted as the family pet after his own domestic security is

\(^78\) *The Jungle Book*, p. 129.

\(^79\) British Library, MS. 45,540, p. 31.
shattered by a summer flood that 'washed him out of a burrow where he lived with his father and mother'. Named Rikki-tikki-tavi on account of his 'war-cry', the mongoose becomes the family protector, fighting off Nag and Nagaina, the wicked cobras of the garden. The domestic bliss of the English bungalow finds its counterpart in the nest built in the garden by Darzee, the tailor-bird, and his wife. The cultivated 'needlework' of Darzee and his wife provides a comment on the domesticity of the bungalow:

They had made a beautiful nest by pulling two big leaves together and stitching them up the edges with fibres, and had filled the hollow with cotton and downy fluff. The nest swayed to and fro, as they sat on the rim and cried.

Darzee informs the mongoose that they are crying on account of Nag eating one of their 'babies' when it fell out of the nest. Rikki-tikki's family history and the plight of Darzee's baby suggest that the bliss of the bungalow will be equally short-lived.

Rikki is both a pet and a wild animal: 'rather like a little cat' in his tail and fur, but 'quite like a mongoose in his head and habits'. The habit of the garden suits the mongoose perfectly because, like himself, it is 'only half cultivated', a partially subdued India that promises good hunting in the 'clumps of bamboos... and thickets of

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80 The Jungle Book, p. 164.
81 Ibid., p. 169.
82 Ibid., p. 169.
83 Ibid., p. 164.
Darzee, by contrast, is a house-proud bird, 'very like a man' in his insistence upon the sanctity of the home and the unfairness of killing snakes. Darzee's scruples are meaningless to the furious and half-wild mongoose, who exterminates the family of cobras without any sentimental impediment, biting off the tops of the eggs and meticulously crushing the youngsters. In this respect, the story pits the realm of nature and instinct against a humanised world of moral responsibility and ethical value. Darzee's 'feather-brained' insistence upon the rights of the cobra offers a moral alternative to the natural and evolutionary workings of the garden, which would be otherwise excluded from the account of Rikki's exploits. The tailor-bird is allowed the final comment in a house-proud song, performed in honour of the mongoose:

Singer and tailor am I -

Doubled the joys that I know -

Proud of my lilt to the sky,

Proud of the house that I sew.

Over and under, so weave I my music - so weave I the house that I sew.  

The weaving of songs and stories adds another moral dimension to the natural conflicts of the garden. Ironically, the narrator rejects the weaving of fictions,

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84 Ibid., p. 168.
85 Ibid., p. 187.
86 Ibid., p. 188.
87 Ibid., p. 198.
referring the reader once again to specialist sources that dispel the ‘myths’ about the mongoose:

If you read the old books of natural history, you will find they say that when the mongoose fights the snake and happens to get bitten, he runs off and eats some herb that cures him. That is not true. The victory is only a matter of quickness of eye and quickness of foot - snake’s blow against mongoose’s jump - and as no eye can follow the motion of a snake’s head when it strikes, that makes things much more wonderful than any magic herb.  

The facts are more strange and magical than the fiction - ‘more wonderful than any magic herb.’ Of course, the entirely fictional realm of talking snakes, birds, and mongooses emphasises the impossibility of the narrator’s commitment to authoritative sources. The narrator too is a weaver of songs, whose ‘old books of natural history’ are inseparable from his ‘magical’ Jungle. There is no closure between the two realms: each is ruled by stories.

Such a disavowal of ‘fanciful yarns’ is a deeply ironic allusion to the fictional licence of the stories themselves, recalling the aggressive racial taxonomies and boundaries of species and political life the writings of Sterndale, Sleeman, and Elliot. In the stories of *The Jungle Books*, Kipling challenged the incursions of a rational, empirical world, along with its systems of trade and representation, upon ‘magical’ domains untroubled by the problems of the modern age. However, in salvaging of the

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picture-story from the rubbish heap or receiving a tale from Limmershin onboard a steamer bound for Japan, Kipling perceived himself as inevitably dependent upon systems of trade, communication, and technology denuding societies of their traditions and stories. This ambivalent response to modernisation became a central aspect of his work in the early years of the twentieth century, when, settled permanently in England, he saw his social and political surroundings changing beyond recognition and increasingly wrote stories, like Kotuko's ivory carving, that wrested the past from the ravages of change.
South Africa and England
CHAPTER SIX

Race, Class, and Representation in Kipling's Boer War Poems

i. A Troubled Homecoming

After the political and personal turbulence of his final few months in America, where the Venezuela crisis and the court case against Beatty Balestier had persuaded him that the atmosphere was hostile, Kipling returned to the relative calm of southern England. After a brief spell at Maidencombe near Torquay, he settled, in 1897, at Rottingdean, West Sussex. The next few years saw the publication of *A Fleet in Being* (1898), *Stalky & Co.* (1899) and *Kim* (1901). The Venezuela crisis highlighted the possibility of war in the near future, stressing the importance of naval supremacy, which had been the dominant concern of both sides in the dispute.\(^1\) After coming to the brink of war, the squadrons of *A Fleet in Being* were to be the saving of England 'when the Real Thing comes'.\(^2\) Kipling rejoiced in the common tradition, 'one thousand years old',\(^3\) that bound together the hearts and minds of the fleet. These were the qualities that he went on to celebrate in *Stalky & Co*. The cunning, defiance,

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1 In *The Eclipse of Great Britain: The United States and British Imperial Decline* (Basingstoke, 1996), Ann Orde describes the gradual concession of naval power to America in the western hemisphere, (*ibid.*, pp. 24-25).

2 *A Fleet in Being*, p. 21.

and camaraderie of the days he so fondly remembered at U.S.C. were a reassurance that, despite what recent events had foretold, the nation would show its true, swashbuckling mettle 'when there [was] a really big row on.' It was soon to be given the chance with the outbreak of the Boer war in 1899. But in the event, the Stalkies; the 'Cheltenham and Haileybury and Marlborough chaps', whom Kipling hoped to see 'let loose on the south side of Europe with a sufficiency of Sikhs', were found sorely wanting in South Africa.

Kipling's reaction to the war, littered with shambolic military performances, and fought amidst a rankling suspicion of political incompetence, intrigue and conspiracy, left a deep and lasting impression upon his work. The war aroused strong feelings in every section of British society. For some it was a high time of imperial pride, for others, a moment of national shame and disgrace. It was against the background of events in South Africa that Kipling began to work out the meaning of his return to England, questioning where his national and political sympathies truly lay. Not surprisingly, the poor performance of the English troops against an ill-equipped army of Boer farmers nettled Kipling, embittering him against those sections of government and public that either outrightly opposed or insufficiently supported the British action. Even his own family was divided over the issue. On 1 June 1902, the day peace was signed in South Africa, his aunt Georgie hung a black banner from her window proclaiming: 'We have killed and also taken possession'. Kipling rushed over to save her from an angry crowd that had gathered around the house. He was equally

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4 *Stalky & Co.*, p. 271.


distanced from his cousin Margaret Mackail (formerly Burne-Jones) and her husband John, who opposed the war and sympathised with Fabian Socialism. Even though in these years he discovered Bateman's at Burwash, the home in which he was to remain for the rest of his life, the Boer War and its aftermath left him more profoundly in exile than he had ever been in India or America.

As early as 1895, while Kipling was still living in Vermont, the eyes of the world had turned momentarily upon South Africa to witness the ill-fated Jameson Raid. Jameson's attempt to topple the government of the Transvaal, assisted by a detachment of British South Africa Police, caused a great deal of embarrassment and trouble for the British government. Kruger's suppression of the uprising earned him a telegram of congratulation from the Kaiser, which was, in the event, a saving grace for Britishers, who, but for the Kaiser's 'cack-handed' denunciation would have aroused an even greater hostility from other nations. As early as 1895, while Kipling was still living in Vermont, the eyes of the world had turned momentarily upon South Africa to witness the ill-fated Jameson Raid. Jameson's attempt to topple the government of the Transvaal, assisted by a detachment of British South Africa Police, caused a great deal of embarrassment and trouble for the British government. Kruger's suppression of the uprising earned him a telegram of congratulation from the Kaiser, which was, in the event, a saving grace for Britishers, who, but for the Kaiser's 'cack-handed' denunciation would have aroused an even greater hostility from other nations.7 The Jameson Raid and the Venezuela crisis emphasized Britain's isolation, especially since they were clashes with powers not hitherto regarded as the country's main rivals.8 Aside from American hostility to England and the English,9 there were now the objections of the rest of the world to British policy in South Africa. After the war, despite his eventual exile, Kruger had the consolation of observing that 'throughout Europe the Boer War had made England's name hated.10 If the belligerence of the American government during the Venezuela crisis had indicated an aggressive international policy, the


Spanish-American war of 1898, with the subsequent invasion of the Philippines, signalled the arrival of a new imperial power in the West. Britain was now more politically isolated and vulnerable than ever.

In October 1899, the dispute between Kruger and the British government, which, officially at least, concerned the rights of non-Boer peoples in the Boer republics, developed into full-scale war. Some commentators interpreted the conflict as a picked fight on the part of the British, an attempt to remove a troubling obstacle to British expansion in Africa; others saw it as a Jewish conspiracy and a manipulation of imperial policy by entrepreneurs such as Cecil Rhodes, for whom the suppression of the Boers would gain a more lucrative and secure hold upon the markets.11 Rayne Kruger argues that:

The Boer war was fought because each half of the white community in the Transvaal wanted to dominate... The Boers said the war was for liberty. The British said it was for equality. The majority of the inhabitants, who were not white at all, gained neither liberty nor equality.12

11 At the time of the war, Rhodes was leader of the newly-formed Progressive Party in the Cape, a 'coalition of jingoist, Dutch-hating, anti-Krugerite, moneyed imperialists and of Cape Liberals who hoped to introduce Coloured and other black citizens into the polity' (ibid., p. 208). This was an odd mixture of political contradictions, but prefigured the Progressive Federal Party of eight years later.

The war instantly aroused Kipling's support. He noted its initial effect on the public with euphoria:

The war is having a splendid effect on the land and all fires will burn more brightly for the fierce draft that has been blown through them. Some day, indeed, it is not too much to hope, we may have an efficient army.13

The 'draft' was fiercer than first anticipated, and the initial optimism soon turned to anxiety. Kipling's own puzzling activities at this time began to reflect the growing desperation of the political and military climate. The desire for an efficient army led him to contribute directly to military preparedness by importing a machine gun and establishing a rifle-range at Rottingdean, where he oversaw the drilling of the hapless locals in preparation for the coming 'Armageddon.'14 Even during his frequent spells in South Africa, he kept a strict eye on the running of the club, issuing military-style instructions and regulations, which he despatched to Sergeant Johnstone, the Instructor at Rottingdean preparatory school.15 During these African visits, Kipling adopted a high-profile, propagandist role; giving speeches, touring cantonments and


14 These exploits are described in letters to Stephen Johnson, 14 March 1901 (ibid., p. 45) and to James Conland, 20 February, 1901 (ibid., p. 41). See also Birkenhead, who writes: 'With an eye all ready on the next war, he regarded his club with deadly seriousness. He always shot in the competitions, adequately, in spite of his eyesight, coming over at three or four in the afternoon in his wide-brimmed hat and leather-patched clothes' (Rudyard Kipling, pp. 233-234).

15 Ibid., p. 234.
visiting wounded soldiers in hospitals. Between April and March of 1900 he served on *The Friend* in Bloemfontein, a newspaper established by Lord Roberts after the military takeover of the town, providing morale-boosting articles for the troops and offering a hand of conciliation to defeated Boers. As a war reporter on *The Friend*, Kipling visited the front, coming under fire at the battle of Karee Siding on 29 March 1900.\(^{16}\) Despite the military enthusiasms he had voiced in some of his most popular writings, this was his first close experience of combat. The acknowledgement that 'about half the men I ever knew seem to have been killed and the other half are wounded'\(^{17}\) appears to have hardened his resolve to use his writing and his fame to publicly aid the British cause. 'The Absent-Minded Beggar' was his immediate fundraising effort, published to raise money for the families of serviceman fighting in the war. As the first fruits of his resolve to 'sell [his] name for every blessed cent it would fetch',\(^{18}\) the poem was an instant success. However, it also signalled a new level of involvement in the political domain that was to have a profound effect upon the subsequent critical perception of his work. In the years to come, Kipling would frequently, and often unjustly, be associated with the war-mongering and jingoism of the period.

The war coincided with a deepening friendship with Cecil Rhodes, who built a house, the Woolsack, for the Kiplings on his Groote Schuur estate, to which they would return every winter from 1900 to 1907. Rhodes was a successful businessman

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and an empire-builder, unashamed of his plan for the expansion of the British empire across the entire globe. To Kipling, Rhodes was almost a deity:

I don't think that anyone who did not actually come across Him with some intimacy of detail can ever realize what He was. It was His Presence that had all the Power. Same as Jameson's held all the magnetism. And of all the people it seemed to me that home-keeping Englishmen would be among the last to feel the power of a man as inarticulate as He was.¹⁹

Kipling was always struck by Rhodes' inarticulacy. It was an inability with language that further bonded the man of action to the man of words: Kipling would express for Rhodes the grand utterances that so frequently escaped him, which were a fitting accompaniment to his brash and often reckless actions. It was as if the dream of endowing his words with practical value, cherished since those days in the Punjab, was fulfilled in his friendship with Rhodes. The difference between Rhodes and, as Kipling puts it, 'home-keeping Englishmen' was another reason for the veneration: Rhodes was another exiled imperialist, apparently inscrutable to the very people whose values he was intent upon imposing on the rest of humanity. Kipling added Alfred Milner and Leander Starr Jameson (of the famous raid) to his list of maverick and influential friends during these years. Opportunist statesmen, these were formidable and controversial figures, unafraid to bend the law and take huge risks to fulfil their imperial aspirations. Rhodes, Jameson, and Milner were, and remain,

frequently associated with the rogue face of imperialism.²⁰ No doubt Kipling's association with such figures increased the uncompromising tone of his work during the period, especially his vehement attacks on the Tory 'old guard', which further alienated him from all sections of the political field.

The writings informed by the Boer war and its aftermath are commonly thought among the most narrow and prejudiced of Kipling's work. Volumes influenced by the war include: *The Five Nations* (1903), *Traffic and Discoveries* (1904) and *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906). Lord Birkenhead argues that: 'The rigidity of Kipling's thinking and the unyielding nature of his prejudice were most pronounced during and immediately after the South African war.'²¹ The claim is supported by Ann Parry's view that the poetry asserts the ideology of the radical right.²² Van Wyk Smith similarly claims that Kipling succumbed to 'the worship of a vast and ultimately nebulous panorama of imperial ideology.'²³ In fact, the war left a far deeper and more complex impression upon his work than these readings suggest. The complexity of his response to the war is most evident in the poems, which became his chief medium of public comment during these years. By discussing the war and its influence

²⁰ Geoffrey Wheatcroft offers a fascinating account of Jameson's near miraculous political rehabilitation after the public disgrace of the Raid (for which he narrowly escaped hanging). Little over eight years after the Raid, following a term of fifteen months in an English prison, he was installed as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, remaining in power for four years. See *The Randlords*, p. 190.


²² *The Poetry of Rudyard Kipling: Rousing the Nation*, p. 106.

upon Kipling's poetry, it is possible to trace the development of themes and issues integral to the fiction he wrote during and in the aftermath of the conflict.

ii. A Time of Self-Questioning

On October 9, 1899, following the continued reinforcement of British garrisons in Natal, President Kruger broke off negotiations with the British government, issuing an ultimatum that British troops be withdrawn from the borders of the Transvaal and that reinforcements be sent home. The British failure to comply with Kruger's request was regarded, according to the terms of the ultimatum, as 'a formal declaration of war', and on October 12 the burghers of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal launched an invasion of British Natal. Situated between Britain, India, and Australia, Natal was considered 'the very keystone of the imperial arch.' To commentators such as Conan Doyle, the attack confirmed the long-held suspicion that there existed a conspiracy to attain the 'final expulsion of British power from South Africa and the formation of a single great Dutch republic.'

This view of events, described in Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Great Boer War* (1902), provides a useful illustration not only of the British position in South Africa, but of the crisis of racial and imperial loyalties precipitated by the war. Events in South Africa prompted a crisis of ideology and representation. Not only were the

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Boers a genuine military threat, but they were a challenge to the cultural assumptions that frequently justified imperial conquest and rule. In physical appearance, religious belief, and their colonial possession of African territory, there were disconcerting affinities of race, culture, and aspirations between the Boers and the British. They too were a white, Protestant people of European stock. These affinities produce ambivalences and anxieties in the political rhetoric of the period and the writings of imperialists such as Conan Doyle and Kipling. *The Great Boer War* captures the mood of regret with which the racial affinity was acknowledged:

It was pitiable that it should come to this. These people were as near akin to us as any race which is not our own. They were of the same Frisian stock which peopled our own shores. In habit of mind, in religion, in respect for law, they were as ourselves. Brave, too, they were, and hospitable, with those sporting instincts which are dear to the Anglo-Celtic race. There was no people in the world who had more qualities which we might admire, and not the least of them was that love of independence which it is our proudest boast that we have encouraged in others as well as exercised ourselves.28

The Boers and the British were supposedly connected by race, law, religion, 'sporting instincts' and love of independence. These were the virile qualities that generations of imperialists were taught to admire. In their religious piety and bravery, Doyle's Boers echoed the qualities of imperial character familiar to readers of Henty's adventure

stories. Confronted with an enemy of the same 'Frisian stock', who were relatively new to the country, and who had forcibly taken the land from the African peoples, British society in some sense confronted itself, and was forced to question the legitimacy of its own imperial annexations. Even Conan Doyle respects the territorial claims of the Boers and their fears of the enfranchisement of outsiders: 'Were the Boers to lose by the ballot-box the victory which they had won by their rifles?\textsuperscript{29} Why, he asks, were the invaders of Bechuanaland considered freebooters 'if the founders of Rhodesia were pioneers'?\textsuperscript{30} Despite his imperial loyalties, Conan Doyle thought it 'pitiable' to wage war upon the Boers. The view was also common in the political sphere. Even during the earliest days of the campaign, with Ladysmith, Kimberley and Mafeking besieged, and with the reversals of Stormberg, Magersfontein and Colenso fresh in the public mind, the Secretary of State, Joseph Chamberlain, drew conciliatory analogies between the Boers and the British:

In Africa, these two races, so interesting, so admirable each of them in their own way, so different in some things, will now, at any rate, have learned to respect one another.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., p. 31.

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., p. 23.

This mood of conciliation and comparison between the two races influences Kipling's 'Piet', where the blood of a dying Boer cries out from the ground against a guilty English soldier:

I've 'eard 'im cryin' from the ground
Like Abel's blood of old,
An' skirmished out to look an' found
The beggar nearly cold,
I've waited on till 'e was dead
(Which couldn't 'elp 'im much),
But many grateful things 'e's said
To me for doin' such.\(^\text{32}\)

The Biblical reference to the first murder implies that the Boer is innocent and his killer is Cain, portraying the war as a sin according to the religious culture shared by the soldiers. To Kipling, the conflict is both a 'civil' war and a betrayal of the English soldier's own racial stock, or, to put it in the terms of the poem, the soldier's racial and religious family. This complex ideological position is evident in Kipling's first major pronouncement on events, 'The Old Issue', which was published on 19 September 1899 to mark the declaration of war. The poem urges the people to oppose Kruger in the same way their ancestors opposed the 'tyrant kings' of the past. However, in its effort to arouse national support for the war against Kruger's Boers, it immediately confronts the racial and cultural associations between the two peoples.

\(^{32}\text{The Five Nations, p. 200.}\)
Adopting the conventional justification for the war: the defence of the freedom of the Uitlanders against the 'tyranny' of Kruger's government, the poem simultaneously affirms a common ancestry in European, aristocratic traditions. Kruger is represented as the tyrannical king against whom the British have fought throughout history to establish their freedom:

'Here is nothing new nor aught unproven,' say the Trumpets,

'Many feet have worn it and the road is old indeed.

It is the King - the King we schooled aforetime!'

(Trumpets in the marshes - in the eyot at Runnymede!)

The reference to Runnymede, where King John was forced to sign the Magna Carta in 1215, places South African affairs in a civil context. By associating Kruger with King John, the poem locates the action against the Boers within the defining limits of English history. The comparison between Kruger and the English King indicates the force with which the racial and cultural affinity with the Boers presented itself to Kipling. Unlike the 'pore benighted 'eathen' of 'Fuzzy-Wuzzy', which described the military action in the Sudan against an adversary easily subjected to racial and cultural distinction on the basis of his physical difference, his 'fuzzy' hair, his 'heathenism', and so on; Kruger, in his manifestation as the King of England was a tyrant who was nevertheless somehow a part of the national identity (indeed, portrayed as the son of Henry II, from whom all kings of England are descended, he was depicted as an

33 Ibid., p. 107.

34 Barrack-Room Ballads, p. 10.
integral part of the nation's history of monarchical government). Anxious to declare
the war 'nothing new nor aught unproven', the poem does the opposite - implying that
war against Kruger meant an interrogation of British values, culture, nationality, and
history.

A modern, theoretical analysis of nationalism and nationalist language provides a
useful counterpart to this reading of 'The Old Issue'. Homi Bhabha argues that the
language of nationalism involves an unstable juxtaposition of past and present. He
suggests that the idea of 'modern social cohesion' or the 'homogeneity' of the people
relies significantly upon atavistic apologues that dictate the timelessness and unity of
the cultural identity.\(^3\)\(^5\) However, in a manner almost of self-contradiction, this
occurs through the arbitrary signs and symbols of culture, which are merely the
'shreds and patches of the present'.\(^3\)\(^6\) The nation's 'visual presence' in nationalist
discourse is consequently 'the effect of a narrative struggle'.\(^3\)\(^7\) Clearly such a
'narrative struggle' is at work in Kipling's poetry. In 'The Old Issue' it occurs between
incompatible views of Boer and British history, where neither their uniqueness nor
similarity can be finally stated. The past asserts neither the separateness nor the
uniqueness of Boer or British societies. The unresolved conflict about the nation's
apologues results in, to use Bhabha's metaphor, a patchwork of views on nationality
and culture, disrupting the illusion of a sovereign national will or cohesion.

\(^3\)\(^5\) Homi K. Bhabha, 'DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation', Nation
and Narration (London, 1990), p. 293.

\(^3\)\(^6\) Ibid., p. 294. Bhabha quotes Gellner on this point.

\(^3\)\(^7\) Ibid., p. 295.
The war against the Boers, a people supposedly related to the British in matters of race, culture, and religion, demanded a strenuous argument in favour of English society and government over and above all other forms. It was a supporting argument that Kipling's verse ultimately could not provide. Even at supposedly its most tub-thumping, Kipling's attempts at rousing the nation were inscribed with a deep cynicism about England and English society. Everything about the war sounded a grim note for English society and the wider imperial enterprise. The Boer resistance to British rule in Africa increasingly foreboded social unrest at home. The war was figuratively transformed into a struggle against a people that had renounced English governance; in other words it offered an adaptable metaphorical framework for the interpretation, and indictment, of the various factions of class, gender, and political party that complicated the national life in the earliest Edwardian years. As J.B. Priestley argues, the Edwardian period was 'an era of tension between extremes.'

According to Priestley it was an era driven by class-consciousness and fear, in which the expanding middle classes anxiously guarded the social position won by reform:

Behind their imposing mask of moral indignation, all the fiercer because they were not sure of themselves, was fear. The members of the upper middle class felt that property and position were being threatened. In the lower middle class respectability itself, often newly won, had to be guarded. There was a feeling that religion, the family, decency, social and political stability, the country itself, were all in danger.


39 Ibid., p. 87.
Chamberlain and much of the pro-war lobby sought a resolution of domestic conflict in the widening and consolidation of imperial ties throughout the world. The Boer presented an obstacle to the wider imperial objective and hence, ultimately, to the national cohesion of Britain. It is measure of how closely Chamberlain associated the two causes that, in 1902, he directly compared the relations of the Dutch and the English of the Transvaal with the relations in Britain between the Scots and the English, urging the races in South Africa to achieve the same level of co-operation and tolerance that existed in the United Kingdom.\textsuperscript{40} As the comparison implies, South Africa radically exposed the fragility of the British nation, revealing the potential for conflict within the various sections of English society and between the various parts of the United Kingdom: for example, between England and Ireland, whose nationalists had sided with the Boers, sometimes joining them to fight against the English. The flight from British rule of the Boer peoples, and their independent, nomadic lifestyle, made them a convenient symbol of the renegade forces and the social regression that threatened the middle classes of England.\textsuperscript{41} To Conan Doyle,

\textsuperscript{40} In a speech of 30 December 1902, he explained: 'We want the same relations between Dutch and English - between Boer and Briton - as have existed so long between Englishmen and Scotsmen' (\textit{The Speeches of Mr Chamberlain}, vol. II, p. 84).

\textsuperscript{41} Chamberlain placed a sinister construction upon the much-praised independence of the Boer, commenting: '[T]he main reason for the trek of the Boers from British rule was their disinclination to be interfered with in their treatment of the native races... My opinion is that the independence of which we hear so much, and which the Boers are said to value so highly, is a free right to treat as they like the people under their control' (Speech to the House of Commons, 19 October 1899, \textit{The Speeches of Mr Chamberlain}, vol. II, p. 26).
they were 'brave, hardy, and fired with a strange religious enthusiasm. They were all of the seventeenth century, except their rifles.'\textsuperscript{42} With their rugged physicality and religious fervour they were a reminder of qualities declining in England, which converged increasingly upon the secular and polluted cities. Polemical journalists such as Arnold White were quick to notice the aptness of the Boer as a model of interpretation for the British national life. In *Efficiency and Empire* (1901) the national 'cult of infirmity' was exposed by the rugged, pastoral Boer:

\begin{quote}
The maintenance of British interests could not be entrusted to men taken at random from the great towns. The vigour of the male population of the Transvaal was such that they contemplated without emotion a meeting with the flower of the British Army.\textsuperscript{43}
\end{quote}

The social reforms urged by White aimed to 'give the efforts of the nation the solidification of a single organism.'\textsuperscript{44} His crudely Darwinian ideal of an efficient national organism revealed the uncertainties and the class-consciousness of the period. White urged that, in the interests of efficiency, aristocratic privilege and scruples of class should be swept aside from all areas of public life, allowing the fittest to serve the nation according to the criterion of 'efficiency':

\textsuperscript{42} *The Great Boer War*, p. 66.

\textsuperscript{43} *Arnold White, Efficiency and Empire* (London, 1901), p. 94.

\textsuperscript{44} *Ibid.*, p. 291.
Gradations of caste in the East End are as real as those higher up in society, where a duke with a Garter looks down upon a duke with no Garter, while a new peer is regarded by an earl who is the fifteenth of his line with much the same sentiment as a sergeant of the Guards looks at a recruit.\textsuperscript{45}

The gospel of national efficiency found its poetic champions in figures such as Kipling, who equally perceived the war as an indictment of British, or, at least, English ills. In 'The Lesson', he wrote:

\begin{quote}
Let us admit it fairly, as a business people should,

\textit{We have had no end of a lesson: it will do us no end of good...}

...All the obese, unchallenged old things that stifle

and overlie us-

Have felt the effects of the lesson we got - an

advantage no money could buy us!\textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

Kipling's ironic reference to the English as a 'business people', who had gained a valuable lesson at a price 'no money could buy', suggested a small-minded nation of shopkeepers, intent upon balancing the books and insuring themselves against the challenges of the modern world. The British army's showing in the South Africa

\textsuperscript{45}Ibid., pp. 63-64.

\textsuperscript{46}The Five Nations, pp. 117-119.
‘faithfully mirrored its makers’ ideals, equipment, and mental attitude’. However, the war had called in question the ‘obese,unchallenged old things’, revealing the need for radical social change.

Like Arnold White, Kipling advocated national service, the abandonment of aristocratic privilege, the increase of naval power, and, later on, stringent political measures to halt the progress of imperial Germany (White advocated a pre-emptive strike to destroy the German fleet). Both saw the urban centres as sites of moral and physical degeneration, the weakness of whose conscripts had been cruelly exposed by the war:

Sons of the sheltered city - unmade, unhandled,

unmeet -

Ye pushed them raw to the battle as ye picked

them raw from the street.

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47 Ibid., p. 118.

48 Although he bemoaned 'bad smart society' (Efficiency and Empire, p. 74), White ultimately remained committed to an aristocratic principle of government, arguing that there existed a species of 'true' or proper aristocrat, who would rise to the top of the social hierarchy according to their superior efficiency: 'The gentle folk will always win in a crowd whenever they take the trouble - for aristocracy is nothing more than the most efficient people in the nation, whose efficiency has been graded up by generations of training' (ibid., p. 23).

49 Ibid., pp. ix-x.

50 The Five Nations, p. 135.
Many of these national and urban ills are alluded to in 'The Absent-Minded Beggar', one of the best-known of Kipling's poems of the war. It was published four weeks after 'The Old Issue', on the 31st of October, 1899, and was written to raise money for the families of servicemen and to purchase comforts for soldiers at the front. The poem is, however, far more sophisticated than its fund-raising purpose might imply. Punning on the themes of remembering and forgetting, it alludes to a national 'consciousness', portraying the difficulties of constructing and articulating a coherent view of British society during the war. In the poem, Tommy is an 'absent-minded beggar' and, as such, requires the nation to put its money where its mouth is, remembering to support his loved ones by dropping a shilling in the tambourine of the fundraiser. Effectively the nation is urged to guard against its own 'absent-mindedness':

When You've shouted "Rule Britannia," when you've sung "God save the Queen,"

When you've finished killing Kruger with your mouth,

Will you kindly drop a shilling in my little tambourine

For a gentleman in khaki ordered South?51

The rabble-rousing echoes of the music hall and the references to popular patriotism imply the lifestyle and the interests of the urban masses.52 But even though the poem

52The poem was first published in Harmsworth's Daily Mail, which was well known for its popular imperialism and links to the Conservative party (See Ann Parry, The Poetry of Rudyard Kipling:
is, in this respect, conscious of class, it urges that the nation forget social distinction, imitating the unity and equality of the various classes serving in the army:

Cook's Son - Duke's son - son of a belted Earl-

Son of a Lambeth publican - it's all the same to-day!\(^{53}\)

At the same time as presenting this co-operation between classes, the poem thus acknowledges that England is riven with social divisions and inequalities. It was written to relieve the suffering of families at the bottom of the social ladder:

There are families by thousands, far too proud to beg or speak,

And they'll put their sticks and bedding up the spout,

And they'll live on half o' nothing, paid 'em punctual once a week,

'Cause the man that earns the wage is ordered out.\(^{54}\)

While the objective of wartime propaganda is the mobilisation of complete popular support and solidarity in the war-effort, 'The Absent-Minded Beggar' reveals the poverty and squalor endured by a significant portion of society. As such, it implies that the condition of England must be remembered and at the same time forgotten if

\(^{Rousing the Nation, pp. 91-92). Parry argues that this was an astute, but ironic move on Kipling's part, because, in choosing such a newspaper he was addressing the jingo crowd from whom he had sought to disassociate himself in 'Recessional'. Nevertheless, I suggest that the poem reflects the ideological contradiction of its fundraising and nationalistic strategies.\(^{53}\)

\(^{Rudyard Kipling's Verse: Definitive Edition, p. 460.}\(^{54}\)}
the war is to be won. The men at the front line are necessarily 'absent-minded' fellows. As the speaker in 'The Return' puts it:

If England was what England seems,
An' not the England of our dreams,
But only putty, brass, an' paint,
'Ow quick we'd chuck 'er! But she ain't!55

Kipling's serviceman, like Homi Bhabha, recognises the difference between England as she 'is' and England as she 'seems' - only putty, brass, and paint behind the 'shreds and patches' of a nationalist language. Bhabha argues that '[it] is through the syntax of forgetting - or being obliged to forget - that the problematic identification of a national people becomes visible.56 The 'Absent-Minded Beggar' suggests that nationalism is a kind of 'absent-mindedness.' Even though the shilling in the tambourine posits a collective act on society's part, it occurs to alleviate suffering caused by the inequalities and injustices of that society. The poem urges the nation to remember while it simultaneously forgets what the giving calls to mind. This curious interplay of remembering and forgetting - or forgetting to remember -57 dramatises the process that constructs 'The England of our dreams', while exposing the 'putty, brass, and paint' of England as it seems. In Kipling's poetry, England came perilously


56 'DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation', Nation and Narration, p. 310.

57 Ibid., p. 311.
close to being what she 'seemed': the botched-up and over-painted remnant of an imperial power.

Characteristically, 'The Absent-Minded Beggar' shifts attention away from South Africa and locates the significant political energies in the British cities, amongst the lower classes. The urbanisation of the Conservative Party was the key to its victory in the so-called 'khaki election' of 1900. It won the most urban seats, especially in Scotland, because the towns were most affected by 'war fever'.

Kipling's poem reflects this changing emphasis upon the cities and the working class. It is both compelled towards and suspicious of the urban crowd. Bhabha explains that a successful nationalist rhetoric establishes a homogeneity of 'the people' that, 'if pushed too far, may assume something resembling the archaic body of the despotic or totalitarian mass'. At this point the 'threat of cultural difference is no longer a question of "other" people. It becomes a question of the otherness of the people-as-one.'

Fear of the jingo crowd is a predominant concern of the period. It was focused by the growing dependence of the empire upon the support of the urban masses. Nationalism often spilled over into violence and rioting. Across the country in 1900, there were a number of serious riots and many assaults on suspected pro-Boers. Kipling's poetry illustrates the extent to which the Boer war contributed significantly to anxieties of class and the fear of the urban crowd. The rousing

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59 'DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation', *Nation and Narration*, p. 294.

60 Ibid., p. 301.

61 *An Imperial War and the British Working Class*, pp. 196-197.
choruses of 'The Absent-Minded Beggar' only partially obscure the damaging effect of the war upon the discourse of national belonging. Paul, Tommy's antagonist, is a worryingly intimate part of home-life in the domestic remit of the poem. Just as the forgetful Tommy is hardly a terrifying vessel of colonial power, Paul (Kruger) is more of a local rowdy than a colonial enemy:

He's an absent-minded beggar and he may forget it all,

But we do not want his kiddies to remind him

That we sent 'em to the workhouse while their daddy hammered Paul,

So we'll help the homes that Tommy left behind him.62

Daddy hammering Paul reconfigures international conflict in terms of a street brawl, populating the complex field of international politics with the colourful braggarts and drunkards that Kipling identifies as Tommy's circle. The imagery brings the conflict troublingly close to home and registers the growing fear of and fascination with Demos, the mob. On the one hand the lines invoke Paul, the white, Protestant antagonist, as a social and cultural equal; on the other they portray the fighting as a form of hooliganism. In the social divisions and the stereotypes of urban life, the poem fears the mob, the spectre of the 'people-as-one', as much as it fears a Boer victory.

To Chamberlain, the troops gathered in South Africa, from all corners of the British empire, were 'trustees of a federation.'63 Chamberlain's view was certainly popular amongst British imperialists in South Africa. When, in March of 1900,

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63 Speech to the House of Commons, 5 February 1900, Mr Chamberlain's Speeches, vol. II, p. 67.
Kipling arrived in Bloemfontein for a spell of work on Lord Roberts' *The Friend of the Free State*, he was assured in an editorial welcome that, amongst the soldiers, drawn 'from every quarter of the globe', he would find 'the actual physical fulfilment of what must be one of his dearest hopes - the close union of the greatest parts of the greatest empire in the world.'

Many of the poems in *The Five Nations* reflect this view of the war as an example of federal trusteeship. For example, in 'The Parting of the Columns', an English Serviceman sings the praises of his fellow soldiers from 'Calgary an' Wellin'ton, an' Sydney and Quebec,' who, with their stories 'Of mine an' farm, an' ranch an' run, an' moose an' Caribou,' have opened his eyes to the vastness, diversity, and strength of the empire. Influenced by Chamberlain's concern to placate Boer hostilities and prepare for close co-operation between British and Boer communities in the future, *The Five Nations* includes a number of poems describing the resettlement of the Transvaal by former British servicemen. At the outset of the war, Chamberlain recognised that it was politically important to keep open the door of reconciliation between both sides in South Africa:

When matters have settled down, when equal rights are assured to both the white races, I believe that both will enjoy the land together in settled peace and prosperity. Meanwhile, we are finding out the weak spots in our armour and trying to remedy them... and we are advancing steadily, if

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65 *The Five Nations*, p. 177.
66 Ibid., p. 177.
slowly, to the realisation of that great federation of our race which will
inevitably make for peace and liberty and justice.\(^{67}\)

In 'The Settler', Chamberlain's hopes for the mutual enjoyment of a 'settled peace and
prosperity' are closely evoked by an ex-serviceman's pledge of reconciliation:

Here, where my fresh-turned furrows run,
and the deep soil glistens red,
I will repair the wrong that was done
To the living and the dead.
Here, where the senseless bullet fell,
And the barren shrapnel burst,
I will plant a tree, I will dig a well,
Against the heat and the thirst.\(^ {68}\)

Echoing the Psalms and the Book of Jeremiah,\(^ {69}\) the poem associates righteousness
and the forgiveness of wrongs with the planting of trees and the digging of wells,
suggesting also an escape from the stifling towns of Britain. Such a poem marks the
early stages of the Edwardian emphasis upon rural life, which gains its impetus from
the conviction that the sooty, unhealthy conditions of the towns had stifled the
physical development of the working-class men who were recruited during the war.

\(^{67}\) Speech to the House of Commons, 5 February 1900, *Mr Chamberlain's Speeches*, vol. II, p. 67.

\(^{68}\) *The Five Nations*, p. 153.

\(^{69}\) Psalm 1. 1-4 and Jeremiah 17. 8.
Kipling's empire federalism was at the same time an indictment of the social ills of urban Britain, replete with associations between the rugged outdoors and the union of the empire. The prosperity and the close co-operation of Britain and South Africa is associated with the pastoral simplicity and regeneration of a life lived in the open spaces. The Boer and the Briton will hold counsel 'over the cattle-Kraal' and the young crop will cover their hatred:

From the far and fiercely guarded streams

And the pools where we lay in wait,

Till the corn cover our evil dreams

And the young corn our hate.\textsuperscript{70}

The poor showing of a British army, culled mainly from the cities, against a healthy and rustic adversary in the Boer, prompted commentators such as Arnold White to predict the moral and physical degeneration of the empire unless steps were taken to stem the urban tide of infirmity. Kipling's poem of resettlement similarly looks to the rural life of the Boer as an escape from English urban ills. It looks forward, in this respect, to \textit{Puck of Pook's Hill} (1906), which reaffirmed the outdoor vigour of an English feudal past, which the Boer war had shown to be in decline. 'Chant-Pagan' echoes this disillusionment with the English cities, asserting that 'the sunshine of England is pale/And the breezes of England are stale.'\textsuperscript{71} The serviceman who narrates the poem again vows to settle in South Africa, associating his future

\textsuperscript{70} \textit{The Five Nations}, p. 154.

\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 162.
prosperity with the rugged life of the 'Vaal and the Orange'. By implication, the harmonious relation of the soldier to the land and the Boer anticipates a harmonious federation of the former enemies:

For I know of a sun an' a wind,
An' some plains an' a mountain be'ind,
An' some graves by a barb-wire fence;
An' a Dutchman I've fought 'oo might give
Me a job were I ever inclined

These poems express a growing discontent with the social and economic plight of England. Britain merely acts as the nominal head of a federated empire, lacking the prosperity and opportunity afforded by the colonies. The lines: 'Me that 'ave seen what I've seen- / 'Ow can I ever take on/ with awful old England again...?' suggest how far events in South Africa had revealed the shortcomings of English life, particularly life in the cities. The 'English Irregular' is happier to work for the Dutch than the 'Squire an' is wife', who train him 'To come in an' 'ands up un' be still'. After 'rollin' 'is lawns for the Squire', he vows to escape to where 'there's neither a road nor a tree':

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72 Ibid., p. 161.
73 Ibid., p. 162.
74 Ibid., p. 159.
75 Ibid., p. 161.
But only my Maker an' me,
And I think it will kill me or cure,
So I think I will go there and see.\(^7^6\)

Kill or cure, the precarious life of the 'Dutchman' in South Africa is preferable to the stifling mediocrity of civilian life in England. Under the harsh conditions of the land true manhood flourishes. This rejuvenation is also the theme of 'The Return', where a soldier explains that, in the Transvaal: 'Things 'ave transpired that made [him] learn / The size and meanin' of the game', transforming him from an 'average kid' to 'a thinkin' man'.\(^7^7\) In 'The sin of Witchcraft', a newspaper article concerning loyalty and disloyalty in the Cape Colony, Kipling trusts to the honour and integrity of the men of the wider empire, which is instilled by a life lived in the open spaces: 'for they too have known the life that is lived out between a horse and a verandah under hot blue skies.\(^7^8\)

The war in South Africa shifted Kipling's attention onto the issues of class, urbanisation, and the rural past. The fiction published after 1900 increasingly evoked the fields and open spaces of Sussex, revealing patterns of social stability in the ancient order of a settled rural life. The sweeping scenery of the Downs implied a freedom lost to the inhabitants of the expanding cities. Nevertheless, in the stories

\(^7^6\) *Ibid.*. p. 162.

Kipling wrote at this time, the landscape is an ambivalent site of introspection and social questioning, in which rural Sussex is troubled by portents of unrest.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Social Reform and the Cult of Imperial Fitness in * Traffics and Discoveries *

i. An Empire of Fresh Air

In 1904, Kipling published a volume of stories written during and immediately after the war in South Africa. The volume, * Traffics and Discoveries*, concludes with a story entitled 'Below the Mill Dam', which allegorises the political transformations of early Edwardian England, bringing the economic and social issues of the collection as a whole into sharp focus. In the story, the waters represent the lower classes, while the ancient water wheel, with its incessant quotations from the Domesday Book, represents the outmoded feudalism propounded by the English aristocracy. It is worth remembering that throughout the Victorian period and up until the election of Campbell-Bannerman in 1906 the British political system was entrenchedly aristocratic, with peers holding the great proportion of Cabinet positions and the House of Lords enjoying almost unrestricted power.1 'Below the Mill Dam' attacks this concentration of power in the hands of the aristocrats and the lords, describing national efficiency in terms of the efficiency of the mill, which is enhanced only by modernisation and reform. The social and political effectiveness of the nation is represented in the story by the electrical power that the wheel generates. Efficiency is

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only achieved by harnessing the full force of the 'floods from the gutters',

2 or the lower, working classes, allowing them to drive the wheel to maximum productivity. The metaphor is an ambivalent figure of social incorporation and improvement, measuring progress exclusively in terms of power and brute force. When the wheel is eventually turned into a set of turbines, the Waters declare that they have 'power enough for anything in the world',

3 giving an imperial slant to the theme of national efficiency. The allegory also implies a fear of power and modernisation, insofar as social change involves the incorporation of the lower classes. To Kipling, the social incorporation of the 'floods of the gutters' runs perilously close to smashing the newly-empowered nation. As the waters themselves remind the wheel: 'The only question is whether you could stand the strain if we came down upon you full head.'

4 At the end of the story, the conservative Wheel is inhabited by the Spirit of the Mill, which enables him to embrace the greater efficiency attainable through modernisation, boasting that, when he is transformed into turbines, he will be able to bear any amount of strain. Despite the acceptance of change, the story also registers concern about the 'philistinism' of the turbine-driven age. Before his mechanical conversion the Wheel comments: 'So in future I am to be considered mechanically? I have been painted by at least five Royal Academicians.'

5 The anxiety of the Wheel about history, tradition, and aesthetic value is relevant to the text itself, which is inevitably written in a spirit other than the spirit of the Mill. The rejoinder of the Waters: 'Oh, you can be painted

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2 * Traffics and Discoveries, p. 384.  
by five hundred when you aren't at work," offers a grim prognosis for the nation's artistic and aesthetic future. Modernity and efficiency spell the obsolescence of literary fiction - a knowledge intimated in the objections of the grey cat and the black rat to the modernisation of the Wheel. The cat and the rat represent old-fashioned Tories like Arthur Balfour and the 'Souls', a club whose members included Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, and liberals such as Wilfred Blunt and Percy Wyndham. Although satirised in the story, the opinions of the 'old guard' had troubling implications for Kipling's own political and artistic values. It was they and not the 'floods of the gutter', who were the most likely readers of Kipling's stories, and who were best able to understand the aesthetic and historical debate of the allegory. Intellectually speaking, 'Below the Mill Dam' excludes the lower classes, allowing itself a literary and aesthetic commitment to the world of the 'old guard' whose obsolescence it predicts.

After the Wheel submits to the Spirit of the Mill, it is observed 'kicking joyously in the first rush of the icy stream.' The invigoration reflects ideals of physical health and hardihood that had become a dominant theme of social reform since the war. Kipling's association of the rural setting with a regeneration of the nation's physical and political prowess reflects a major ideology of the Edwardian years - namely that the countryside promoted the physical well-being that the war had shown to be lacking in the population. The myth was not confined to literature. As Alun Howkins argues, it was commonplace in the music of Cecil Sharp and Vaughan Williams, and

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6 Ibid., p. 389.


8 Traffics and Discoveries, p. 391.
in the architecture of Philip Webb and Lutyens. In fact, it has an even wider influence. The 'back-to-the-land' philosophy also dominates the fields of medicine and social science during the period.

In 1907, Dr George Newman published *The Health of the State* as part of the Social Services Series edited by Percy Alden M.P. I cite the credentials of the author and editor in order to convey their eminent institutional and political standing. *The Health of the State* is a compelling evidence of the extent to which the ideologies of nation and empire dominate the sciences as well as the arts. This medical support for personal hygiene and physical health enables the ideology of a bucolic nationalism to have a direct and authoritative influence over the individuals of the state. Dr Newman emphasises the imperial dimension of his work in the prefatory note:

> This little volume may, therefore, be looked upon in some sort as a missionary handbook, sent forth as a reminder that the physical health and fitness of the people is the primary asset of the British Empire, and the necessary basis of that social and moral reform which has for its end 'the creation of a higher type of man.'

The reference to a missionary project and a sending-forth into the world allies an evangelical to an imperial purpose. In this context the 'creation of a higher type of

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man' is a religious objective that also incorporates racial and evolutionary overtones. Significantly, it is not a redistribution of wealth that forms the basis of social and moral reform, but higher standards of personal hygiene and physical fitness. Baden-Powell's scout movement was established with similar values in mind.\textsuperscript{11} Newman's programme is echoed in the poem that Kipling used as the preface to \textit{Land and Sea Tales for Scouts and Guides} (1923):

\begin{quote}
\textit{Nations have passed away and left no traces,}

\textit{And History gives the naked cause of it--}

\textit{One single, simple reason in all cases;}

\textit{They fell because their peoples were not fit.}\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{11} See Hugh Brogan, \textit{Mowgli's Sons: Kipling and Baden-Powell's Scouts} (London, 1987).

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Land and Sea Tales for Scouts and Guides}, p. v. Quoted in isolation, the lines appear to venerate merely a robust physicality. However, the poem continues:

Now, though your body be mis-shapen, blind,

Lame, feverish, lacking substance, power or skill,

Certain it is that men can school the Mind

To school the sickliest body to her will -

As many have done, whose glory blazes still

Like mighty flames in meanest lanterns lit:

Wherefore, we pray the crippled, weak and ill -

Be fit - be fit! In mind at first be fit! (ibid., p. v).

'Fitness' was for Kipling a wide-ranging concept, crossing boundaries of age, gender, and race:

\begin{quote}
\textit{For boys and girls, men, women, nations, races -}
\end{quote}
For Newman, fitness was a matter of 'simple living, suitable dieting, and a sense of hygiene', habits more easily adopted in the country than in the 'man-stifling' towns:

The effects of overcrowding must by this time be fairly well known. Small cubic space is bad and uninteresting in itself, but it also involves lack of ventilation and light, which bring in their train all manner of evils and various kinds of physical defects.

The duty of physicians, Dr Newman argues, is to align themselves with Nature: 'learning her secrets, her ways of doing things, endeavour[ing] to imitate her and work along the line of her laws.' Following the line of Nature's laws involves admitting as much of the outdoors as possible into the home:

Our next duty is to see that a proper supply of fresh air is admitted to our dwellings, and especially our bedrooms and workshops, where two-thirds of our lives are passed, all too frequently in a smelling, frowsy atmosphere.

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*Be fit - Be fit! And once again, be fit!* (ibid., p. vi).

13 *The Health of the State* p. 67.


The work of Dr Newman lends institutional support to the aesthetics of writers such as Kipling. Moreover, by instituting changes to the workspace, the home, and personal habits, it imposes a bucolic idealism upon the most mundane and seemingly unrelated areas of life. The degeneration of the cities and the corresponding idealisation of Nature and natural laws legitimised intrusion into every area of personal life. Even such a trivial matter as tea-drinking comes under Dr Newman's scrutiny: he explains in detail the method of 'infusion' by which tea is properly made, urging that hot beverages be taken 'sparingly and sipped rather than quaffed off.'

Little more than four years after the war, the lessons of the Transvaal had reached into the kitchens and the toilets of the English household: elsewhere Newman expatiates on the evils of 'an offensive privy' and 'a filthy cistern.' The hygiene of the home had become the 'primary asset of the British enterprise'. The cities and the lower classes were the main culprits of dirtiness. Filthy toilets were essentially a problem of the urban poor, whose 'destruction' was due to 'not only their poverty but their ignorance and helplessness.' A proper estimation of the merits of fresh air and open spaces would be the first step towards cleanliness and physical health. This conservative approach to reform was attractive to figures such as Kipling, positing a national revival without social upheaval or largescale economic transformation.

Dr Newman's contribution to the Social Services Series, which also included titles such as Land and the Landless, The Unemployable and Unemployed, and Child Life and Labour, reflects an intense focus upon poverty and deprivation at the outset of

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17 Ibid., p. 24.
18 Ibid., p. 24.
19 Ibid., p. 34.
the century, incorporating the belief that physical health and the health of the empire were derived from nature and a life lived in the open spaces of the country. A similar, essentially rural and nostalgic view is found in the work of the Liberal politician and social commentator C.F.G. Masterman, who contrasted rural life with the dull encroachment of the modern world:

Whole ancient skilled occupations - hedging and ditching, the traditional treatment of beasts and growing things - are becoming lost arts in England. Behind the appearance of a feverish prosperity and adventure - motors all along the main roads, golf-courses, gardeners, armies of industrious servants, excursionists, hospitable entertainment of country house parties - we can discern the passing of a race of men.²⁰

The lost arts of the country foreshadow the 'passing of a race of men' - a typical association of the country with a more virile agrarianism. The association owes much to writers such as Kipling, who looked to the landscape for renewal in the aftermath of the South African war. However, in Traffics and Discoveries, the nostalgia for ancient England was undercut by a mode of narration implying identification with and alienation from rural Sussex. This is especially the case in 'They', which lends an economic and technological aspect to the separation.

ii. Questioning the Health of the Nation

'They' involves a direct and dominant focus upon two of the most contentious issues of the Edwardian period: the motor-car and infant mortality. The 'supernatural' theme traditionally invites critics to overlook the more terrestrial meanings of the story. Opening in the bucolic vein of Newman and Masterman, 'They' gradually uncovers a scenario of social and economic hardship, culminating in the final disclosure of a rural Sussex haunted by the ghosts of the untimely dead. Far from associating the countryside with national regeneration, 'They' describes a precarious existence beset by misfortune and illness, which snatches away the innocent young of the nation. By positing the economic and social consequences of modernisation in the setting of rural Sussex, the story exposes the fictions of modern social reform. The first words of 'They' echo Newman's encomium on fresh air and the open spaces - the landscape is a living organism, whose scenes beckon the narrator:

One view called me to another; one hill top to its fellow, half across the county, and since I could answer at no more trouble than the snapping forward of a lever, I let the county flow under my wheels.21

The driver sets out on a journey that leads him to the mysterious house of a blind woman, whose outlying estate is rented to tenants and tenant-farmers. After a number of visits and mysterious sightings of children in the house and its grounds, the narrator discovers that the woman's love for them invites the ghosts of those who have died to

21 Traffics and Discoveries, p. 303.
return and to play in her home. Only those who have borne and lost their own young can see the visitants. In this respect, the house and its surroundings form a matriarchal dependency, in which childbearing is the basis of recognition and belonging. The emphasis upon female experience contradicts the virile aesthetic of Newman, Masterman, and Edwardian reform. The narrator discovers his own departed child among the ghosts of the house, but it is a communion with the dead too emotionally distressing for him to endure. Beneath the mysterious communion with the spiritual realm, there remain the intractable realities of the world, to which the story persistently returns in its references to social class, economic hardship, and illness.

To return again to the opening sentence of the story. Viewing the prospect of the hilltops, the narrator immediately defines himself as a motorist, invoking the technological progress and modernisation threatening the landscape. At the turn of the century, the car was a new and lavish object that aroused resentment as much as admiration. In August 1904, the year the story was published, there were only 8,500 in the country. Only the very rich could afford to buy their own private vehicles. Not surprisingly, they were viewed as symbols of 'private ostentation in an age of public penury.' The car was a symbol of economic privilege in a predominantly disadvantaged society. It 'aggravated class feeling when these juggernauts tore at 10 m. p. h. down the narrow country roads, unpaved and unsuited to them, covering the hedges and all passers-by in a coat of white dust. Masterman puts the case against the car more stridently:

23 Ibid., p. 45.
24 Life Since 1900, p. 27.
Wandering machines, travelling with an incredible rate of speed, scramble and smash and shriek along all the rural ways. You can see them on a Sunday afternoon, piled twenty or thirty deep outside the new popular inns while their occupants regale themselves within.

The car-owner was thought decadent and socially irresponsible. From the outset, Kipling's story reveals awareness of this common reaction. For the narrator, the county is a recreation to be enjoyed at 'no more trouble than the snapping forward of a lever.' The languid response of the driver to the beckoning scene is in keeping with the popular stereotype of the motorist as a wealthy and complacent aristocrat. Throughout 'They', the car undermines the rural nostalgia with antagonistic implications of social privilege and decadence. Kenneth Grahame handled the theme more light-heartedly in *The Wind in the Willows* (1908). Toad embodies all the ostentation and irresponsibility appropriate to the early motorist. The push of the lever initiates his own dream of personal freedom:

As if in a dream he found himself, somehow, seated in the driver's seat; as if in a dream, he pulled the lever and swung the car round the yard and out through the archway; and, as if in a dream, all sense of right and wrong, all fear of obvious consequences, seemed temporarily suspended. He increased his pace, and as the car devoured the street and leapt forth on the high road through the open country, he was only conscious that he

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was Toad once more, Toad at his best and highest, Toad the terror, the traffic-queller, the Lord of the lone trail, before whom all must be give way or be smitten into nothingness and everlasting night.\textsuperscript{26}

Kipling himself claimed that his love of motoring owed much to its promise of escape from the pressures of the world, enabling the dream-like freedom from a reality, like Toad's, 'temporarily suspended'. Echoing the first lines of 'They', he explains to Filson Young that 'the car is a time machine on which one can slide from one century to another at no more trouble than the pushing forward of a lever.'\textsuperscript{27} It offered escape into a dimension where history and reality merged with fiction: '[A] day in the car in an English county is a day in some fairy museum where all the exhibits are alive and real and yet none the less delightfully mixed up with books.'\textsuperscript{28} Motoring mixed up reality with books, creating a delightful 'fairy museum', where the problems and contradictions of England were resolved in a sweeping vision of the country as a kind of fiction:

\begin{quote}
[I]n six hours... I can go from the land of the \textit{Ingoldsby Legends} by way of the Norman Conquest and the Barons' War into Richard Jefferies' country, and so through the Regency, one of Arthur Young's less known tours, and \textit{Celia's Arbour}, into Gilbert White's territory.\textsuperscript{29}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{26} Kenneth Grahame, \textit{The Wind in the Willows} (1908; London, 1994 edn.), p. 92.

\textsuperscript{27} To Filson Young, April 1904, \textit{Letters}, Vol. 3, p. 150.

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 150.

\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 150.
Like reading, motoring was a form of literal and metaphorical escape. In his own evocation of a reality suspended, the narrator of 'They' describes 'a long afternoon crowded with mad episodes that rose and dissolved like the dust of our wheels, cross sections of remote and incomprehensible lives through which we raced at right angles...'. However, the story offers a highly critical view of this racing through life at right angles. Ultimately the social world of the story is not to be merely glimpsed in 'cross sections'; lives are neither so 'remote' nor 'incomprehensible, nor do they 'dissolve' like the dust off the wheels. As he learns at the hands of Mrs Madehurst, the sweetmeat seller, motoring has political implications that are inescapable and offensive to the villagers:

[T]he fat woman who sold sweetmeats there gave me to understand that people with motor-cars had small right to live - much less to 'go about talking like carriage folk'. They were not a pleasant-mannered community.

Certainly the narrator projects a self-image that confirms the opinions of the sweetmeat seller. He regards himself as 'divinely appointed superior' to the butler

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30 *Traffics and Discoveries*, p. 322.

31 *ibid.*, p. 312.

32 *ibid.*, p. 320.
of the mysterious house to which he continually returns in the story, and is clearly offended by the impudence of his 'rude, fat friend of the sweetmeat shop.'

It is a measure of the gulf between Kipling's declared opinions and their re-working in a literary context that, in 'They', the nostalgic view of the country is juxtaposed against themes that imply a turbulent historical and political setting. At first, the scenes described by the narrator are conventional and nostalgic enough. Sussex is alive with historical associations, and is prized, as in the letter to Filson Young, for what it preserves of an England now faded:

I found hidden villages where bees, the only things awake, boomed in eighty-foot lindens that overhung grey Norman churches; miraculous brooks diving under stone bridges built for heavier traffic than would ever vex them again; tithe barns built larger than their churches, and an old smithy that cried aloud how it had once been a hall of the Knights of the Temple.

The high regard for heraldry and pomp, implied by the imposing churches and chivalric orders, and for the rural prosperity and religious awe suggested by the oversized tithe barns again reflects the rural emphasis of social reform. Indeed, it is a measure of Kipling's own influence in the sphere of social and political reform that Masterman closely echoes this passage in his own criticism of rural decline, *The Condition of England* (1909):


Here are deep rivers beneath old mills and churches; high-roofed red barns and large thatched houses; with still unsullied expanses of cornland and wind-swept moor and heather, and pine woods looking down valleys upon green gardens; and long stretches of quiet down standing white and clean from the blue surrounding sea.35

The scene-painting could almost be taken from 'They', with the inland barns, mills, and churches sweeping down to the white cliffs and blue sea. Masterman was in no doubt as to what was responsible for the wrecking of rural England: the economic inequality and modernisation represented by the motor car. The nation was 'vulgarised by the clamour and vigour of the newer wealthy, racing each other down on motor cars from the noise of the town, into the heart of a great silence'.36 The narrator of 'They', and to some extent the author himself, are a part of this set for whom the land is a recreation. Motorists were, Masterman explained, a symptom of developments that were rendering the traditional skills of agricultural husbandry 'lost arts in England'.37

The Sussex described in 'They' is a fictional ideal, supplying the absences of the narrator's own technological and modernised age. The crucial paradox of the story is the narrator's love of a land that is jeopardised by his love of motoring, or, at least, the social inequalities suggested by his pastime. The world of his fiction is constantly intruded upon by a social reality hostile to any dream-like escape or romance. Aside


36 Ibid., p. 201.

37 Ibid., p. 191.
from the implications of the motor car, the house and the wood peopled with the untimely dead are an even more solid arrival at the political reality from which the story initially departs. Although the children are ghostly visitants, metonymically they are deeply of the world, because, according to the reform tracts of the day, infant mortality 'is a measure of social evil' (Dr Newman's emphasis indicates the extent to which the death of infants is taken as a barometer of social conditions).

In reading 'They', it would be careless to overlook the implicit connection between motoring and infant mortality. At the time the story was first published, any juxtaposition of these controversial themes invited an emotional and a political response. Dr Newman made infant mortality the most urgent of all the social needs he addresses in *The Health of the State*. He argues that a high rate of early deaths indicates the 'existence of evil conditions in the mothers and in the home life of the people.' According to the social and political debates of the period, the motor car both represents and materially contributes to social conditions responsible for the high mortality rate among children. Of course, the deaths are not caused in any direct, material way, by noxious fumes or road accidents as is the norm in modern society (although dangerous driving is thought of as a killer of children in the story) nor is the connection established so bluntly, but is implied in the terms of the relation of the car, as a symbol of wealth and inequality, to the material circumstances of birth and death in a rural and underprivileged community.

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40 At one point in the story, the motorist-narrator 'swerve[s] amply lest the devil that leads little children to play should drag [him] into child-murder' (*Traffic and Discoveries*, p. 311).
Far from guaranteeing freedom from the trials of the world, in 'They' the car is an instrument of social confusion and chaos. The narrator is involuntarily transported, without conscious understanding of direction or route, to the House Beautiful, where he is mistaken for a chauffeur, suggesting a loss of his authority and privileged social position.\(^{41}\) The confusion intensifies when Arthur, the illegitimate child of one of the villagers is taken ill with meningitis, and the motorist is called to assist in a crisis that entangles him forever in the lives and the social predicament of his 'divinely appointed' underlings. As the narrator sets out in his car to find medical help, he notices that Arthur's mother, Jenny, is unmarried, observing her hand 'without a ring' as she clutches his knee in desperate appeal. According to the social and medical tracts of the day, this 'small irregularity of [Arthur's] birth'\(^{42}\) puts the infant at high risk of early death. As Mrs Madehurst explains: 'insurance offices... would not willingly insure such stray lives.'\(^{43}\) In The Health of the State, Newman states that 'the death rate of illegitimate infants is nearly twice as high as that of legitimate infants' during these years.\(^{44}\) In fact, Newman's work shows that between 1901 and 1905, the approximate years of the story's setting, rural Sussex was amongst the safest places in Britain for children to be born and spend their earliest years.\(^{45}\) Moreover, the


\(^{45}\) Between 1901 and 1905, the infant mortality rate for Sussex (101 in every 1000 births) was extremely low in comparison with the industrial areas, particularly the Midlands, where the rate commonly reached 170 in every 1000 (*Infant Mortality: A Social Problem*, pp. 22-23).
cerebro-spinal meningitis that eventually kills the child is listed amongst the least common of infectious diseases during 1904, the year of the story's publication.\textsuperscript{46} Arthur's death, and the circumstances of his brief life, appear to entirely contradict the statistical information on Sussex in the period. Hence Arthur and his bereaved, unmarried mother are a blot on the idealistic landscape to which writers such as Newman and Masterman urged the nation to return. Neither physically robust nor insulated against the social ills of the cities, they are vulnerable despite the scientific and fictional encomiums upon the English countryside. The impact of this, one of Kipling's finest stories, derives from its subtle allusion to the social and economic realities underlying the bucolicism of the period, which is also a departure from the norms of the supernatural or 'gothic' genre, allowing \textit{reality} to be the ultimate terrifying revelation of the story. 'They' is a work of fiction that denies itself detachment from the world.

In the story, the mundane economic realities of the House Beautiful (the Bunyanesque appellation used by the narrator) intrude upon the life of the blind woman. House Beautiful and its outlying estate are firmly in the grip of the 'progress' that Masterman blamed for the decline of rural prosperity and tradition. Towards the end of the story, the woman accuses Mr Turpin, one of her tenants, of overstocking and 'dragging the heart out of the farm.'\textsuperscript{47} The narrator listens with great unease as Turpin pledges to acquire 'some minerals - superphosphates'\textsuperscript{48} by which to enrich the pastures and justify his claims for a new cowshed at his landlady's expense. The

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p. 22.

\textsuperscript{47} Traffics and Discoveries, p. 331.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p. 331.
'intensity of his greed' invokes the short-term policy bankrupting England of the inheritance celebrated by Newman and Masterman. Turpin is 'quite a new man - and a highway robber'; having no 'organic' relation to the land or community. When he first sees the house, the narrator comments: 'Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth at least must come out of that half-open garden door and ask me to tea.' Although in the mind of the narrator they are 'delightfully mixed up with books', the house and the blind woman are vulnerable to the vagaries of the material world. In a passage cited earlier, which is now quoted in full, Kipling describes the contents of a dream; a disjointed sequence of images that finally cohere in the intractable detail of Jenny's despair:

It was a long afternoon crowded with mad episodes that rose and dissolved like the dust of our wheels; cross sections of remote and incomprehensible lives through which we raced at right angles; I went home in the dusk, wearied out, to dream of the clashing horns of cattle; round-eyed nuns walking in a garden of graves; pleasant tea-parties beneath shaded trees; the carbolic-scented, grey painted corridors of the County Institute; the steps of shy children in the wood, and the hands that clung to my knees as the motor began to move.

49 Ibid., p. 330.
50 Ibid., p. 305.
51 Ibid., p. 322.
The journey in the car is a 'mad episode' that allows glimpses of 'remote and incomprehensible lives'. Like the story itself, it is the starting point for an imaginative flight that eventually returns to the material events of the day, passing through the remote and fanciful images of the country, only to return to the carbolic-scented County Institute and the imploring hands of the mother. The passage reflects the overall development of 'They', which takes the car and its cultural significance to initiate a fictional episode strangely loaded with the freight of history and destined to return to the solid details of life in the Edwardian period.

iii. 'Wireless' and the Loss of Literature

While *Traffics and Discoveries* celebrates the technological developments of the early twentieth century, the stories are critical of the social failings of the change and modernisation. England was in the midst of political transformations to which Kipling was predominantly hostile, associating change with the destruction of antiquity and a democratisation that would induce a culture of mediocrity. In 'Wireless', an early experiment in telegraphic communications produces unexpected and supernatural results when portions of Keats's poetry are 'transmitted' to Mr Shaynor, one of a group of chemists present at the experiment. The modern chemist's shop, where the experiment is conducted, is invaded by a past and a poetry that it regards as effete and obsolete. When Shaynor recovers from his trance and is told of his transcription of portions of Keats's poetry, which he has never read, he comments: "Ah! Anybody could see that he was a druggist from that line about the tinctures and syrups. Its a
fine tribute to our profession." Mr Shaynor is referring to the line he has transcribed from 'The Eve of St Agnes' - 'And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon' - from stanza 30 of the poem. His inappreciation of Keats or of the magnitude of what has befallen him, reflects the story's ironic treatment of the parochial, middle-class setting. The shop is situated in a town that is currently suffering from 'a good deal of influenza' (the ill-health of the town and the work of the chemist again invokes those insalubrious conditions of urban life described by Dr Newman in *The Health of the State*). Mr Shaynor, the chemist and the eventual 'conductor' of Keats's spirit, is portrayed as a comically inappropriate vessel for the higher consciousness of the poet. Of humble birth - his mother a schoolteacher and his father a 'small job-master at Kirby Moors, who died when he was a child' - he is a stereotype of the urban achiever, industrious, efficient, and supremely dull. Alluding to Shaynor's lack of social refinement, the narrator wryly observes that his manners 'had not, perhaps, the polish of the grocery and Italian warehouse next door, but he knew and loved his dispensing work in every detail.' Mr Shaynor's monochrome normality and his diligent attention to his work recall J.B. Priestley's description of the lower middle classes, who, after winning their social position by years of self-denial and earnest application, vigorously defended their privileges against any social or political reform. The narrator describes Mr Shaynor's social rise and his attitude to the co-operatives:

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52 Ibid., p. 237.
53 Ibid., p. 214.
54 Ibid., p. 215.
55 Ibid., p. 215.
Little by little I grew to know something of his beginnings and his hopes... of the examinations he had passed and of their exceeding difficulty; of his dreams of a shop in London; of his hate for the price-cutting Co-operative stores; and, most interesting, of his mental attitude towards customers.

'There's a way you get into,' he told me, 'of serving them carefully, and, I hope, politely, without stopping your own thinking...’

Mr Shaynor's brand of urbanised conservatism dominated the 'Khaki election' of 1900 and defined the target audience of 'The Absent-Minded Beggar'. His pride at passing so many difficult exams; his ambition to open a shop in London, and his hatred of the Co-operative movement, all reflect the narrow outlook and resistance to social change commonly attributed to Shaynor's class. Mr Shaynor's 'interesting' mental attitude towards customers is also worth noting for its petty individualism and interiority. Maintaining his 'own thinking' at all costs, he proudly explains that he can hold half a page of Christy's *New Commercial Plants* in his head while at the same time selling "...all that window twice over, and not a penny wrong at the end...". Of course, this proud defence of his 'own thinking'; his private mental process, is ironically thwarted by the visitation of Keats, who uses the chemist's mind for less worldly ends.

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57 Tompkins describes him as 'a deliberately coarsened and inaccurate reproduction of Keats' (*The Art of Rudyard Kipling*, p. 91).

58 *Traffic and Discoveries*, p.216.
Although it is conventionally read as a 'supernatural' story, 'Wireless' is also an ingenious work of social satire, which dramatises the class-consciousness and tensions of a people in a rapid phase of modernisation and political change. The narrator is struck by the narrow compass of Mr Shaynor's experience:

For relaxation he seemed to go no farther afield than the romance of drugs - their discovery, preparation, packing, and export - but it led him to the ends of the earth, and on this subject, and the Pharmaceutical Formulary, and Nicholas Culpepper, most confident of physicians, we met.  

Yet despite this narrowness of mind, Shaynor's thoughts can reach out to 'the ends of the earth'. In fact, during the visitation of Keats he ventures considerably further. The chemist becomes the vessel of the poetry, creativity, and experience of the sublime that his age has all but lost. As Shaynor begins, under the guidance of Keats, to haltingly re-compose 'The Eve of St Agnes', he restores the literary and historical consciousness the modern epoch has begun to forget. The shop and its surroundings, excelled in ordinariness only by the character of Mr Shaynor, are transformed into a series of images harmonious with the poem, becoming, as it were, the second source of inspiration for the re-write:

59 Hermione Lee argues that it 'feels... like a story by Poe' (Traffics and Discoveries [Penguin Edition], p. 25).

60 Traffics and Discoveries, p. 215.
I looked over his shoulder, and read, amid half-formed words, sentences, and wild scratches:

- Very cold it was. Very cold

The hare - the hare - the hare -

The birds -

He raised his head sharply, and frowned toward the blank shutters of the poulterer's shop where they jutted out against our window. Then one clear line came:

The hare, in spite of fur, was very cold.

The head, moving machine-like, turned to the advertisement where the Blaudett's Cathedral pastille reeked abominably. He grunted, and went on:

Incense in a censer -

Before her darling picture framed in gold -

Maiden's picture - angel's portrait. 61

Mr Shaynor notes early on in the story that the pastilles 'smell very like incense', 62 and that the wind is 'nearly blowing the fur off' 63 the hare outside the poulterer's. On

61 Ibid., pp. 228-229.
the wall of the shop is an advertisement featuring a picture of Shaynor's girlfriend, Fanny Brand, who is supposedly the Edwardian counterpart of Keats's beloved, Fanny Brawne. Describing this rather gaudy, 'gold-framed toilet-water' picture, the narrator observes that 'the flamboyant thing was to [Mr Shaynor] a shrine.' Shaynor's devotion to the girl implies a suppressed emotional life beneath his mediocre exterior. Ultimately, the story implies that Blundett's Cathedral pastilles can evoke the scent of 'incense in a censer', the wind-blown hare outside the poulterer's shop might recall the hare in the poem, and the girl in the advertisement could be thought the modern equivalent of Keats's 'angel's portrait'. Unfortunately, the connections are only recognised by the narrator, who is the bearer of an interpretation of the modern world largely irrelevant to the characters in his story. The fragments of Keats that Shaynor transcribes are replete with the images and associations that have long departed from the chemist's shop:

Manna and dates in Argosy transferred
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one
From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.65

These are the bounties at 'the end of the earth' toward which the narrator believes 'the romance of drugs - their discovery, preparation, packing, and export' transports Mr

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62 Ibid., p. 221.
63 Ibid., p. 217.
64 Ibid., pp. 220-221.
65 Ibid., p. 233.
Shaynor. 'Wireless' ultimately reflects the belief, or, more accurately, the hope that the technological progress of urban life, represented by the characters, the chemist's shop, and the experiment in telegraphy, can be sublimated into a discourse worthy of England's national and imperial legacy. Hence the prefatory poem, which urges the recognition of the sublime in the materials of everyday life. The children of the poem slash fruitlessly at the empty sky in pursuit of Psyche and her radiant butterflies, only finding her when they look to the humble cabbage leaf:

Eyes aloft, over dangerous places,

The children follow where Psyche flies,

And, in the sweat of the upturned faces,

Slash with a net at the empty skies.

So it goes they fall amid brambles,

And sting their toes on the nettle-tops,

Till after a thousand scratches and scrambles

They wipe their brows, and the hunting stops.

Then to quiet them comes their father

And stills the riot of pain and grief,

Saying, 'Little ones, go and gather

Out of my garden a cabbage leaf.
'You will find on it whorls and clots of
Dull grey eggs that, properly fed,
Turn, by way of the worm, to lots of
Radiant Psyches raised from the dead.'

Clearly the metaphor of 'dull grey eggs' transforming into butterflies alludes to the grey world and the transformation befalling Mr Shaynor in the story. These whorls and clots of dull life need to be, as the poem puts it, 'properly fed' if they are to flourish and rise to life. Taken as a metaphor of the intellectual feeding, cultivation, and transformation of the urban classes or 'lower forms of life', the poem indicates the anti-democratic and authoritarian response of Kipling to social change. In the story, the writer works the transformation upon the dull matter of urban life. Technological progress is subordinated to the re-emergence of Keats's poetry, whose writing transforms the chemist's shop into a place of higher significance, transcending its merely social or medical function. For the narrator, a man of imaginative and artistic sensibilities, the shop is a magical environment, laden with literary and historical associations:

The shop, by the light of the many electrics, looked like a Paris-diamond mine, for Mr Cashell [the owner] believed in all the ritual of his craft. Three superb glass jars - red, green, and blue - of the sort that led Rosamund to parting with her shoes - blazed in the broad plate-glass

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windows, and there was a confused smell of orris, Kodak films, vulcanite, tooth-powder, sachets, and almond-cream in the air.67

The romantic portrait of the shop is a literary privilege that the narrator defends against the ravages of modernity. For this reason he is an anxious onlooker when Mr Shaynor, in his trance, plays a dangerous game with two lines from 'Ode To A Nightingale'. These are among the 'high water mark[s]' of literature, which risk being mangled by the philistine involvement of Shaynor:

My throat dried, but I dared not gulp to moisten it lest I should break the spell that was drawing him nearer and nearer to the high-water mark but two of the sons of Adam have reached. Remember that in all the millions permitted there are no more than five - five little lines - of which one can say: 'These are the pure Magic. These are the clear vision. The rest is only poetry.' And Mr Shaynor was playing hot and cold with two of them!68

The drying throat of the narrator, and the mixture of awe and horror with which he observes the detail of Shaynor's cigarette-stained hand as it writes, reflects an anxiety at the re-emergence of 'noble' literature in a degradingly urban context: 'my every sense hung upon the writing under the dry, bony hand, all brown-fingered with

67 Ibid., p. 216.

68 Ibid., pp. 234-235.
chemicals and cigarette-smoke. Given the 'supernatural' events and social observations of the story, the narrator's exclamation of awe at the wireless experiment is deeply ironic: "How wonderful!"..."Do you mean we're overhearing Portsmouth ships trying to talk to each other - that were eavesdropping across half South England?"  

Although these stories invoke the beginnings of the modern world, they are no more convinced of its value than they are convinced of human integrity or social responsibility. Shaynor in one room of the shop, and Cashell in the other, are guardians of the future and the past, neither of which is entirely safe in their hands. The narrator is excluded from the Marconi-driven future, which is 'out of [his] beat all together', and from the English antiquity that finds its means of 'induction' in the narrow mind of Mr Shaynor. The stories of Traffics and Discoveries capture the anxieties of the early century, depicting a society reeling from the shock of events in South Africa and the prospect of rapid modernisation and political change.

69 Ibid., p. 235.
70 Ibid., p. 238.
71 Ibid., p. 219.
CHAPTER EIGHT

Home, Family, and the Re-invention of Tradition in Puck of Pook's Hill

i. Stories for Grown-Ups

In his autobiography, Kipling commented on Puck of Pook's Hill (1906) and Rewards and Fairies (1910):

[S]ince the tales had to be read by children, before people realised that they were meant for grown-ups; and since they had to be a sort of balance to, as well as a seal upon, some aspects of my 'Imperialistic' output in the past, I worked the material in three or four overlaid tints and textures, which might or might not reveal themselves according to the shifting light of sex, youth, and experience. It was like working lacquer and mother o' pearl, a natural combination, into the same scheme as niello and grisaille, and trying not to let the joins show.1

This mysterious passage indicates the full extent, registered in the stories, of the complex interdependence of the writing process and the perception of history itself. Much as Kipling here describes the elaborate artistry of their composition, the stories reflect the problem of history and its treatment in the context of fiction. In the

1 Something of Myself, p. 190.
passage, writing is a process of indirection and indeterminacy. The two volumes require, as Kipling acknowledges with regret, acceptance by children before they can be properly recognised as stories written for adults. Moreover, the stories are worked and re-worked into three or four overlaid tints and textures, whose complexity and ambivalence is increased by the hermeneutic proviso that they refract meaning according to the shifting light of sex, youth and experience. Here the writer is written out of the process of composition: he is not a writer at all, but a craftsman, who works with lacquer and mother of pearl, striving to combine these 'natural' materials with the methods of niello and grisaille.² Trying 'not to let the joins show' was a widely different aesthetic end to the material aims of his work in the Punjab, where writing could save the lives of 'cattle and men' and lead to 'really tangible results' in the administrative realm. The new-found refractions of *Puck of Pook's Hill* and *Rewards and Fairies* implied a loosening of authority over the perception of meaning. The 'shifting lights' of 'sex' and 'experience', or, more specifically, those factors of gender and class so contentious in the political scene, now had a formative impact upon the writing and reception of his works. In many respects, Kipling's later description of his craft, emphasising the unbridgable distance between the writer, the world, and the experience of the reader, suggested an alienation from Liberal England that, in turn, was reflected in a dense and many-layered form of narrative. His work would increasingly be seen in terms of 'aspects' and 'tints and textures', refracting an imperial age inscrutable to the modern period.

² Niello is a method of decorating engraved silver or gold by filling the lines with a metal paste. Grisaille is a method of painting that uses only shades of grey. See Pinney, *Something of Myself and Other Autobiographical Writings*, p. 258, note 26.
In keeping with this allusive and multiplicit style of narrative, continuity and progress are virtually dismissed in *Puck of Pook's Hill*. The circularity of history and the dischronology with which Dan and Una experience various epochs, frustrates any belief in a continuous English tradition or history.³ In the Roman stories, placed in the middle of the volume, Edwardian England rehearses again the decline and fall of Rome's mighty empire. The tales are deeply pessimistic about the future of the British enterprise. The well-known poem, 'Cities and Thrones and Powers', introduces this group of three stories, establishing the circular view of history and the disavowal of progress characteristic of the volume:

Cities and Thrones and Powers,

Stand in Time's eye,

Almost as long as flowers,

Which daily die:

But, as new buds put forth,

³ Andrew Rutherford makes a similar point about the dischronology of *Puck of Pook's Hill*: 'Modern England is certainly seen as heir to the whole of her own past, but the deliberate dislocation of chronology in the arrangement of the stories seems to deny any simple pattern of progress, as does [the] sense of the impermanence of human achievement' ('Officers and Gentlemen', *Kipling's Mind and Art*, p. 195). Nevertheless, despite this astute reading, Rutherford continues to argue that the volume *does* in fact embody a kind of coherence and an optimism about the future: 'Yet each age does leave something to posterity, even if the contributors are long forgotten' (*ibid.*, p. 195). In the light of Kipling's imperial disappointments following the Boer war, and his political and intellectual 'exile' from the England of these years, it is simply not possible to read these stories so optimistically and pro-imperially.
To glad new men,
Out of the spent and unconsidered Earth,
The Cities rise again.

This season's Daffodil,
She never hears,
What change, what chance, what chill,
Cut down last year's:
But with bold countenance,
And knowledge small,
Esteems her seven days' continuance
To be perpetual. 4

Ironically, the metaphor of ‘this season’s daffodil’ invokes the popular rural theme of the period, only to dispel its frequently nationalistic overtones. Here the cities, like the flower, are doomed to die, only to rise again out of the ‘spent and unconsidered earth’. The juxtaposition of cities and sweet-smelling flowers is deeply ironic, implying the frailty and impermanence of the Edwardian towns, which are places of ‘bold countenance/and knowledge small’. In fact the cities were the destroyers of the daffodil, suggesting, in the discordant metaphor itself, the disharmonies and frictions of urban life. The cities are deaf and blind to the warnings of history, never hearing ‘what change, what chance, what chill’ destroyed their forbears. This was, Kipling believed, the ignorance that had already assured the death and burial of the empire:

4 Puck of Pook's Hill, p. 139.
So Time that is o'er-kind,
   To all that be,
Ordains us e'en as blind,
   As bold as she:
That in our very death,
   And burial sure,
Shadow to shadow, well-persuaded, saith,
   'See how our works endure!'\(^5\)

The Edwardian empire was peopled only with 'shadows', discoursing vainly upon the endurance of their works. 'Recessional' portended this fate at the height of imperial hubris:

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!\(^6\)


*Puck of Pook's Hill* confirmed that, by the early 1900s, the empire was destined to be 'one with Nineveh and Tyre'.

In 'A Centurion of the Thirtieth', which follows 'Cities and Thrones and Powers', Kipling develops the theme of history and its warnings. The first of the Roman stories in the volume, it tells how Parnesius and his friend Pertinax fight valiantly, and against all odds, to defend Hadrian's Wall and save Britain from a Saxon invasion. Parnesius explains to Dan and Una that, as a British-born Roman, who grew up in Vectis, the Isle of Wight, he has never seen the capital of the empire: '...I'm one of a good few thousands who have never seen Rome except in a picture...'. There is a parallel here between the Anglo-Roman and the Anglo-Indian, both of whom were exiles from their 'mother country'. As Parnesius finds when he attempts to join the army: '...The Roman-born officers and magistrates looked down on us British-born as though we were barbarians...'. Nevertheless, Parnesius' father, much as Kipling's own 'Pater' would have done, reminds his son that the family is '...of the Old Stock...' and that their duty is '...to the Empire.' Despite the fact that Rome has '...split the Eagle...', appointing various Emperors over its provinces, each of whom is in conflict with the other, it is the duty of the Old Stock to defend Britain, a declining outpost of the Roman order.

The analogy would have made unsettling reading at the time the story was first published. Parnesius and his family are identifiably 'British', but in the analogical terms

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7 *Puck of Pook's Hill*, p. 144.
of the story their abandonment of Rome represents the abandonment of modern Britain by imperial subjects from overseas, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. The defence of the wall, or of Britain, implied a dereliction of duty to Rome. As Parnesius' father explains:

'There is no hope for Rome... She has forsaken her Gods, but if the Gods forgive us here, we may save Britain. To do that we must keep the Painted People back. Therefore, I tell you, Parnesius, as a Father, that if your heart is set on service, your place is among men on the Wall - and not with women among the cities.'

There is 'no hope for Rome' and, implicitly, even less for the modern empire. Parnesius and the 'Old Stock' were to forget Rome and 'do what [they] must to keep the Painted People back.' In this respect their heroic duty to Britain suggested at the same time the abandonment of Britain: that is, their disavowal of Rome implied a necessary disbelief in the official propaganda of imperial permanence, and also, if necessary, the official law of the modern imperial capital. The Edwardian empire was an illusion or a 'well-persuaded shadow', for which increasingly desperate measures were required in order to save what little remained. To put it mildly, Parnesius' dereliction of Rome and its imperial command rendered his defence of Britain an extremely ambivalent and discomfiting notion to a conventionally pro-imperial readership. By his own admission, he is "...not too fond of anything Roman...".

11 Ibid., p. 154.

12 Ibid., p. 152.
Parnesius has no knowledge of Roman history, as he explains to Una and Dan:

"...Aglia [the governess] never taught us the history of our own country. She was so full of her ancient Greeks." According to Parnesius’ father, the 'splitting of the Eagle' began with the advent of such 'large-mindedness':

"...The great war with the Painted People broke out in the very year the temples of our Gods were destroyed... Go back further still."... He went back to the time of Diocletian; and to listen to him you would have thought eternal Rome herself was on the edge of destruction, just because a few people had become a little large-minded."

Parnesius' Cohort are the "...last sweepings of the Empire - the men without hope..." none of whom speak the same tongue or worship the same gods. They are the product of a decadent and declining Roman world. Nevertheless, it is in the company of these cynical and disenfranchised sweepings of empire that Parnesius saves himself and the Wall. His father teaches him the value of male friendship and sexual abstinence, urging him to live a life among the men of the Wall, "...not with women among the cities." Beneath the Wall lies "...a vast town - long like a snake, and wicked like a snake..." - implying its sexual enticements and its dangers to the

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14 Ibid., p. 153.
16 Ibid., p. 176.
17 Ibid., p. 174.
men. The encouragement of male camaraderie and avoidance of sexual enticements reflects Kipling’s own suspicion of the redefinition of sexual-roles accompanying urbanisation and social reform in the early part of the century. The Roman stories reassert the political importance of masculine camaraderie and fellowship. Maximus is the close friend of Parnesius' father, a fact that wins Parnesius the support of the Emperor. Parnesius is the close friend of Pertinax, who in turn are the friends of Allo and the Picts, which enables the diplomatic conciliation of the Painted People while Maximus attempts to subdue Gaul. Parnesius even has a friend amongst the Saxons, Amal, whose life he once saved during an earlier skirmish. The whole war is fought in these curious terms of bonding and loyalty between strong men. The masculine ethos dates from Kipling’s time in India. The scenes beyond the Wall are reminiscent of the Punjab, where administrative non-regulation urged an 'intimacy' with the customs and ways of the colonised peoples:

‘...Old Allo, the one-eyed, withered little Pict from whom we bought our ponies, was our special friend. At first we went only to escape from the terrible town, and to talk together about our homes. Then he showed us how to hunt wolves and those great red deer with horns like Jewish candlesticks. The Roman-born officers rather looked down on us for doing this, but we preferred the heather to their amusements. Believe me,’ Parnesius turned again to Dan, ‘a boy is safe from all things that really harm when he is astride a pony or after a deer...’

18 Ibid., p. 178.
The sporting exploits of the Romans and Picts hark back to the polo and pigsticking of imperial India. The disapproving attitude of the Roman-born officers recalls the widespread disaffection for the administrative habits of the 'pauper province', which demanded an equally irreverent approach to officialdom and the English legislature. Maximus has much in common with John Lawrence, whose steady gaze subdued the tumult of the mutineers in Kipling's account of 1857. Maximus' hard stare is enough to subdue the disaffected rabble on the Wall: "...If he had turned his back an instant, or for an instant had ceased to hold their eyes, there would have been another Emperor made on the Wall that hour...".19 The government of Roman Britain requires the firm hand of the autocrat. For Maximus, rule is "... one man's work - always and everywhere."20

This valorisation of male authority is reflected, significantly, in the treatment of the theme of the family in the stories. In 'A Centurion of the Thirtieth', Roman law grants absolute authority to the father of the household, as the frolicsome and noisy children are firmly, if playfully, reminded: "...Have you ever heard of a Father's right over his children? He can slay them, my loves - slay them dead, and the Gods highly approve of the action!"21 The word of Parnesius' father is law, shaping the entire destiny of his son:

'[W]hen my Father spoke as he did, I kissed his hand, and waited for orders. We British-born Romans know what is due to our parents.'

19 'The Winged Hats', *Puck of Pook's Hill*, p.199.
20 'On the Great Wall', *Puck of Pook's Hill*, p. 189.
21 'A Centurion of the Thirtieth', *Puck of Pook's Hill*, p.122.
'If I kissed my Father's hand he'd laugh,' said Dan.

'Customs change; but if you do not obey your father, the Gods recognize it. You may be quite sure of that.'

The writing of *Puck of Pook's Hill* itself had a strongly paternal influence. Kipling took the idea of the volume and 'smoked it over' with his father, who actually contributed directly to some of the writing:

The Father came over to see us, and hearing 'Hal o' the Draft,' closed in with fore-reaching pen, presently ousted me from my table, and inlaid the description of Hal's own drawing-knife. He liked that tale, and its companion piece 'The Wrong Thing' [*Rewards and Fairies*], which he later embellished, notably in respect to an Italian fresco-worker, whose work never went 'deeper than the plaster.' He said that 'judicious leaving alone' did not apply between artists.

The 'family square' had always been important to Kipling. In fact, as the curious term implies, his notion of the family had associations with Freemasonry - both of which he considered immune to the vagaries of cultural and historical situations, offering a system of values and meanings untroubled by problems of race, caste, or class. In the Roman stories, the friendships forged between opposing factions in the imperial world

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23 *Something of Myself*, p. 187.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 188.
are underscored by Kipling's portrayal of Mithraism as a kind of Freemasonry. Parnesius recognises Amal, the Winged Hat, as a fellow-Mason: 'I addressed him a certain Question which can only be answered in a certain manner. He answered with the necessary Word - the Word that belongs to the degree of Gryphons in the science of Mithras my God...'.

Likewise in *Puck of Pook's Hill*, the family is a unique and stabilising institution, unchanging between different epochs, cultures, and societies. It is the basis of social stability throughout history, spanning from the Roman period through, implicitly, to the modern epoch. Parnesius describes his own childhood:

'Good families are very much alike. Mother would sit spinning of evenings while Aglia read in her corner, and Father did accounts, and we four romped about the passages...'.

Blessed with a governess [Aglia] and a Father wealthy enough to keep his own accounts and to own a large house, with many passages in which the children can romp, Parnesius' family has its counterpart in the upper-middle class households of Edwardian England. Mother sits spinning while father attends to business - a comfortably conservative portrait in a period of social change. Una takes an appropriately feminine interest in the affairs of the Roman household. It is she that first meets Parnesius, and implores him: "Tell me about all your family, please."

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25 *Puck of Pook's Hill*, p. 205.


Dan, kept indoors to work on his Latin, arrives later with Puck, who explains the puzzling matters of Roman language, history, and geography that elude Una in Parnesius' story:

'Has he puzzled you much, Una?'

'Not a bit, except I didn't know where Ak - Ak something was,' she answered.28

Puck explains, in crushingly domestic terms, that Parnesius is referring to Bath, "...where the buns come from..." 29

This emphasis upon well-defined roles in the domestic setting plays an influential part in the debate over the extent of state intervention in the affairs of the family. As George Newman's work shows, the quest for national efficiency had made the conditions of maternity and the raising of children issues inseparable from the wider cause of the empire. The conservative, traditional view dictated that mothers were especially responsible for the production of healthy offspring and the maintenance of a stable and secure family. In an age that saw an increasing number of middle-class women at work and, by 1911, a 'surplus' of over 1.1 million of unmarried females in the population30 the traditional view of maternal responsibility was neither easily nor

28 Ibid., p. 152.
29 Ibid., p. 152.
30 Ibid., p. 71. Susan Pederson argues that there was actually a decline in the number of married women at work. She states that 'by 1901... fully 77% of all women wage earners were single. If married women did maintain a position as skilled workers in some regions and particular trades, they clung to such work in the face of a labour market skewed against them and a dominant
universally accepted. In other, more radical sections of society it was argued that the state should directly contribute to the making of the family, providing financial support that would enable mothers to raise children without the vagaries and the stigma of dependence on men's wages. H.G. Wells was amongst the best-known campaigners for such a liberating entitlement for women. The demand for aid to the family was therefore in many respects the demand for the remuneration of specific gender roles, making the issue of state intervention in family affairs, especially given the actions of the suffragists and suffragettes, a deeply contentious matter. As Susan Pederson argues, the willingness to address gender relations directly and to call on the state to mitigate problems of female dependence identified family policy from the outset as a socialist or feminist crusade in Britain. Parnesius' adventures are informed by this view of family policy as a politically contentious and formative issue, in which a wider national and imperial stability is at stake. As children, Dan and Una were a highly selective and idealistic representation of the nation's offspring, whose vigour was in many respects a repudiation of the need for state support. In 1906, the year *Puck of Pook's Hill* was published, the School Meals Act was passed; which is traditionally regarded as the founding moment of the welfare system. This measure had drawn criticism from figures such as Margaret Horn, who, in 'The Feeding of Schoolchildren' (1905), objected to the direct intervention of the government in the discourse of the deleterious effects of their work on the sobriety of their husbands, the health of their children, and their own morality' (*Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State* [Cambridge, 1993], p. 38).


affairs of the family. Liberal election victory nevertheless gave the edge 'to those politicians and reformers who were convinced the relief of poverty and the "uplift" of working class family life would require some measure of state intervention. Una and Dan are of the 'Old Stock' - independent, sprightly, and quite able to stand on their own feet. Even their games, inspired by their reading of Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, imply their admiration for muscular and epic deeds:

'Now welcome - welcome Sextus,' sang Una, loading the catapult -

'Now welcome to thy home,

Why dost thou stay and turn away?

Here lies the road to Rome.'

She fired into the face of the lull, to wake up the cowardly wind, and heard a grunt from behind a thorn in the pasture.34

Kipling's rejection of modern reform is echoed in Parnesius' rejection of Rome and its interference in the lives of men. It is the Picts who suffer most from this involvement, and, significantly, they are the 'Little Folk' of the stories. Although they are an adult people, their suffering and desperate promise of retribution implies a childlike vulnerability and dependence. In 'A Pict Song', which ends the cycle of Roman stories, the little folk 'bawl' when the adult monstrosity of Rome tramples their world:

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34 *Puck of Pook's Hill*, p. 148.
Rome never looks where she treads.
    Always her heavy hooves fall,
On our stomachs, our hearts or our heads;
    And Rome never heeds when we bawl.
Her Sentries pass on - that is all,
    And we gather behind them in hordes,
And plot to reconquer the Wall,
    With only our tongues for our swords.

We are the Little Folk - we!
    Too little to love or to hate.
Leave us alone and you'll see
    How we can drag down the State!
We are the worm in the wood!
    We are the rot in the root!
We are the germ in the blood!
    We are the thorn in the foot!35

Significantly, at the beginning of 'A Centurion of the Thirtieth', Una is mistaken for a Pict. As middle-class children, she and Dan are themselves 'little folk', whose voices

35 I quote from the version of 'A Pict Song' printed in *Songs From Books* (London, 1913), p. 98, in which Kipling uses the words 'the State' instead of 'the Great', as originally given in the version appearing in *Puck of Pook's Hill*, p. 225.
are ignored by the Edwardian state. Like the Picts they are ultimately "...the corn between the two millstones..." 36 whose traditions and values are in decline. As Parnesius advises the old Pict, Allo, it is best to "...[b]e content if they [the millstones] grind evenly, and don't thrust your hand between them...". 37 Kipling saw clearly enough that the defence of the Wall was ultimately doomed to failure.

For this reason it is quite wrong to read the volume as a 'love-poem' to an essential, unchanging England, as does Edward Shanks; 38 or as an irritating 'lesson' in the old values of empire, as does Martin Seymour-Smith. 39 Andrew Rutherford similarly interprets the exploits of Parnesius and Pertinax as an example of the survival and endurance of the spirit of imperial conquest. 40 The stories are actually far more cynical about the future of the empire and the social problems of England than such a reading implies. The poet and playwright Alfred Noyes provides, in an early review,

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37 Ibid., p. 206.

38 Edward Shanks, Rudyard Kipling, p. 230.

39 Seymour-Smith argues that "[t]here is just a smell of 'If' about [the stories] that disallows them from the timeless... That they are not wholly successful (the better critics such as Wilson and Gilbert tend to fight a little shy of them) is owing, I think, to their being engineered to a theory in which Kipling did not really fully believe, but rather hoped might be the case. They are thus too much of a pageant..." (Rudyard Kipling [Basingstoke, 1990], pp. 353-354). This view of the stories as an imperial 'pageant' falls extremely wide of the mark. To imagine Kipling 'engineering' or propounding a 'theory' of the re-birth of empires, as does Seymour-Smith, is to misread the stories, ignoring their extremely pessimistic treatment of history.

40 '... Kipling's awareness of the mutability inherent in a wider time-scale does not lead him to a nihilistic denial of significance to human endeavour' ('Officers and Gentlemen', Kipling's Mind and Art, p. 196).
perhaps the best insight into *Puck of Pook's Hill*, recognising its subversion of the ideologies of 'popular imperialism':

...let popular Imperialists beware of him. The day may come when he will turn and rend them as he turned and rent large masses of his devoted readers in that delightful onslaught which he called 'The Islanders'. Mystics are always dangerous - to materialists, at any rate; and Mr. Kipling has mysticism in his blood and in his bones.41

Clearly, at the time it was first published, the volume was in no sense universally interpreted as a straightforward lesson in imperial values; nor should it be read in this way by modern critics, unless, of course, its turbulent relation to the social and political context is to be ignored. Noyes evidently regarded *Puck of Pook's Hill* as a work of profound social reference - far more than a mere children's book. To him it was a deeply 'mystical' and prophetic work, terrifying to conventional patriots and jingo-imperialists. Early on, Noyes had recognised those 'tints', 'textures', and refractions of meaning that Kipling was later to attribute to the stories. To adopt the terms of Noyes, *Puck of Pook's Hill* responded to the political 'materialisms' of the day, evoked in the machinery of social reform, by rejecting the state and all manner of interventionist policy. To identify with Parnesius was to recognise the collapse of the state and the wider empire. *Puck of Pook's Hill* is not simply a sociological tract urging a return to nature and a commitment to family values, of the kind typified by Dr Newman's *The Health of the State*, but is a deeply pessimistic work, dismissing the

41 Alfred Noyes, signed review (1906), *Kipling: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 300-301.
possibility of intervention in the political destiny of England or the empire. History proves that ultimately Parnesius could neither defend the Wall nor alter the plight of Britain or Rome. His friends and his imperial world are doomed to fail even before his story begins. Despite the ethos of companionship and the integrity of the family in the stories, the modern world of Dan and Una is the result of the destruction of Parnesius' world and its values. The children are the outcome of the intermarriages - racial and cultural - augured by the fall of Rome and the coming together of Saxon, Roman and Pict. Again, the stories dispel an attractively unified vision of history: Parnesius loses Rome to defend Britain; Dan and Una are similarly forced to recognise the abandonment of Parnesius and the Wall as a fundamental component of their own history and identity. Oak and Ash and Thorn are the mysterious symbols of this ambivalent relation to the nationalistic languages and myths of the stories. While on the one hand the leaves are tokens of 'Englishness' -

Of all the trees that grow so fair,

    Old England to adorn,

Greater are none beneath the sun,

    Than Oak, and Ash, and Thorn.

Sing Oak, and Ash, and Thorn, good Sirs

(All of a midsummer morn)!

Surely we sing no little thing,

    In Oak and Ash and Thorn.42

42 'A Tree Song', Puck of Pook's Hill, p. 31.
- they are also the 'memory-magicking'\textsuperscript{43} stuff that prompts Dan and Una to forget all they see and hear of Puck and his glimpses of English history. Moreover, Oak and Ash and Thorn are a secret and forbidden knowledge, which is outlawed by the priest and the English church:

Oh, do not tell the Priest our plight,

Or he would call it a sin;

But - we have been out in the woods all night,

A-conjuring Summer in!

And we bring you news by word of mouth -

Good news for cattle and corn -

Now is the sun come up from the South,

With Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!\textsuperscript{44}

In such an outlawed and secretive glimpse of the past, \textit{Puck of Pook's Hill} invoked a nationalistic agenda that was also a 'rebellion' against the forms and even the laws of English society. The volume sanctions a retreat from the empire, from the city, from its people and its ideologies. It is, above all else, a work of willing exile from the Edwardian age. In these circumstances, whatever the rural and companionable ethos, \textit{Puck of Pook's Hill} refutes any decisive political policy, whether of a radical right or imperial complexion.

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 162.

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 32.
ii. Outcasts and Prophets

The themes of exile, homecoming, and artistic pride lend the story 'Hal o' the Draft' a special relevance to Kipling’s own writing and the turbulent political circumstances of his return to England. The story opens with Dan and Una playing pirates in the attic of the mill, where they meet Hal, a famous artist and draftsman of the fifteenth century. Hal tells how, under the guidance of Father Roger of Merton College he was employed as an apprentice in the construction of the new university at Oxford, learning from the finest craftsmen of 'all Christendie' and eventually becoming a celebrated draftsman in his own right. At the peak of his pride, he is commissioned by Father Roger to return to his native Sussex (like Kipling) and rebuild, at his own expense, the church where his ancestors have been buried for six generations. As soon as he begins his task, Hal finds that his work on the church has "...raised the Devil in Sussex..." uncovering a plot to sell cannon to a famous pirate, Sir Andrew Barton, in which the whole village is complicit. Kipling’s own literary 'rebuilding' of ancient England involved an acknowledgement of his alienation from modern society and the political world, much as Hal's return to, and rebuilding of, Sussex occurs in hostile circumstances that he must eventually learn to understand and tolerate. In fact, the story urges that Hal, and implicitly all proud and politically idealistic artists, come to accept the fundamental corruption of English society and the legislature - the whole village is involved in the treasonous, gun-running enterprise. At the beginning of the story, when he first meets Dan and Una, Hal is a 'reformed' artist, ashamed of his

45 Puck of Pook's Hill, p. 233.
46 Ibid., p. 241.
former pride, and more attuned to the cultural and historical changes that have come upon England in his absence. Dan, Una, and Puck introduce him to hops and turkeys, which he has never seen before. Taking out his ready book, Hal 'drafts' these "...good new things..."\textsuperscript{47} as if marking the subordination of his craft to the temporal and cultural transformations occurring around him. As the turkeys rage and flame against his fine plum-coloured hose, their "...[p]ride in purple feathers..."\textsuperscript{48} is a fitting comment on his initial artistic and sartorial extravagance. As he himself explains, he had returned to his village "...not to serve God as a craftsman should, but to show [his] people how great a craftsman [he] was..."\textsuperscript{49} Official power and authority are represented in the story by Hal's friend, Sebastian Cabot, whose order of cannon for the King's ships is also affected by the gun-running exploits of the villagers. When the cannon consistently fail to materialise, or are defective, Sebastian realises to whom they are being sold, and the illegal purposes for which the church is being used. However, both Sebastian and Hal are urged by the magistrate, Sir John Pelham, to accept his amicable settlement of the dispute, reasoning that "...we cannot have half Sussex hanged for a little gun-running..."\textsuperscript{50}

In keeping with the theme of the story, the introductory poem, 'Prophets have honour all over the Earth', implies that a stoic forbearance of corruption and intrigue is 'good for' the prophet, or writer:

\textsuperscript{47}Ibid., p. 236.

\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., p. 236.

\textsuperscript{49}Ibid., p. 238.

\textsuperscript{50}Ibid., p. 245.
Prophets have honour all over the Earth,

Except for the village where they were born;

Where such as knew them boys from birth,

Nature-ally hold 'em in scorn.

When prophets are naughty and young and vain,

They make a won'er ful grievance of it;

(You can see by their writings how they complain),

But O, 'tis won'erful good for the Prophet!

There's nothing Nineveh Town can give

(Nor being swallowed by whales between),

Makes up for the place where a man's folk live,

That don't care nothing what he has been.

He might ha' been that, or he might ha' been this,

But they love and they hate him for what he is.51

The main Biblical reference of these lines is to Christ's return to Nazareth, and his assertion that prophets are without honour in their home town.52 Ironically, the poem itself and the subsequent tale subvert the Biblical teaching, implying that rejection is the right and proper response of the people. The other reference is to the Book of Jonah, in which the repentance of Nineveh angers the prophet, who believes


52 *Matthew* 13. 57.
that God's forgiveness of the town casts doubt on his own prophetic powers. Again, 'Hal o' the Draft' inverts the moral and political implications of the Bible-story, because the church building, the institution and symbol of Christian penitence, is used by the villagers for entirely corrupt and illegal purposes. Hal's artistic 'reform' marks his initiation into a politically irresponsible and impenitent society. The artist or 'prophet' of this story falls into line not with a redeemed social order, a Nineveh, but with a society guilty of "...black treason...".53

In many of the stories in the volume, society is viewed as a system of signs and significations, whose interpretation is a special gift bestowed upon chosen individuals. When the villagers employ the crude material of a cow-hide in order to impersonate the devil and terminate the renovation of the church, lest the illegal guns be discovered, Hal is warned by the corrupt ironmaster to "...take the sinnification o' the sign...".54 Hobden's wife is gifted with the supernatural power to divine the various "...signs and sinnifications..."55 of the flight of birds, bees, and shooting stars. As an artist and craftsman, signs and significations are Hal's stock in trade; but arriving in the village as a proud and famous man with a knighthood, who ought to be building the porch at Lincoln,56 he is duped by the villagers and unable, at first, to interpret the significations of the place. The final acceptance of the gun-running leaves the 'prophet', artist, or writer, reconciled neither to the government nor the people - he is merely the inadequate chronicler of distorted significations. The illegal use of the

53 Puck of Pook's Hill, p. 240.
54 Ibid., p. 239.
55 Ibid., p. 263.
56 Ibid., p. 235.
church by the villagers, along with their impersonation of the devil, is a rumbustious
corruption of Christian language, tradition, and iconography; Sir John's application, or
misapplication of the law is another corruption of 'signs and sinnifications'. However,
these corruptions of meaning and the law are viewed with affectionate
incomprehension in the story. To Kipling it is all merely 'Sussex! - Silly Sussex for
everlastin!'

At the end of 'Hal o' the Draft', Hobden advises Dan and Una's father
against the grubbing of an oak tree, which, although he does not admit any ulterior
motive, is essential to his rabbit-hunting, forming a bridge for their passage and an
ideal place for the setting of traps. The episode suggests the eternal roguishness of
'Silly Sussex'. In the story, Hal recognises Hobden's ancestor, Ralph, as an accomplice
in the original gun-running enterprise, suggesting ancestral continuities that outlive
the ever-changing significations so readily corrupted by the villagers. The poem that
closes the story, 'A Smuggler's Song', is an apt encouragement to illicit and underhand
enterprises, urging secrecy and complicity in the smuggling of goods and official
documents:

If you wake at midnight, and hear a horse's feet,
Don't go drawing back the blind, or looking in the street,
Them that asks no questions isn't told a lie.
Watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen go by!

Five and twenty ponies,
Trotting through the dark -
Brandy for the Parson,

57 Ibid., p. 249.
'Baccy for the Clerk;

Laces for a lady; letters for a spy,

And watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen go by! 58

While the ironic use of the term 'Gentlemen' for smugglers, and the involvement of the Parson and the Clerk, implies roguish practices akin to those in Hal's story, the smuggling of 'letters for a spy' suggests the possibility of a more radical disloyalty to the state. Such a Pict-like disavowal of state authority culminates in the encouragement of the child to disobey the King's soldiers:

If you meet King George's men, dressed in blue and red,

You be careful what you say, and mindful what is said.

If they call you 'pretty maid', and chuck you 'neath the chin,

Don't you tell where no one is, nor yet where no one's been! 59

In Puck of Pook's Hill, the roguish characters of Sussex are the ingenious interpreters of their own 'sinnifications' and values - the diviners and prognosticators of a future distinct from the 'cities and thrones and powers'. Rome, or more specifically, the British Empire, has fallen, and it is left to the folk of Puck of Pook's Hill to reinvent an order, history, and national identity on their own terms, much as Parnesius and Pertinax choose, after the 'splitting of the Eagle', to defend and consolidate their corner of the defeated empire.

58 Ibid., p. 251.

59 Ibid., p. 252.
The story 'Dymchurch Flit' is similarly influenced by the question of reform and state intervention. In the Roman stories the 'good family' is stable, prosperous, and physically healthy, whereas, in 'Dymchurch Flit', the notion of the commendable family is widened to incorporate an economically and physically disadvantaged household. In the story, the family is headed by a single mother, the Widow Whitgift, who has two sons, one of whom is born blind and the other struck dumb by a fall. However, this family ultimately saves Romney Marsh and England during a time of sickness and unrest. The story is set during the Reformation, when the fairies of England are troubled by the religious persecutions rife in the country, and are themselves "...reckoned among the Images."60 Like the gods in 'The Bridge-Builders' their power and authority depends upon the culture that constructs them. When the ill-feeling among 'Flesh an' Blood' becomes intolerable to the fairies, or 'Pharisees', as they are termed in the story (deriving from the duplication of the plural in Sussex dialect), the dumb and blind sons of the Widow Whitgift are enlisted to ferry them over to France. Tom Shoesmith, who narrates the story, and whom the children recognise as Puck, gives an account of the woman and her sons:

'Now there was a poor widow at Dymchurch under the wall, which, lacking man or property, she had the more time for feeling; and she come to feel there was Trouble outside her doorstep bigger an' heavier than aught she'd ever carried over it. She had two sons - one born blind, and t'other struck dumb through fallin' off the Wall when he was liddle. They

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60 Ibid., p. 267.
was grown, but not wage-earnin', an' she worked for 'em, keepin' bees and answerin' Questions.\textsuperscript{61}

As a woman 'lacking man or property', providing for two grown sons who are 'not wage-earning', the Widow Whitgift maintains a family burdened with economic and physical ills unknown to the conservative and stable households celebrated elsewhere in the volume. Nevertheless, because she lacks a husband and property, the widow has 'the more time for feeling', which alerts her to the trouble of the fairies and is ultimately the saving of the Marsh. The scenario inverts the expectations aroused by the political reform of the period, in which such families were conventionally regarded as powerless and in need of state support. In the story, the Whitgifts assume a determining role in the fate of the nation, which modern economic and social policy assumed they could not. Moreover, the rescue of the Marsh involves all the instinctual and emotional resonances of motherhood and the family - the widow offers the "...love-loan..."\textsuperscript{62} of her sons, who are "...all the dearer..."\textsuperscript{63} because of their physical weakness. When the fairies make their appeal, her maternal instincts are crucial in her eventual decision to help:

'She was a fine, valiant woman, the Widow Whitgift. She stood twistin' the ends of her long hair over her fingers, an' she shook like a poplar, makin' up her mind. The Pharisees all about they hushed their children

\textsuperscript{61}Ibid., pp. 269-270.

\textsuperscript{62}Ibid., p. 273.

\textsuperscript{63}Ibid., p. 271.
from cryin’ an’ they waited dumb-still. She was all their dependence.

'Thout her Leave an’ Good-will they could not pass; for she was the Mother...'.

Widow Whitgift is 'the Mother' upon whom a whole society depends, vindicating both the family and the fortitude of mothers in the modern age. Her saving of the Marsh valorises 'dependence' in its maternal and familial senses, dispelling its connotations of weakness and liability. Ultimately the crying of the fairy-children confirms her resolve to loan her sons: "...The voices just about pierced through her; an' there was children's voices too. She stood all she could, but she couldn't rightly stand against that...". The issues of motherhood and child-rearing are lent an additionally 'urban' reference in the description of the worrying of the fairies. The conditions of the Marsh under the great Trouble invoke the cramped and unhealthy conditions of the cities:

'...You run too many chickens together, an' the ground sickens like, an' you get a squat, an' your chickens die. 'Same way, you crowd Pharisees all in one place - they don't die, but Flesh an' Blood walkin' among 'em is apt to sick up an' pine off... The Pharisees through bein' all stenched up an' frightened, an' tryin' to come through with their supplications, they nature-ally changed the thin airs and humours in Flesh an' Blood. It lay on the Marsh like thunder...'.

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64 Ibid., p. 272.
65 Ibid., p. 272.
66 Ibid., p. 269.
As the fairies leave with "...their wives an' children an' valooables, all escapin' out of cruel Old England...", they escape the land of Henry VIII in the midst of the cruelties and frictions of the Reformation. The affinities of the words 'reformation' and 'reform' indicate the parallel made in the story between the themes of state power under Henry VIII and the power of the state in Kipling's England. The comparison between the religious reformation under Henry and modern political reform under Edward VII ultimately associated Henry's pillaging of the churches, and the subsequent burning of heretics, with the interventionist role of government in the modern epoch. Much as in Henry's England the parish churches were used "...something shameful..." and the people burned each other "...no bounds, accordin' which side was top..." Kipling thought the modern age equally tyrannous and riven with political hatreds.

At the end of 'Dymchurch Flit', much to the disappointment of Dan and Una, the widow's sons are returned "...as she sent 'em." (emphasis Kipling's) There are no miraculous interventions or cures, "...[t]hat would have been out o' nature..." - just as, in Kipling's view, their should be no intervention of the state in the life of the individual, household, or community. In the Roman stories, the family is untroubled by the vagaries of political or imperial policy, while in 'Hal o' the Draft' the village

67 Ibid., p. 273.
68 Ibid., p. 267.
69 Ibid., p. 267.
70 Ibid., p. 274.
71 Ibid., p. 274.
community is above the law of the land. In this story, as Tom Shoesmith explains, the ailments and imperfections of the Whitgift brothers equip them for the saving of the land: "...The blind man he hadn't seen naught of anything, and the dumb man naturally, he couldn't say aught of what he'd seen. I reckon' that was why the Pharisees pitched on 'em for the ferrying job...".\textsuperscript{72} When the 'ferrying job' is over, the sickness is lifted from the land, the airs clear and the people 'shine' with good health:

'...From Hithe to Bulverhithe, pretty man an' petty maid, ailin' woman an' wailin' child, they took the advantage of the change in the thin airs just about as soon as the Pharisees flitted. Folks come out fresh an' shining all over the Marsh like snails after wet...'.\textsuperscript{73}

Nevertheless, for Kipling such a rejuvenation of the land is neither comprehensive nor socially inclusive. Much as the Whitgifts remain economically and physically disadvantaged, the recompense of the widow for the 'love-loan' preserves the social marginalisation of her descendants. As Tom Shoesmith explains: "So long as Whitgift blood lasted, Robin promised there would allers be one o' her stock that - that no Trouble 'ud lie on, no Maid 'ud sigh on, no Night could frighten, no Fright could harm, no Harm could make sin, an' no Woman could make a fool of."\textsuperscript{74} At the end of the story, it is revealed that Hobden's son, the Bee Boy, is the fulfilment of the promise. The Bee Boy, who appears in many of the stories, is considered 'not quite...

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., p. 274.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., pp. 273-274.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p. 274.
right in his head', and as a character marked out as different, 'not right', he is the modern counterpart of the socially disadvantaged Whitgifts. Untroubled by fear, sin, or the love of women, he is beyond the interventions of the political world - a creature whose mysterious existence cannot be explained or altered by any statutory or administrative measure.

The various persecutions and marginalisations described in 'Dymchurch Flit' foreshadow the sufferings of Kadmael, the persecuted Jew and hero of 'The Treasure and the Law', the final tale in *Puck of Pook's Hill*. In the story, which he later thought 'too heavy for its frame', Kipling portrayed gold as the underlying determinant of all social and political policy. The story tells how Kadmael, a Spanish-born Jew, learns as a child that money is the source of all worldly power. Hearing the talk of his father's friends, who bear news of the armies of Rome, Venice, and England, he is persuaded that "...[a]ll over the world the heathen [fight] each other..." and that "...[t]here can be no war without gold...". On one level the depiction of Kadmael is an unpleasant racial stereotype, associating his Jewishness with an ability to 'snuff' gold and discern its movements throughout the world:

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76 *Something of Myself*, p. 189.

77 *Puck of Pook's Hill*, p. 290.

"...we Jews know how the earth's gold moves with the seasons, and the crops and the winds; circling and looping and rising and sinking away like a river - a wonderful underground river...".\(^7\)

Nevertheless, it is this gift of economic intuition, a traditional source of hatred and anti-Semitism throughout history, that purchases the freedom and equality of all Englishmen. By forcing the signing of the Magna Carta by King John, and by securing an amendment to the wording of the charter, Kadmael becomes, in accordance with an early prophecy, "...Lawgiver to a People of strange speech and a hard language...".\(^8\)

Although he is despised and feared by the people of the "...abominable land...", who believe him to be Ahasuerus, a Jew "...condemned, as they believe, to live forever..."\(^9\) he becomes the purchaser of the land's freedom. In many respects, Kadmael does indeed 'live forever' in the law of the Great Charter. In the light of the widespread belief in a Jewish financial conspiracy during the South African war, this view of Kadmael as the redeemer of England and giver of the Law challenges much of the racist propaganda of the period. Kadmael succeeds where Conrad's Nostromo fails, sinking the treasure of Pevensey to the bottom of the sea, out of the reach of King John and his army: "...At sunrise I made my prayer, and cast the gold - all - all that gold into the deep sea! A King's ransom - no, the ransom of a


people!...". In the higher cause of freedom for his people and the wider nation, he risks his life and sacrifices immediate personal gain.

Despite its triumphant aspect in the story, Kadmael's sinking of the gold has disturbing economic implications for the Edwardian age. The story is told amid the noise of a shooting party, at which Mr Meyer, a Jew, is the modern beneficiary of Kadmael's work at Pevensey, enjoying a supposedly untroubled life as a free man of Sussex. Implicitly, he, like Kadmael at Pevensey, is in the position of either giving or retaining his gold. Moreover, the ongoing sights and sounds of the shooting party, which form a constant background to the telling of the story, suggest the reason his gold might soon be demanded of him. In the 'cruel guns' of the pheasant hunt, which 'rattle' ominously throughout the tale, Kipling invokes the distant rumblings of heavy artillery. At the end of the story, a cock-ghesant that had 'sheered aside after being hit spattered down almost on top of them [the children], driving up the dry leaves like a shell. The explosive fall of the bird emphasises the meaning of Kadmael's story for Dan and Una, whose nation was soon to fight its own costly and bloody war. For Kipling it was men such as Kadmael who determined the fate of nations. Kadmael himself explains that he had seen "...peace or war decided not once, but many times, by the fall of a coin spun between a Jew from Bury and a Jewess from

82 Ibid., p. 301.
83 Ibid., p. 283.
84 Ibid., p. 289.
85 Ibid., p. 303.
Treasure would again decide the outcome of the war, and ultimately men like Mr Meyer held the Fortieth of the Great Charter in their palms.

*Puck of Pook's Hill* ended on a sombre and ominous note, whose political implications made disturbing reading for adults, let alone for children. These were many-layered narratives, whose various 'refractions' of meaning challenged all sections of the political field. To Kipling, the fate of the nation lay in the balance. The Wall had begun to give way, and it would take a massive effort of will to defend an England whose diminishing unity foreboded a protracted and difficult struggle for survival over the coming years. England would require, Kipling suggested, qualities of fortitude and guile unknown to an age that confused 'dependence' with reliance upon the state. The rogues, the rebels, and the Picts, who forged their own existence in the midst of social decline, would be the people to whom the state would turn in the dark years that lay ahead.

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Conclusion

In *The World, The Text, and the Critic* (1984), Edward Said asserts the relationship between exile and 'critical consciousness'. By referring to Eric Auerbach and his critical study *Mimesis* (1953), which was written in Istanbul during the second world war, Said explains how displacement from one national and political context to another enables the 'concrete critical recovery'\(^\text{1}\) of the ideas and traditions that constitute a culture. As a Jewish refugee from Nazi Europe, Auerbach undertook in his work the monumental task of discussing the 'representation of reality in Western Literature'\(^\text{2}\) - a task imperilled by the circumstances in which he wrote. Writing in a land associated with Islam and the scourge of Christendom throughout medieval and renaissance history, Auerbach's situation foreboded the loss of the texts and traditions that informed his scholarly work and his identification with the critical values and philosophies of the West.\(^\text{3}\) Ultimately, the ambitious and monumental undertaking of *Mimesis* was, Said argues, an act of cultural and civilisational survival.\(^\text{4}\) Should he fail to write, Auerbach risked 'the concrete dangers of exile - the loss of texts, traditions, continuities that make up the very web of a culture.'\(^\text{5}\) He risked becoming 'an exorbitantly disoriented outcast from sense, nation, and milieu.'\(^\text{6}\) However, as he

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explains in the epilogue of *Mimesis*, if he had not been exiled from Europe and denied access to a 'rich and specialized library' replete with 'all the work that has been done on so many subjects', he 'might never have reached the point of writing.' The trauma of exile and the prospect of cultural disorientation, loss, and estrangement are ultimately the personal factors that gave rise to the volume; enabling him to achieve a critical distance from, and hence a 'critical consciousness' of, the subtle interactions of language, values, beliefs, political orientations and material circumstances that comprise Western culture.

The example of Auerbach's 'critical consciousness' has a special relevance to Kipling, whose life and works are deeply marked, perhaps more profoundly than any other literary figure, by exile from diverse cultural contexts and societies. As we have seen, his life involved a series of multiple displacements, which allowed him to enrich and intensify his awareness of the continuities and the contradictions of the 'web of culture'. At the earliest point in his journalistic and literary career, he responded to the intellectual and administrative scenario of the Punjab and the north-west frontier. It was an exile that urged the concrete recovery of robust intellectual, political, and rhetorical strategies. For Kipling too, though in a different way, the absence of specialist sources was a 'salutary' circumstance that added to the martial intensity of the colonial situation and enhanced the formal directness of his own writing. He began to see British authority in the Punjab not simply as an exercise of freedom and power, or a 'civilising' work, but as a reinvention of English learning and tradition in a highly disrupted and altered form. To 'reach the point of writing' in the Punjab was to acknowledge not simply the absence of a specialised library, but the irrelevance of

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*Quoted in The World, The Text, and The Critic, pp. 5-6.*
that library to the material circumstances of an empire manned by infantrymen and governor-generals. It was pointless to recover the texts, traditions, and continuities of a British intellectual culture ill-acclimated to the exigencies of the frontier.

The problem of estrangement was common, in one form or another, to the whole of the civil service and the Anglo-Indian community. British Simla might reflect in its architecture and its social life a nostalgia for the metropolitan milieu, but it remained at a great height - geographically, politically, and intellectually - from the English society it vainly imitated and the life of the India it looked down upon from the hills. Working on the *Civil and Military Gazette* and the *Pioneer*, Kipling addressed a readership for whom the merest echoes of England carried a double-meaning of critical distance and personal loss, even abandonment. In this paradoxical situation of exile, literary and philosophical acumen were inscribed with a measure of self-criticism and disavowal. Due to the material evidences of British power in the Punjab - exemplified in the stabilising role of the province during the Mutiny - resistance to British culture, at least its effete metropolitan component, was as necessary to 'civilisational survival' as its recovery. In contrast, perhaps, to Auerbach, Kipling's political order depended more upon the disruption than the assertion of English meanings, of which he was both intensely conscious and intensely critical.

In material and geographical terms, his life in Vermont also exemplified his ambivalent relationship with England. On the one hand he reasserted his commitment to the middle-class respectability of Henley and the readers of *The Scots Observer*, on the other he maintained the distance of 'three thousand miles of intervening sea'8 between himself and the society he celebrated. In this way, he remained 'a vagabond

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8 My Sunday at Home', *The Day's Work*, p. 351.
on the face of the earth', observing life in glimpses - by juxtaposition, contrast, and ironic displacement, which formed a complex picture of his own national commitments and the relationships between various countries and peoples. Belonging indisputably to a fixed cultural situation would have spelt the end of this 'salutary' exile. It is no coincidence that 'In the Rukh', which tells the story of the adult Mowgli's life in human society, is the most miserable and turgid of the Jungle stories. In the manuscript of 'Kaa's Hunting', Kipling describes it as a story for grown-ups 'not half as interesting' as the other Mowgli tales.

Kipling dissociated himself from the American unions and financiers, yet allowed their political confrontation to inform his vision of India, where the 'bridge' and the fire-carriage represented not only the progress but the extinction of the Raj. Nations were linked together in a culture of impermanence, mutability, and, to adopt the modern theoretical term, 'hybridity'. The signs of British authority, railroads, bridges, books - even the Bible - were as transitory as the gods of the orient, enduring only so long as they were invested with power by society. It was Kipling who first combined the mutually disruptive words 'jungle' and 'book' - a collocation that suggested an ironic disavowal of the 'presence' and 'plenitude' of British colonial authority, which was merely a 'sign taken for a wonder'. Sources of imperial and scientific authority were reinvented, parodied, and portrayed as fictions - like the 'gods' of Findlayson and Peroo, who reflected the transitory meanings of empire long before the designation 'post-colonial'. In Kipling's work, John Lawrence calmed the rebellious south with echoes of the Koran; while Carlyle vied with Mohammed for intellectual and philosophical hegemony, depicting a proliferation of meanings at the very instant of

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9 British Library, MS. 45,540, p. 17.
valorising military power. At times, the endless deferment of definite values inspired fear and despair. On other occasions, for example in The Jungle Books, the anxieties of misidentification and 'hybridity' were matched by a delight in fiction and its freedom from the rigidities of scientific, moral, economic, and juridical facts.

At the beginning of the century, Kipling discovered at Burwash his perfect home - "...The Only She!..." Nevertheless, as a settled rural gentleman he remained thoroughly in exile from the various factions of English society he depicted in his stories. His aesthetic sympathies lay with traditional, 'realist' modes of Victorian fiction and poetry, which increasingly hampered the reception of his work in the Edwardian years. The advent of modernism further marginalised a writer whose politics and art were increasingly consigned to a bygone imperial age. However, the peaceful seclusion of Burwash and his conservative literary style belied the increasing complexity and power of his writing. In Traffics and Discoveries and Puck of Pook's Hill, Sussex was a place of anachronism, peopled with the centurions of the Roman frontier and the ghosts of the untimely dead, in which masonic fraternity extended across the ages and the borders of the colonial frontier, valorising relationships that nonetheless foreboded the decline of Britain and the empire.

Perhaps because he was 'exiled' from the values and politics of Edwardian England, he accurately foresaw the imminent conflicts of the age. Ironically, it was just this detachment that G.K Chesterton criticised in Kipling's view of the land and its peoples:

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10 Something of Myself p. 178.
He knows England as an intelligent Englishman knows Venice. He has been to England a great many times; he has stopped there for long visits. But he does not belong to it, or to any place; and the proof of it is this, that he thinks of England as a place. The moment we are rooted in a place the place vanishes. We live like a tree with the whole strength of the universe.11

The irony of Chesterton's criticism is that, by labelling Kipling a 'globe-trotter', who 'has not the patience to become part of anything',12 he asserts the crucial paradox of exile and critical consciousness. At the point where the writer is 'rooted in a place', the place 'vanishes' - a vanishing that implies the end of writing.

Although Kipling's life reflects the anguish of separation and alienation, it also reflects the flourishing of ideas and imaginative worlds inspired by the various exiles peculiar to the end of empire. As Chesterton notes, Kipling never belonged 'to any place' - and it was this permanent exile that engendered his commitment to specialised communities and fraternities that spanned the globe and crossed limits of culture and race. Such a repudiation of fixed social and cultural limits appears irreconcilable with his declared imperial commitments and values. Nevertheless, by asserting the meanings of cultures and societies by their oppositions and differences - which is for Chesterton both the weakness and the 'genuine charm'13 of his best work - Kipling

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12 Ibid., p. 297.
13 Ibid., p. 295.
achieved the level of 'critical consciousness', and self-alienation, that became the characteristic of intellectual and political culture in the twentieth century.
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In addition to these collections I have consulted material from the Kipling Papers, University of Sussex Library. Specific articles are cited only where I claim an important attribution to Kipling. Inclusion of articles in the scrapbooks of press-cuttings at Sussex is not taken as reliable evidence of Kipling authorship (the Boer
War cuttings include a number of articles clearly by other hands. Shelf and volume numbers are given for references:

'In the Year '57', Civil and Military Gazette, 14 and 23 May 1887 (Kipling Papers, 28/3 and 28/4). I attribute this important work to Kipling on the basis of style, content, presence in the scrapbooks, and Kipling's mention of having written an article based upon his study of a 'file of John Lawrence's ordinary office letters for the month of June 1857' (to Robert Underwood Johnson, 14 December 1895, [Letters, vol. 2, p. 219]).

28/1 (Articles and Verses 1884-1886). Contains contributions to the Civil and Military Gazette.

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(vi) Correspondence


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(b) letters from other correspondents
Letters received 1894-1909, 43 letters (18/1)
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