

A NEW PATTERN IN A SHIFT OF LIGHT:
A Study of Rudyard Kipling as a 20th Century Writer

by

PHILIP R. SNIDER

B.A., University of California, Davis, 1991

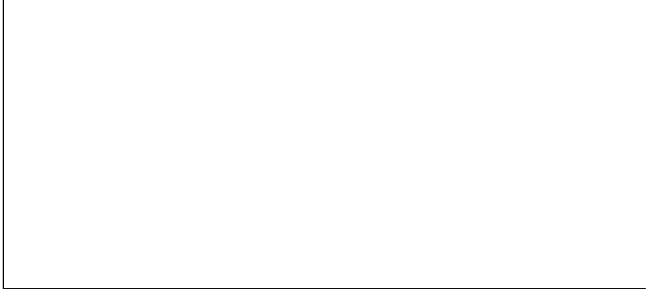
A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Department of English

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

August 1993

© Philip R. Snider, 1993

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

(Signature)

Department of English

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date Aug 31, 1993

ABSTRACT

For most of the hundred years or so that Rudyard Kipling's works have been available in print, they have suffered under a certain amount of critical disapprobation. In many cases such criticism has been politically motivated, particularly among writers and critics of the Modernist movement. This is a paradox because, in his best works, Kipling shows a strong affinity for Modernist issues as demonstrated in his concern for the themes of isolation and abandonment, and the quest for healing, and in his use of indeterminate narrative structure. The dichotomies in his life and work have also resulted in profound misunderstandings of his writings. Nevertheless, his subjects and methods combine to establish Rudyard Kipling as a powerful and significant 20th century writer.

CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Dedication	v
Introduction	1
Chapter One Theme	8
Chapter Two Structure	35
L'Envoi	63
List of Works Consulted	71
Appendix Abbreviations of Kipling's Works Cited	74

Acknowledgements

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the advice, assistance and extreme patience of several individuals. Thanks are due to Dr. Jon Wisenthal who waded through several drafts of each section before they were firm enough to walk on; to Drs. Andrzej Busza and Richard Cavell for graciously agreeing to serve on my committee; and to the late Dr. Elliot Gilbert, who first took me beneath the surface. My thanks also to my sweet typist, editor and moral support, and to our four children, for waiting.

Dedication

To d.j.

Introduction

And there is a third muster, very cunning in the outside of things . . . Take these to the lower hold and show them that I do not altogether sell toys or looking glasses. Remember, too, that many of the cloths are double- and treble-figured, giving a new pattern in a shift of light. Some are best seen in full sun, others under a lamp, and a few are only good to be used in dark places where they were made.

Introduction To The "Outward Bound" Edition,
Plain Tales From The Hills

There is an aura that surrounds Rudyard Kipling, or the image of Rudyard Kipling, that dissuades many from even the most cursory examination of his works. His reputation for vulgarity, jingoism, and literary cleverness in the absence of substance, not to say misogyny and racism, is so strong that for many years books and articles on Kipling have traditionally been introduced with some notation of the discrepancy between what we think we know of him, which is bad, and what admired critics have said of him, which is (according to the selection) good. Elliot Gilbert explains that his book takes its title, The Good Kipling, from Hemingway's reluctant and qualified inclusion of Kipling among the "literary forebears [he] learned the most from" (Plimpton 191). Randall Jarrell, in his essay "On Preparing to Read Kipling," notes after a lengthy quotation, "It surprises us to have [William] James [and from the context, his brother Henry as well] take Kipling so seriously, without reservations . . . as if he were Kant's Kritik" (Jarrell 116). Robert F. Moss begins with the snippet familiar to Kipling scholars from Auden's "In Memory of W. B. Yeats," "Time that with this

strange excuse,/ Pardons Kipling and his views" (Moss xi). Edmund Wilson's essay "The Kipling That Nobody Read," relates his subject to the myth of Philoctetes, the warrior of the incurable wound and invincible bow, and leaves the impression of Kipling as a writer with a neurotic capacity to hate. Yet in another place he lists "Poe, Conrad, Kipling, Henry James and Steven Crane" (Wilson, Letters 365) among the greats in the art of the English Story. Auden had it right. If pardon is necessary, on the whole it is Kipling's distasteful views and not his works that require it.

The public Kipling, a pugnacious, mustachioed little man on the rostrum, an unbending conservative, unrepentant imperialist, friend and associate of the ilk of Cecil Rhodes, and implacable nemesis of those he termed the "immoderate left," was prone to mouthing sentiments that led not a few critics to confound the writer with his work. Ignoring what may be Kipling's best known story, "The Man Who Would be King," which is an explicit parable of the pitfalls of empire, and his own analysis of "Recessional" as "a denunciation of [imperial] power politics, British as well as German" (Orwell 142), George Orwell nonetheless contends:

It is no use pretending that Kipling's view of life, as a whole, can be accepted or even forgiven by any civilized person . . . Kipling is a jingo imperialist. He is morally insensitive and aesthetically disgusting. It is better to start by admitting that . . . (Orwell 141)

Following the lead of Orwell, who attributes "Mary Postgate," to Kipling's alleged sadistic strain, Boris Ford writes:

Kipling quite candidly, like Mary Postgate, "ceased to think and gave himself up to feel" when he undertook this story, and it seems as if he had always been ready to indulge his feelings of revenge and hysteria when he could. But, unfortunately for him, the opportunity could only seldom arise for a man . . . and this, the second interesting factor, explains why the story operates through the agency of a woman. On the whole, Kipling despised women; but in one or two tales, he is glad to use them to vent feelings that he would be ashamed to attribute to a man. (Ford 335)

Orwell and Ford, along with Robert Buchanan, Max Beerbohm and a few others, represent that corps of critics who cannot look on Kipling without bile. Yet any of them would be hard pressed to demonstrate Kipling's moral insensitivity in Kim's Lama who, far more than Creighton Sahib or the other players of the Great Game, is the spiritual center of the novel; or his want of taste in such stories as "They," "The Gardener" and "The Miracle of Purun Bhagat."

There are stories which, in keeping with Kipling's public persona, support Orwell's indictment. "The Mother Hive" is a thin parable of moral decay aimed directly at the liberals Kipling despised. "My Son's Wife" is a conversion story of a social wastrel who sees the light and embraces the life of a conservative landholder. While there are virtues in both stories, especially in characterization, they are not by any

means among Kipling's best. This is not because of the direction of their political focus, but because they are politically focussed at all. Kipling's best work deals not with what his characters think, but with how and why.

Even today Kipling's political reputation colors the perceptions of many readers. "It is the abiding paradox of Kipling scholarship," Moss wrote in 1982, "that while his reputation stopped growing about 1902, the literature about him did not" (Moss xi). Consequently, much of that literature still reflects the stunted and two dimensional (at best) reputation that makes it "difficult to see Kipling plain" (Orel, Interviews ix). Worse, it prevents us from perceiving the complex artistry of the work, the overlaid tints and hues so carefully devised by the author to give "a new pattern in the shift of light" (PTH xi).

The purpose of this study is to examine a selection of Kipling's stories, essentially without regard to his politics, as examples of early 20th century fiction. I will not contend for Kipling as a Modernist. The Victorian elements in his works are far too obvious and explicit. Nevertheless, in a shift of light and emphasis, patterns of Modernism do present themselves and the analysis of those patterns, described in terms of theme and structure, comprise the body of this study.

I have made the decision not to attempt a definition of Modernism for strictly practical reasons. I would sooner work without the net of specific definitions than spend the time weaving one from single strands. Rather, my analysis of Modernist elements in Kipling's fiction will be based on the

assumption that themes of alienation and isolation, and weight-bearing narrative structures designed to embody meaning in themselves, while admittedly present in other eras, are generally acceptable as indicators of literary Modernism.

Nor will I attempt to deal with the entire body of Kipling's work, which runs to 35 volumes in the definitive Sussex Edition, again for practical reasons. The novels and nonfiction prose I have left completely alone. His verse, which I will consider for the most part only as it relates to the specific stories I have selected, has received over the years such eminent critical attention as to distort, to a degree, its significance. Consequently, the editors of many anthologies have persisted in placing Kipling among the minor poets while ignoring his mastery of the short story genre. Without discounting the value of the poetry, it is the art of Kipling's short stories I will examine.

My concern in the selection of stories for analysis has been to demonstrate that Kipling does not altogether "sell toys or looking glasses," nor yet the "beads, brass rods and coarse cloths" he feared his harsher critics would "infallibly choose" (PTH xi): Farces such as "Brugglesmith," and "The Village That Voted the Earth Was Flat;" revenge stories such as "The Tie;" or tracts (Kipling's term) like "The Army of a Dream." In making my selection I considered first the stories' capacity to illustrate a particular aspect of theme or structure, second their overall quality as examples of Kipling's work, and third their varied capacity, in my view, to capture the reader. Of the stories chosen, if I have

chosen well, "Some are best seen in full sun, ["Without Benefit of Clergy," perhaps, or "The Gardener"] others under a lamp, [or by firelight--"The Knife and the Naked Chalk"] and a few ["Mrs. Bathurst"] are only good to be used in dark places" (PTH xi).

This breadth of variety in Kipling's work is the very factor that makes it difficult to assure any measure of completeness of representation in a selection of his short stories. Gilbert's concession of the "unevenness" of Kipling's work, resulting from his more than occasional lapses into partisanship, accounts for only a part of the difficulty. Eliot noted:

One of the problems which may arise concerning Kipling is related to that skill of craftsmanship which seems to enable him to pass from form to form, though always in an identifiable idiom, and from subject to subject, so that we are aware of no inner compulsion to write about this rather than that . . . We expect to feel with a great writer, that he *had* to write about the subject he took, and in that way. With no writer of equal eminence to Kipling is this inner compulsion, this unity in variety more difficult to discern.

(Eliot 15)

If my selections are not representative of the entire body of Kipling's work, they are at least related to each other, in that they share certain motifs. The themes which I will examine, of isolation, abandonment and the quest for healing, and the use of indeterminate structure as a source of meaning,

recur with sufficient frequency in Kipling's stories, even if they don't pervade them, to command our attention.

It is precisely these motifs that establish Kipling's significance as a 20th century author. As an observer, always a most keen observer, of the formative circumstances and events of this century, he is an interpreter of the issues of identity and personal responsibility, physical and spiritual survival, the inability to know in the face of a desire to believe, the insatiable thirst for healing, and the divine impulse of compassion--issues that continue to dominate our thoughts at the end of the 20th century as they did at its beginning.

"Kipling's account is still unsettled," says Jarrell, and he has it right, too (Jarrell 117). The all too human nature of the man, his public support for ideas which in his works are treated with profound ambivalence, continues to dazzle the eyes of many, and hide from them all but the most obvious ripples on the surface of very deep waters. For those who are able, finally, to pardon Kipling his views, the Modernist aspect of his work, which we are about to address, is only one facet for study in the rich and complex art of Rudyard Kipling

Chapter One Theme

I have prayed to the prophet and to Beebee Miriam (the Virgin Mary). Thinkest thou either will hear?

*"Without Benefit of Clergy,"
In Black and White*

In his introduction to A Choice of Kipling's Verse, T.S. Eliot speaks of the "universal foreignness" that pervades Kipling's writing. The phrase is employed by Eliot, not to mark a distinction between Kipling and other writers of the early 20th century, Eliot not excepted, but to include him among the writers whose sense of spiritual homelessness, isolation and abandonment, helped to define them as a literary movement. Whether Kipling himself is or is not a Modernist is a question that must, in the absence of a simple and codified definition of Modernism, remain unanswered. Yet the affinity that Kipling felt for the themes of Modernism, or perhaps the affinity that Modernists felt for Kipling's themes, is remarkable. His "The Bull That Thought," which employs the ritual and decorum of the bull fight as a metaphor for art, was published in 1924, two years before Ernest Hemingway's use of the same ritual as a metaphor for life in The Sun Also Rises. His Epitaphs of the Great War, though beholden to Browning for the technique of the dramatic monologue, resonates to the same melancholy chord as the writings of Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen. And while his early soldier stories and accounts of the Anglo-Indian life are replete with examples of Victorian energy and adventure, and

frequently dominated by the exploration of encounters between classes and cultures, there is in many of the stories an underlying sense of loneliness and separation from the community, that "foreignness" which Eliot noted.

The development of these themes, as Kipling matures in his work, is also remarkable. The isolation depicted in his Plain Tales From the Hills and In Black and White is the isolation of the Anglo-Indians, which Martin Seymour-Smith describes as "a community living, and feeling that it lived, in exile" (Seymour-Smith 53). This was the early model of homelessness to which Kipling returned after his education in England to begin his journalistic career. The much exercised prerogative of the British Raj to transfer civilian and military personnel to the various ends of the Empire and Kipling's own vagabond life as a correspondent introduced him to life without roots. His own abandonment in the "House of Desolation" at Southsea, when he was "sent home" from India for his education at the age of five-and-a-half or six, is recounted in the autobiographical story "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep," a nearly unbearable tale of abandonment. But in his later stories, the themes that Eliot perceives are more subtle and internal in their expression, "dealing no longer with incidents in the lives of young soldiers and sailors, but with the mental processes of mature adults" (Carrington 8). Many of his later stories address the often fruitless quest for healing, a theme with which Kipling, like many of his contemporaries including Faulkner and Fitzgerald, was to become increasingly obsessed.

The presence of such modern themes, even in what seem to be some of his most Victorian stories, is indicative of the transitional nature and Modernist trend of Kipling's work. The examples of "Without Benefit of Clergy," "The Knife and the Naked Chalk," "The Eye of Allah" and "The Gardener" demonstrate not only a concern with isolation, homelessness and abandonment, core issues of Modernism as noted by Eliot, but a significant development is his ability to address these issues, to link them later to his overriding concern for healing, and to approach them with the increased maturity and complexity that the age demanded.

"Without Benefit of Clergy," published when the author was only 25, may be the most powerful and impressive of Kipling's early stories. This account of the tragic marriage of a British civil servant and his Muslim bride, and of their brief life together, deals with the theme of isolation and abandonment on two levels. Their social isolation, the need to keep their interracial marriage a secret, serves as a background for the tragedies which reveal to them mankind's isolation in a "blundering, directionless [universe] very nearly incapable of supporting human life" (Gilbert 22). But discoveries of this kind necessarily begin in ignorance, or at least in naivety, a trait which characterizes both Holden and Ameera, the story's main characters. To Holden's query regarding their expected child, "But if it be a girl?" Ameera responds:

Lord of my life, it cannot be. I have prayed for so many nights and sent gifts to Sheikh Badl's shrine so often, that I know God will give us a son--a man-child that shall grow into a man. Think of this and be glad. My mother shall be his mother till I can take him again, and the mullah of the Pattan mosque shall cast his nativity--God send that he be born in an auspicious hour! (B&W 101)

The sixteen year old bride and expectant mother's belief in the magic, rituals and performances with which she hopes to safeguard her child at birth and throughout his life is implicit. Placing a dagger unsheathed on the threshold at the time of her son's birth she believes will "avert ill luck" from her son's life. The fact that Holden steps upon and breaks the dagger inadvertently she interprets to her husband as a sign that "thou has taken his misfortunes on thy head" (B&W 106). The growing child's fascination with the household parrot gives him his nickname, "Tota" (the parrot), and the sharing of an almond between the bird and the child is a "charm to make him wise as Suleiman and Aflatoun (Solomon and Plato)" (B&W 120). Nor is Holden immune to the seductive comfort offered by belief in ritual as a protection against disaster. The Muslim birth sacrifice, certainly not a part of any creed he consciously holds, has a stirring impact on the man. Though he had never considered in earnest the significance of the rite Ameera had insisted he learn,

The touch of the cold sabre-hilt in his palm
turned suddenly to the clinging grip of the child up-

stairs--the child that was his own son--and a dread of loss filled him. "Strike!" said Pir Kahn, "Never life came into the world but life was paid for it. See, the goats have raised their heads. Now! With a drawing cut!"

Hardly knowing what he did, Holden cut twice as he muttered the Mahomedan prayer that runs: "Almighty! In place of this my son I offer life for life, blood for blood, head for head, bone for bone, hair for hair, skin for skin."

Holden swung himself into the saddle and rode off through the low-hanging wood-smoke of the evening. He was full of riotous exultation, alternating with a vast, vague tenderness directed at no particular object, that made him choke as he bent over the neck of his uneasy horse. (B&W 110)

Overwhelmed by the unexpected power of this unfamiliar ritual, moreover, Holden retreats into a ritual more familiar, wherein he can reinforce his conviction that all will yet be well. "I never felt like this in my life," he thinks, "I'll go to the club and pull myself together" (B&W 110). At that Anglo-Indian institution Holden partakes of the rituals of fellowship, billiards, and "the [talk that] beat up around the ever-fresh subject of each man's work, and steadied Holden until it was time to go" (B&W 112).

The belief that Holden and Ameera place in ritual and the comfort they draw from it notwithstanding, it rapidly becomes clear that there is no guiding hand overshadowing their lives

and the life of their son, and therefore no one and nothing to appease in order to ward off disaster. The healthy birth and continued well-being of their "small, gold-colored little god" (B&W 119) is no more assured by Ameera's spells, tokens and prayers (at both Muslim and Christian altars), than his eventual death is averted by Holden's sacrificial slaughter of livestock. The narrator tells us conclusively that the rituals of religion, tradition and superstition in which Ameera indulges so lavishly, and which Holden doubts yet finds so strangely compelling, are not the agents of the couple's good fortune. In the days of their happiness,

. . . the powers were busy on other things. They had allowed 30 million people four years of plenty wherein men fed well and the crops were certain, and the birth rate rose year by year . . . [Nevertheless,] two months later as the deputy had foretold, nature began to audit her accounts with a red pencil. On the heels of the spring reappings came a cry for bread, and the government, which had decreed that no man should die of want, sent wheat. Then came the cholera from all four quarters of the compass. (B&W 129)

Not only does the disease eventually claim Ameera's life but, lest we think that her death has any special significance or that the powers might somehow be propitiated, the narrator also reports "it struck a pilgrim-gathering of half a million at a sacred shrine. Many died at the feet of their god" (B&W 129). Indeed, Elliot Gilbert asserts, "What is most striking about this story is that in the world which it pictures,

ritual--elaborate and hopeful and time-consuming as it is--is of no use . . . it is, from beginning to end, pathetic hocus-pocus and nothing more" (Gilbert 29). There can be no appeal to any higher power for compassion or mercy, he says, for Kipling's universe is deaf as well as blind.

To Holden and Ameera, with the realization that no sacrifice, performance or spell can mitigate the course of misfortune, comes also the realization that they are alone and abandoned in a universe which makes no provision for their special needs. Armed with the dear-bought knowledge that they must make their own way as best they can, the lovers begin a purge of meaningless ritual from their lives. The failure of Ameera's charms to preserve and bless the life of her child leads her step by step to lay each and all of them aside.

Chastened and enlightened--matured--Ameera at the last examines her existence face on, without the veil of bazaar-stall mysticism to shield her eyes. Holden, too, in grief for the death of his son and fear for the health of his wife, finds even the British traditions of hard work and stoic resignation, though comforting at first, eventually lose their potency to "[fill] up his mind for nine or ten hours a day" (B&W 125) and drive away the pain of his loss. Though he continues to maintain the secrecy of his relationship to Ameera, as required by Anglo-Indian mores, when word of her impending death comes he lays aside the last vestiges of convention and abandons his post to rush to her side. Even the final ritual of mourning, abbreviated for Holden by the appearance of the "four sheeted ghosts" who must promptly

remove cholera victims in accordance with civic necessity, is defiled by the greed of Ameera's mother who "in her anxiety to take stock of the house-fittings forgot to mourn" (B&W 135). As disaster is heaped upon disaster for Kipling's characters, the rituals of faith, magic, hope, and eventually even routine are all discarded.

In his essay quoted above, entitled "A Farewell to Ritual," Dr. Gilbert contends, "What is so remarkable about Ameera [and he could say the same of Holden] is that each blow that life inflicts on her makes her not more and more a prisoner of the superstitions she started with, but somehow more and more free of them" (Gilbert 37). He concludes therefore that Ameera's farewell to Holden, a seemingly blasphemous paraphrase of the Moslem profession of faith, is her final rejection of the last and most deeply rooted of ritualistic beliefs. And yet . . .

Ameera's last words are, in fact, ritual. Her statement, "I bear witness . . . that there is no God but--thee, beloved!" are couched in the diction of ritual, and spoken in the expectation of understanding as ritual. Likewise Holden's retention of the red-lacquered bedstead, his visit to the empty and desolate house, and his determination that it should either remain empty or be pulled down and obliterated, is equally ritualistic. It is, in fact, a reflection of the common Victorian ritual of saving only very personal keepsakes of the dead and destroying all other possessions to prevent their being pawed over by strangers (see "Mary Postgate"). What Kipling has illustrated in his story is not a rejection

of all ritual, but a winnowing out of meaningless ritual in order to revitalize that which retains its value. The final acts of both characters suggest not a "farewell to ritual," but a renewed commitment to a new and meaningful form.

Ameera's last profession of faith and Holden's cloistering of her memory are the ritual recognitions of love as the final and appropriate locus of belief, and the only means of defence against the random violence of a blind and soulless universe.

Kipling's approach to the themes of homelessness, isolation and abandonment in this early story are grounded in his experience of the Empire and in the common Victorian sense that science and technology had increased knowledge but eliminated faith, leaving man to work out not his salvation, but bare survival in fear and trembling before an empty altar. Vestiges of the Romantic fascination with mysticism and the occult remain, but only to be exposed and discredited in the context of a void and uncaring universe. It is an approach reminiscent of Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach," which describes a newly explicated world "so various, so beautiful, so new," but which in its soulless anonymity "Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light, / Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain; / And we are here as on a darkling plain" (Arnold 401). Kipling's domestic tragedy, played out upon the plains of India's fearful summer heat, is reflective of his Victorian, Anglo-Indian experience. Alone and isolated, not only from their respective societies but in the universe, Holden and Ameera would sob quietly in Arnold's words, "Ah love, let us be true / To one another . . . " (Arnold 401).

* * *

"The Knife and the Naked Chalk" is an example from Kipling's middle career of a story of isolation. By 1910, the time of the story's publication, Kipling had been away from India for more than 20 years. In the interim both he and his fiction had moved a considerable distance from the imperial atmosphere that had brought him forth. While Kipling would always remain a Victorian Imperialist ideologically, the "Puck" stories contained in Puck of Pook's Hill (1906) and Rewards and Fairies (1911), which give a fanciful account of British history as magically revealed to a pair of children, indicate a growing perception on the author's part that England, too, had in the past been an outpost of empire. A few years earlier Conrad's Marlow observed in "Heart of Darkness," "This, too, has been one of the dark places of the earth," (Conrad 5). Kipling's exploration of isolation and abandonment in "The Knife and the Naked Chalk," however, has considerably less to do with any physical separation from society, the starting point of "Without Benefit of Clergy," and much more to do with the intellectual and spiritual separation of the superior man from his fellows. While the duty to govern by service, a clearly Victorian concept, remains and is strongly manifest in the story, it provides the poignancy of the tale as well. It is the lead character's desire to belong and to "serve the people," in fact, that separates and isolates him from them.

Like most of the Puck stories, and many others in various collections, "The Knife and the Naked Chalk" is bracketed with verse that introduces and comments upon the story. The prologue poem, "The Run of the Downs," is particularly significant to this study as a presentation of the story's theme in antithesis. Consistent with the formal, pastoral framing of the tale, "The Run of the Downs" is a ballad of the land. The folk rhythm of iambic tetrameter chants in the oral tradition. The poem is a list of geographic and historic sites on the Weald and the Downs of Sussex, such as might be recited to children to help them appreciate and identify with their local heritage. The closing couplet, "The downs are sheep, the weald is corn,/ You be glad you are Sussex born!" is an explicit statement of invitation, virtually by command, into the community.

Likewise the frame of the story speaks of belonging. Dan and Una, children of a man who left the Downs "to live among them messy trees in the weald" (R&F 142) (and of the same ages as Kipling's own son and daughter at the time), have returned to the Downs for their summer holidays. Their acceptance by Mrs. and especially Mr. Dudeney, the old shepherd who knew their father as a boy and who takes the role of caretaker and interpreter of events, is a matter of natural course. When the retired sheep dog, Old Jim, brings Dan and Una to where the flock is grazing, Mr. Dudeney acknowledges both the children and their reason for coming. "You come to talk with me," he says, "same as your father used. He didn't need no dog to guide him to Norton Pit" (R&F 141). Mr. Dudeney's

recognition of the children as descendants of the Downs, and even his mild chiding of their lack of a significant communal skill (finding their way across the waving grasslands of the Downs), contributes to a sort of antithetical pre-theme (as opposed to the main theme found in the central narrative) of community and ancestral belonging. This careful construction of antithesis serves by contrast to give greater emphasis to the opposing main point.

To the flint worker who is the central character and speaker of the story, his inclusion in the community is of critical importance. Conjured up by Puck--Shakespeare's own fairy spirit--for the amusement and education of the children, this ostensible antecedent of Mr. Dudeney finds greater comfort in the sense of belonging than Dan, Una or any of the frame story characters can compass. His upbringing was at the center of his society. He was the son of a priestess, and knew the signs, the language and the ceremonies of their religion. When he was old enough, he took his place in the sheepguard and assumed his portion of responsibility for "the people." Indeed, to his sorrow, he knows more and feels more of the true nature of his society than others among his companions can guess, and his desire to obtain knives from the Children of the Night, is based on that knowledge.

Their priestess said, "For whose sake have you come?"
I answered, "The sheep are the people. If the beast kills our sheep, our people die. So I come for a magic knife to kill the beast! (R&F 153)

His words are a reiteration of his basic contention: "It is not fit that the beast [the wolves of the Downs] should master man" (R&F 150). The resulting sacrifice of his position as one of the people by means of his elevation to the status of a god becomes the more poignant because of his awareness.

The sum of his fear is change. Upon entering the trees he fears the change that is wrought, in his mind, by the spells of the woodland inhabitants--a fever against which, as a stranger in the woods, he has built up no immunity. The loss of his right eye, required by the gods as earnest for his good motives in trading for the knife, represents another and more dreadful change. But the greatest and most devastating change is that of the attitude of his own people, who "thought [him] to be a God, like the God Tyr, who gave his right hand to conquer a Great Beast" (R&F 158). Their reverence is such that they will not tread upon his shadow or speak to him in the common tongue. It is a reverence that limits as much as it exalts the man. He is not free to speak or move among his people as before, and when a man of his companions asks leave to take his maiden, the new god observes, "He was full of the fear of a God, but of me, a man, he had no fear" (R&F 159). This stone age man's exceptional willingness to face fear, to endure loss, in the end to embrace change ("for the people; the sheep are the people"), sets him apart from his society. As Tyr, the God, the Buyer of the Knife, his voice is lost. Priests now speak for him. His seed is lost, as another takes his wife. His self is lost, as the significance of his single

act overwhelms every other aspect of his character. As he intuitively feared, the exchange had terms that were hidden.

His isolation is in fact a double damnation. Having assumed responsibility to master The Beast for the sake of The People, he is required to retain that responsibility in other aspects of his life as well. "He who has done a God-like thing," his mother declares, "must bear himself like a God . . . The People are your sheep now till you die. You cannot drive them off" (R&F 160). Moreover, having himself attained the status of a God, there is no priest or deity to whom he can look for help or comfort. The people place their faith upon him as a burden, "a heavier sheep than [he] can lift" (R&F 160), while his own faith has no place to rest. That burden, too, he must bear.

The pain of isolation, whether redeemed by revitalized ritual as in "Without Benefit of Clergy," or bitterly endured as in "The Knife and the Naked Chalk," crystallizes in Kipling's late work into a larger theme: the quest for healing. Certainly he is not alone among the writers of this period in pursuing such a theme. In the destruction of the Great War and the political, physical and emotional dislocation of those who survived, a chronicle of pain was no longer sufficient to address the issues of isolation and abandonment. A nearly obsessive quest for healing marks the literature of the post-War period. Hemingway's Jake Barnes vainly seeks relief from the pain of his storied wound in The Sun Also Rises. Fitzgerald's Charlie Wales pursues healing and redemption from the long alcoholic binge of the 20's in

"Babylon Revisited," and Faulkner probes the wounds that refuse to heal in The Sound and the Fury.

In 1926 "The Eye of Allah" was published in Debits and Credits, Kipling's penultimate collection of short stories. In beautifully descriptive language, perhaps the richest in all Kipling's body of work, the tale tells of the experiences of John Otho, or John of Burgos, an artist in the 12th century English monastery of St. Illod's. Though not a churchman himself, John travels about the western world on behalf of his brethren, obtaining drugs for the infirmary; rich and rare pigments and earths for the illumination of their hand-copied texts; and for himself, models for his art. In Moorish Spain he finds devils to torment the Gadarene Swine of his "Great Luke" revealed in a single drop of water through a primitive microscope, which the Moors call the eye of Allah, and which he brings back to the monastery in England. While in Spain, he also loses his wife (or mistress) and their infant son in childbirth. On his return to St. Illod's, he attempts to find solace in his craft. The tale may also be one of Kipling's most mature explorations of the themes thus far discussed, for it addresses not only the pain of isolation and the quest for healing, but the clear cognizance of authorship--artistry--relative to those questions.

Not all of the stories in the Debits and Credits collection can be measured as mature Kipling, but then his unevenness is well established. "The United Idolaters" is merely a further adventure of the Stalky and Co. characters to which George Orwell so strenuously objected. So too, in

spirit, is "The Janeites." The names of the participants are different from the Stalky stories, though familiar from earlier tales, but the attitudes are definitely products of the "Old School" experience. The familiar author-as-narrator character, too, appears in "A Madonna of the Trenches" and "In the Interests of the Brethren." Nevertheless, along with "The Wish House" and "The Gardener," "The Eye of Allah" remains an exemplary piece of Kipling's mature work addressing the themes of pain and healing, and of artistic self-consciousness in that context.

At this point in his career, in his better stories, Kipling works his themes not on one or two levels, but throughout the story, weaving them into every aspect of the pattern. In "The Eye of Allah" each character suffers to some degree the pains of physical injury or disease, age, incapacity or sin, and each character must bear his or her pain in isolation. John Otho endures first separation from, and at last the utter loss of, his wife and child. Brother Thomas, the Infirmaryman, suffers in fear that his private thoughts might constitute sin, while Roger of Salerno, the visiting surgeon, savors the bitterness of vain pride, knowing with assurance that he dare not publicly pursue his thoughts lest Mother Church declare them heresy. Anne of Norton, the Abbot's Lady, must be carried whenever she goes abroad, as she wastes from *immedicabile cancer* as diagnosed by her medieval doctors, and Stephen de Sautré himself is lame, his share in an unlucky Crusade and "two years captivity among the Saracens at Cairo" (D&C 312).

For all that it follows the travails of John of Burgos, "The Eye of Allah," however, is not John Otho's story, but the story of Stephen de Sautré, Abbot of St. Illod's, and of the healing that occurs under his hands. His monastery is a sanctuary of order, authority and compassion, presented as a ship of refuge "moored on the edge of the banked shoals of sunset" (D&C 331), a sea that is vast and unknowable. When John prepares to leave for Spain, it is Stephen gives him "generous absolution to cover lapses by the way; for he [Stephen] did not hold with chance-bought Indulgences" (D&C 312). The absolution would cover not only the sins incidental to John's acquisition of drugs for the infirmary and colors for the scriptorium, but also his meeting with one, who in the eyes of the Church can only be a mistress, whether Moorish or Hebrew. Under Stephen's authority the affection John bears his lady can carry no taint of sin. When John returns, having "left all in the hands of God," while Anne of Norton exhorts him to "remember there is no jealousy in the grave" (D&C 315), it is Stephen who counsels him "for pain of the soul, there is, outside of God's grace, but one drug; and that is a man's craft" (D&C 315-316). Accepting Stephen's counsel in meekness, John applies his art to serve his grief and, laying all other work aside, declares, "My Magdalene has to come off my heart first" (D&C 317).

"*Physicus* before *sacerdos*, always" (D&C 319), Stephen's ecclesiastical ministry is an exercise in healing. When saintly, 70-year-old Brother Martin, "who spoke about once a fortnight," accepts from John some stolen sweet meats as a

reward for particularly good work, "then confessed and insisted upon penance," Stephen "set him a book called De Virtutibus Herbarum" (On the Virtues--or Powers--of Herbs, another text on healing) to "fair-copy," a "crabbed text" of the "gloomy Cistercians, who do not hold with pretty things" (D&C 317). That the text would have to be copied anyway is clear, as is the implication that in this, as in all cases, the penance set by Stephen bears no hint of malice but is determined solely to satisfy the needs of the sinner.

It is consistent then with Stephen's character that the "wisdom dinner" he assembles would likewise present an opportunity for the participants to find salve for their private wounds. It is characteristic of Kipling's tightly woven structure, as well, that all of them should seek salvation through the same implement--John's primitive microscope.

With the Abbot Stephen's ring of office laid aside, the after dinner discourse is unfettered. In freely speaking their minds, three of the company reiterate the sources of their pain: Thomas' fear that certain unbidden thoughts may be sin; Roger of Salerno's vain pride in knowledge condemned by the Church; and Roger Bacon's related frustration that any knowledge should be withheld or suppressed. Stephen's suffering is suggested (it is enough) in the sob of his unseen lady as she passes through the halls, as is John's in the display of his Magdalene, pale, "almost transparent," and

weakened by the banishment of her devils.¹ But as the conversation turns to John's devils and the microscope through which he first perceived them, each man perceives that, like John, he may find the means to assuage his troubles under the glass. Thomas finds blessed relief in the knowledge that "the small animals that the eye cannot follow" of which he had dreamed are in fact "Life created and rejoicing," and that "it was no sin for me to dream" (D&C 331). Bacon, in a passion over this newly revealed world, desires to believe that with the "English-hearted Foulks made Pope" (D&C 322) the window may not be closed, yet Salerno knows better. "It is a new world," he says assuredly, but "What of Mother Church? . . . If it comes to her ears that we have spied into her Hell without her leave, where do we stand?" he asks (D&C 332). And Stephen de Sautré answers: "At the stake." In Kipling's world under the Eye of Allah, who is God, the artist and the man of faith may find salvation, while the scientist and philosopher find only tantalizing and frustrating hints of forbidden treasure.

This is not a contradiction of Kipling's well-documented admiration for, or emulation of, the insider, the man-who-

¹Salerno the physician, incidentally, marvels at the artist's powers of observation and describes the symptoms of epilepsy as displayed in the portrait. The model of course for John's masterwork was his pregnant wife. What Kipling's medieval doctor identifies as epilepsy may more likely be an advanced case of eclampsia, a condition which occurs in pregnant women causing fluid retention, weakness and, if untreated, seizures and other symptoms which mimic epilepsy. The seizures can be fatal to both mother and child. In John Otho's Magdalene, the disease Salerno takes to be epilepsy might also provide a natural explanation of her "possession," consistent with the religious/naturalist sensibilities of Kipling and his contemporaries.

knows. Rather, in this particular story, Kipling is asserting that there are circumstances in which the observer sees and grasps more from the outside than the expert can from within. The outsider becomes the ultimate insider. Indeed, to judge by "The Eye of Allah," Kipling places greater faith in the ability of art to save than in the efficacy of faith, and far more than in the works of technology. Yet the artist, as always, is limited in his powers: "My trade's the outside of things," says John (D&C 333). He may observe, but never influence. Consequently the question of whether to preserve or suppress the instrument of revelation must be debated between the cleric and the scientist. Though all hold the instrument dear, those with experience of the world recognize not only its power, but its danger.

Ironically, Stephen, the one man who is both *physicus* and *sacerdos*, is the one who must decide. Well knowing that science may bring truth and that truth comes from God, Stephen also knows that a world unprepared for the truth will not accept it from science or from God. Finally, recognizing that the prevention of suffering, though it may be briefly painful, is the most effective form of healing, Stephen makes his decision. "This birth is untimely, my sons," he says, recalling the recurrent image of untimely and tragic births that run through the story. "It will be but the mother of more death, more torture, more division, and greater darkness in this dark age" (D&C 335). So saying, he destroys the lens of the instrument.

Kipling provides an intriguing support for Stephen de Sautré's contention that greater light may bring forth greater darkness, by providing a companion piece in the Debits and Credits collection, that is an exploration of the same theme in mirror image. In this light, Kipling's commitment to structural integrity in his late short story collections is worth noting. Not only are the collected stories generally related to the book's title (the question of balance in "The Eye of Allah" certainly reflects the concept of Debits and Credits), but the stories within the collection are arranged in a very specific order. In Debits and Credits a sort of chiasmus is employed, with pieces of similar theme and intensity placed first and last in the book, and lighter pieces in the middle. Additionally, the stories in their placement often reflect and comment upon their opposite (first and last; second and next to last) or companion (first and second; last and next to last) numbers, or on both. (It is an arrangement which Pound might have admired, had he looked.) In Debits and Credits, "The Enemies to Each Other" and "The Gardener," first and last in the collection, deal with Adam and Eve as casualties in the War of Satan against God, and with Christ and Magdalene figures coping with the losses of World War I. The stories balance each other in terms of the debit of Adam's Fall and the credit of Christ's Atonement. Moreover, the Magdalene of "The Eye of Allah," the next to the last story, prepares the reader for her allegorical presence in "The Gardener." What answers, then, does the second story

of Debits and Credits offer for the questions raised at Stephen de Sautré's banquet?

"Sea Constables: A Tale of '15" is a bitter story of the pursuit to the death of a mercenary minded "neutral" attempting to sell oil to the German Navy offshore, by middle-aged pleasure mariners drafted with their vessels into the coast guard service. While Edmund Wilson and others dismiss it as simply another, slightly more mature revenge story, when viewed as a comment upon "The Eye of Allah," "Sea Constables" is much more revealing. The burden of the tale, as told by Kipling's narrator, Maddington, is that the failure of the Neutral to take the War seriously and his attempt to bend and twist the laws of society for his own purposes, forces Maddington to apply the letter of the law in its strictest sense. The result is a polite and deadly gamesmanship, at the end of which the Neutral, in terror at the onset of bronchial pneumonia in a small Irish port without medical facilities, concedes and requests transport to London for care. Shocked at his own cold blooded response, Maddington refuses. His last comment on the episode describes his view of the neutral's ship, "his flag half-masted" (D&C 40).

The "sea constables," at their long-awaited dinner in town where the tale is told, are civilized men, no strangers to the worlds of either business or culture. At need they put off the trappings of civilization to become savagely efficient in the defence of their country. They drink "Damnation to all Neutrals" (D&C 22) who would have them put the concerns and courtesies of business before the lives of the soldiers and

sailors they support. The men at de Sautré's banquet are, conversely, men of action in their natural state, who put on civilization within the walls of the monastery. As Abbot of St. Illod's, Stephen is compassionate and dedicated to the relief of suffering, both physical and spiritual; but in his youth he bore a sword in the service of the Church, crusading against the Saracens. Salerno intimates that he has, or at least has desired, to raise the skin of corpses he has seen littering the roads in the wars of the Bishops in Italy, "to look at God's fabric beneath" (D&C 323). His secret autopsies, whether real or only fancied, are dark and furtive procedures prohibited by the Church on pain of excommunication. John Otho is most open of all about his harsher outside life. More cognizant of this dichotomy than his fellows, he is not ashamed to challenge the brethren of the Scriptorium: "Have you ever thought how I lie and steal daily on my travels--yes, and for aught you know, murder--to fetch you colors and earths?" (D&C 318). The sea constables go out from civilization to do savage battle to preserve life and prevent further bloodshed. The men of de Sautré's monastery retreat from the savage world to find balm for their private wounds, but are forbidden to carry it out into the world lest the cure of enlightenment be more deadly than the disease of ignorance.

Yet, though Stephen may put off his ring to hear the thoughts of the scientists, artists and philosophers he has gathered about him, he knows he must also resume that authority. To avert the carnage that would ensue from the

publication of legitimate proofs of a heretical idea, he must crush the lens which represents the civilized hopes of his colleagues. Like Maddington, Stephen de Sautré must lay aside civility, and ruthlessly destroy to prevent suffering on a wider scale.

The themes of homelessness, isolation and abandonment, the random violence of an uncaring universe, and the quest for healing all come together in one of Kipling's most beautiful and haunting stories, "The Gardener." This late tale, the end piece of Debts and Credits, presents us with the character of Helen Turrell whose illegitimate son, known to the world as her nephew, "her only brother's unfortunate child" (D&C 339), has been killed in the War. Throughout his life, Helen has been mother in all but name to the boy, and even in name "at bed time as a [secret] pet-name between themselves" (D&C 341). When the young man is reported missing in action, Helen, certain that "missing *always* means dead" begins with subtle cognizance the process of "being manufactured into a bereaved next-of-kin" (D&C 345). In her visit to the Belgian cemetery, where the lately recovered body of her nephew/son has been interred, Helen is engulfed by the "merciless sea of [twenty thousand] black crosses, bearing little strips of tin at all angles across their faces" (D&C 351). On the strips are imprinted the "intolerably nameless names" for which Siegfried Sassoon grieved. The bare chance of her son's death, and the overwhelming anonymity of his grave leave the bewildered woman

to fall back on the familiar habits of more than 20 years. Denying herself the title, and thereby the legitimate pride and pleasure of her station, when Helen is asked whose grave she would visit:

"Lieutenant Michael Turrell - my nephew, " said Helen slowly, word for word, as she had many thousands of times in her life. The man lifted his eyes and looked at her with infinite compassion before he turned from the fresh sown grass toward the naked black crosses.

"Come with me," he said, "and I will show you where your son lies."

When Helen left the cemetery, she turned for a last look. In the distance, she saw the man bending over his young plants; and she went away supposing him to be the gardener.

(D&C 351-2)

The universe in which Helen Turrell moves, the imperturbable workings of which proceed oblivious of her son's death, is as aimless and violent as that of "Without Benefit of Clergy." Helen's isolation is as complete and hopeless and intimate as that of the flintworker of "The Knife and the Naked Chalk," and her need for healing is as intense as that of any of the characters of "The Eye of Allah." And yet there is a difference.

There is a God in Helen's universe, made manifest in the man she takes to be the gardener. His powers are limited. He cannot, or will not, govern so minutely as to prevent the

chance death of one soldier more or less. Yet in the world of "The Gardener," the God that Kipling reveals is cognizant of that death and of the void it leaves in a life such as Helen's. While Holden and Ameera must establish the meaning of their existence with a love that functions in defiance of an unconcerned universe, Helen is the recipient of a seemingly divine offer of redemption, an opportunity to lay aside the constraints of secrecy and openly acknowledge her love for her son. In Helen's universe there is cognizance of suffering, hope for isolation, and balm for pain, if only she is able to receive it.

The difference is significant and more subtle than it appears, for while God may, as in "The Gardener," or may not be present in the worlds which Kipling creates (for all his unorthodoxy and skepticism, Kipling was not an atheist), the responsibility to make peace with life and find meaning in existence rests entirely with the individual. There is solace for John Otho in his craft, if he can find it. The conquest of the beast gives meaning to the sacrifice of the flintworker of the chalk, but it is a meaning as much to be endured as savored. Like Holden and Ameera, the redemption offered to Helen Turrell is dependent upon her identification and performance of ritual in a renewed and vital form. The standard rituals of grief are unavailable to Helen in her official capacity as aunt rather than mother. The dispatching of documents and requests for information regarding the missing "nephew" merely leave her confused and numb. But the compassion and guidance of the man tending plants at the

cemetery represent an open door. For Helen, whose namesake is a Christian saint thought to be a British princess and the discoverer of the "true cross" of Christ, the quest for meaning and hope for reconciliation is dependent, as was Mary Magdalene's nearly two millennia before, on her recognition of the "Gardener" as "Rabboni; which is to say, Master," (John 20:16) and of his divine authority to name Michael her son.

Chapter Two Structure

*I used to think seein' and hearin' was the only regulation
aids to ascertainin' facts, but as we get older we get more
accomodatin'*

"Mrs Bathurst,"
Traffics and Discoveries

*I reckon there's more things told than are true.
And more things true than are told.*

"The Ballad of Minepit Shaw,"
Rewards and Fairies

In 1904, in the midst of what is generally considered his middle period, Kipling published two stories, "They" and "Mrs. Bathurst," which demonstrate a "highly organized and almost incredibly complex pattern of parallelisms, cross references and interconnections. . . where one must expect practically every word and sentence to be [as] indispensable to the whole as a sequence of bars in a Beethoven quartet" (Bodelsen 121). In short, the complexity, the sheer density of these stories mark them as the beginnings of a decidedly Modernist tendency in Kipling's work.

It was a development well before its time, if contemporary responses are any indication. A review of "They" in The Literary Digest (October 1, 1904) emphasizes the confusion the story wrought in its readers and offers excerpts of explications from a number of journals. Reviews of Traffics and Discoveries, the volume that contains "They" and "Mrs. Bathurst," in The Contemporary Review (November 1904) and The Times Literary Supplement (October 7, 1904) likewise complain of Kipling's change in style. The anonymous author of the TLS

article especially laments the loss of "life, colour, form, even simplicity, as Mr. Kipling had them years ago" in his stories, and contends with photographic images that make us suspect he was thinking of "Mrs. Bathurst":

These hard, over exposed photographs are not pictures; the details are far too harsh; they drag the eye in different directions. Where is Rossetti's "fundamental brain work," that should take all these scattered bits and fuse them as that instantaneous click of the shutter can never do? (TLS 304)

In fact, as C. A. Bodelsen points out, this new technique "baffled most of his readers, and lost him [much of] his former popularity." The response was so strong and so clearly negative that "for some time after 1904 Kipling did not continue his experiments in his new technique, and when he resumed it in Rewards and Fairies (1910), he handled it with much more moderation than in 'Mrs. Bathurst'" (Bodelsen 120-121). Nevertheless, these stories mark a startlingly mature introduction of complex Modernist structure in Kipling's work.

There is no dearth of examples of "color, form, [and] simplicity" in the structure of Kipling's early stories. The Plain Tales From the Hills, 28 of which appeared first as "filler" in the Civil and Military Gazette of Allahabad, as well as most of the Soldiers Three and Military Tales, follow a straight-ahead journalistic narrative form. This, in addition to the mannerisms about which many critics habitually complain, including his direct address to the Reader and the ". . . but that is another story" tease, clearly identify the

early tales as the newspaper columns they were originally intended to be. Much of the freshness and vitality, "life and color" of these early stories, which lifted into relief the strangely familiar and yet mystic Indian subcontinent for the Victorian Englishman at home, originates in the journalistic realism of Kipling's early style.

As the stories in the early collections progress and Kipling's journalistic "I" begins to relinquish the role of primary narrator, frequently to dialect speakers such as the Irish, Cockney and Yorkshire privates of the military tales, a framing process begins to appear in the stories. The orchestration of themes between frame and story is a significant aspect of structure in Kipling's early work, and is deftly handled in "The Courting of Dinah Shadd."

The serial reader of Kipling's stories in 1895 would have been very familiar with the character of Terrance Mulvaney, one of the author's three spokesmen for the private soldiers of the Victorian Empire, but would have known little of his fictional background. The central narrative of "The Courting of Dinah Shadd" is Mulvaney's explanation of the traumas of his life, and that of his wife, as the result of a curse laid on them by "ould Mother Sheehy," the mother of Judy Sheehy, whose affections Mulvaney had toyed with and rejected. The burden of Terrance's story, the theme, is the terrible and lifelong impact of this meaningless and irresponsible, flirtation. For balance, and to prepare the reader for that which is to come, the frame story then, is a natural

progression of examples of unforeseen results flowing from seemingly insignificant incidents.

The narration begins with Kipling's "I" narrator observing "the camp of exercise," a war game held among the several regiments stationed in this particular corner of India. Through the kindness of the officers in providing a few young goats for the men, the government's experiment with "Erbsenwurst, tinned beef of surpassing tinniness, compressed vegetables, and meat biscuits" (MT II 103) to nourish the troops, is made of no effect. The failure of the Southern army to secure and guard their lines of supply and communication before rushing forward toward their seemingly unguarded objective results in the capture and loss of an entire regiment. Even the unlovely sight of a private "strategically greasing his feet" by firelight leads the narrator to "reflect on the exact proportion of the 'might, majesty, dominion and power' of the British Empire which stands on those feet" (MT II 105). In the clearest imagery of all the frame examples, the narrator, sensing Mulvaney's troubles, encourages the Irishman to talk:

"Begin at the beginning and go on to the end," I said royally. "But rake up the fire a bit, first."

I passed Ortheris's bayonet for a poker.

"That shows how little we know what we do," said Mulvaney, putting it aside. "Fire takes all the heart out av the steel, an' the next time, maybe, that our little man is fighting for his life his bradawl'll break, an' so you'll ha' killed him, manin' no more

than to kape yourself warm. 'Tis a recruity's thrick
that. Pass the clanin'-rod, Sorr." (MT 110)

By means of this series of items and incidents in the frame, not only does Kipling foreground his theme,--in Mulvaney's words "for all we take we must pay, but the price is cruel high"--he also very deftly and subtly passes the narrative through the hands of various characters, adding a significant breadth of dimension and color within each entry. Though the full potential of this technique of multiple narrators would be realized later, particularly in "Mrs. Bathurst," the narration of Mulvaney's story must rest at last with Mulvaney. Through this central character's recollections of the past and observations of the story's present, Kipling ties all together into a powerful evocation of his theme.

The tenderly haunting images of "They" (the more tender, perhaps, because of the freshness of the wound--Kipling's own beloved daughter Josephine died just five years before the story's publication in 1904) are presented in the narrative without a frame. Rather, while the narration is carried by Kipling's "I," the clues to the meaning of the story are supplied by a variety of characters, each of whom seems to be more knowledgeable than the narrator, but reticent to say all that he or she knows.

Bodelsen posits this "veritable cult of indirectness and concealment" as a structural marker of Kipling's "late manner" (Bodelsen 100), and indeed Kipling uses it to great effect in

heightening the mystic enchantment that pervades the story. While the narrator confesses early on that there may be "one or two reasons" for his fondness of children, the knowledge of his loss and consequently the motive for his compassion and the depth of his pain are concealed until the moment of relief. The result is that the reader experiences the accumulated blend of emotion in a single rush of discovery, rather than in stages as a companion to the main speaker. Likewise the blind woman, the narrator's guide in the way-house of children's spirits, confesses her consuming love "for the children" at every stage of the story, but for a great while can only express wonder at his limited perceptions. In this she is supported by the butler and certain characters from the village whose attitudes assure the narrator, and the reader that, eventually, they will come to understand. The verbal explication of concepts must wait on the narrator's enlightenment through experience.

If the narrator's sense of confusion, of being excluded from specific knowledge of circumstances, even while being included within their influential realm, is lost on the reader, the author/narrator seems quite willing to get a little of his own back in certain obscure references within the text. I admit my own mystification at the figure of "the Egg"¹ the blind woman "traced on the rug" (T&D 354) in

¹With Kipling, the first suspicion must be that this is a Masonic symbol. A. G. Mackey, however, compiler of The Encyclopedia of Free Masonry, after a long appreciation of the egg as a symbol of new or renewed life, dispels this idea with the observation: "It is strange that it [the egg] has found no place in the symbolism of Free Masonry." If the symbol is drawn

illustration of the colors she "feels" in the emotions of others. The concept is communicated with sufficient clarity that the reader is left to wonder, along with the narrator, just how the knowledge was acquired and what more it might mean.

Nevertheless, if indirection, reticence and concealment comprise one structural aspect of Kipling's more mature, more Modernist work, the use of clues, or "pointers" as Bodelsen calls them, subtly embedded in the work form another. In "They," he points out:

The phrase that the narrator comes from "the other side of the county" is repeated six times. It signifies, of course [along with his passage through a dark, tunnel-like grove carpeted with dead leaves], that he is a visitor from the country of the living to the country of the dead. (Bodelsen 110)

The narrator's view of the spirit children, moreover, is always obscured by distant windows, screens or panels, or hedges of yew, wreaths of which are traditional in mourning. The living must be separated, if only transparently, from the dead. Indeed, the narrator's entry road to the other worldly realm is guarded by great knights of clipped yew, and the eyes of his guide are dead as to the flesh, but alive to the spirit. As Virgil to the Dante of "They," the blind woman is loquacious of speech, yet mysteriously reticent of meaning.

from the mystic practices of Hindu, Buddhist, or other Indian beliefs to which Kipling was exposed as a child, he does not seem to feel any compulsion to reveal the source.

In keeping with the general tenor of the story, the ambiguity and reticence of "They" is more gentle certainly than that of "Mrs. Bathurst" or others of the late stories. The narrator's inability to perceive, much less describe, what happens to him invites us to fill in the story with what we can feel. We cannot say precisely what occurs, but sharing his tender sorrow leads us to imagine things that might produce such a feeling in ourselves.

The use of indirection, concealment and obscurity in a Modernist text such as "They," in addition to the meanings revealed by Dr. Bodelsen's pointers, working on a semiconscious or even subconscious level, often carries meaning in itself. The very presence of doubt, when it is built into the story structure, becomes an element of meaning. Of all Kipling's stories, "Mrs. Bathurst" may be the richest in this type of meaning, as it is certainly the most indirect, the most concealed, and the most obscure.

Bodelsen calls his chapter on "Mrs. Bathurst," "The Hardest of All the Stories". Gilbert refers to it as "so elusive, so astonishingly reticent in [its] structure and syntax. . . that [its] very existence constitutes a puzzle which seems forever beyond solution" (Gilbert 94). Indeed, to class it, as Gilbert has, "among some of the most doggedly inexplicable fiction written in the 20th century" (Gilbert 77) may be quite accurate and no overstatement, though he proceeds to give an extended and creditable explication. Martin

Seymour-Smith finds "the 'meaning' of the story as dense as that of a Shakespeare play or a Hardy novel," and as such "'Mrs. Bathurst' comes into the category of supreme literature" (Seymour-Smith 310). And while David Lodge admits that Kipling does not indulge in the kind of stylistic experiment by means of which writers like Joyce, Woolf and Lawrence attempted to render the workings of the subjective consciousness and the unconscious. . . the relationship between the story and the telling of it in Kipling's work is often highly unorthodox, making it as teasingly ambiguous, as difficult, and "polysemous" as that of the acknowledged Modern Masters. (Lodge 71)

Lodge's examination of "Mrs. Bathurst" as an example of "Indeterminacy in Modern Narrative," provides not only a summary of the chain of communication that operates in a written narrative, but a "Chinese box" diagram of the narrative structure, demonstrating what he sees as the integration of the stories of the various narrators into a series of frames for the elusive kernel of the story. While the issues of real and implied authors and readers figure strongly in Lodge's argument, it is the presence of multiple narrators and narratees in "Mrs. Bathurst," an extension and extremely complex development of techniques already examined in "They" and "The Courting of Dinah Shadd," that are most significant to the meaning that Bodelsen says "must exist" in "Mrs. Bathurst."

The obscurity of the story makes it difficult to summarize effectively, and that difficulty is compounded by the fact that at no point does either Mrs. Bathurst or Warrant Officer M. "Click" Vickery, the story's central characters, ever turn up to give their own accounts. The complex relationship between Mrs. Bathurst, the gracious keeper of a seaman's tavern in Hauraki, New Zealand, whose image somehow appears in an early cinematograph, debarking at Paddington station, and her obsessive admirer (and by inference, but never clear statement, much more), is communicated in the course of conversation between four narrators, each of whom possesses only fragments of the presumed full story. Worse, the sum of their intelligence in the matter is fragmentary still, and the reader is left to speculate with the narrators what, if anything, it all may mean.

Kipling's narrators in "Mrs. Bathurst" include:

"I:" primarily a receptor and interpreter of the nonverbal signals produced by the other narrators. He also provides the external frame of the story with descriptions of setting and current circumstances;
Marine Sergeant Pritchard: who introduces the main character of Mrs. Bathurst through personal recollection;

Naval petty officer Pyecroft: who in like fashion informs of Vickery's background and of his strange behavior and eventual disappearance, and;

Inspector Hooper of the Cape Government Railways: the discoverer of two bodies charred by a lightning

strike beside a remote section of rail, one of which answers to Vickery's physical description.

In Lodge's analysis, "I's" account of their surroundings and the other information he provides, frames the narratives of each of the succeeding narrators. Pritchard's frames that of Pyecroft and Hooper. Pyecroft, with the preceding two, frames Hooper's account of the discovery, and the four together frame "a hole, an absence, an insoluble enigma" (Lodge 77), that exists where the crucial, closure providing incident ought to be.

The narrative line, too, without consideration of the speakers, describes a series of frames that emphasize or illuminate the central events. The fortuitous gathering of all four narrators on the beach at False Bay is the result of various missteps, misunderstandings and false starts. Kipling's "I" is present because the H.M.S. *Peridot* he was supposed to tour (named for an olivine stone occasionally used as a *faux* gem), left without him. His meeting with Hooper is purely accidental, as is their discovery by Pyecroft and Pritchard in the *sidetracked* rail car Hooper uses as an office. At first the sailor and Marine are mistaken by Hooper for "dirty little Malay boys, " and their noisy presence outside the car interrupts his account of finding what are presumably Vickery's *false* teeth. As introductions are made and Hooper offers the servicemen bottles of cheap local beer, Pyecroft produces a quart of "Bass" obtained by Pritchard's intrigue with a housemaid down the rail line. This, too, he modestly dismisses as a mistake: "I shouldn't wonder if she

mistook me for MacLean. We're about of a size" (T&D 382). The resulting discussion leads the men to recount the infamous deception perpetrated upon them and others by "Boy Niven, who lured seven or eight able-bodied seamen and marines into the woods of British Columbia" (T&D 384), on the promise of free farmland if they would desert with him. This, they discover, is another false lead. "'A day an' a night--eight of us--followin' Boy Niven round an uninhabited island in the Vancouver Archipelago! Then the picket came for us an' a nice pack o' idiots we looked!'" (T&D 384). At the resulting court martial the officers determined, wrongly, it was the "able seaman an' promisin' Marines 'ad misled Boy Niven" (T&D 384), and were to be punished. Each circumstance leads--or misleads--to the next as the participants proceed step by step toward the eventual intimacy of a shared narrative.

The subject of desertion brings Vickery to Pyecroft's mind, and after a misunderstanding regarding Hooper's curiosity about the missing warrant officer, he begins his narration of Vickery's strange behavior in Capetown. The story again is sidetracked when Pritchard interrupts with a description and defense of Mrs. Bathurst's character. (For that matter, the lives of both Vickery and Mrs. Bathurst must be viewed as an example of false starts. Mrs. Bathurst is a widow of long-standing, Vickery becomes a widower, and the two together seem to be engaged in an illicit affair--we must say 'seem to be' because we aren't permitted to know.) When Pyecroft resumes, he recounts in full all that he knows of Vickery's obsession with Mrs. Bathurst, or rather with her

image as exhibited in an early, and to 1903 audiences novel and extremely real, cinematograph, and of his eventual disappearance "up-country," presumably in pursuit of that image. The collection of partial narratives culminates in Hooper's report on the charred remains of two tramps found beside the tracks in "the dead end of a siding," far up in the teak, struck by lightening. Hooper's description of the one standing body, including his tattoos--"You know how the writing shows up white on a burned letter? Well, it was like that, you see" (T&D 408)--fits Vickery, completely. The false teeth we are led to believe he has in his pocket he does not produce, and we and the narrators are left to puzzle out what we can of the lives of Vickery and Mrs. Bathurst.

In analyzing the story, or collection of stories, Lodge defends his concept of a hollow, four-framed enigma effectively. "Paradoxically," he contends, "indeterminacy of meaning leads to an *increase* of meaning, because it demands more interpretive effort by the reader" (Lodge 71). Nor is Lodge alone in his belief that the event, whatever it may be, that resides at the core of the story is unknowable. Gilbert holds that "the newsreel itself and the newsreel-like structure of the story," wherein characters and incidents appear briefly in frame then disappear leaving no hope of any further enlightenment, a structure modern both by trope and by definition, "supports Kipling's theme of the accidentalness of life" (Gilbert 98). Philip Mason concurs, describing "Mrs. Bathurst" as "an interrupted series of fragmentary pictures, the kind of tantalizing glimpses that in real life we do

suddenly get of other people's lives, and the effect of the fragmentation is cumulative and powerful" (Mason 144). The images of "Mrs. Bathurst" are harsh and overexposed, as noted by the anonymous TLS reviewer in 1904. They do, indeed, "drag the eye in different directions," as they were intended to do, to replicate the gathering of information as it naturally occurs, in unconnected bits and irreconcilable snatches.

Regarding the question that "for some reason [which obviously eludes him] has always been the most controversial of all the 'Mrs. Bathurst' problems, the identity of the second tramp" (Gilbert 111), Gilbert is certain that blind fate has provided a mere random companion to call attention to Vickery's standing posture by sitting. It is yet another example of a universe as hollow as the story itself. Seymour-Smith agrees enthusiastically:

"The ultimate secret!" he says. "That is what Gilbert omits to mention, as I also do . . . That is what lies behind this masterpiece: The secret that has not yet been discovered. There is something factual here, a circumstantial truth, which is so terrifying that we should be unable to bear it if we knew. (Seymour-Smith 321)

It is the eternal mystery of our neighbors' lives, artfully revealed as we would naturally see it: Fragmentary, unexplained, and in this particular case, horrific.

The ambiguity of "Mrs. Bathurst," however, is not built upon the single structural component of indeterminate narrative. As in "They," the elusive clues for which Kipling is justly famous abound in this story and enhance its polysemous nature by admitting, though not necessarily confirming, other readings.

Nora Crook, in her study of Kipling's Myths of Love and Death, notes that one of the difficulties to be overcome in any current analysis of "Mrs. Bathurst" is an absence of the same "mental furniture" that Kipling's contemporary reader may have had. This "furniture" would have included, of course, a knowledge of the Boer War and its recent settlement; the state of transportation and communication technology, (as ships, trains and the infant cinema figure prominently in the story); and, according to Crook, the "once-celebrated military tragedy" of Major-General Sir Hector MacDonald (Crook 71).

The circumstances of the tragedy are connected to Kipling in many ways and give every indication of his awareness of the events. MacDonald began his military career as a private soldier, a "Tommy" who rose by "courage and ability" (Crook 72) to his position of command. He served in Afghanistan and later in South Africa, parts of the Empire in which Kipling was emotionally invested, and had been promoted by Kipling's friend and hero, Lord Roberts. All three, Kipling, Roberts and MacDonald, shared a "passionate belief in the necessity for a conscript army" (Crook 73), which MacDonald had supported with lecture tours just as Kipling supported it with his story "The Army of a Dream." Moreover, MacDonald was the

surname of Kipling's maternal family line, "and though the two men were not related, Kipling regarded himself as a member of the clan" with apparent pride (Crook 173). His cognizance of such a prominent contemporary figure with whom he shared so many ties of interest would be expected and natural.

In February 1903, a date very close to the fictitious events of "Mrs. Bathurst," MacDonald was recalled to London from Ceylon (where he had been transferred at the end of the war) to face an *in camera* hearing at the War Office, reportedly regarding his alleged homosexual activities with Ceylonese boys in a railway carriage. This, of course, is reminiscent of Hooper's reference to "dirty little Malay boys" outside his rail car office (T&D 380-81). At the conclusion of the hearing, MacDonald was ordered back to Ceylon to endure a court martial. Instead, the General stopped at the Regina Hotel in Paris and committed suicide with a pistol.

Crook's conclusion, which she supports in far more detail than can be recounted here, is that the story of "Mrs. Bathurst" is in part a reaction to, or inspired by, the events of the MacDonald case. While her analysis is admittedly biographical, or at least has biographical footings, this should neither surprise nor make us wary. Many of Kipling's stories and characters were clearly drawn from his life experience. "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep" he presented as and no doubt believed to be autobiography. Florence Garrard, the reluctant object of his youthful devotion, appears in various stories always as the selfishly ambitious female, incapable of love. Indeed, as Seymour-Smith points out, part of the early

appeal of Kipling's Anglo-Indian stories was the Simla parlor game of identifying the originals of his characters.

Nevertheless, his stories were never mere recountings of actual occurrences. Always Kipling's art and craft come into play, transplanting real characters into fictive circumstances and nurturing the seed of an incident into a fully developed creative work. Certainly the timing of this story and the incidental details admit Crook's interpretation. Likewise, her assertion that Vickery's companion in the teak is Boy Niven fits well as a comment on the MacDonald tragedy. It is a possibility permitted but not necessarily required by the accounts of two of the narrators.

Boy Niven's function in the story is that of a corruptor. His seducing of the seamen and Marines to desert, "very young an' very curious. . . but lovin' an' trustful" (T&D 384), is representative of other seductions to which sailors and marines long at sea have traditionally been rumored to be susceptible. The character's name, "Boy" Niven, itself has homoerotic implications, and the beating to which he is treated when his companions "came out of cells" is the traditional reward for the seducer of lonely sailors when at last they come ashore.

A further support to Crook's argument, at least as to Niven's nature if not as to his presence, is to be found in a consideration of the names of the ships in which Pyecroft, Pritchard and others involved in the Vancouver incident later served. The name of the vessel from which they attempted to desert is not given, but from there, Pyecroft was transferred

to the *Palladium*, a safeguard, and Moon and possibly Quigley were sent to the *Astrild*, called after a South African bird often kept as a caged pet. Those sailors we have knowledge of were sent, after Vancouver, where they could be watched and protected. As he recounts his portion of the story, Pyecroft is assigned to, and refers to himself as, a *Hierophant* or interpreter of events. Pritchard serves aboard the *Agaric*, named for a fungus used to transform oak, the wood from which Men-of-War are constructed, into punk, a material used to ignite the fuses of explosives, but also a well known Edwardian slang term for homosexuals. Given Kipling's habit of referring to homosexuality as "perversion," the result of "unclean microbes" (*SofM* 22), it is not at all beyond him to represent homosexual temptation as a fungus to transform the oaken strength of the senior service into "punk," the perverted igniter of explosive trouble.

Crook contends then, that the logical candidate for the position of Second Tramp, the one most clearly hinted at by the clues, is Boy Niven, and that Niven had become in Vickery's deranged mind a substitute for Mrs. Bathurst. Vickery had warned Pyecroft that he felt entirely out of control of himself, and Pyecroft worried that, "deprived of 'is stimulant," the film of Mrs. Bathurst, Vickery might become violent. That he was deprived of the cinematic specter of his obsession while wandering up country is a given. That he was unable to withstand the torment the events of his life had produced, and was therefore not to be held responsible for

his actions, would form a plausible explanation, for Kipling, for the alleged missteps of the admired MacDonald.

But the attitude of the corpses shows that he has not murdered his companion. There is, however, another violent act which someone in his position might commit especially if, deprived of the film ("'is stimulant"), he had filled the void with his own fantasies and come to mistake his 'mate' for his dead mistress restored to life. This is sodomy, which in 1904 was a crime. Vickery and his companion standing in the 'dead end' of the siding would have both participated and hence both incurred the Biblical punishment - destruction by fire from heaven. (Crook 71)

The voluntary, explosive, and self-obliterating nature of Vickery's death, standing upright by the tracks to draw the lightening that would kill him, would be a reflection too of MacDonald's violent death in a room of Kipling's favorite Paris hotel.

In the end however, it must be emphasized that wherever the clues and allusions may lead, they do not provide evidence of a single definitive interpretation. Here again, the indeterminacy of the narrative comes into play, casting as deep shadows on a critic's interpretation of the components of the story, as it does upon that of Pyecroft, Pritchard and Hooper. For if Nora Crook, or for that matter Elliot Gilbert or Martin Seymour-Smith, had hit upon that absent something at the story's core "so terrifying that we should be unable to bear it," how should we know? The horror of the narrators,

which Crook attributes to their presumed discovery of the Vickery/Niven/Bathurst liaison, is founded upon their demonstrably fallible judgment, and is questionable in the most literal sense. We dare not believe their conclusions, as we know their understanding to be incomplete. We dare not disbelieve them, not knowing what else they may know or what they may not. Certainly Hooper betrays a greater knowledge than he is willing to explain when he responds to Pyecroft's account of Vickery's wanderings with the exclamation, "What walks! . . . Oh, my soul, what walks!" (T&D 420).

Ultimately, "Mrs. Bathurst" is an essentially Modernist, even Post-Modernist, narrative about narratives, demonstrating not only how little we know, but how little it is possible for us to know of the minds and souls of those around us. If, as Crook postulates, this is Kipling's reaction to the tragedy of General Sir Hector MacDonald as it well may be, it is also an exploration of a much wider principle expanding far beyond and deep within the world of the story itself: That the great ineffable horror at the core of the story is as much unnameable in its horror as it is horrible for being unnamed.

The impressive pairing of theme and structure in "Mrs. Bathurst" demonstrating the inability to know by the honest ignorance of the four narrators, and the horror of the unknowable by our inability to understand their horror, is generally held as a bench mark of density in Kipling's fiction. While its reputation as "the hardest of all the

stories" is well founded, there are others which approach this high standard, but which have not, perhaps, been appreciated in that respect, "The Gardener" and "Mary Postgate" among them. In this light, and of "Mary Postgate" in particular, Norman Page has written, "There are good grounds for believing that, nearly 70 years after the story's first appearance, Kipling's intentions [in this context his "art"] are still not fully and generally appreciated" (Page 41).

The questions Kipling leaves open in "The Gardener" invite us to apply ourselves to the interpretation with no guarantee our answers will be confirmed. Indeed, the clear intent of the story is to mislead, up to the crucial point of recognition. Whether the gardener is a Christ figure in the form of a tenderly compassionate mortal, or the Christ figure mistaken yet again for "the gardener" as Mary Magdalene had mistaken him millennia before, makes little difference to Kipling's theme of the pain of repression and the burden Victorian society imposes upon its straying members to preserve decency. Whether this man who plants flowers among the "merciless sea of black crosses," (D&C 351), is divinely cognizant of naming Helen's "nephew" her son, or whether he is an uncomprehendingly inspired agent, he extends to Helen a great mercy in the permission to grieve openly for her child. Whether this mercy is beyond her capacity to receive, we cannot know.

In "Mary Postgate" Kipling offers a more bitter treatment of similar characters and themes. As domestic companion to Miss Fowler, the bland and ungainly Mary is *de facto* governess

and surrogate mother to Miss Fowler's nephew, Wynn. (The possibility raised by Crook that Wynn is Miss Fowler's nephew as Michael is Helen's, seems remote and is in any case inconsequential). The natural maternal affection she lavishes on the boy is thoughtlessly repaid in abuse and scorn, even when he returns home from training in the Flying Corps, presumably a mature young man. Wynn's death during a training flight leaves Mary, like Helen, to devise and deal with the rituals of grief. With Miss Fowler, she sorts through Wynn's belongings, sets aside a very few keepsakes, and prepares to burn all that remains.

In town to buy paraffin for the pyre, Mary witnesses the death of little Edna Gerritt. Though the local doctor contends that the collapse of the barn which killed the child resulted from rotting timbers, Mary is certain that Edna is the victim of a German bomb. The Germans to her are pagan monsters, and she is certain "Wynn was a gentleman who for no consideration on earth would have torn little Edna into those vividly colored strips and strings" (DofC 438). As she sets alight the artifacts of Wynn's young life, with "the match that would burn her heart to ashes" (DofC 435-36), the fire reveals to Mary an injured German flier groaning at the foot of the tree in the garden. Rather than summoning aid, Mary assumes the role of woman whose "business was to make a happy home for - for a husband and children. Failing these - it was not a thing one should allow one's mind to dwell upon - but -" (DofC 440). Standing by in cold passion, Mary watches her enemy's death with unflinching satisfaction.

For most of Page's "nearly seventy years," the standard response to "Mary Postgate" has been dismissive, ranking it as merely another of Kipling's revenge stories. Yet here again, as in "Mrs. Bathurst," a more careful consideration of the clues implanted in the story-- for "the rigorously and sometimes excessively economical art of Kipling's later narratives tolerates no irrelevance, however trivial" (Page 42)-- reveals the possibility of a much more subtle and powerful story than such narrow interpretations admit.

A close look at Mary's German flier provides some of the clearest indications that more is going on in the story than the taking of revenge. To appreciate them, however, we need first to look at the relationship between Mary and her English flier, Wynn. Crook very correctly points out, "There are good reasons for Mary to hate Wynn. He has never said an affectionate or grateful word, for all her slaving for him, but on the contrary has thumped her and torn strips off her" (Crook 136-7) reminiscent of "those vividly coloured strips and strings" into which little Edna was torn. And although Mary preserves in her own mind the fiction that "Wynn was a gentleman [which he certainly was not] who for no consideration on earth" would have done such a thing as dropping bombs, she ignores the fact that his training in the Flying Corps was to teach him to do just that. The callousness and cruelty which kindles Mary's hatred of the German flier and his special pleading for her favors at his need, which infuriates her, are typical of Wynn. They are, in fact, the heinous causes of offense that Mary holds, and

vehemently denies holding, against her young and now vanished charge. The pain that Wynn has caused in Mary's life and her habitual repression of her tender feelings toward him, whether offered in love or smarting in rebuke, lead both Crook and Page to conclude that the German flier is a phantom of Mary's own creation, and an acceptable means for her to vent her rage against Wynn.

Considerations of the "German's" dress, his speech, and his suspiciously coincidental appearance in Miss Fowler's garden offer further support for the flier as a product of Mary's hysteria. Upon her discovery of the injured airman, Mary notes "he was dressed. . . in a uniform something like Wynn's with a flap buttoned across the chest" (DofC 436). Yet the German uniform of the era was single-breasted, with a high collar. The only image of an air-warrior that Mary's imagination could produce would necessarily wear the only Flying Corps uniform she had ever seen, Wynn's and that of the "two young men [at the funeral] in buttoned-up uniforms [who] stood beside the grave and spoke to her afterward" (DofC 427). Indeed, at first she wonders if the fallen aviator might be one of them.

When the broken ("*tout cassé*" - all broken) Prussian speaks, it is significant that he does not speak German. His words are an amalgam of German-accented English, addressing Mary as "Laty!" and very bad, nearly indecipherable, French. His only German word, "Toctor" is an English cognate which Mary might readily be expected to understand. With her elementary understanding of the German language, as

demonstrated by her flawed but intelligible reply to the specter, Mary could not be expected to understand the emotional pleadings of the native speaker. Neither could her subconscious imagination provide words for her hysterical creation in a language she did not command. It must therefore provide the most foreign sounding concoction it is able to dredge up, a combination of words from three languages, all spoken with German pronunciation.

The appearance of the hallucination, moreover, occurs just on the heels of Mary's thought that Wynn would have enjoyed the light of such a fire. The explanation of the fallen flyer's presence, that it is "quite possible for people to fall out of aeroplanes. . . [and] that trees were useful things to break an aviator's fall" (DofC 437), had likewise been provided by Wynn in idle and flamboyant conversation. Even the airplane from which Mary is certain her specter must have fallen had dubious beginnings in the spinster's imagination as she walked into town. "She could almost hear the beat of his [Wynn's] propellers overhead" (DofC 432), she thought. But by the time the doctor tries to convince her that the barn which killed Edna collapsed of dry rot, her suggestion has grown into a certainty. "'I saw it,' said Mary shaking her head. 'I heard it too'" (DofC 432). While we cannot doubt Mary's belief in what she saw, neither are we free from doubt that her experience is anything other than the hysterical product of repressed anger, frustration and rage. Like the critics who puzzle her story out, Mary is entirely capable of constructing her own interpretation of events.

It is only through a very careful reading in fact, that the clues which reveal Mary's hysteria become apparent. So subtle is the reticence of Kipling's narrator, so integral are the clues to the narrative process, so transparent, as Eliot says, is the writing, that it can hardly be called a matter of misreading to believe the reality that Mary herself creates. It seems unlikely that such perceptive critics as George Orwell and Edmund Wilson, both of whom took the tale at face value and reviled it as a mere revenge story, could easily fall into the trap of the unreliable narrator. Rather, what Kipling has created is such a perfect emulation of deranged fantasy, that the ambiguity, or ambivalence, exists as much in the mind of the reader as on the page. Our entry into Mary's world is so seamless and real that we are hardly prepared, and nearly prevented, from seeing the aberrations of self delusion in which we almost feel we have participated.

As in "Mrs. Bathurst," the indeterminacy of the narrative structure enhances the ambiguity of both "The Gardener" and "Mary Postgate," and entices the reader to look carefully at the deeper tints and hues. There is a difference, however, in the narrator's role in creating ambiguity between "Mrs. Bathurst" and the two later stories. While "Mrs. Bathurst"'s theme of the incompleteness of narrative is illustrated by narrators whose knowledge is both individually and collectively incomplete, in "The Gardener" and "Mary Postgate" the theme of repression is abetted by a narrator whose

ambiguous neutrality permits us, if we will, to continue in possible error, while scrupulously not hindering our discovery of possible truth. Consequently, while the trail of falsehoods that covers the facts of Michael Turrell's illegitimate birth are recounted in the opening paragraph of "The Gardener," the narrator does not tell us it is so. He tells us only that "everyone in the village" knew it to be so. While providing good and sufficient reason to doubt the identity and even the existence of the German flier in "Mary Postgate," the narrator assures us that "There was no doubt as to his nationality" (DofC 436). The question of whether that unspecified but indisputable nationality was actually German or Mary's hysterical construction of a German, goes unanswered. Once again, as in "Mrs. Bathurst," the narrative strategy in telling the tale is remarkably well suited to the theme.

Finally, there is a certain cosmic significance, within the context of his works, to Kipling's use of reticence, ambiguity and indeterminacy as structural components. While the themes of repression and the horror of the unknowable dominate "The Gardener," "Mary Postgate" and "Mrs. Bathurst," implicit within those themes are the themes of abandonment and isolation. Helen Turrell is isolated in her secret grief for her son just as Holden is for the loss of his wife and child in "Without Benefit of Clergy." The position of "Mary Postgate" is as grossly misunderstood and unappreciated as that of the flintworker in "The Knife and the Naked Chalk," and the necessity to turn aside an abortive attempt at healing

by Stephen de Sautré in "The Eye of Allah" is little different from the suggested inability (though Kipling leaves the question open) of Helen Turrell to perceive proffered solace in "The Gardener."

As the themes of isolation and abandonment within a random and oblivious universe, or in the case of "The Gardener" a universe that is minded but not necessarily governed by God, pervade Kipling's work, so it is necessary for Kipling as creator of this universe to maintain a detachment, a distance permitting the random universe to remain random, and not impose a controlling order. This is certainly not to say that Kipling's stories lack order or control. The multitudinous layers of meaning, "double-and-treble-figured, giving a new pattern in a shift of light" (PTH xi) require the most stringent organization and control and are the patterns of genius. The abandonment and isolation of the reader by a detached and unconcerned narrator, to struggle with the tale just as the characters also struggle in their search for meaning, is a component of that genius.

L'Envoi

*Something I owe to the soil that grew--
More to the life that fed--
But most to Allah Who gave me two
Separate sides to my head.*

"The Two-Sided Man"

Kim

Martin Seymour-Smith is adamant in his opinion that Kipling "was not a part of" mainstream Modernism (Seymour-Smith 352). On balance he is probably correct not only in his assessment, but in his approach to the definition. The complexity and the contradictions embodied in Kipling's work suggest that in many ways it may be easier to define what Kipling is by what he is not. Eliot's 1941 essay in introduction of his Choice of Kipling's Verse begins and ends with the assertion that Kipling is not a poet, dedicated to the art form itself, but with intent a writer of verse whose work at times transcends the limits and becomes poetry. Just how and when and why that transcendent transformation occurs he cannot say. George Orwell's reply to Eliot puts the idea in different terms, but the critic still finds it useful to define Kipling by what he is not. With qualified admiration for a "vulgar thought vigorously expressed" (Orwell 159), Orwell contends that while Kipling is not a good poet, his abilities lift him above the run of bad poets. "One can perhaps," he says, "place Kipling more satisfactorily . . . if one describes him as a good bad poet" (Orwell 156). Even his charge that Kipling "is a jingo

imperialist" is made only in support of the argument that Kipling is "not a Fascist" (Orwell 141).

The same line of argument, however, can be followed to wholly different conclusions. Kipling is *not* a jingo imperialist. Yes, he is belligerent. His attack on Irish activists in Parliament in the poem "Cleared" is harsh, bitter and confrontational. Yes, he is chauvinist and imperialist, singing in his poetry the praises of England and the Empire as he saw them, with division unthinkable and dissolution unconscionable. "The Enlightenments of Paggett, M. P." detail a long list of reasons why this must be so. Yet Kipling is not wholly belligerent and chauvinist. "Recessional," as discussed earlier, is a warning to his nation that the mere exercise of imperial power, in the absence of what Conrad's Marlow terms the "idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea" (Conrad 7), invites the judgement of God, and that the Empire itself eventually will pass as "one with Nineveh and Tyre!" (FN 202). "The Man Who Would be King," among other stories, raises questions of competence and even of right in the rule of one nation over another. If Kipling in one light is a jingo imperialist, a shift of the light reveals in him a critic of Empire and a moralist and Jeremiah to a nation prone, in his eyes, to "put her trust/ In reeking tube and iron shard" (FN 202).

Kipling is not a racist, or again, at least not wholly so. The love he bears for India and his carefully cultivated understanding of the people, their customs, beliefs and character, are not consistent with the bigotry of racism.

Nirad C. Chaudhuri, whom Kipling's characters would have called a "Babu," while confessing his hurt at the "excessive display of Anglo-Saxon pride" and contempt in many of Kipling's Indian stories, nevertheless considers Kim "not only the finest novel in the English language with an Indian theme, but also one of the greatest of English novels in spite of that theme" (Chaudhuri 47). The greatness of the novel he attributes, not to any dispassionate observation on Kipling's part (Kipling is almost never dispassionate about India), but to:

Kipling's vision of a much bigger India, a vision whose profundity we Indians would be hard put to it to match . . . He had arrived at a true and moving sense of that India which is almost timeless, and had come to love it.

This India pervades all his books in greater or lesser degree and constitutes the foundation on which he weaves his contrapuntal patterns. (Chaudhuri 49)

Kipling, whose slanderous characterizations of "natives" and whose condescending dialogue in the mouths of "sahibs" gives painful offense, displays at the heart of his stories a love for India that gives birth to profound understanding. Shamsul Islam in his study of Kipling's Law, while acknowledging Kipling's apparent dislike of Hinduism as a system of belief, finds "that Kipling was deeply aware of Islamic literature and religion, and that he made frequent use of these sources" (Islam 37). "The Head of the District," which Chaudhuri finds offensive and Islam defends, demonstrates not only Kipling's

understanding and respect for Islamic culture, but an attitude that speaks of Indian, not Anglo-Indian, prejudice. If Kipling is guilty of racism, it is of a curious variety mingled with knowledge and a brutal affection, the more hurtful because of its intimacy.

The same defining process may be applied to Kipling's work. Whatever else they may be, the stories are neither simple nor trivial. I hardly dare to mention an exception to prove this rule, for fear of having overlooked the significance of what appears to be an example of simplicity or triviality. As mentioned before, Boris Ford's analysis of "Mary Postgate" as merely a vehicle for Kipling's anti-German hysteria appears very shallow in the light of a closer reading. As a psychological study the story offers support for a number of interpretations, yet resists definitive explication. Crook sees similarities and specific allusions to Chaucer's Prioress' Tale, presenting "Mary Postgate" as a Miracle of the Virgin genre tale. Roger Lancelyn Green reports that Andrew Lang, who would later become one of Kipling's earliest and most ardent proponents, found his introduction to Kipling's work distasteful. Of "The Mark of the Beast" Lang wrote, "I would gladly give Ian [General Sir Ian Hamilton] a fiver if he had never been the means of my reading this poisonous stuff, which has left an extremely disagreeable impression on my mind" (Green 14). Yet Bonamy Dobrée finds in the story a complex example of Kipling's attitude of respect toward all creeds and a forceful, if gruesome, examination of how events "sometimes force people to

do what they would normally revolt from doing" (Dobrée 136). Somewhat schizophrenically, Elliot Gilbert characterizes "The Bull That Thought" as both "the one [story] which most fully explores the relation of brutality to art . . . a moving and delightful tale" and one which "may at any moment lapse into a grotesque 'portrait of the artist as a young bull'" (Gilbert 169).

There are stories that Kipling himself considered unworthy of print. The authorized edition of Abaft the Funnel was only published to squelch an unauthorized American version in the absence of international copyright agreements. Yet even here, "Sleipner--Late Thurinda" is an interesting tale of the supernatural, drawing on sources in Norse mythology. While none but the most mediocre authors' work is of consistent density throughout, and Kipling is hardly mediocre, it is difficult to feel confident in pointing out examples of mediocrity in his work. His deceptively unobtrusive themes and allusions, and the seamlessness of antithetical levels of meaning in his narrative structure make us wary, wondering if perhaps what was read in full sun requires a lamp in a close room to reveal its finer patterns.

Finally, Kipling is not a Modernist. There are, as demonstrated, elements of theme and structure that appear throughout his work as important and clearly Modernist components of his distinctive style. Yet, as one who began to publish his work in the 1880's, chronology at the very least is against the inclusion of Kipling among the Modernists. There are, moreover, certain "Victorian" elements to his work

as well. His subject matter certainly, his expansiveness and energy, and his consistent fascination with the interaction between cultures have roots in the 19th century, even if they bear fruit, as they continue to do, in the 20th. This blending of Modernist themes and techniques with Victorian experience, emphasizing as it does the issues that continue to challenge us--nationalism, racial interaction, isolation and abandonment, and the incapacity of man's understanding--is the key to Kipling's significance as a literary figure, in terms of both art and meaning, at the end of the 20th century as much and perhaps more than he was at the beginning.

Elliot Gilbert theorized² that Kipling, like Dante who was also born in a year numbered 65, was aware that his biblically allotted span of "three-score years and ten" would be precisely divided between the two centuries in which he would live. Consequently, Gilbert concluded, his works would reflect of division of style, a conscious effort to differentiate his work of the 19th century from that of the 20th.

Whether this particular theory holds up is open to question, but Gilbert is certainly not alone in noticing a form a duality in Kipling's work. Dobrée styles Kipling as both "Realist and Fabulist." Edmund Wilson contends that the pain and anger of the stories stem from the division of

²In a discussion in his office, my first ever academic discussion of Rudyard Kipling.

Kipling's early childhood between the Eden of his parents' home in India and the purgatory of his boarding house existence in Southsea; a separation the child Rudyard could not logically comprehend and the adult Rudyard could not confront. Seymour-Smith speculates (his word) that the divisive tension is sexual, the result of homosexual urges suppressed by heterosexual conventions. And Salman Rushdie postulates a perpetual conflict between "Ruddy Baba" whose childhood was spent in India and "Kipling Sahib" who wrote about it from an Imperial perspective. The result, Rushdie says, is that, "There will always be plenty in Kipling that I will find difficult to forgive; but there is also enough truth in these stories to make them impossible to ignore" (Rushdie 80).

The gem that is the art of Rudyard Kipling seems to be not brilliant-cut--round, with every facet obliquely reflecting several others--but emerald-cut, with each facet having its opposite parallel. The strident imperialism of Kipling's public pronouncements is reflected in mirror image in his stories of the fate of empire. The cold physical brutality of "Sea Constables" illuminates by contrast the intellectual violence of "The Eye of Allah." Even within individual stories such as "Mary Postgate" or "Mrs. Bathurst," the hard surface of meaning in one interpretation bears on its face the shadowy reflection of another, opposing meaning. And though a particular facet may flash brightly from one angle, we cannot be sure that, in a shift of light, its counter will not appear of equal brilliance, quality and proportion, or that yet

another facet may not catch the light. The double- and treble-figured creations of Kipling's art are of just such an unpredictable and delightful nature.

*O there'll surely come a day
When they'll give you all your pay
And treat you as a Christian ought to do.
So, until that day comes round,
Heaven keep you safe and sound,
And, Thomas, here's my best respects to you!*
"To T.A."
Barrack-Room Ballads

WORKS CONSULTED

- Arata, Stephen D. "A Universal Foreignness: Kipling in the Fin-de-Siecle." English Literature in Transition. 36:1 1993.
- Arnold, Matthew. The Poems of Matthew Arnold: 1840-1867. Ed. Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch London: Oxford U. P., 1913.
- Bentley, Eric, ed. The Importance of Scrutiny: Selections From Scrutiny: A Quarterly Review, 1932-1948. New York: New York UP, 1964.
- Berman, Marshall. All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982.
- Carrington, C. E. The Life of Rudyard Kipling. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1956.
- Chaudhuri, Nirad C. "The Finest Story About India - In English," Encounter, #43 v8 (April 1957): 47-53.
- Clayton, John J. Gestures of Healing: Anxiety and the Modern Novel. Amherst, Massachusetts: U of Massachusetts P, 1991.
- Conrad, Joseph. Heart of Darkness. New York: Norton, 1963.
- Cowley, Malcolm. Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920's. New York: Penguin, 1951 (1976).
- Dobrée, Bonamy. Rudyard Kipling. London: Longmans, Green, 1951.
- Eliot, T. S., ed. A Choice of Kipling's Verse. London: Faber & Faber, 1963.
- , "The Unfading Genius of Rudyard Kipling," Kipling Journal. March 1959.
- Faulkner, Peter, ed. The English Modernist Reader, 1910-1930. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1986.
- Faulkner, Peter. Modernism. London: Methuen, 1977.
- Foot, Timothy. "Fifty Years On, 'O Best Beloved' Kipling Is Making a Comeback." Smithsonian, v16 (January 1986): 34.
- Gilbert, Elliot L. The Good Kipling. Oberlin, Ohio: Ohio UP, 1970.
- , ed. Kipling and the Critics. New York: New York UP, 1965.

- Grant, Patrick. Six Modern Authors and Problems of Belief. London: Macmillan, 1979.
- Green, Roger Lancelyn, ed. Kipling: The Critical Heritage. London. Routledge, 1971.
- Gross, John, ed. The Age of Kipling. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972.
- Hoffman, Frederick J. The Twenties: American Writing in the Post-War Decade. New York: Free Press, 1962.
- Islam, Shamsul. Kipling's Law: A Study of His Philosophy of Life. New York: St. Martin's, 1975.
- "Just So." Rev. of Just So (a musical review). Times Literary Supplement 30 Nov. 1990.
- Kamra, Sukeshi. Kipling's Vision: A Study in the Short Story. New Delhi: Prestige, 1989.
- Kipling, Rudyard. The Writings in Prose and Verse of Rudyard Kipling. Vols. I-XXV. New York: Scribner's, 1897-1911.
- Korg, Jacob. Language in Modern Literature: Innovation and Experiment. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1979.
- Levenson, Michael H. A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine 1908-1922. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984.
- Lodge, David. "Indeterminacy in Modern Narrative." Kipling Considered. Ed. Phillip Mallett. New York: St. Martin's, 1989.
- Mason, Philip. Kipling: The Glass, The Shadow and The Fire. London: Jonathon Cape, 1975.
- Meyers, Jeffrey, ed. Hemingway: The Critical Heritage. London: Routledge, 1982.
- Moss, Robert F. Rudyard Kipling and the Fiction of Adolescence. New York: St. Martin's, 1982.
- Orel, Harold. "Adapting the Conventions of Historical Romance: Rider Haggard's Eric Brighteyes." English Literature in Transition. 36:1 1993.
- , "Kipling and Children's Literature." English Literature in Transition. 36:2 1993.
- , A Kipling Chronology. Boston: Hall, 1990.
- , ed. Kipling: Interviews and Recollections. Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble, 1983.

- Orwell, George. "Rudyard Kipling." Dickens, Dali, and Others: Studies in Popular Culture. New York: Reynal, 1946.
- Page, Norman. A Kipling Companion. London: Macmillan, 1984.
- Pound, Ezra. Guide to Kulcher. Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions, 1952.
- Rao, K. Bhaskara. Rudyard Kipling's India. Norman, OK: U of Oklahoma P, 1967.
- Rev. of "They," Rudyard Kipling. The Literary Digest 1 Oct. 1904.
- Rev. of Traffic and Discoveries, Rudyard Kipling. The Contemporary Review Nov. 1904.
- Ricketts, Harry, ed. Kipling's Lost World. Cornwall: Tabb, 1989.
- Rushdie, Salman. Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991. London: Granta Books, 1991.
- Seymour-Smith, Martin. Rudyard Kipling. London: Papermac, 1990.
- Simon, John. "The Story of the Gadsbys." New York, v13 (December 22, 1980): 57.
- Wilson, Edmund. The Wound and the Bow. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1941.
- , Letters on Literature and Politics: 1912-1972. Ed. Elena Wilson. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1957.
- Wilkinson, Frederick. Battle Dress: A Gallery of Military Style and Ornament. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970.
- Withycombe, E. G. The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names. Oxford: Clarendon, 1977.

APPENDIX

ABBREVIATIONS OF KIPLING'S WORKS CITED

<u>B&W</u>	<u>In Black and White</u>
<u>D&C</u>	<u>Debits and Credits</u>
<u>DofC</u>	<u>A Diversity of Creatures</u>
<u>FN</u>	<u>The Five Nations</u>
<u>MT</u>	<u>Soldiers Three and Military Tales, vol. 1</u>
<u>PTH</u>	<u>Plain Tales From the Hills</u>
<u>R&F</u>	<u>Rewards and Fairies</u>
<u>SofM</u>	<u>Something of Myself</u>
<u>T&D</u>	<u>Traffics and Discoveries</u>