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The Spirit of the Jest: Humour, Incongruity and Kipling's Engagement with Modernity.

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Submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Postcolonial Studies

The University of Kent

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September 2017

99950 words

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Citation Abbreviation Table

Abbreviation	Source
Andrews, <i>Child</i>	Andrews, Malcolm. <i>Dickens and the Grown-Up Child</i> . Houndmills, Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1994.
Andrews, <i>Laughter</i>	Andrews, Malcolm. <i>Dickensian Laughter: Essays on Dickens and Humour</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
Anstey, <i>Bayard</i>	Anstey, F. <i>A Bayard from Bengal</i> . London: Methuen & Co., 1902.
Bergson, <i>Laughter</i>	Bergson, Henri. <i>Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic</i> . Eds. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell. New York: The Macmillan Company: 1914.
Carlyle, <i>Heroes</i>	Carlyle, Thomas. "Lectures on Heroes (1840). On Heroes, Hero-worship, and the Heroic in History." Project Gutenberg. 1997.
<i>Debts</i>	Kipling, Rudyard. <i>Debts and Credits</i> . New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1926.
<i>Diversity</i>	Kipling, Rudyard. <i>A Diversity of Creatures</i> . London: Macmillan and Co., 1952.
Eagleton, <i>Ideology</i>	Eagleton, Terry. <i>The Ideology of the Aesthetic</i> . Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1990.
Eagleton, 'Flight'	Eagleton, Terry. "The Flight to the Real." <i>Cultural Politics at the Fin De Siècle</i> . Eds. Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. 11-21.
Freud [1960]	Freud, Sigmund. <i>Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious</i> . Trans. James Strachey. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960.
Freud [1976]	Freud, Sigmund. <i>Jokes and their Relationship to the Unconscious</i> . Eds. James Strachey and Angela Richards. London: Pelican Books, 1976.
<i>Kim</i>	Kipling, Rudyard. <i>Kim</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
<i>Kim</i> [1901]	Kipling, Rudyard. <i>Kim</i> . Ed. Jeffrey Meyers. London: Macmillan, 1901.
<i>Letters</i>	Pinney, Thomas, ed. <i>The Letters of Rudyard Kipling</i> . London: Macmillan, 1990. 6 vols.
<i>Limits</i>	Kipling, Rudyard. <i>Limits and Renewals</i> . London: Macmillan and Co., 1932.
Montefiore, <i>Time's Eye</i>	Montefiore, Jan, ed. <i>In Time's Eye: Essays on Rudyard Kipling</i> . Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013.
Montefiore, <i>Kipling</i>	Montefiore, Jan. <i>Rudyard Kipling</i> . Horndon: Northcote

	House Publishers Ltd., 2007.
<i>Plain Tales</i>	Kipling, Rudyard. <i>Plain Tales from the Hills</i> . London: Penguin Books, 1994.
<i>Poems</i>	Pinney, Thomas, ed. <i>The Cambridge Edition of the Poems of Rudyard Kipling</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 3 vols.
<i>SoM</i>	Kipling, Rudyard. <i>Something of Myself</i> . London: Macmillan, 1937.
Spivak, <i>Critique</i>	Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. <i>A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present</i> . Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999.
<i>Stalky</i>	Kipling, Rudyard. <i>Stalky & Co</i> . London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1899.
<i>StS</i>	Kipling, Rudyard. <i>From Sea to Sea and Other Sketches</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 2 vols.
<i>Traffics</i>	Kipling, Rudyard. <i>Traffics and Discoveries</i> . London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1928.

Introduction

Overview

This thesis investigates Kipling's response to colonialism, capitalism and modernity, as a total system, and one that he engaged with in a critical and creative way. It does so by tracing the threads of incongruity and humour. This approach has been taken for a number of reasons. Firstly, Kipling's interest in the incongruous, appears not only in the material dealing with the colonial East, but extends throughout his writing career. Secondly, humour and incongruity are features that contribute to the aesthetic and ambivalence of Kipling's work, and their absence usually denotes a shift into a particularly dark and introspective register. Finally, incongruity and humour are rarely examined in Kipling's work (C. A. Bodelsen and J.M.S. Tompkins are rare exceptions), and their significance in his material has not been fully explored. The omission is particularly noticeable in the context of Kipling's critical engagement with the totality of the material world. By the material world, I mean the idea of a systemised world that emerged as a product of colonialism and capitalism and subject to continuous change. In this world, the individual has been diminished and reduced to a simple component of the greater system. In taking this approach, I am addressing a neglected area of Kipling studies.

Kipling was active as a creative writer for approximately fifty years, and was someone who, through the periods of high Victorian colonialism, *fin-de-siècle* imperialism, and finally modernity, continuously engaged with a modernising world. I take the view that this extended engagement creates difficulty in using single-strand approaches derived from Postcolonialism, Marxism or Modernism, or indeed from any other single discipline *on its own*, to fully evaluate his material. The practice in this thesis is therefore to combine appropriate critical domains in order to interrogate Kipling's material, as he engaged the external world system of colonialism, capitalism and modernity from the standpoint of an isolated individual.

Kipling's aesthetic is different to that of the Victorian bourgeois, preoccupied with family, respectability and conformity, and different again to that of formal modernism concerned with cultural revolution and textual innovation. The

strangeness of it appears in the apparent playfulness of his enigmatic address of 1888, given to a fresh intake of colonial officials newly arrived in India:

You stand on the threshold of new [imperial] experiences – most of which will distress you and a few amuse. You are at the centre of a gigantic *Practical Joke*. Strive to enter the spirit of it and jest temperately. ('A Free Hand.' *The Pioneer*. 10 November 1888.)

One would have expected that address to be rather sombre and intended to inspire the new intake of colonial officers with the ethos of duty and empire, but these seem to be absent. Instead, we have the spirit of the jest and the suggestion of a gigantic practical joke. Perhaps the colonial enterprise was, after all, just a gigantic practical joke, woven of deceit, as Salman Rushdie implied when William Methwold removed his wig at the moment when British rule of India ended (Rushdie 153). I view Kipling's jest as ambivalent, indeterminate and incongruous, a fertile place for creativity which positions it differently from the way humour is usually treated in colonial texts. All too often, laughter and humour are analysed as signs of anxiety, breakdown, ridicule or control, rather than positioned in the indeterminate place of creativity that I find in Kipling.

In the introduction to the 1988 Penguin edition of *Wee Willie Winkie*, Hugh Haughton writes that:

[Kipling's] best stories precisely through their grotesque interweaving of play, plotting and politics, acquire a complex, unstable figurative density that enables them to invoke forces which elude and undermine the writer's conscious designs. (*Wee Willie Winkie* 9 [1988])

This is the instability that I follow throughout the thesis, the ever-present contest between conscious reason and mysterious forces that undermine it. In my reading, Kipling's work is restless, impatient, questioning and continually engaged in the relationship between the individual and the greater world system.

Caroline Rooney and Kaori Nagai present a collection of edited essays that originate from the field of Postcolonial Studies, but contain critical essays which examine his work, from the earliest material to the emergence of the modernist movement. Alongside work such as Donna Landry's and Caroline Rooney's

‘Empire’s Children’ which discusses Kipling’s colonial work in the context of a ‘wish–fulfilling daydream’ (Landry and Rooney 60), there is Benita Parry’s essay ‘Kipling’s Unloved Race: the Retreat from Modernity’. Parry moves Kipling from the colonial context into the modern, dealing explicitly with Kipling’s response to modernity and the disruption symbolised by the Jew figure, and arguing that Kipling recoiled from, rather than embraced, modernity. Jan Montefiore, in her *In Time’s Eye: Essays on Rudyard Kipling*, offers a selection of edited essays from a wide variety of authors that view Kipling in a historical and literary frame, extending from the colonial to the modernist eras. George Orwell portrays Kipling as a writer who belonged to the period of 1885–1902, and concerned with life’s platitudes. By contrast Harry Ricketts in his ‘A Kipling–conditioned world’, extends Kipling’s influence beyond that to the period of the war poets. In both these collections, the Kipling that emerges is not a fixed beacon but rather a constantly changing figure that refuses to be pinned down. This uncertainty is addressed by Rooney and Nagai when writing that their selection of material is governed by:

The question of why it is that Kipling continues to be a significant literary and cultural icon together with the question of what the maintenance of this legacy variously means in the counter–currents of Postcolonialism and Anglo–American globalisation. (Rooney and Nagai 14)

It is the uncertainties that Rooney and Nagai highlight that this thesis responds to. Specifically I use the investigative threads of humour and incongruity to examine Kipling’s engagement with a world that consists of colonialism, capitalism and modernity, all operating together as one complex system. By using this approach I position Kipling as a writer engaged with a developing global capitalism and simultaneously deriving creative energies from the inconsistencies within that world.

For convenience I discuss the sources for the thesis in four broad groups: the first is biographic; the second is critical material that directly engages with Kipling’s writing; and the third group originates from the postcolonial arena. Finally there is material that is concerned with the modern and the onset of modernity. There exists an extensive library of Kipling biographies, commencing with Thurston Hopkins’s *Rudyard Kipling: A Character Study* of 1915 and the final (so far) Charles Allen’s, *Kipling Sahib: India and the Making of Rudyard Kipling* (2008). There is also

Kipling's autobiography *Something of Myself* (1937). A count of the more significant titles reveals some eighteen, spread over ninety-three years. Most were intended for the popular market but all represent an assessment of Kipling's life and his writing, taken from a single point in time and from a single perspective.

Three examples illustrate this ruling tendency. Angus Wilson emphasises Kipling's literary properties, in the context of the loss of an idyllic childhood dream, and an adult imagination in confrontation with modernity. Harry Ricketts discusses Kipling's relationship to modernism, and while Ricketts is careful not to claim that Kipling was a modernist, he emphasises the unacknowledged influence that Kipling had on modernist writers (Ricketts, *Minute*, 363-4). Ricketts goes further and locates some traits in Kipling's work that suggest a modernist dimension (Ricketts, *Minute*, 287-8). These observations are significant; they introduce the idea of Kipling as a historical writer, one whose material responded as the environment around him changed. In this case, it is the changing face of the modern: from a modern that the Victorians recognised into a modernity that described the western world from the second decade of the twentieth century. Finally, David Gilmour produced a biography in which Kipling's literary and political imagination, dominated by colonialism, is seen as in an engagement with an increasingly oppressive modernity. What I take from this material, is the idea of Kipling, over an extended period of time, creatively engaging with a fluid modern world and using a literary technique that develops and responds to that external world.

My examination of Kipling's critical material starts with three sources from the 1950s and 1960s that view Kipling in the context of the English literary tradition. J.M.S. Tompkins identifies five major themes in Kipling's work: laughter, hatred, revenge, healing and the relationship of the individual to the incomprehensible world surrounding him. Of these, the notions of laughter and of the individual and society are most important to this thesis. From Noel Annan, I note Kipling's preoccupation with the individual and society, but resist Annan's 'nexus of groups' within Kipling's writing, which he argues, informs Kipling's notion of a coherent society (Annan 326). Annan also recognised Kipling's more than cursory interest in the relationships between science, technology and a wider society, noting its innovative turn against the high Victorian distrust of science. Annan credits Edmund Wilson for establishing the 'orthodox view' of Kipling as 'the champion of authoritarian upper middle class rule' (Annan 324). Wilson provides a reading of Kipling's work which

argues that Kipling was influenced by psychological damage he suffered as a child in England, first as an infant in a boarding house, and then when he attended the United Services College at Westward Ho! This view is still accepted today when attempting to explain the harshness and violence in many of his stories. Wilson does, however, provide a perceptive view of Kipling's engagement with technology. When commenting upon Kipling's machines in *The Day's Work*, Wilson comments that he 'managed to convey with precision, both the grimness and the exhilaration which characterized the triumph of the machine' (E. Wilson 156) and that his words were 'hard, short and close-fitting, giv[ing] the impression of ball-bearings and cogs' (E. Wilson 155).

C. A. Bodelsen, presents a reading of Kipling's post-World War 1 stories by investigating dualities in Kipling's work (identified by Bodelsen as the day and night worlds) and the significance of laughter. Kipling's laughter, according to Bodelsen, is not representative of collapse, but indicative of 'a state of release and exaltation' (Bodelsen 5), while in some stories ('Vortex', 'Aunt Ellen' and others) it becomes spiritual and 'forms a cosmic revelation' (Bodelsen 8), where the characters 'roll to the ground, gush, shriek and groan, till they are on the point of suffocation' (Bodelsen 11). Bodelsen's interpretation of Kipling's orgasmic laughter is striking. It depicts a breakdown of the constructed self, but not a breakdown of despair or repression. Rather it represents an event of joy and of new birth and it is the interpretation that I follow in my thesis.

A psychoanalytically informed reading of Kipling's Indian stories is given by Lewis D. Wurgaft. Wurgaft examines the 'imaginative element in the British involvement in India' in the context of 'two contrasting British attitudes towards India: the attraction of India as a land unknown, mysterious, and seductive; and the self-mastering and self-sacrificing repression and denial involved in the commitment to govern' (Wurgaft xi). In Wurgaft's reading, Kipling's material exemplifies this tension, the 'unendurable pressure which is the product of the collision between the isolated individual – the isolated self – and the physical and mental stress of India service' (Wurgaft 127). Wurgaft's sources are predominantly historical and psychological rather than literary, but what I derive from his study is the idea of an engagement present in Kipling's work between the isolated self and an external system.

In contrast to the psychoanalytically informed approach of Wurgaft, Teresa Hubel examines Kipling's work from a political viewpoint. She finds that, despite his obvious love for India and his detailed depictions of Indian life and customs, structures of power underpin his work that operate to maintain colonialist superiority (Hubel 26). She identifies the schism between Kipling's colonial politics and the 'repudiation of imperialist politics by liberal and Marxist intellectuals', as a cause of the failure of Kipling's work to be accepted into either the Victorian or modernist literary canons (Hubel 7). Hubel also highlights Kipling's liminal position as a writer, stating that on political, aesthetic and ethical levels, there is a lack of consensual opinion about his work (Hubel 23-4).

Jan Montefiore integrates a range of factors present in Kipling's work to produce an assessment of earlier critiques, and writes of a daemonic quality to his work that produces a 'rank vitality' (Montefiore, *Kipling*, 8). She continues that, despite Kipling's 'metallic, type-casting exactness, his writing has something rank, something excitingly uncontrollable about it' (Montefiore, *Kipling*, 8). The interpretation taken of Montefiore's 'rank vitality' is that of some form of unidentifiable spirit within Kipling's writing, which I identify as Henri Bergson's *élan vital*, the mysterious spirit that supposedly energised human existence and corresponded with the ideas of vitalism in the early twentieth century. It forms a major part of the thesis, appearing in Chapters Three and Four with the examination of Kipling's machines and of a modern society saturated with machines and systemised thinking. Citing Kipling's 'parodic brilliance and invented voices', his engagement with 'revolutionary' technologies, his skill as an inventive public writer that in an elusive combination subverts 'their apparently traditionalist modes of representation', Montefiore positions Kipling as a writer 'on the cusp of modernity,' (Montefiore, *Kipling*, 15-6).

Like Montefiore, John Kucich follows Noel Annan's idea of Kipling's deep engagement with society and its cohesiveness, but departs from Annan's idea of a nexus of groups underpinning Kipling's cohesive society. Instead, Kucich suggests, that for Kipling, it was a shared suffering, unique to the enterprising and virile Victorian middle class that bonded society. Benita Parry disagrees with this view and although distancing herself from Kucich's sadomasochistic interpretation of Kipling's 'class-coded modes of solidarity and domination', she does agree with Kucich's view, that Kipling was concerned with maintaining and extending middle-

class ideology and power (Parry, 'Kipling's Unloved Race', 25). In this, I concur with Benita Parry, and it is a view that I incorporate into my analysis of Kipling's material.

A nuanced and insightful view of Kipling's material is presented by Zohreh Sullivan that positions Kipling as an isolated individual, re-enacting childhood trauma in his intricate fictions of colonial life. She reads the ambivalence in Kipling's work as undermining a single-voiced narrator, threatening disintegration and questioning Kipling's own commitment to the ideology of colonialism. But her commentary itself becomes ambivalent, where she writes of 'Kipling's playful and profoundly ambivalent narratives' (Sullivan 4), as if Kipling's playfulness is itself destabilising the notion of ambivalence, so that the reader becomes thoroughly confused as to his intentions. Identifying a dualism in Kipling's work, Sullivan writes that there is the outer frame of the 'accurate, the official and the prescribed as against the dreamlike, the repressed, and the outlawed' (Sullivan 30). Sullivan's description is analogous to Kipling's own description of his day and night persona, or the struggle between his creative demon and his more responsible self. Interestingly, Sullivan aligns the duality in Kipling, which she argues originates from the struggle for power between the two halves of his character, with Bhabha's analysis of colonial anxiety. She writes that:

Kipling laughs at non-rational presences and reasons them away, here, [in 'My Own True Ghost Story'] the entangled encounter with the Other, and the unseen that slips from mimicry into menace, reflects Kipling's anxieties about control over the colonial self and its empire, and prepares us for what Bhabha calls 'the twin figures of narcissism and paranoia that repeat furiously, uncontrollably' in scenes of colonial power where history turns to farce' (Sullivan 69).

This is a pointer to one form of laughter in early Kipling, which was to develop into the humour in late Kipling, considered by Bodelsen and Tompkins. In this later material, I read Kipling's subversive element as directed towards the totality of the external world that comprised imperialism, capitalism and modernity, and not just the colonial enterprise.

Sullivan identifies Kipling as a sociologist (Sullivan 9) who was sensitive to tensions between ‘the private truths known by the colonizers about themselves and cracks in the larger system’ (Sullivan 10). Sullivan presents the idea of fissure and crack as ultimately destructive, the beginnings of a transformation into a nonhuman form. I take an opposing view in this thesis, and investigate the crack or fissure as an incongruity, a place of fertility and renewal. Representations of laughter in Kipling are, for Sullivan, signs of collapse. She refers to hysterical laughter that erupts from the character Strickland in *Kim*, after failing to solve a problem, and that, ‘weeping, laughter and madness’ were an escape from the official colonial subject (Sullivan 64). Laughter and weeping are, she writes, ‘both subversive eruptions of the body over which, momentarily the mind has lost control’ (Sullivan 91). I deviate from these Freudian based interpretations of laughter, which relate to control and destructive collapse, instead arguing that laughter and humour arising out of incongruity are often constructive and a force for renewal. Andrew Smith investigates laughter in Kipling’s texts and, in a similar vein to Sullivan, finds that laughter ‘represents a highly politicised language of male hysteria’ (Smith 67). Smith nuances this stark comment by arguing that ‘comedy like the Gothic, can be used as a mode of transgression’ (Smith 67), and postulates on the possibility of laughter creating new possibilities, ‘as it radically questions formulations of narrative convention and socio–political reality’ (Smith 58).

Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein present a set of essays from a wide variety of sources that consider the role of humour in the postcolonial context, arguing that there are substantial relationships between the two. Of particular interest is Ulrike Erichsen’s essay, in which Erichsen identifies the necessary presence of a doubling and a duality in both humour and the postcolonial, a condition that requires the existence of two separate and distinct frames of reference. These two frames of reference she writes, ‘are often also indicated though code–switching and/or specific meta–lingual statements. This double–focus of humorous utterances forces the reader or listener to switch between two perspectives and two frames of reference’ (Erichsen 32). Erichsen’s duality of frames forces a double–focus on the part of the reader and splits the text, decentralising a single narrative into two ambivalent texts, or perhaps more. The ambivalence referred to by Erichsen, is a characteristic that Bhabha’s postcolonial theory, Kipling’s fictions, and humour, all seem to share. Uncertainty and disruption produced from mimicry and parody produce

ambivalence; so too does incongruity, which Henri Bergson relates to laughter and humour. Bergson predetermines laughter to be hostile, to coerce the incongruous back into conformity. That is not my interpretation in this thesis; rather, I develop the approach of Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin, by viewing the incongruous as a special place of fertility and individuality which resists enforced systemisation and recognises individuality and creativity.¹ In Kipling's fictions, I take incongruity as the entry point to the special place of Bodelsen's 'cosmic revelation' (Bodelsen 8), which is the highest form of Kipling's jest, and a place where suppressed individuality can emerge and from which renewal is possible. In my reading, Kipling was concerned with the relationship between the individual and the greater external cultural system that surrounded that individual, which is reflected in the transgressions, subversions and ambivalence of his writing.

Postcolonial theory is an obvious source to turn to when analysing Kipling's material, especially his work prior to World War I. Recent postcolonial theory has developed, in part, from French 'high' theory that originated from the work of Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan and Michel Foucault. Its subsequent development by Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi Bhabha now form the central core of postcolonial theory. This platform has provided a launch pad for my investigation, but while it has offered valuable insights, it does not in my view, provide a satisfactory means to fully understanding Kipling's work.

I read Kipling as a writer who continually engaged with the world in its totality, and that engagement continued throughout his almost fifty year writing career. The world with which Kipling engaged was not static or frozen in the 1880s, but was in a process of continuous development, and it was a world that was modern, although that 'modern' changed. I argue that this engagement with the world system is a key link between Kipling's material, the postcolonial, the modern and Modernism. By world system, I mean a system having the characteristics Immanuel Wallerstein describes in chapter two of his *World System Analysis: An Introduction*. According to Wallerstein, the modern world system originated in the sixteenth century, and is characterised by the division of labour combined with significant

¹ Carlyle, Thomas. "Signs of the Times." *The Collected Works of Thomas Carlyle*. Vol. 3. London: Chapman and Hall, 1858. 16 vols. ; Landow, George P. *The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.

internal exchange of goods and flows of capital and labour (Wallerstein 23).

Additionally this world system is ‘*not* bounded by a unitary political structure,’ and it contains many political units, cultures, groups, religions and languages (Wallerstein 23). In my interpretation it is characterised by local difference, rather than homogeneity even though all component parts of the system are engaged in a global capitalist enterprise.

To explore this aspect of his work, material from Frederic Jameson, Benita Parry, Vivek Chibber and Neil Lazarus is used to extend the core of postcolonial theory. The greater scope provided by this approach, aligns incongruity and Kipling’s engagement with modernity to the nexus of postcolonial theory and the theories of uneven and combined development. Frederic Jameson provides two points: the first is his concept of spatial disjunction (Jameson, ‘Modernism’ 157), from which I interpret Jameson’s spatial disjunction as the invisibility of parts of the meta-system to any individual within it. It results from the process of modernisation, produced by a capitalistic energised process of change. The second is the differentiation between the modern and Modernism (Jameson, ‘Modernism’ 162). Jameson argues that Modernism is a response to the process of change and disjunction caused by modernisation and the modern.

This clear distinction is useful in understanding Kipling’s material in the context of a world that was rapidly changing and subject to modernisation. Jameson’s modernisation introduces the dynamic of capitalism which I follow up with Benita Parry’s and Vivek Chibber’s interventions into postcolonial theory. Both Parry and Chibber argue for the recognition of capitalism’s uneven development within postcolonial theory, on the grounds that this unevenness supports difference. That is, while modernisation is continuous throughout the world, it does not produce a homogenous linear system, rather one that tends towards heterogeneity and non-linearity. Finally, the work undertaken by Neil Lazarus and others from the Warwick Research Collective looks beyond the current core of postcolonial theory to the theories of uneven and combined development, providing a final context in which to view Kipling. By ‘uneven and combined development’ I mean the ideas first articulated by Leon Trotsky and other Marxist theorists that the spread of capitalism and its effect upon the subject peoples throughout the world was uneven. This unevenness appeared not only in distribution of the material benefits of capitalism (or the deprivation of such benefits) but in the way the world was beginning to

operate (Trotsky 3-12). In a more formal sense ‘uneven and combined development’ is a term that describes the emerging, and contested, discipline of study that examines in a social context, the incorporation of ‘international relations into a theory of capitalist world development.’ (*Uneven And Combined Development: theorising the international*). At its simplest, the term ‘uneven and combined development’ points to an international world that is driven by capitalism, but within which development is unequal. In the political sense it also posits the idea that the nation state is no longer the determining entity, but has been subsumed within a larger international group. Further developments in this rapidly expanding field of studies, investigate the emergence of a ‘world literature’ which is ‘the literature of the world-system’ (Warwick 8), and is as ‘one and unequal’ (Warwick 10). It is in the context of the recognition of a world literature, which reflects the differences and dynamics of a world undergoing ‘unequal and combined development,’ that I suggest Kipling can be productively read. These extensions to postcolonial theory allow Kipling to be read, as a writer engaged in a continuing critique of a world system that is dynamic, nonlinear, and in which both capitalism and Bergson’s *élan vital* are major energisers.

Modernity, according to Nicholas Daly in his essay ‘The Machine Age’ is signalled by the rise of the machine and new technologies of the internal combustion engine, electromagnetism and the new forms of mass communication of cinema and sound. This is the period of the ‘second industrial revolution’, as Nicholas Daly terms it (Daly 283). In Kipling’s writing it is the exterior world that ‘Mrs Bathurst’, ‘With the Night Mail’, ‘As Easy as A.B.C.’ and the later stories that I consider, engage. T. J. Clark writes, that modernity signals a profound change in the human condition for it ‘points to a social order which has turned from the worship of ancestors and past authorities to the pursuit of a projected future’ (T. J. Clark 7). Clark also pessimistically adds, that modernity is accompanied by ‘a great emptying and sanitizing of the imagination’ and the condition of contingency (T.J. Clark 7). By contingency, Clark means the recognition of uncertainty, ‘the turning from past to future, the acceptance of risk, the omnipresence of change, the malleability of time and space’ (T. J. Clark 10-1). Modernity itself is a nebulous place but Clark writes that ‘most readers [will] know it when they see it’ (T. J. Clark 7), and in Kipling, it is the period in which his ambivalent jest reaches its most elevated form, and conversely, where its suppression produces the darkest of texts. Clark’s

‘contingency’ and Jameson’s ‘disjunction’ are characteristics that surface frequently in Kipling’s material during the investigation of incongruity, and provide a useful framework when considering Kipling’s later works.

Chapter Synopsis

Chapter One investigates the meaning of Kipling’s jest through the interrogation of humour theory, to arrive at a formulation that is applicable to Kipling. The path traced is, in a way, analogous to the hysteria that Zohreh Sullivan identifies in Kipling’s writing. Kipling’s jest is *unreasonable* and lives in an alternative world to the reasonable, a world that is akin to Kipling’s world of the night, rather than the world of the day, and a world where spiritual energies predominate. The chapter opens with a discussion of the relationships between humour and the postcolonial, identifying a series of linkages between them, seemingly in opposition to the capitalist-driven world of Victorian colonialism and modern globalisation. The discussion continues with an investigation of humour theory, which is founded upon Henri Bergson’s *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* and Sigmund Freud’s *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. While acknowledging the conventional application of hostile humour interpretations to Kipling’s work, I develop the idea of a sympathetic dimension to incongruous humour. The wide variety of essays collected and edited by Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein is taken as a source for the alignment of humour to the postcolonial experience. From this foundation, a viewpoint is constructed that differs from the general approach, in that it allows humour to be viewed positively, as a creative mechanism for sympathetic alignment with the subject, rather than the more commonly assumed negative position of control or hostility. Arthur Koestler provides a connection between humour and creativity that is important, because it suggests humour, through its creative aspect, is an energy that relates to individuality and has the potential for the historical forces of newness and change to emerge. Finally, Koestler’s idea of bisociation provides a platform to discuss the duality present in humour. The final section deals with the nature and significance of Kipling’s jest, firstly through the identification by J.M.S. Tompkins and C.A. Bodelsen of the importance of humour to Kipling, in particular Tompkins’s ‘laughter of affirmation’ (Tompkins 50) and Bodelsen’s ‘spiritual experience’ (Bodelsen 7).

Freud's theory of the joke is then explored to develop the idea that the jest, like the aesthetic, lies in an intermediate space between the unconscious and the conscious.

Chapter Two investigates a Victorian resistance to imposed systemisation by using material from Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin and William Morris. From these sources, the relationships between incongruity and individuality are developed, and in this context, Kipling's interest in the symbol of the craftsman and the production of the flawed object are of particular relevance.

The final section of Chapter Two concerns itself with the journey away from the British Empire and colonial India in 1888, recorded in Kipling's collection of travel letters published as *From Sea to Sea and other Sketches*. This journey marks a change in Kipling's writing and ontology, for it is a period of transition, from the closed world of the Anglo-Indian colonial officer, to a world outside of the British Empire. The world that he discovered as he journeyed away from India, firstly experiencing the world of British settlements in China, then independent Japan and finally the USA, is full of incongruity and vitality. He confronted societies that were outside British influence and were energised with an apparently unstoppable dynamic that drove them towards Western modernity, while simultaneously challenging it. His observations and judgements on a strange new world provide perspectives on modernity and an emerging world system that are rarely commented upon, and which I argue continued to influence him throughout his life.

Chapter Three moves the discussion forward, both in subject and time, by considering material produced from the period after Kipling's return to England in 1889 and through to the early years of the twentieth century. This chapter is concerned with a dialectic between materialist and spiritual energies, in which Kipling's machine, in both its physical and its virtual forms, becomes a visible symbol of that confrontation. I argue that the machine, as a symbol of systematic, scientific organisation, is important to an understanding of Kipling, not just as a colonialist writer who gloried in power (which is one common interpretation), but as a writer who attempted to understand a society that was technologically advanced and increasingly systemised. I approach the society in which Kipling was situated, as predominately a machine-like construction for accumulating capital and organised as a distributed system with a multiplicity of nodes and a complexity of interactions. In this view, it was a society in which colonialism, capitalism and the technologically modern combined with a spiritual energy to create a period of great

change, and a society with which Kipling, the promoter of the free individual, critically engaged.

The chapter is divided into a number of sections. Initially, these discuss the machine as it is treated in Victorian literature, and then as it appears positively in Kipling's poem 'The Secret of the Machines (Modern Machinery)'. The next two sections present a Marxian view of the machine, suggesting it as a consumer of human vitality and spirit and a holder of suppressed demonic energies. This view is developed through readings of 'Mrs Bathurst' and a private letter to James M. Conland of 1 June 1897, where Kipling describes a sea trip on a new naval boat. The final two sections deal with spiritualism and its interactions with technology, using the story 'Wireless' and finally, the bleak situation depicted in 'As Easy as A.B.C.', where the human race has lost its spiritual energy and has become subservient to the machine. It is a time when the incongruous space, that allows the jest to develop, has been suppressed by an overwhelming determinism. This section also contains a discussion on Kipling's 'Woman' figure: firstly as a component of the machine ('The Female of the Species') and later as the custodian of human survival ('As Easy as A.B.C.'), where she subverts the machine and the male-constructed world system.

In Chapter Four, I explore the contestation between materialist and spiritual forces through the development of the late Victorian colonial stereotype, from its origins in a mercantile empire, to its maturity in a world of Victorian capitalism and imperialism, and finally, to the beginnings of a fragmentation. The chapter is organised into three broad sections and is generally a theory chapter intended to establish a foundation for the analysis of Kipling's Babu Figure in Chapter Five. The first section deals with the origins of the Victorian colonial stereotype, and specifically, how the Indian 'Babu' stereotype changed, as the colonial enterprise developed from a mercantile operation, into a modern capitalist and imperialist machine.

The second section is a materialist critique of Homi Bhabha's postcolonial theory of the stereotype, as contained in his essay 'The other question: Stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism'. Bhabha argues that the stereotype is 'a complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation, as anxious as it is assertive' (Bhabha 100). I interrogate this, by investigating the view that it can equally be a Marxian commodity, manufactured from the ethnographically determined characteristics of its subject and produced as Other and inferior to that of

the colonialist. I propose that in this commodity form the stereotype becomes an incongruity, and this idea is followed up in the third and final sections of the chapter, by investigating the possibilities of the comic in the repetitive nature of the stereotype. This discussion leads onto the possibilities of the creative energies within laughter, ultimately fragmenting the Bergsonian incongruity of the stereotype.

Chapter Five examines critical material relating to the resurgence of Indian literature in the late nineteenth century. Bengali sources includes material from Bankim Chandra Chatterji, taken from Tapati Gupta's edited collection, and from the North Indian perspective, I examine Mushirul Hasan's collection of texts and Nazir Ahmad's *Son of the Moment*, translated by Mohammed Zakir. This short comparative study, by presenting material from the other side of the colonial divide, goes a little way to redress the colonist viewpoint of Kipling's writing.

In contrast to the usual stereotyped colonist view of the native administrator, drawn from the outside, the material that I use originates from individuals who were engaged within the colonial system as native administrators. It reveals some of the internal spiritual energy, complexity and contradictions of those individuals that seldom appear within colonialist material. Accordingly, I present an historical context of the period which focuses on the rise of a new Indian bourgeoisie, and the surge in Indian literary activities observed during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Finally, Kipling's construction of Hurree Chunder Mookerjee in *Kim* is considered, by taking the view that the character is an external view of Kipling's colonial Babu Stereotype in the initial stages of a chaotic fragmentation. I argue that Hurree's fragmentation is energised by indeterminate forces arising from increasing education and economic and class self-interest. Recognition of this is important because it signals a turning point in Kipling's thought, or at least in his sub-conscious thought, where stability is no longer imposed from the top but is being overtaken by change, forced upon the world, at least the British world, by indeterminate energies from below and from outside.

Chapter Six, the final chapter, investigates a number of Kipling's later stories, produced immediately before and after World War 1. Kipling's late work has an increased level of uncertainty, not necessarily the loss of hope and the onset of black despair, although it certainly depicts that, but openness and incompleteness. Orwell, in his 1942 essay 'Rudyard Kipling', termed it a period of Kipling's isolation, his time of sulking (Orwell, 30). While not completely dismissing this

interpretation, I follow the path that the entropic quality of the material reflects Kipling's own intellectual restlessness and a search for some form of renewal, albeit one that he could not fully articulate. The material is read in the context of the emerging modernity of the period, and Kipling's engagement with the world system, represented by the combination of colonialism, capitalism and modernity. I use models of the chaotic for the transitional society of the time, taking the rhizome concept of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and relatively new theoretical work on deterministic chaos, to deliver a reading of Kipling's later material. In this chapter, Kipling's material is considered in thematic order rather than chronologically and is parcelled up into three sections. Placing the material in this sequence also allows the investigation of a deepening interiority in Kipling's writing and in particular, in his treatment of women. Section one deals with a series of optimistic texts: the poem 'The Legend of Mirth' and the stories 'Aunt Ellen' and 'The Vortex'. These works are ones in which Kipling's jest erupts in its most powerful form, and they are approached through the platform provided by C.A. Bodelsen and J.M.S. Tompkins, focusing upon Tompkins's 'moment of physical disorder, the inversion of human and official dignity' (Tompkins 33); and Bodelsen's identification of Kipling's strange world of misrule and disorder, a world of the chaotic and unruly domain of humour and laughter that opposes the sane world of Western reason. This strange world overwhelms the protagonists of a binary argument with a multitude of chaotic possibilities.

The second section charts the loss of optimism in 'A Madonna of the Trenches' and 'Mary Postgate'. These are both violent tales, material that could be considered ugly rather than beautiful, and which deal with a breakdown arising from a combination of modern warfare and modern society. Kipling's 'A Madonna of the Trenches' illustrates how he uses the hidden complexity of chaotic entanglement to question the conventional English social attitudes of the time, related to marriage and human attachment. 'Mary Postgate' is equally grim and ugly and is concerned with deathly isolation and sterility.

Section three tackles the enigmatic story 'The Gardener' and continues the theme of breakdown but seemingly finds a resolution – but a resolution that is in the spiritual domain rather than the material one. In that sense, it is a circular referral to the earlier 'Legend of Mirth.' But 'The Gardener' is not a humorous story, rather one of the most serious works which Kipling produced. Like the stories in the second

section, it shows a world in which the jest, a place-holder of indefinable human vitality, has been denied to human life and can only reappear in the form of an experience that lies outside of the artificially ordered modern world. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Kipling's relationship with modernity, where I conclude that Kipling was a writer *of* modernity, rather than a more easily categorized 'modernist'.

Chapter One: Theorising Kipling's Jest

Introduction

This chapter is intended to establish a theoretical foundation for the investigation of humour in Kipling, predominately in the form of incongruity and the strange phenomena, termed the jest. The chapter is divided into four distinct sections. The first is an examination of how humour and laughter is treated in postcolonial analysis. The second examines the relationship between humour and incongruity, particularly how it can lead to individuality and a form of alignment with the subject rather than a distancing from it. The third section deals with forms of laughter and the comic in Kipling – that might be termed conventional humour – that fall outside of the special place identified by the jest. Finally, I present a detailed discussion of the special properties of Kipling's jest and its importance in the reading of Kipling's work.

The Postcolonial and Humour

There is no immediate or obvious relationship between humour, the postcolonial, or indeed the colonial. Yet these domains, one of laughter, the funny and the comic, the other of the consciously political and concerned with control and subversion, seem to be strangely related to each other. Kipling, very early in his career, tackles the problem directly. The idea of the jest appears in Kipling's work from almost the very beginning, and is present throughout his writing lifetime. In 1888, he addresses a fresh intake of colonial officials newly arrived in India:

You stand on the threshold of new [imperial] experiences—most of which will distress you and a few amuse. You are at the centre of a gigantic *Practical Joke*. Strive to enter the spirit of it and jest temperately. ('A Free Hand,' *The Pioneer*. 10 November 1888)

The obvious question is why would he say that? Why is the Raj a 'gigantic *Practical Joke*'? I do not think that Kipling was suggesting that the empire, as experienced by the Anglo-Indian colonial officer, was a joke. Certainly it does not

imply a joke in the Freudian sense; but perhaps, rather, it suggests empire was part of something far more mysterious and intangible. Kipling talks of entering the spirit of the *Practical Joke*, and then jesting: what does he mean by that, and what is the jest? The address is ambivalent, its meaning is indeterminate and it introduces instability. What seems to have happened is that two frames of reference, one of humour and the other of the colonial, that ought to be orthogonal to each other, are misaligned or warped. They are no longer independent but interact as a coupled system and it is the consequences of this interaction that I wish to examine through a postcolonial perspective.

Work that considers the relationship between humour and the postcolonial (and by inference, the colonial), is sparse, but Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein, along with the many contributors to *Cheeky Fictions: Laughter and the Postcolonial* (2005), have made a major contribution. Reichl claims that both postcolonial theory and humour theory ‘share conceptual and theoretical problems of approach: both terms have a history of redefinition, both terms are polysemic’ (Reichl and Stein 5). The idea of redefinition, movement and change, suggests a living entity, that neither of the disciplines are complete and finished; both are ever growing and open to reinterpretation. Ulrike Erichsen recognises a doubling in both disciplines: humour contains ambiguity, a ‘double focus’ which ‘forces the reader or listener to switch between two perspectives and two frames of reference’ (Erichsen 32). Similarly, postcolonial texts very often posit separate frames of reference for the coloniser and colonised, and both disciplines seemingly require the reader to be in two worlds at once, or at least to be able to recognise that both exist. This doubling contrasts with the majority of colonial discourse, which operates exclusively in one reference frame, either that of the coloniser or of the colonised. Although, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak demonstrated in her essay ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’, all too often only the voice of colonial authority has been heard.

Reichl elaborates upon the postcolonial aspect of difference – of parallel but interconnected worlds – stressing the need for the ‘recognition of ethnic, local and historical difference’ (Reichl and Stein 8). She continues:

Likewise, as we point out above, both laughter and humour require multi-dimensional conceptualisation, and accordingly have been treated in theoretical works with respect to their variability. It is thus obvious that a

combination of two areas which have been characterised by a dynamics of connectedness across difference should not be (and indeed cannot be productively) translated into a monolithic whole. (Reichl and Stein 8)

Reichl's plea for the continuing recognition of difference is crucial, and I approach this by recognising the difference between the component parts, between different players and different forms of ontology. The split and differentiated worlds of humour and the postcolonial cannot be simply parcelled up and digested in 'monotonic wholes'. Both disciplines require the difficult but productive task of assimilation by parts, if indeed they can be assimilated. In a broader sense, Reichl is identifying systems of thought and practice that ought to be independent but are not: there are points of indeterminate coupling between them which influence the behaviour of each. As the number of component parts increases, then so does the difficulty of assimilation. In Chapters Five and Six, I examine the cases where the number of parts are so numerous, and the interactions so complex, that the result is a system that is bigger than the simple sum of its parts, and the result is apparent chaos. In this chapter however, I wish to consider a more limited idea of difference, identified by the incongruous. Humour's power to disintegrate and to fragment the whole is identified by Malcolm Andrews when discussing the comic dimension of Charles Dickens's work. He refers to the 'disintegrative power of laughter' (Andrews, *Laughter*, 100): laughter 'undoes the self' (Andrews, *Laughter*, 99) and it fragments the isolated bourgeois body into Bakhtin's 'grotesque body of the people' (Andrews, *Laughter*, 101).

Heinz Antor argues that laughter is a serious phenomenon which should not be trivialised. He writes that it should be treated as a 'phenomenon which has a legitimate place in such a conflict-ridden field as that of colonialism and its aftermath and must therefore be taken seriously' (Antor 89). The seriousness of laughter and humour is also touched upon by Reichl and Stein, who argue that laughter, rather than 'either slighting a serious subject matter or simply indicating light-hearted entertainment', should, on the contrary, be 'taken very seriously indeed' (Reichl and Stein 2). Laughter therefore can, and should be included as one of the subtexts to be decoded in the discipline of postcolonial literature. Humour and laughter hovers on the boundary of rationality and irrationality, split between the two

worlds of sanity and madness, as it were. It can, as Freud argues for his elaborate theory of the joke, be the product of rational thinking, and simultaneously, a means of expressing or relieving fears and inhibitions inhabiting the deepest regions of the subconscious. When this strange, monstrous phenomenon appears in postcolonial texts, and is recognised, a key question that has to be answered is its purpose— what does it do, why is it there? Reichl and Stein pose this question rather more elegantly:

Does laughter, in postcolonial production – lend agency or whether it, in fact, prevents opposition and dissent by relieving some of the tension. Does the laughter in or induced by postcolonial fiction gesture towards a new world order? Or does postcolonial laughter uphold the order of the day?
(Reichl and Stein 10)

Humour theories are generally divided into three broad groupings, discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. Briefly these groupings are: superiority theory, where laughter is used to reinforce a power structure; relief theories, where laughter is a type of safety valve releasing suppressed internal energy; and the third revolves around the resolution of some form of incongruity. Reichl and Stein argue that laughter often appears in postcolonial texts in the hybrid form of superiority and relief guises that provide release from the tension and potential aggression of the colonial encounter. They continue:

The concrete manifestations of laughter arising from such a constellation range from subversive laughter, carnivalesque exhilarations, wry smiles, self-deprecation, gallows humour, or black humour, to more conciliatory and healing humour, or to the wild and eerie laughter of the otherwise silenced ‘madwoman in the attic.’ All these reflect a struggle for agency, an imbalance of power, and a need, a desire, for release. (Reichl and Stein 9)

Ulrike Erichsen takes a more nuanced approach by identifying the role of humour as both a safe container and an alert mechanism for potential conflict. She identifies four roles for laughter in postcolonial texts: firstly, it can ‘defuse cultural conflicts by offering a strictly limited context for such conflict’; secondly, it can ‘highlight a doubly-coded situation’ (which I take as a sign of ambivalence); and thirdly, it can

be a means of ‘alert[ing] the reader to cultural barriers that need to be overcome in order to fully understand the text’ (Erichsen 30). Finally, it can ‘encourage intercultural communication and understanding’ (Erichsen 30). Erichsen recognises the role that humour can play in productively illuminating individuality, by recognising difference and uncovering stereotypes (Erichsen 28). In extending the idea of difference and individuality that emerges through the agency of incongruity and humour in Kipling, I deviate from the usual postcolonial stance of interpreting his humour through the lens of a hybrid of Freudian relief and superiority theory. The importance of humour to Kipling is emphasised by Bodelsen in his discussion of Kipling’s farces, where he argues that Kipling elevated the farce to an instrument used to ‘express a transcendental experience’ (Bodelsen 6). Furthermore, Bodelsen, when discussing Kipling’s poem ‘The Necessitarian’ (1904), writes, it that it ‘is surely a remarkable comment on Kipling’s theme of liberating laughter’ and ‘a statement of his philosophy of Cosmic Mirth’ (Bodelsen 17-18). Stanza two of ‘The Necessitarian’ reveals the importance of the jest:

Who bids the heavenly lark arise (5)

And cheer our solemn round—

And Jest beheld with streaming eyes

And grovelling on the ground;

(*Poems* 2: 760)

In my examination of the jest in Kipling, I adopt the view that investigating aspects of incongruity and, where appropriate, carefully decoupling these from psychoanalytical theories of laughter that inevitably lead to conclusions of hysteria, guilt, anxiety and catharsis, will provide an insight to Kipling’s work that focuses upon the revelation of a world seemingly opposed to the world of ordered reason and modernity.

Defining Laughter

What does laughter mean? What is the basal element in the laughable? What common ground can we find between the

grimace of a merry—andrew, a play upon words, an equivocal situation in a burlesque and a scene of high comedy? What method of distillation will yield us invariably the same essence from which so many different products borrow either their obtrusive odour or their delicate perfume? The greatest of thinkers, from Aristotle downwards, have tackled this little problem, which has a knack of baffling every effort, of slipping away and escaping only to bob up again, a pert challenge flung at philosophic speculation. (Bergson, *Laughter*, 1)

Henri Bergson opens his seminal *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* with a sobering doubt, a reflective thought on the intractability and slipperiness of humour. It is a reflection that itself becomes infected with humour, in attempting to discuss a little problem that refuses to submit to the attentions of the highest human intellect. Humour, Bergson implies, infects and attempts to usurp even the most astute rationalist attempts to define it. As he says in the introduction cited above, humour is an essential part of the human condition (Bergson, *Laughter*, 1), always with us, and yet, seemingly always out of reach. Perhaps humour is an unfinished part of the human condition, constantly there, intruding upon us and constantly eluding a precise understanding.

Attempting to define humour and distinguish between all of its forms, such as, the comic, the ironic, the joke and so forth, becomes a frustrating and complex operation. One could *assume* (which I do not) that humour (in its modern meaning as distinct from the obsolete medical terminology) encompasses all forms of mental state that do not belong to the serious or earnest. The phrase ‘out of humour’ is easily defined: for example, the *OED* provides a definition of ‘annoyed, depressed, or dissatisfied state of mind in a bad mood’.²

In colloquial use, to be ‘out of humour’ generally can signify a state of mind which is unreceptive and possibly hostile, and is a phrase that is commonly encountered. Conversely the phrase ‘in humour’ is much less common and its meaning is hazy. To be ‘in drink’ is plain enough (i.e. the individual is drunk), but to be ‘in humour’ could mean to be happy, to be laughing, to be cheerful or possibly to

² "humour | humor, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017

be open, friendly and receptive, it can also refer to ‘a stimulus, a response or disposition’ (Chapman and Foot 3). Reichl and Stein express the difficulty as one of sign, the multiple unarticulated meanings that lie behind the sign that is the word ‘humour’:

However, ‘laughter’ is different from ‘humour’ and ‘the comic’ is also a rather vague notion. Just referring the reader to other theorists who have fretted over intractable terminology does not seem a legitimate solution to this dilemma. (Reichl and Stein 4)

David Heyd also recognises the intractability of humour and laughter. He writes that laughter ‘resists theorization’ and that, ‘most philosophers have been deterred from the study of laughter by the unfounded fear of treating an unserious matter seriously, or of investigating rationally something based on incongruity and absurdity’ (Heyd 285). Heyd is drawn to the difficulty that if laughter is ‘funny’ it must be frivolous and beyond the scope of rational explanation and examination. But the problem is that somehow, humour in its many manifestations can become serious, an emotive force that intrudes and explodes into the realm of serious rational thinking.

Humour is difficult to define; it seems to be easier to define what it is not than what it is. The *OED* provides a series of possible interpretations: it can be part of the senses denoting mental quality or condition, ‘temperament’, ‘sentiment’, ‘spirit’ or a ‘temporary state of mind or feeling; mood or temper’. It is related to the comic in that it is ‘quality of being amusing, the capacity to elicit laughter or amusement.’ It can also be ‘the ability to appreciate or express what is funny or comical.’ The *OED* adds an illuminating note that humour is ‘distinguished from *wit* as being less purely intellectual, and as having a sympathetic quality in virtue of which it often becomes allied to pathos’.³

This sympathetic quality is, I think, important, and the *OED* expands upon it when discussing humour used as a verb, offering several definitions associated with compliance: for example, ‘to comply with the peculiar nature or exigencies of (a thing); to adapt or accommodate oneself to; to act in compliance or agreement with;

³ "humour | humor, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017

to fit, suit'.⁴ That is, to have a flexible, adaptive frame of mind, to be capable of accepting change, to be alive.

There is another dimension to humour which is often obscured, but is addressed by Michael K. Cundall, in his consideration of the relationship of humour to creativity. After considering numerous humour theories, including that of incongruity (which I address later in this chapter), he concludes that humour lies within the fold of the creative; but, in contrast to individual creativity, humour requires a social dimension to achieve its creative potential (Cundall 211). Humour, it seems, must be shared with and communicated to others. In this social mode, operating within the creative process, humour becomes a conjoiner of individuals, a connector that facilitates an interaction between isolated, individualistic creative energies. Cundall's argument, therefore, places humour as a socially productive force, a component part of the creative process that brings newness into the world. Humour therefore is, or can be, creative. Arthur Koestler expresses it in this way: '[humour] provides a back-door entry to the domain of creativity because it is the only example of a complex intellectual stimulus releasing a simple bodily response – the laughter reflex' (Koestler 130).

The association with creativity is one reason why humour deserves to be treated seriously. Humour, Koestler argues is a:

combinational activity – the bringing together of previously separate areas of knowledge and experience. The scientist's purpose is to achieve a synthesis; the artist aims at a juxtaposition of the familiar and the eternal; the humorist's game is to contrive a collision. (Koestler 129)

In Koestler's view, humour forms a 'continuous spectrum' with science, and there is 'no clear frontier' where one ends and the other begins (Koestler 129). Koestler's positive view of humour is countered by his insistence that it must contain an element of malice and aggression. He writes that, 'it is the aggressive element, the detached malice of the comic impersonator which turns pathos into bathos, tragedy into travesty' (Koestler 115). Alenka Zupančič implies that detachment and creativity are related and that one is most creative when detached from the immediate surroundings (Zupančič 4). She continues, that comedic distance not only

⁴ "humour | humor, v." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017.

suppresses feeling, 'but above all it is a way of introducing a distance (or nonimmediacy) into the feelings themselves' (Zupančič 8). My interpretation of this is that distancing facilitates the identification of a potentially humorous situation and allows it to develop. Zupančič is discussing hostile humour that is intended to maintain, and possibly increase, the distance between the observer and the subject. This is the interpretation commonly associated with colonialist writing. In summary, I argue that although humour has a nebulous quality which so far has resisted satisfactory rational explanation, and perhaps always will, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that, under certain conditions, it can be allied to the sympathetic and the receptive, and it is part of a communal creative process.

Incongruity Theory

Before moving onto my main line of humour enquiry, incongruity theory, I would like to briefly identify the other two principal theories of humour, the theories of relief and superiority. Superiority theory is generally attributed to Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679):

Sudden Glory, is the passion which maketh those grimaces called laughter; and is caused either by some sudden act of their own that pleaseth them; or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves. (Hobbes 43)

As Hobbes writes, superiority laughter is selfish because it arises from a desire for self-elevation and self-importance, and it is divisive. In the colonial situation, it is commonly encountered, demeaning the colonial subject and elevating the colonialist, or as Reichl and Stein write, it 'uphold[s] the order of the day' (Reichl and Stein 10).

Relief theory is usually attributed to Herbert Spencer (Spencer, 'Laughter') and Sigmund Freud. In comparison to superiority humour, Freudian relief theory of humour is rather more Januslike, for Freud regards the primary task of dream-formation to subvert the restrictions of censorship (Freud 222[1976]). He argues that jokes have something 'forbidden to say' (Freud 150[1976]) and recognizes the role of the joke in rebelling against authority (Freud 149[1976]):

But the object of the joke's attack may equally well be the institutions, people in their capacity as vehicles of

institutions, dogmas of morality or religion, views of life which enjoy so much respect that objections to them can only be made under the mask of a joke and indeed a joke concealed by its facade. (Freud 154[1976])

Freud's joke provides a mechanism for the attack on revered or powerful institutions. He argues that the attack may have to be doubly concealed, initially by making light of the matter, by means of a joke, and secondly by hiding that joke within a scaffolding of unrelated material, such as allusions and displacements (Freud 231[1976]). Virginia Richter sums up Freud's joke:

Freud makes it abundantly clear that the primary impulse of the joke is not 'funny' but hostile, intended to humiliate and vanquish the 'enemy'. (Richter 63)

The aggressive nature of Freud's joke is illustrated by Kipling's farcical story 'The Village that Voted the Earth was Flat' (1917). It is an example of an attack on politicians and petty local dignitaries, figures who have acquired authority, and whom Kipling subjects to ridicule and humiliation. The enemies that Kipling attacks, by ridicule and the elaborate construction of a monstrous joke, are the eminent radical liberal politicians and the political hysteria of the time (Carrington 404-6).

Incongruity theory is the final and most important humour theory that I wish to consider, and is, I argue, the most appropriate one to investigate Kipling's jest. Unlike relief and superiority approaches, incongruity offers the possibility of escaping the rigid boundaries of Freud's isolated bourgeois individual, trapped within a hostile and aggressive world, or conversely, the egotistical glory seeker often associated with Hobbes. Incongruity humour theory descends from Immanuel Kant's well-known comment:

In everything that is to excite a lively laugh there must be something absurd (in which the understanding, therefore, can find no satisfaction). Laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing. (Kant I.I.54)

Kant's observation offers the opportunity to explore the fertile space of the incongruous, by suggesting that in the absurd there is an impasse that reason cannot

resolve (an incongruity), and the result is a descent into laughter. Kant's observation is significant. It could be that laughter in this form is simply a relief mechanism, or more productively, a sign of the world of unreason, a world where order is replaced by apparent disorder (as I discuss in Chapter Six). Schopenhauer extends Kant's argument by adding the element of pleasure to the discovery of the unexpected. As Monro interprets it, for Schopenhauer, 'humour depends on the pleasure of finding unexpected connections between ideas', once again relating a creative act, the discovery of the unexpected, to the humour mechanism (Monro 4).

Incongruity and another aspect of humour, the eccentric, appear to be interrelated. Eccentricity is defined by the *OED* as the condition of not being centrally placed, of not agreeing with, of having little in common, of being remote from the centre.⁵ Interestingly, this property of being displaced has an alignment with the postcolonial, with its questioning of the relationship between the metropole and the peripheral colony. One could argue that, when viewed from the metropolitan centre, the physical and ontological displacements between the colony and the metropole represent an eccentricity on the part of the colony. According to Bergson, eccentricity is a property that prompts laughter. For example, inelasticity, as illustrated by an inability to adapt to circumstances, is a sign of eccentricity and becomes comic (Bergson, *Laughter*, 19). Also if 'an eccentric individual dresses himself in a fashion of former times' he makes himself laughable (Bergson, *Laughter*, 39). These examples link eccentricity, a difference from the expected, to the incongruous. Bergson argues that differences from the mainstream, from the centre of opinion and the median of culture (the question does arise though, of which culture), instigate corrective laughter and ridicule in order to suppress the differences. Expanding this line of thought places the eccentric colony in the remit of the comic, a place which is legitimately subject to the disciplinary action of laughter. Alternatively, if the median of culture resides in the colonial lands, then the metropole and the coloniser become the eccentric and subject to laughter. Bergson's eccentricity is not only allied to the comic alone but also to madness, to the state of being beyond the reasonable, and strangely he adds, that the comic 'has a method in its madness' (Bergson, *Laughter*, 2). Method implies the existence of some

⁵ "eccentricity, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017.

determining law(s) that underpins unreasonable behaviour, an idea that is expanded upon in Chapter Six in the investigation of deterministic chaos.

The source of humour and the comic, Bergson further argues, is the incongruity present when the ‘mechanical [is] encrusted upon the living’ (Bergson, *Laughter*, 37). In the subsequent exposition of this argument, Bergson continues:

In the first place, this view of the mechanical and the living dovetailed into each other makes us incline towards the vaguer image of *some rigidity or other* applied to the mobility of life, in an awkward attempt to follow its lines and counterfeit its suppleness. Here we perceive how easy it is for a garment to become ridiculous. (Bergson, *Laughter*, 38)

Bergson uses the example of inappropriate clothing to illustrate the ridiculous, and his argument can easily be extended to include the attempted transformation of an object by a badly manufactured or fitted external shell. For example, in the postcolonial context, the rigid imposition of one culture, or set of values, upon a pre-existing indigenous culture could be said to be ridiculous. The judgement of the ridiculous is however subjective: it depends upon the standpoint, the centre from which the judgement is made. One can equally laugh at the ill-fitting imposition, or at the perpetrator, or the victim. Sadly however, Bergson’s disciplinary laughter is still a long way away from harmonious:

Laughter is, above all, a corrective. Being intended to humiliate, it must make a painful impression on the person against whom it is directed. By laughter, society avenges itself for the liberties taken with it. It would fail in its purpose if it bore the stamp of sympathy or kindness. (Bergson, *Laughter*, 197)

By following any of the three generally accepted theories, laughter appears to be a cruel, harsh judgement, difficult to reconcile with innocent unselfish joy. Freud offers the image of the repressed individual fighting for survival, Hobbes presents the individual attempting to maintain superiority over others, and Bergson insists that the individual conforms to the larger society.

A more adaptable and nuanced approach can be found in Arthur Koestler’s work, where he elegantly defines incongruity in terms of ‘bisociation’, as ‘the

perceiving of a situation or idea in two self-consistent but mutually incompatible frames of reference or associative contexts' (Koestler 113-4). The idea of an encounter between two separate systems (these may be interconnected systems as discussed in Chapter Six) has an immediate appeal to the colonial and postcolonial situation, or indeed any situation which engenders a meeting of two apparently disparate groups, each having its own perspectives, its own rules and its own ontology. In this context, it is useful to identify the relevance of incongruity to modernity, or any situation where the condition of uneven development occurs, for incongruity at its fundamental level, is a deviation from the norm, or difference from the expected. In the encounter between Koestler's two frames of reference, something that is unexpected, odd or out of place occurs and the incongruity is sensed by an observer. Koestler refines this event by adding a productive dimension, in that 'it makes us function simultaneously on two different wavelengths' and during this condition, the event is not, as is normally the case, associated with a single frame of reference, but '*bisociated* with two' (Koestler 112-3). A useful analogy of Koestler's bisociation, functioning on two different wavelengths, can be drawn from physics, where the listener hears two different musical notes, simultaneously produced by different players on different instruments. The listener does not hear these as independent sounds but registers the difference between them. The result of the encounter is productive and is a product of their difference. If the notes are precisely the same, the effect is only an increase in volume; any difference at all in pitch between them will result in a new sound, which is the product of the encounter. So, if that analogy can be applied to human activity, it suggests that we observe not only the individuals, but also the resulting difference which is newly created out of the encounter. The greater the discrepancy, the greater the product of encounter will be. Like the sound analogy, however, if the difference is too great, the product will be beyond human perception and no productive encounter will be registered.

Malcolm Andrews, when discussing the explosive comic laughter of Charles Dickens, points out that for Dickensian knockabout comedy, Koestler's bisociation 'requires the simultaneous functioning in the mind of two separate frames of reference, not just the sudden drop into the low' (Andrews, *Laughter*, 83). That is, both lofty and low references must continue during and after the encounter in order that the degree of the drop is properly registered. In this case, the encounter does not

produce permanent change, merely the detection of an event and of a difference, but that difference is transitory. For Andrews, it does not change the original reference frames which continue, and the result is the recognition of an abrupt descending incongruity. Dickensian comedy relies upon the often violent coincidence of incongruity and Koestler's bisociation, but usually it does not result in deep hurt. The rotund Pickwick falling into the ice while showing off is typical (*The Pickwick Papers* 413-5). Such comedy can be found in Kipling. The early story 'Yoked with an Unbeliever' (1886) is an example, where the central character Phil Garron, 'who is really not worth thinking of twice', takes a native wife, Dunmaya, and 'will ultimately be saved from perdition through her training' (*Plain Tales* 41). The incongruity of the worthless Englishman being saved by the native wife, (who truly loves him) is a source of humour, and Kipling's playful ironic narration that distances the reader from the characters, creates a detachment that allows the reader to enjoy the comedy. The salvation of Phil, as Kipling's narrator comments, 'is manifestly unfair', for fairness would require punishment of the worthless Phil for his false love letter to Agnes (*Plain Tales* 41). Instead, he is given a loving wife and an occupation which will keep him in comfort; whereas, the innocent and naive Agnes is left with the whole of her life seemingly spoiled (*Plain Tales* 41).

Incongruity in Kipling, however, does not necessarily result in comedy and laughter. 'Beyond the Pale' for example is 'a story of a man who wilfully stepped beyond the safe limits of decent everyday society, and paid for it heavily' (*Plain Tales* 171). In this story, the central English character, Trejago, has an illicit affair with a young Indian widow Bisesa. When this encounter between the two cultures, with separate frames of reference, is discovered and resolved, the result is brutal. Bisesa's hands are amputated and Trejago is stabbed in the groin, and probably castrated. The growing relationship between the Englishman and the young native widow is out of place, it is incongruous, and the resolution of this illicit encounter is savage, it hurts and Kipling meant it to.

There is, as Koestler writes, another 'fundamental aspect [to humour] – the emotional dynamics' (Koestler 114). Dickens and Kipling use different emotional frames that determine the degree of detachment of the observer. In these examples, Dickens and Kipling in 'Yoked with an Unbeliever', allow the reader to be detached and enjoy the deflation of the characters. In 'Beyond the Pale', Kipling's writing and the colonial setting appear not to allow that degree of detachment. The result is not

laughter (unless of an extreme savagery), but anger, offence or conversely sympathy. Malcolm Andrews locates the laughter mechanism in a seismic event, arguing that when incongruity plus a 'grotesque logical continuity' creates a shock, laughter is triggered (Andrews, *Laughter*, 78). Perhaps, as in 'Beyond the Pale', when that 'logical continuity' is turned into a discontinuity, then other emotions or passions are triggered, and alternative reactions to laughter are observed. In another aspect in the understanding of the nature of incongruity, Andrews argues that 'resolvable incongruity' results in humour, while 'unresolved incongruity' results in nonsense (Andrews, *Laughter*, 79). That is, in comedic terms, farce. I would add that, when that 'resolvable incongruity' results in violence and hurt, then comedy can become tragedy. Although the details of the relationships of incongruity to humour and the laughter mechanism are continuously debated, there does seem to be a consensus that there is a tangible relationship between the two. Cundall, in investigating the limits of incongruity, quotes Cohen in recognising that, 'In finding a thing humorous, one invites another to share a particular outlook on the world' (Cundall 208). In this interpretation, shared incongruity will stimulate humour if there is a coincidence between the cognitive or emotional states of the participants. In my reading of Kipling, I treat incongruity as the entry point in the domain of Kipling's productive jest, an area that is partly aesthetic, partly nonsense, and in which Kipling's reasonable world of the day has been banished.

Laughter and the Comic

I am concerned with understanding the role of humour in Kipling's work, and, while not attempting to establish a general theory of humour in any way, I am trying to establish a theoretical base that is appropriate to Kipling. Returning once again to the role of humour in the postcolonial context, Reichl and Stein locate it as a mediating or relief device that 'can release some of the tension and relieve some of the potential aggression', but they detect little or no sympathetic dimension (Reichl and Stein 8). I would add to this that, postcolonial encounters and relationships are very often incongruous, and while they may not be humorous in the funny knockabout sense, they can trigger the mechanisms of forms of humour, which can be either hostile or sympathetic, depending upon the observer's emotional frame.

Andrew Smith is in no doubt as to the purpose of laughter in Kipling. He writes:

Images of laughter in Kipling represent a highly politicised language of male hysteria in which their sense of social identity becomes compromised because it is either subject to mimicry or otherwise merely present as a nervous projection. How to theorise this as part of a truly Gothic discourse becomes possible once we consider how comedy, like the Gothic, can be used as a mode of transgression. (Smith 67)

To an extent, the connection between laughter and ‘a highly politicised language of male hysteria’ is true, but in my view, is inadequate to provide a satisfactory resolution to the majority of Kipling’s work. It fits most comfortably when applied to the early Indian stories, and Smith uses the example of ‘The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes’, where a Sahib falls into a pit of the undead and under the power of a Babu. The story is full of gothic-like tropes. Smith identifies a ‘language of the dead’, ‘hysterical and demonic laughter’, ‘mimicry and mockery’, and the use of ‘laughter as a doubling device’ (Smith 60-1). Hysteria is further recognised by Zohreh Sullivan as one component of ‘resolving the problem of how to survive the potential political and personal loss of India’ (Sullivan 15). Specifically, Sullivan writes that in ‘The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes’ Kipling ‘reacts to such a possibility with hysterical defensiveness, paranoia and denial’ (Sullivan 15). The *OED* defines hysteria as a condition of passion, excitability or morbidity and historically often associated with women.⁶ To be hysterical is to suffer from ‘convulsive emotion or excitement’ and ‘convulsive fits of laughter or weeping.’ A weakened colloquial usage is to be ‘extremely funny or hilarious’.⁷ Hysteria is a loss of reason or control, which includes, under some circumstances, the eruption of laughter or weeping. Hysteria is not the laughter of self-control, where one may laugh comfortably at another’s misfortune, but uncontrollable laughter that lies on the borderline of madness or chaos. Hysteria then could possibly be thought of as the world of unreason and the chaotic.

⁶ "hysteria, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017.

⁷ "hysterical, adj. and n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017.

As Smith points out, laughter in Kipling's work can be brutal, as evident in the story 'Thrown Away' (1888). A young and inexperienced army officer, only known as 'The Boy', takes life too seriously and blows his brains out because he cannot cope with the ordinary rebuffs of garrison life. The body is found by his sympathetic Major and Kipling's usual ironic narrator. They concoct a great lie that the death was heroic rather than pathetic, clear away the blood and gore, bury the body and write a suitable letter to The Boy's parents assuring them of his heroic and noble life and death in India:

In due course I made the draft to my satisfaction, setting forth how The Boy was the pattern of all virtues, beloved by his regiment, with every promise of a great career before him, and so on; how we had helped him through the sickness – it was no time for little lies, you will understand – and how he had died without pain. I choked while I was putting down these things and thinking of the poor people who would read them. Then I laughed at the grotesqueness of the affair, and the laughter mixed itself up with the choke – and the Major said that we both wanted drinks. (*Plain Tales* 23-4)

In discussing this passage, Wurgaft claims that 'such deep brutal laughter rings throughout Kipling's stories on India' and that it functions as a 'distancing device from the brutal and over-stimulating realities of life as Kipling saw them' (Wurgaft 127). The laughter certainly is brutal, but I am not certain that it is a distancing device, rather an external sign of just how close the narrator comes to the awfulness of the suicide, a sign of how the ironic distance between observer and subject has collapsed. The story can also be read as a criticism of the liberal imperial dream, where the unproblematic application of Western education and methods will civilize the world. The boy is a product of that system, cosseted and educated in the best style, but unable to withstand the coarse reality of holding onto empire and like the young officer in the poem 'Arithmetic on the Frontier' (1886), discussed in Chapter Six, fails to develop. Both are products of the system, expensively educated and equipped with the best military hardware money can buy, examples of the cutting edge of Western modernity, and they both fail. Development of capitalist funded

colonialism is not linear or certain, rather as Kipling writes in ‘Arithmetic on the Frontier’, it is chaotic and ‘the odds are on the cheaper man’ (24) (*Poems* 1: 97).

Kipling’s characters concoct a grotesque lie to protect the naive family at home in the belief that even a futile death from cholera is better than the horror of the truth. Kipling’s lie is not dissimilar to that of Marlow’s, surrounding the death of Kurtz in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, published some ten years later. Both lies, in their attempt to glorify imperialism, operate to destabilise it. ‘Thrown Away’ emphasises the futility of taking life in India seriously (‘Now India is a place beyond all others where one must not take things too seriously – the midday sun always excepted’), concluding the list of futilities with the advice to escape to somewhere, ‘where amusement is amusement and a reputation worth the having’ (*Plain Tales* 16-17). The Boy dies because he is unable to enter Kipling’s jest and escape the seriousness of life, and the narrator laughs and chokes because he cannot escape from the futility of the boy’s life. J.M.S. Tompkins classes this laughter as the ‘hysterical laughter of strain and wretchedness’ and a ‘natural but distressing noise’ (Tompkins 50). Tompkins also dismisses its significance in Kipling’s work, describing it as ‘facile play in the early tragic tales’ (Tompkins 50).

One further example will serve to indicate the type of laughter that I wish to look beyond, in order to find the more subtle nuances of humour, as I have defined them. The example is once more from an early Indian story, ‘The Taking of Lungtungpen’ (1887). The story is narrated by Private Mulvaney and Kipling gives him a broad Irish accent, typical of the Paddy stereotype. The story concerns a mad escapade in Burma where Mulvaney and his company, under the command of a young, inexperienced English officer, are chasing dacoits. For the British, the dacoit was an armed robber; conversely, the Burmese identified him as an armed resistance fighter against the British (Kwarteng 174). The soldiers strip naked to swim a river and immediately come under fire on the opposite bank, so they resolutely charge and achieve a victory. Immediately afterwards, and before they have recovered their uniforms, the soldiers have to patrol the town and establish order:

‘Let me tell you, pathrollin’ a town wid nothing on is an *expayrience*. I pathrolled for tin minutes, an’ begad, before ’twas over, I blushed. The women laughed so. I niver blushed before or since; but I blushed all over my carkiss thin. Orth’ris didn’t patrol. He sez only, ‘Potsmith Barricks an’ the

'Ard on a Sunday!' Thin he lay down an' rowled any ways wid laughin.'

'Whin we was all dhressed we counted the dead – sivinty – foive dacoits besides wounded. We tuk five elephints, a hunder' an' sivinty Sniders, two hunder' dahs, and a lot av other burglarious thruck. Not a man av us was hurt – excep' maybe the Lift'nint, an' he from the shock to his dasincy.'
(*Plain Tales* 119-20)

The laughter here is a complicated mix of bravado, of superiority over the native, and of satire, where private Ortheris transposes the events of the night to a Sunday morning parade in England. Interposed with this is the mocking laughter of the native women, rarely heard voices in Kipling, or indeed in many colonial texts. The women laugh at the loss of dignity of the naked soldiers and of the absurdity of patrolling dressed only in ammunition belts and carrying rifles. The soldiers, shorn of their uniforms, become not warriors of the mighty empire, but merely men, and as Mulvaney make clear, wholly inexperienced soldiers at that.

The story is incongruous: it disrupts the facade of a glorious empire with a tale of inexperienced soldiers blundering into a river, and then, desperately fighting to escape the logical conclusion of that mistake. Incongruity is coupled with the comic, produced by the descent from the high and lofty ideals of empire to the low bodily images of naked men fighting for their lives. Kipling's use of the broad Irish tongue of Mulvaney to narrate the story is halfway to suggesting the comic, uncontrollable and wild Irish stereotype. But the incongruity in the story does not lead solely to the comic; through the images of the laughing native women, and the comparison to a Sunday afternoon parade, it also satirizes the grand imperial vision. There is no grand civilizing mission here, only mistakes, manly fighting, derision and the opportunity for plunder. Kipling seems to be saying that empire is what the uneducated, ordinary soldier makes it, not what the theory in the far-away metropole postulates it should be. Kipling's soldiers are not unlike the common soldiers and camp followers of Shakespeare, caring little for the grand vision, but immersed in a practical world of hard soldiering, acquiring loot and maintaining their own code of honour. The cares and viewpoints of Learoyd, Mulvaney and Ortheris are comparable to Gower, Fluellen, and Williams of *Henry V*. Fluellen and Mulvaney,

although different in rank, seem to be especially notable. Both are distinguished by their accented speech, one Welsh, the other Irish, and both bring to bear a viewpoint that is both critical and supportive of the grand epic vision. Kipling adds another dimension to his soldiers, in that he has them fighting naked, suggesting, perhaps, a similarity to classical Greek Spartan soldiers fighting for the honour of Sparta, and legitimating modern expansive Empire in the classical European tradition.

In this story, and those of this period, Kipling makes the dirty, dusty, lethal ground of the Indian Empire the centre, and the metropole the eccentric. In this inverted development, the metropole is backward and has yet to develop sufficiently to understand the reality of colonialism and of empire. Laughter induced by the activities of the soldiers is ultimately reflected away from the colonial setting to settle on the beliefs and imperial dogma of the metropole, for the imperial vision has become the true incongruity.

The problem is how to approach humour and laughter from a viewpoint that does not inevitably lead to an analysis of insecurity, hostility, power and control. J.M.S. Tompkins contrasts Dick Helder's laughing Melancholia in *The Light That Failed* to the 'hysterical laughter' of the early Indian stories. Tompkins describes the laughing Melancholia as a symbol of the 'laughter of affirmation, the assertion, while one stands in the jaws of fate, that one will be swallowed whole and alive' (Tompkins 50). John Lippitt, in his study on Nietzsche and laughter, recognises the positive aspects of humour and that, at its highest, humour can be a truly liberating experience for the individual rather than Bergson's 'social corrective' (Lippitt 40). It is this laughter of liberation, and acceptance of the world for what it is, to which Tompkins seems to align Kipling's 'laughter of affirmation'. It is a productive liberating force, and through the linkage of laughter to individuality and liberation, suggests that laughter could have a relationship to an aesthetic response. The aesthetic relationship would then liberate humour from, at best, a safety valve, or at worst, an essential part of a destructive control framework. The 'laughter of affirmation' is what is absent in the story 'As Easy as A.B.C.' (discussed later in Chapter Three). In this decadent story, the characters are too afraid to enter the jest of life, and death, and to laugh the laughter of affirmation and the acceptance of fate.

Kipling's Jest

The *OED* provides an extensive etymology for the jest. The English word jest originates from the Latin *gesta* and the old French *geste* or *jeste*. In older usage, identified by the *OED* as obsolete, it can mean a notable exploit, a narrative of exploits or an idle tale. More modern usage places the jest in the realm of laughter; it can mean to mock, taunt or jeer or can be a piece of raillery or banter. It can excite laughter, be a ludicrous event or circumstance and it is the opposite of seriousness.⁸ The interpretation taken in this thesis is that Kipling's jest, at its simplest, is a device for provoking laughter, it can then develop into a mode critiquing an event, person, or an ideology or institution. The jest, for example, may include Kipling's extensive use of puns and word play, identified by J.M.S. Tompkins (Tompkins 99-101), and these may provoke laughter, but the jest has a deeper significance than merely producing surface laughter. In its most elevated form, the jest becomes a device for moving the reader from the world of the reasonable into a world where nonsense and the unreasonable dominates. In this final form, it becomes a productive mechanism that reveals new meanings and possibilities.

Before discussing Kipling's jest in detail, it should be considered in relationship to the comic. The comic may well utilise a jest and the jest may well incorporate parts of the comic within it, but, in the form that I trace Kipling's jest, it is far more transcendental than being merely 'comic' or 'funny'. By this I mean that, Kipling's jest is effectively a pathway that leads to forms of understanding that lay beyond the world of reason. Freud argues that the comic is essentially the laughing at an unexpected discovery, often an incongruity in the form of personification, comic situations, mimicry, disguise, unmasking, caricature, parody, travesty etc. (Freud 248-50[1976]). Freud's comic relies heavily upon the degrading of individuals; he identifies the comic degradation of adults to children (Freud 290[1976]) and 'the dependence of their mental functions on bodily needs' (Freud 263[1976]). A use for the comic, according to Freud is to make a person 'contemptible, to deprive him of his claim to dignity and authority' (Freud 249[1976]). The comic, according to Freud, relies upon the disinterestedness of the observer, which implies the lack of any sympathetic attachment between the subject and the observer (Freud 284[1976]). Kipling takes this to the extreme in 'The Village that Voted the Earth was Flat',

⁸ "jest, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017.

where the comic is so excessive it becomes cruel, and the carefully constructed plot wreaks revenge upon Sir Thomas Ingell, M.P and the villagers of Huckley, turning them into objects of contempt. Kipling's story of revenge is not spontaneous, it is planned and implemented by reason, and it degrades the objects under attack.

Mimicry, caricature, parody and travesty all appear in colonial and post-colonial texts. Bhabha explores the role of mimicry in the dynamics of the colonial stereotype (which I discuss later in Chapter Five), and Kipling exploits the others in works that include 'The Head of the District', and the poem 'What Happened'. Both are works that criticise an imperial ideology originating from the metropole, and giving the educated Bengali a degree of equality to the Anglo-Indian. The final aspect of the comic is irony (Freud 232 [1976]). Kipling's texts are particularly rich in this: the bitter irony of the death of the young subaltern and the subsequent construction of a letter of lies to his parents in 'Thrown Away'; the ironic death of the expensively educated officer shot by a 'ten rupee jezail' in the poem 'Arithmetic on the Frontier'; the ironic statement in Kipling's travel letter on the Chinese, where he concludes by writing, 'Let us annex China', all casting doubt on the Indian colonial enterprise (*StS* 1: 277).⁹ Irony rings through Kipling's colonial works. It may not produce joyous, liberating laughter, but nevertheless, it acts as part of the comic to critique the environment within which Kipling was immersed.

The comic and humour are not necessarily the same thing, they, along with jokes, share a complex relationship with each other; Freud argues that humour is more closely allied to the comic rather than jokes (Freud 299[1976]). There is, however, one important difference between humour and the others. According to Freud, humour 'does not depend upon the essential splitting in the jokes and the comic, between sense and nonsense' (Freud 300-1[1976]). That is, humour does not differentiate between sense and nonsense; it incorporates both the resolvable and the irresolvable aspects of Koestler's encounter between two separate frames of reference, and it does not separate farce from the world of reason. In this interpretation, humour, and the laughter it generates, is different to the laughter produced by Freud's jokes or the comic. It results from the condition induced by the collision of two separate worlds, with the acceptance of both of those worlds, and it

⁹ See Chapter Two for the publishing history of Kipling's early travel letters.

leads to the highest form of Kipling's jest visible in the farces identified by Tompkins and Bodelsen.

J.M.S Tompkins categorized Kipling's farces into three broad types. Firstly, there is a group that includes 'Aunt Ellen' and culminates in 'the moment of physical disorder, the inversion of human and official dignity' (Tompkins 33). Tompkins argues that they commenced with 'The Rout of the White Hussars' (1888) and finished with 'Aunt Ellen' (1932) and that they are 'complex, deliberately wrought, visually rich and ringing with various voices', and they invariably reach 'the moment of physical disorder, the inversion of human and official dignity' (Tompkins 33). Secondly, there are farces 'in which the ridiculous incidents serve some extraneous purpose as ordeal or gauges' (Tompkins 34). Tompkins includes within this group 'The Puzzler' and 'The Vortex', where 'the Heavenly Lark is commandeered to serve as a political allusion' (Tompkins 36). Finally, there is the group of 'punitive farces, in which the killing ridicule, sometimes physical, is aimed by angry men at an offender' (Tompkins 34). This final group includes 'Beauty Spots' and 'The Village that Voted the Earth was Flat' where the 'mood of the story [...] is also astonished, disquieted and bitter.' (Tompkins 35). Bodelsen, to a degree, follows Tompkins's grouping, but adds a further subset, in which the 'real point is not the sequence of fantastic happenings that constitutes the action, but a spiritual experience which they are an attempt to express' (Bodelsen 7). It is the struggle in Kipling's writing to attain this spiritual experience, rather than the other conventional forms of laughter, that I attempt to trace throughout this thesis through Kipling's jest.

Freud's theory of the joke is a mix of superiority and relief theories, and is conceptualised around the idea that humour and laughter serve as a means of venting excess nervous energy that has accumulated from various forms of sexual and social repression. Freudian theory of the joke provides a useful understanding of the jest, locating it in the relationships between the conscious and unconscious, between emotion and reason. Freud plots a useful linkage between dreams, play, jest and the joke in that order (Freud 129[1960]). Somewhat reductively, dreams are entirely subconscious affairs occurring when the conscious, bodily part of the human subject is switched off. Play can be thought of as activity in the conscious world but is not constrained by it, becoming a sort of extension of the dream world into the physical world. Freud locates the jest as an extension of play, extending the pleasure of play for as long as possible until a joke is constructed (Freud 129[1960]). For Freud, a

joke is a ‘conscious construction’, whereas a jest is a ‘continuation of the pleasure derived from play and a subversion of criticism that prevents pleasure from emerging’ (Freud 129[1960]). Freud’s jest, and Kipling’s, is an ambivalent thing, a subversive element that exists outside of the world of constructed reason, properties that I use later in this chapter to make a connection between incongruity, humour and the aesthetic. Finally, there are two other important properties associated with the jest: it can ‘betray something serious’ (Freud 107[1960]) and it ‘springs from a cheerful mood’ (Freud 178[1960]). Freud’s jest can be thought of as a porous device that allows a leakage from the suppressed inner to the public outer world, as well as a means of prolonging unconstrained pleasure. The Freudian joke (which is a constructed public utterance) is a complex affair: it has to overcome censorship and inhibitions (Freud 173[1960]); it is dualist, in that ‘it has to be made yet it has to be involuntary’ (Freud 167[1960]); and it is a form of ‘infantile pleasure which takes the adult back into childhood’ (Freud 170[1960]). It is important to recognise the differentiation between joke and jest, between the public joke and the leaky jest. Play and jest are associated with emotion rather than with reason. A joke emerges as the result of cognitive effort (i.e. it has to be actively constructed, belonging to the sphere of reason) and represents the final form of humour, and one most easily analysed. In contrast, the jest belongs to the borderland between emotion and reason; it combines both sense and nonsense in one ambivalent mode of humour and in that ambivalent relationship, it is similar to the aesthetic.

I treat the aesthetic, as argued by Terry Eagleton as a non–reasonable condition referring ‘to the whole region of human perception and sensation, in contrast to the more rarefied domain of conceptual thought’ (Eagleton, *Ideology*, 13). Eagleton argues that what we now term the aesthetic response is aligned to our ‘creaturely life’, to the world that we experience as bodily creatures, comprising of ‘things and thoughts, sensations and ideas’, and is quite separate from the part of the mind that deals in reason (Eagleton, *Ideology*, 13). The aesthetic individualises and, Eagleton argues, that it ‘marks an emphasis on the self–determining nature of human powers and capacities’, which becomes the platform for Marx and others to create the ‘foundation of a revolutionary opposition to bourgeois utility’ (Eagleton, *Ideology*, 9). Eagleton continues that:

The aesthetic is at once, as I try to show, the very secret prototype of human subjectivity in early capitalist society,

and a vision of human energies as radical ends in themselves which is the implacable enemy of all dominative or instrumentalist thought. (Eagleton, *Ideology*, 9)

Eagleton's aesthetic lies in the region of sensation, apparently opposing, or at least in contention with, the external world of reason, which is the same region that humour and the jest are located, and like humour, the aesthetic individualises.

The relationship between humour and the aesthetic is contested. John Morreall argues that humour is an aesthetic experience or at least 'a pleasant psychological shift' (Morreall 128), while Freudian theory implies that they are separate entities (Freud 139[1960]). The difficulty in formalising a theory of the relationship between humour and the aesthetic is deftly summed up by Reichl and Stein in their introduction, by referring to Patricia Keith-Spiegel's essay that discusses the subjectivity of humour.¹⁰ They write that our response 'depends on a variety of factors, among them, our cultural background and identity, our politics and aesthetics, and our location and current state of mind' (Reichl and Stein 5). Unlike Freud, who visualises humour subverting an aesthetic taste, Reichl and Stein argue that aesthetics can block humour completely. They imply that there has to be an alignment between an individual's aesthetic and humorous senses before a positive reaction can occur. In my interpretation, I place humour and the aesthetic in relation to each other through a common separation from reason, and a strong sense of individuality, that can produce a resistance to external domination. Kipling's jest is one such example of humour and aesthetic senses operating together; it is not a joke constructed by reason but something ambivalent and resistant to external control. The jest is out of place, not belonging to the reasonable, and it is that incongruity with its associated ambivalence that connects it to the aesthetic, for the incongruity that is the jest is sensed, and not decoded through a series of reasonable mental operations.

David Bromwich provides an interpretation of Kipling's jest which nuances Freud's theory by deriving an explanation from the *OED* and amplifying it by

¹⁰ Keith-Spiegel, Patricia. "Early Conceptions of Humor: Varieties and Issues." *The Psychology of Humour: Theoretical Perspectives and Empirical Issues*. Eds. Jeffrey H. Goldstein and Paul E. McGhee. New York: Academic Press, 1972. 4-39.

reference to Gay and Cowper. According to Bromwich, the jest can disrupt the narrative with an alternative and is a space of contrapuntal truth:

[...] it denotes the witty, sometimes mocking interruption which splits up the telling of the tale (but which in doing so may offer a fragmentary rival tale) [...] Gay in 1732 ‘Life is a jest, and all things show it, / I thought so once, and now I know it.’ Cowper takes it further and suggests an antithetical *wisdom*. ‘The Scripture was his jest–book, whence he drew / Bon–mots to gall the Christian and the Jew.’ (Bromwich 187)

A useful expansion of Bromwich’s interpretation is provided by Sara Suleri who writes that ‘the irresolvable jest at hand, according to Bromwich, refers to the futility of any interpretive attempt to determine which belief has precedence’ (Suleri 126). The contestation and incompleteness that Suleri identifies increases the complexity of the jest and the difficulties of precise definition; it does, however, illustrate the open nature of the jest and its property of combining disparate ideas and elements. The jest is a powerful device, inhabiting the margins of innocence and knowledge, and forming a permeable boundary between the private and public. It disrupts order and reason with an unsettling, subversive and contrapuntal wisdom. In this guise, the jest assumes the character of a wildcard, or a joker, that reveals an alternative narrative behind the surface text. Bromwich illustrates this by reference to Kipling’s prelude to *Departmental Ditties* (1886), where the ironic narrator refers to the ‘jesting guise’.

I have written the tale of our life
 For a sheltered people’s mirth
 In jesting guise – but you are wise,
 And ye know what the jest is worth.

(*Poems*1: 7)

The jest carries a hidden narrative that cannot be told openly, and it holds a truth which can only be felt rather than written (Bromwich 196). Adding a layer of Freudian interpretation to this suggests the opaque layers of dream, play, jest and

joke. Only those who can enter the world beyond reason can truly read the jest. The ‘sheltered people’ are only able to read the respectable, reasonable civilized surface text. According to Bromwich, Kipling’s jest is also a device for generating ironic distance:

He is a jester in that he stands apart from a storyteller who would identify with his hero effortlessly. At the same time, his attitude is only a ‘jesting guise’ – not part of his disposition, but a security without which the tale would stay wrapped in earnest decencies. [...] All these qualifications give ‘jest’ a special strength for the wise, and with the concluding line it turns into another name for truth. (Bromwich 188)

Bromwich implies that there are two layers within the jest. The first distances the author from the hero narrator; the second distances the tale from the daylight world of the reasonable and the earnest, which allows a hidden truth to emerge. Considered in this way, Kipling’s writing occupies a self-conscious space and according to Zohreh Sullivan, a duality. She writes that:

The dual plot of Kipling’s life and art at its most vital involves a dialectic between the accurate, the official and the prescribed as against the dreamlike, the repressed, and the outlawed. (Sullivan 30)

Sullivan’s comments echo that of C.A. Bodelsen who argued that Kipling inhabited two worlds. One was the daylight world of ‘machines and ships and soldiers and administrators’ and another, the world of the night ‘whose gates sometimes open[ed] for him’ (Bodelsen 1). These night time experiences, Bodelsen argued, were probably ‘incommunicable’ to Kipling because they were private and offered no common ground between the writer and the reader (Bodelsen 2). They also ‘belong[ed] to the hinterland of consciousness that language has no means of dealing with in direct terms’ (Bodelsen 2). Bodelsen writes that the night time episodes ‘were accompanied by a state of release and exaltation’, implying a release of suppressed energies (Bodelsen 5).

Bodelsen describes the result of entering Kipling's night world as 'a spiritual experience that is quite intangible' and it results in a 'release in an ecstasy of laughter, so vehement as to be almost painful' (Bodelsen 11). It is almost a 'fit of hysteria' where the 'characters roll on the ground, gasp, shriek and groan, till they are on the point of suffocating' (Bodelsen 11). The result of successfully entering the elusive world of Kipling's jest is, according to Bodelsen, a productive one:

He who experiences this is vouchsafed a glimpse of a comic cosmos, and at the same time a revelation of hidden meanings that have escaped him in his more sober moments. The process takes place, of course, inside his own mind, which undergoes a kind of enlargement enabling him to discover new and exciting qualities in things that used to appear prosaic; and it is implied that what he perceives in this way is a truth that otherwise eludes one. (Bodelsen 10)

This is Kipling's jest at its most vital, where something magical occurs and a truth, which is apparently impossible to express in reasonable, formal language, is shared between author and reader, and it is shared through an experience which Bodelsen describes as 'spiritual'. This thesis follows the idea that the jest, by allowing the energies of Kipling's day and night worlds to co-exist and to compete, is the means that Kipling used for exploring the borderland between consciousness and unconsciousness, and is a source of the vitality that Bodelsen and Sullivan comment upon. It is the development of Kipling's spiritual jest that is traced in this thesis, through investigation of the incongruous, the engagement with mysterious spiritual forces, the collapse of a colonial stereotype, and finally works that engage in a critique of metropolitan modernity.

Summary

Finally in this chapter, I want to place incongruity humour and the jest in the wider context of questioning and seeking answers to the unknown. Colonial and postcolonial texts abound in examples of the inability of one culture to understand and sympathise with another. Well-known examples are Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* and some of Kipling's Indian stories.

Finding the incongruous and out of place can be part of the process of understanding and reconciliation, if the event is treated sympathetically, while conversely, if treated in the Bergson mode of control and enforcement, it seemingly and inevitably leads to conflict and separation. Bob Plant illustrates the importance of the incongruous in the process of understanding:

What I mean is this: The incongruity generated by the ‘irreducible’ collision of subjective and objective perspectives is what prompts us to raise daunting existential questions in the first place. That is to say, we are simply the kind of animal that naturally asks ‘What is the meaning of life?’ and ‘Does life matter?’ We are also, simultaneously, the kind of animal that cannot find satisfactory answers to these sorts of questions – not, however, because we are too dumb, shallow or lethargic. In short, living at the juncture of subjective and objective perspectives, we human beings just cannot help repeatedly asking unanswerable questions. (Plant 133)

By following Plant and responding to the incongruous, and by implication, the aesthetic positively, and by asking, and perhaps finding a partial answer to the unanswerable question, the individual may widen their world. Conversely, by avoiding or suppressing those intractable questions, it is reduced. I argue that the incongruous and Kipling’s jest are linked, incongruity providing the entry point, as it were, to the jest. Bodelsen writes of the final stories that Kipling produced in a striking way:

The experiences these stories try to describe involve, as it were, a pause in the inexorable regularity of the world. They have the effect of a private Saturnalia that produces a catharsis by the suspension of rules and distinctions that one normally has to observe. (Bodelsen 10)

It is the struggle to arrive at this magical point of revelation that reaches its final form in Kipling’s late farces, which I trace through the remainder of the thesis.

Kipling frequently uses the term jest as a synonym for a spirited joke. In *Plain Tales* for example, it occurs in three stories. In ‘His Wedded Wife’ the jest is

the glorious and inclusive joke of revenge hatched by a subaltern officer upon his superior. ‘The Bronckhorst Divorce–Case’ is a tale where the term jest is used to describe the heavy handed jokes, and cruel form of humour, inflicted upon his wife by an unfeeling husband. Finally in ‘In the Pride of his Youth’, a story in which Kipling says that ‘all the jest [has] been left out’ (*Plain Tales* 213), there is the cruel joke of fate that reduces Dick Hatt to a state of uncontrollable and hysterical laughter. The jest that I consider is not simply a joke, as demonstrated by these examples, but of an experience that emerges from the coexistence (Koestler’s bisociation) of Freud’s rationally constructed *reasonable* joke with the unconscious and the *unreasonable*. The *Pioneer* quotation, cited at the beginning of this chapter, is an example of this bisociation. In this quotation Kipling asserts that the colonial experience is both, a product of reason (Freud’s constructed joke – ‘*a giant practical joke*’), and the intrusion of the unconscious and the unreasonable (the presence of the unconscious element of the jest – ‘jest with it temperately’). The coexistence of these two states creates the special form of jest, which ultimately allows admission into a world which is not determined by reason alone. It results in an experience that is analogous to that which Tompkins and Bodelsen identified, but in contrast to Tompkins and Bodelsen, I investigate this special form of the jest from a postcolonial perspective.

Chapter Two: Colonial Incongruities – The Journey from Empire to Modernity

Introduction

This second chapter develops the ideas of the incongruous to investigate how it relates to individuality, and in particular, how it operates through the agent of the craftsman and the production of the flawed object. I begin with an exploration of the avenues of interpretation that the incongruous, the odd, and the out of place liberate, and I investigate Kipling's engagement with these. This is followed by a discussion of the philosophy of Carlyle and Ruskin to develop the idea that the aesthetic arising from the combination of humour and incongruity can be a positive liberating experience. By using William Morris as a direct link between the Kipling family and Ruskin, I connect the ideas of the craftsman, the free individual, the importance of the craftsman and the flawed artefact (which becomes a carrier of the incongruous) to Kipling.

The final section of the chapter investigates Kipling's writing as he journeyed away from India and from the British Empire, firstly, experiencing the world of British settlements in China, then, independent Japan and finally the USA. At each stage, the influence of the Empire and of the old Anglo-Indian way of life recedes, and Kipling experiences new and different ways of living. In effect, the journey is a movement away from fixed ideas of Victorian Empire to an emerging modernity. I concentrate upon how Kipling judges these new worlds through the lens of craftsmanship and incongruity, and ultimately how these experiences destabilise the Anglo-Indian certainties that seemingly defined his life and his work.

Attractive Incongruity

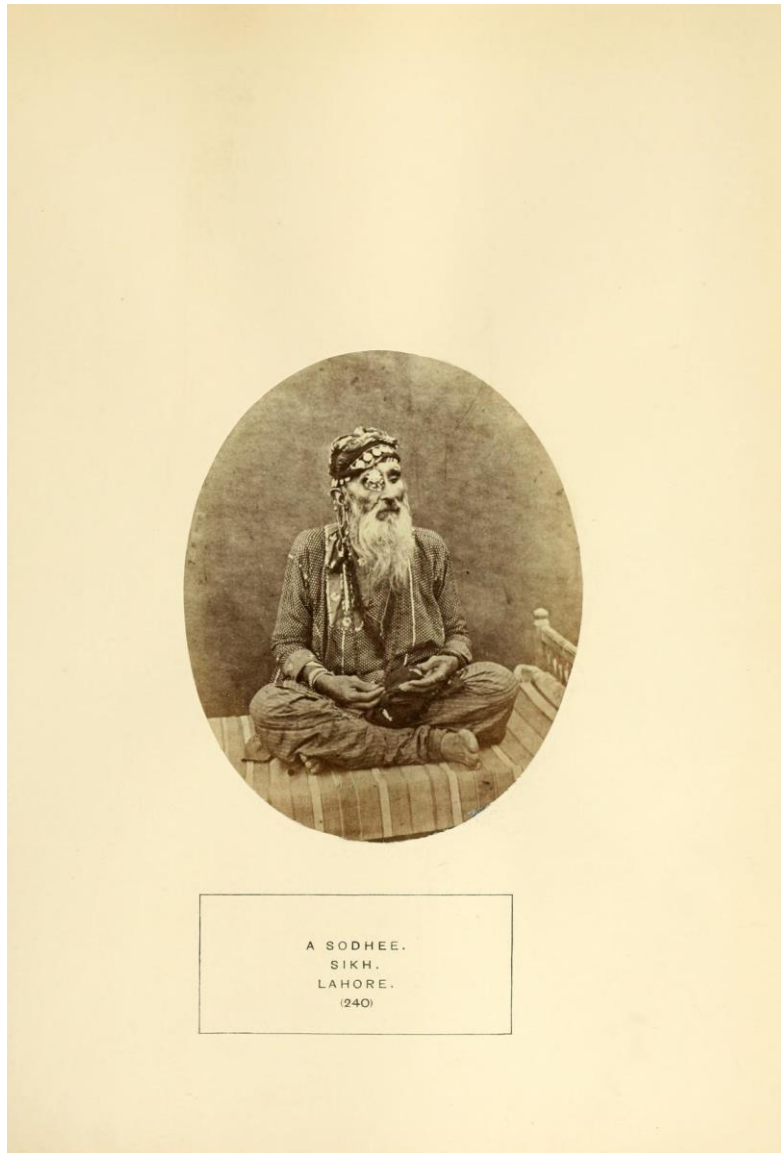
The *OED* defines the incongruous as a negative, disruptive quantity; it is the space that disrupts the whole. It is 'out of keeping, disaccordant, inconsistent, inharmonious or unsuited'. The incongruous is unreasonable in that it is 'disagreeing or inconsistent with the circumstances or requirements of the case, or what is reasonable or becoming'. In fact it is 'unbecoming, unsuitable, inappropriate, absurd, out of place'.¹¹ It would seem at first glance that the incongruous is a region of

¹¹ "incongruous, adj." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017.

nonsense, which is only fit for ridicule or laughter, but among the supporting citations from the *OED*, there are a few which suggest a deeper and more enduring property. Daniel Defoe is cited as saying that ‘I have since observed, how incongruous and irrational the common Temper of Mankind is’, and in the definitions for incongruity, there are three citations which suggest a positive dimension. Samuel Johnson asserts that beauty cannot exist without incongruity: ‘Without incongruity [...] we cannot speak of geometrical beauty’; and F. Fuller suggests that incongruity is an admirable feature that can be admired. Finally, A. Bain removes the essentialist link between incongruity and the ludicrous: ‘the most commonly assigned cause of the Ludicrous is Incongruity; but all incongruities are not ludicrous’.¹² So if incongruity is not essentially ludicrous but has some connection to the absurd and to beauty and in addition can be an admirable feature of human life, what is it? Incongruity and the incongruous are above all unreasonable, as they do not fit comfortably within the logic of reason, for incongruity is the fissure that disturbs the whole, and the only way that reason can deal with it is by making it ‘unsuitable, inappropriate and absurd.’

Sara Suleri in her study, *The Rhetoric of English India* has chosen to use the photograph of a Sikh Sodhee taken from Watson and Kaye’s *The People of India* (1868-75) volume 5, plate 240 as its frontispiece.

¹² "incongruity, n." OED Online. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017.



The People of India 5: Plate 240.

The nature of the Sodhee in volume 5 used by Suleri excites Watson and Kaye's interest, not because of his occupation but in his costume and appearance: 'He has lost an eye, which is covered by an ornament pendant from his turban; and it is a strange peculiarity of this person, that he dresses himself on all occasions in female apparel' (*The People of India 5: 240*). The nature of the 'female apparel' that excited Watson and Kaye's interest is not apparent to the modern Western observer, for the figure is wearing a shalwar (trousers) and what appears to be a loose fitting shirt. Suleri uses the photograph and the accompanying text to illustrate the inadequacies of official ethnographic categorization of culture. She writes:

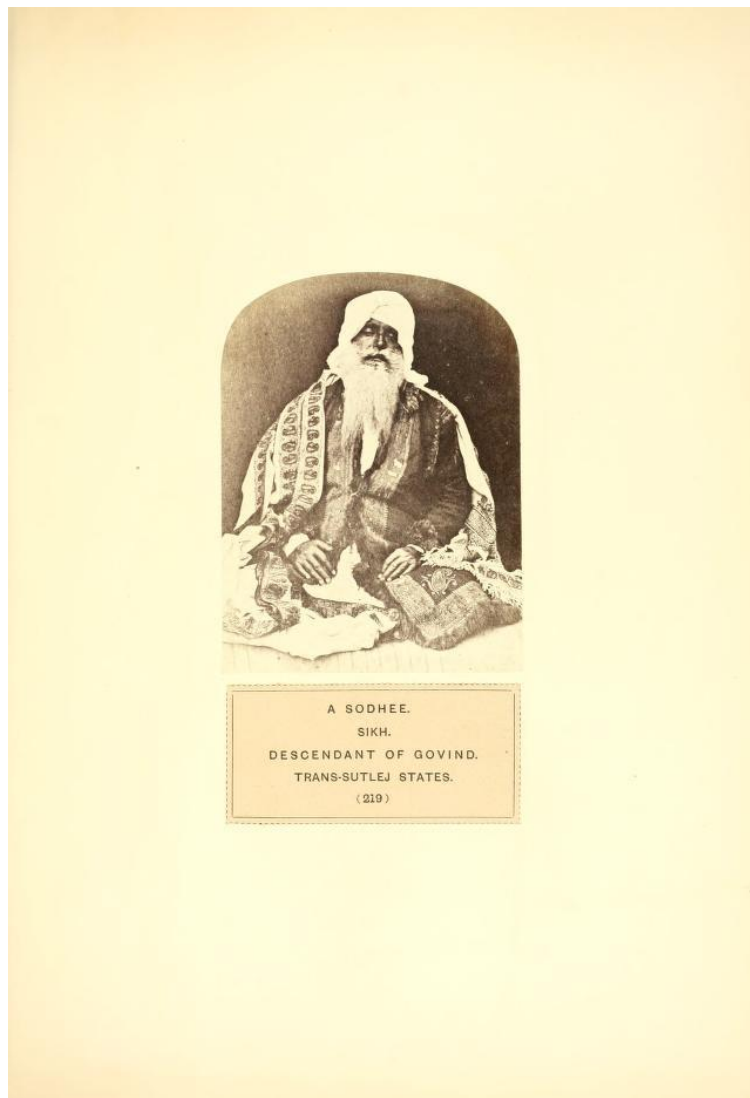
The photograph itself smiles back a cultural mocking at the colonizing camera's eye: dragging in his unreadability to

upset an imperial reliance on the gendering and costuming of its empire, the image confirms what the text has already guiltily acknowledged – to dress the colonial picturesque in either feminine or masculine garb is tragically to defer that cultural realization which knows that its official representations remain physically skin deep. (Suleri 110)

The People of India is ambivalent towards the Sodhee, because the Sodhee is categorized in two volumes, 4 and 5. Volume 4 provides a genealogy of the Sodhee, asserting that they are descendants of Govind:

They are revered as the descendants of the great teacher and military leader, and are supported by the voluntary offerings of the Sikh people at large; but they have neither the office nor the sanctity of a hereditary priesthood, and though supposed to act as teachers, are for the most part an idle class, remarkable chiefly for profitless and dissolute lives. [...] The Sodhees have obtained a sad notoriety for female infanticide, which they justify by the assertion that they cannot mix the blood of Govind with other than their own. (*The People of India* 4: 219)

It provides another Sodhee photograph (plate 219) of one who ‘is a respected member of the Sodhee family’ (*The People of India* 4: 219).



The People of India 4: 219.

Suleri uses the commentary provided by Watson and Kaye on the androgynous Sodhee to question the certainty of colonial knowledge. In a wider context, it also demonstrates the impossibility of constructing a sufficient understanding of a complex system from a series of isolated and limited observations. What the incongruous nature of the figure does is to establish himself as an individual who is no longer a native Indian among hundreds of millions, a Sikh among millions of Sikhs, a Sodhee among thousands of Sodhees but an individual who confronts and destabilises official ordering. The figure becomes interesting, if for no other reason, that he defies simple categorization, not only is he apparently ‘wrongly’ dressed but he is flawed by having only one eye. The flaw (deformity might be another term) is

not so much hidden but accentuated by the gaudy pendant, perhaps defying the observer to remove it and see the mystery underneath.

The incongruous is interesting; it seems to stimulate an inquisitive energy and it invites investigation because it is the bit left over, the remainder that rational description and analysis cannot absorb. Why does the dress of the figure signify, why the ornamental patch over the disfigurement, why emphasise the loss of sight and the ability to see the world in depth? Why did the official mapping in *The People of India* replace ‘the respected member of the Sodhee family’ with the far more problematic figure that Suleri selects? Is this figure mysterious, pathetic, and menacing or is he simply absurd? Does he generate hostility or sympathy? Was the figure a symbol of native India to the colonial regime and what does he signify now? Incongruity opens up all of these avenues of exploration which reason and categorization have closed off.

The incongruous and out of place attracted Kipling, he deliberately cultivated contacts within the regions of society that were on the periphery of the colonial administration. He writes in his *Something of Myself* of his nightly walks in the old Indian sections of Lahore and of his friendship with the subaltern classes of the colonial administration.¹³ One such individual was the native foreman on the *Gazette*, one ‘Mian Rukn Din, a Muhammedan gentleman of kind heart and infinite patience, whom I never saw unequal to a situation [who] was my loyal friend throughout’ (*SoM* 41). During this period, Kipling seems to have deliberately sought the friendship of ordinary soldiers who were often excluded from contact with the Anglo-Indian elite.¹⁴ These contacts were later to blossom into the soldiers’ stories. He cultivated friendships with the men of the 31st East Surrey Regiment, ‘a London recruited confederacy of skilful dog-stealers’ (*SoM* 55), and he learned the harsh reality of soldiering for the Raj, which included the boredom, disease, privations, bad as well as good officering and occasionally some action. Kipling’s Indian stories are varied. He wrote about people on the very edge of colonial society: ordinary soldiers, drug addicts, courtesans, adventurers, as well as about ineptitude, failure, scandal and the occasional success of the colonial administration. Very often the stories reflect a breakdown of individuals or of seemingly civilized life. One has to ask why

¹³ Subsequently abbreviated to *SoM*.

¹⁴ For a fuller clarification of this marginalisation, see: Allen, Charles. Ed. *Plain Tales from the Raj: Images of British India in the Twentieth Century*. London: André Deutsch Ltd., 1975. 153-63.

choose these subjects for his Anglo–Indian readership, especially as very often the stories reflect the flaws inherent in that community? The answer, I argue, is that Kipling was attracted to flaws in society, in systems, in physical artefacts and in machines. The objects that are not congruent with the idealised norm tend to be the most interesting, even though they stand out from the surroundings, and they may jar or destroy the symmetry of the whole. Very often they assume such a prominence that the background of empire becomes just that, a background, or alternatively they may enhance and support the remainder of the scene in some way. Kipling seizes on these incongruities to craft stories around them, which sometimes amuse, sometimes antagonise or revolt, but very often produce an experience that can only be described as aesthetic.

Kipling’s stories are not picturesque; they are not primarily intended to display his technical skill, and they usually implicate far more than the surface scene. In Ruskin’s terms they display an ‘age mark’ that is evidence of the wear and tear of real life upon the subjects (Landow 230). Ruskin argues that there is an attraction in wear and tear, in the flaws and blemishes that honest use and time has wrought upon the perfect surface, and that incongruity is a home for ‘the confused hieroglyphics of human history’ (Landow 229). In effect, the out of place has a place: incongruity is the place where the memory traces of the untidy, unloved, uncomfortable bits of human existence are lodged. According to Ruskin, real art should display ‘the implications of the picturesque scene before him [the observer]’ (Landow 232). Ruskin writes in his diary entry of 12th May 1854 of a scene in Amiens:

All exquisitely picturesque, and as miserable as picturesque. We delight in seeing the figures in the boats pushing them about the bits of blue water in Prout’s drawings. But as I looked today at the unhealthy faces and melancholy, apathetic mien of the man in the boat, pushing his load of peats along the ditch, and of the people, men, and women, who sat spinning gloomily in the picturesque cottages, I could not help feeling how many suffering persons must *pay* for my picturesque subject, and my happy walk. (Landow 232)

I take the view that Kipling's stories fit into Ruskin's idea of real art – they do not ignore the pain and the all-too-often futility of everyday life by hiding it behind the picturesque. Unlike Ruskin's idealism, they are far more concerned with the details and imperfections of life undermining the edifice of grand architecture, rather than grand architecture inspiring life. They implicate more than that which is apparent on the surface, and, as Oscar Wilde writes, they are serious:

From the point of view of literature Mr. Kipling is a genius who drops his aspirates. From the point of view of life he is a reporter who knows vulgarity better than anyone has ever known it. Dickens knew its clothes and its comedy. Mr. Kipling knows its essence and its seriousness. He is our first authority on the second-rate, and has seen marvellous things through keyholes, and his backgrounds are real works of art. (Wilde 1055)

Wilde seizes upon Kipling's recognition of the quotidian, the vulgar stuff of everyday existence, and he acknowledges its seriousness to lived existence, but to Wilde this is second rate. To Wilde, Kipling is an ethnographic voyeur, peeking through keyholes to observe and record the overlooked background to life, and from which he creates 'real works of art.'

Kipling's exploitation of the incongruities, defects and the vulgarity of life, very much in the Johnsonian vein, suggest a vitality and inherent beauty that can only be realised by the recognition of its flaws. It is not too fanciful to apply these words of Ian Baucom's on Ruskin, to Kipling:

In thus celebrating its own imperfections, the Gothic freed the labourer from the servile compulsion to imitate and rewards the flowerings of imagination, even those which are blasted in the bloom. Through his reading of the Gothic, Ruskin recognizes culture as the eternally incomplete, as something that can never be photographed and obediently reproduced. (Baucom 65)

If the term Gothic, which has a predetermined literary meaning, is removed and replaced by Incongruous, then I argue that Baucom's passage applies directly to Kipling. Kipling's stories certainly explore and delight in the imperfections of life:

he delighted in anything that was created, be it a text or a craft object, a machine, or an empire, and he insisted on his own artistic independence. For example, Kipling finds himself the object of hostility when entering the ‘long, shabby dining–room where we all sat at one table’ of the Club, which ‘was the whole of my outside world’ (*SoM* 51). Kipling has found himself, as an employee of the *Civil and Military Gazette*, associated with the *Gazette*’s support for the Indian Government, and its promotion of the Ilbert Bill that sought to give Indian judges the right to try Englishmen. The situation is made worse by a well–intentioned intervention from a senior member of the Club to ‘Stop that! The boy’s only doing what he is paid to do’ (*SoM* 51). In *Something of Myself*, Kipling relives the realization that as an employee, he must relinquish a proportion of his artistic independence: ‘I was a hireling, paid to do what I was paid to do, and – I did not relish the idea’ (*SoM* 51).

Kipling, unlike Dickens, is not directly associated with the philosophy of Thomas Carlyle, yet I argue that there are two distinct avenues of connection. The first avenue is one of literary and political influence and has three threads traceable back to Carlyle. One thread is Kipling’s antagonism towards ‘democracy’. The second thread is his love of heroes, individuals who have specific knowledge with the skills and energy to provide leadership (Carlyle, *Heroes*). The third thread is distrust towards enforced conformity and systemised organisations that control and stifle individuals, clearly demonstrated in Dick’s relationship with the press syndicates in Kipling’s *The Light that Failed* (1891).

The second avenue related to Carlyle that I consider refers to the aesthetic of Kipling’s work and the development of the individual through incongruity. It runs through the line of Carlyle, Ruskin, William Morris, Edward Burne–Jones and finally through his parents Alice and John Lockwood Kipling. The starting point is the deterministic machine and the successive expansion of industrialisation that impacted Victorian Britain, radically altering its economy and its organisation. The machine, with its ability to produce power and reproduce items seemingly endlessly, is one great symbol of Victorian society. The machine, as Sussman argues, became far more significant to the Victorian mind than just a mere collection of mechanical parts:

For Carlyle, Ruskin, and Morris, as well as for Dickens, Wells, and Kipling, the machine is important not merely as an image, a representation of a visual experience, but as a

symbol, an image that suggests a complex of meanings beyond itself. (Sussman 3)

The machine and the new way of living that it produced could be viewed as a liberator, freeing humankind from the soulless, numbing physical labour that non-industrialised agrarian economies require. Alternatively, it becomes a terrifyingly new way to enslave. By consuming the individual in ever greater and grimmer factories or factory-like organisations, the machine symbolically transformed the comfortably docile agricultural labourer into a member of the great sullen mass of the new working class.¹⁵ However the machine is viewed, it was disruptive, but the fortunate few – Baucom identifies Ruskin, Carlyle, William Morris and A. W. Pugin – could take refuge in a vision of an idyllic past (Baucom 77). The aspect of this view of a mythical past that I wish to pursue is the craftsman (perhaps also mythical) who in leaving his marks on the artefacts that he produced bequeathed a sign of individuality and freedom: human properties that were seen by Carlyle and Ruskin as being in danger of obliteration by an ever-growing deterministic and materialist society.

For Ruskin, gothic architecture was the sign of a mystical pre-industrialised England, one that supposedly respected the individual and one where a craftsman obtained true satisfaction from his honest toil. According to Ruskin, the marks and surface flaws produced by the craftsman's work and the passage of time, which cause the incongruities in the grand facade, validate the whole to give it an enduring value. Ruskin's artefact is more than just a passive material object; he implies that artefacts affect the identities of those who come into contact with them (Baucom 77). What I wish to take forward from this is the idea of how an object that is flawed by honest use, from manufacture, and the passage of time, can induce an aesthetic experience that will have an effect on our subsequent lives. Ruskin's flawed objects, however, are not just of intellectual interest or private, even selfish, aesthetic joy. They are social artefacts that can be read as a contribution to the creativity of humankind. He fully realised that mistakes, which are honest flaws, are an essential part of the human existence. Without making mistakes, one cannot do anything that

¹⁵ See Chapter Sixteen 'Class Consciousness' of Thompson, E. P. *The Making of the English Working Class*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980. 781-915.

has not been done before. Mistakes are, or can be, a sign of newness in the world and of the creative energy of humankind:

Understand this clearly: You can teach a man to draw a straight line, and to cut one; to strike a curved line, and to carve it; and to copy and carve any number of given lines or forms, with admirable speed and perfect precision; and you will find his work perfect of its kind: but if you ask him to think about any of these forms, to consider if he cannot find any better in his own head, he stops; his execution becomes hesitating; he thinks, and ten to one he thinks wrong; ten to one he makes a mistake in the first touch he gives to his work as a thinking being. But you have made a man of him for all that. He was only a machine before, an animated tool. (Ruskin, *Selected Writing*, 40)

The influence of this train of thought can be seen directly in Lockwood Kipling's comments on the Punjab village carpenter, working in the railway workshops of the Raj:

When forbidden to copy European models he will 'work with considerable effect and artistic propriety' but will soon lose this excellence when working under European supervision and to European standards of fit and finish. (L. Kipling, *Monograph*, 5)

Lockwood Kipling recognises that the indigenous aesthetic and artistic drive becomes lost when the Tarkhán, the native craftsman, is reduced to what is in effect a factory operative. The operative, in contrast to the craftsman, works under instruction from a superior and is prohibited from applying any of his, or her, imaginative powers to the work. He labours to produce an alien machine part in which the marks of human production, or individualism, are not tolerated in the finished article. In Bergsonian terms, the hard shell of alien mechanised production has been forced upon the free and lively spirit of a native craftsman. The result is either derision at his incompetence or, as in Lockwood's case, a sympathetic understanding of the incompatibility between the two frames of reference. One frame

of reference is that of a free and independent craftsman working out of his own imagination, the other a factory–hand manufacturing a component to a specification.

The dilemma between an original expression of some intangible human quality and a reproduction of an existing object or design was not new. Timothy Clark traces this to the Romantic and post–Romantic tradition of aesthetics. He identifies the work of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), where ‘genius’ exceeds a mere craftsman’s talent,’ and that of F.W.J. Schelling (1775-1854) and others regarding the ‘mysterious ‘nature’’ (T. Clark, 53) of the

unconscious power that differentiates and makes up the leap of ‘inspiration’, whereby the work exceeds both the conscious planning of the artist and the exhaustive or totalizing ambitions of any one act of understanding. (T. Clark, 53-54)

Rephrasing this, there would appear to be some spiritual dimension, Bergson’s *élan vital* perhaps, or Kipling’s demon that takes control and expresses itself through the body of the labouring artist or craftsman.¹⁶ In this context, the comments of Ruskin, Lockwood Kipling and Rudyard Kipling that oppose the ‘hireling’ nature of work, can be read as an attempt to recover the space from which ‘inspiration’ could emerge and take control.

Incongruity and creativity

Ruskin argues that identity is inexorably linked with individual effort, with creating something that has not existed before, and mistakes and flaws are part of that process. In effect, the incongruous flaw is a sign that a thinking, sentient being is behind the production of the artefact, and this bestows a moral validity upon that artefact. Baucom comments upon Ruskin’s sense of morality in the production of things:

By returning to a cultural moment that valued the labour of the hand [...] he sought to save culture from the hegemony of the copy shop by elaborating an aesthetic philosophy that

¹⁶ Bergson’s *élan vital* was the idea that human life is energised by an energising spirit which was present at the creation and is passed down from generation to generation. See Bergson, Henri. *Creative Evolution*. Houndmills Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007: 5-63.

insisted on the essential imperfection, incompleteness, and irreproducibility of the cultural artefact.’ (Baucom 64)

In addition to the creditable motive of relieving human suffering, Ruskin’s attention to the essential imperfections of human creation sets the cultural artefact free from the dead hand of completeness. It can never die, always having the possibility of being remade with countless variation, always developing into something that is new. The artefact can never be complete and wholly without blemish, and from this incompleteness and imperfection arises creativity and renewal.

Ruskin, like Carlyle was influential, partly through his published work, partly through his public lectures and partly through his interest in art education. Perhaps his most lasting and practical visible contribution to the debate around the place of the machine in society was not in England but in India, where it influenced Mahatma Gandhi and the Swadeshi movement, elevating craftsmanship to a political weapon.¹⁷ Ruskin was undoubtedly an intellectual, a person concerned primarily with ideas rather than their practical application, whereas William Morris was far more concerned with their application. From that viewpoint he could be perceived as a complement to Ruskin’s intellectualism; Ruskin thought about individuality, Morris crafted it with his hands. Morris follows in the line of Carlyle and Ruskin in rejecting the idea of humans as simple operatives, obedient mechanical units of production, bound to a capitalist system of production that divided work into ever decreasing units of complexity and skill.¹⁸

Morris was more than just a simple craftsman though; he engaged in poetry, handcraft and politics and with varying degrees of success, in business, but as Sussman writes, he remained committed to one central idea:

And yet through these seemingly contradictory interests – escapist poetry, medieval handicraft, commercial success, socialism – there runs a single purpose; all are different means to the same end of freeing natural, organic impulses

¹⁷ See Brantlinger, Patrick. “A Postindustrial Prelude to Postcolonialism: John Ruskin, William Morris, and Gandhism”. *Critical Inquiry* 22.3 (1996): 466-485.

¹⁸ For an extended discussion, see Berg, Maxine. *The Age of Manufactures 1700-1820*. London: Fontana, 1985 and Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Capital*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1995.

from the psychic restraints created by mechanization.
(Sussman 104)

As a practical craftsman, Morris remained committed to the idea that human freedom and happiness could be found through work, provided that the work was the right sort. Morris, and the Arts and Crafts Movement attributed to him, is relevant to the understanding of Kipling's work for a number of reasons. The first is Morris's insistence on freeing the worker from the drudgery of soulless repetitive work, and restoring the human element to artefact production, by the reintroduction of the skilled craftsman. Morris, in his address 'Art of the People' delivered to the Birmingham Society of Arts and School of Design on February 19th 1879, states:

That thing which I understand by real art is the expression by man of his pleasure in labour. I do not believe he can be happy in his labour without expressing that happiness; and especially is this so when he is at work at anything in which he especially excels. (Morris 23)

Applying this statement to Kipling's many instances of the knowing individual labouring to create something – an empire, a bridge, battling a famine or administering a district – opens a new way to interpret Kipling's work. Bodelsen writes with reference to Rudyard Kipling's frequent reference to craftsmanship and to craft:

But this [technical proficiency] is not what he meant to imply: craftsmanship, even the very word, was for him [Kipling] endowed with almost a magical significance and symbolized something that he regarded as one of the chief conditions of human worth and dignity: the ability to master some particular kind of trade or job to perfection. (Bodelsen 44)

Applying Bodelsen's interpretation to Kipling's characters transforms them from merely Sahibs, technically proficient colonial officers, and members of a superior race labouring to improve the lives of ungrateful colonial subjects, but free men. The depersonalised Sahibs are transformed into artists or craftsmen, who through their productive labour leave a mark that signifies their individuality and worth.

The second reason is that Morris had personal links to both Kipling's father and mother through the Burne-Jones's family. Kipling's library at Bateman's has a copy of Edward Moxon's 1857 edition of *Tennyson's Poems* with the hand-written inscription inside the front cover:¹⁹

Alice Macdonald.

From your friend

William Morris

Kipling's mother (Alice Macdonald) presumably knew Morris through her sister's marriage to the artist Edward Burne-Jones, a friend and associate of Morris. Lockwood Kipling would have been aware of Morris's work before he left for India in 1865 and certainly during his work there to stimulate the export of quality Indian hand-crafted items. Where Morris was concerned to reinvigorate the English craft industry, Lockwood Kipling was similarly engaged, but in a government capacity, to do the same for the Indian.²⁰ Morris specifically tackles the art of India in his address of 1879 to the Birmingham Society of Arts and School of Design. He acknowledges India as the source for the new English education in art, but mourns India's loss of traditional craftsmanship, which he attributes to the western demand for cheap mass-produced goods. Morris continues pessimistically: 'In short, their art is dead, and the commerce of modern civilisation has slain it' (Morris 17). Morris's comments can be read in conjunction with Gandhi's later efforts to recover the craft base of Indian society, and perhaps they, like Ruskin's work, did influence Gandhi. I argue that the mix of the philosophies of Carlyle and Ruskin, along with William Morris's practical craftsmanship, all contributed to Kipling's view of the world. This, when combined with the colonial environment, created a lens through which he evaluated and commented upon the peoples and events that he encountered during his journey away from India.

¹⁹ Kipling's former home in England from 1902 until 1936, now owned and maintained by the National Trust.

²⁰ See Judith Flanders essay "The Keeper of the Wonder-house: John Lockwood Kipling". The Kipling Society. <http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/members/paper_flanders.htm>. Accessed 21 August 2013.

The Journey to Modernity

The majority of Kipling's time in India was spent in a world dominated by the British Empire. Kipling was still a very junior and young participant, with effectively little or no experience outside of the colonial environment. Indeed in his letter to E. K. Robinson of 30th April 1886, he writes, 'Would you be astonished if I told you that I look forward to nothing but an Indian journalist's career? Why should I? My home's out here; my people are out here, all the friends etc. I know are out here and all the interests I have are out here' (*Letters* 1: 126).

Kipling's break with the *Pioneer* came in 1888 and among his last work for that paper was a series of travel letters, first on a tour of India ('Letters of Marque') and then on the long journey back to London ('From Sea to Sea'). 'Letters of Marque' were first published in the *Pioneer*, between 14th December 1887 and 28th February 1888. These were subsequently collected by Kipling, and included in the two-volume *Sea to Sea and Other Sketches*, first published in New York by Doubleday and McClure Co. (1889), and in London by Macmillan (1890). Kipling's letters covering his journey from India to America, titled 'From Sea to Sea', were first published by the *Pioneer* in 1889 and 1890. They too were subsequently collected by Kipling, and included in *Sea to Sea and Other Sketches* of 1889 and 1890. Kipling also produced a series of letters in 1888, concerned with urban Calcutta and collectively titled 'The City of Dreadful Night'. These were first published as a letter series between March and April 1888 in the *Pioneer*. Subsequently, much of this material was published in India by A.H. Wheeler under the title *City of Dreadful Night and Other Places* in 1891, and by Wheeler and Sampson Low, Marston & Co. in England, also in 1891, as number XIV in the Indian Railway Library Series. Like the other material discussed above, they were subsequently collected by Kipling and included in *Sea to Sea and Other Sketches* of 1889 and 1900. Kipling's collected edition also included additional material written by Kipling, first published by the proprietors of the *Pioneer* between 1887 and 1888, on railways, mines and an opium factory.²¹ For citation purposes I take a modern facsimile of the 1928 Macmillan edition of Kipling's collected *From Sea to Sea and*

²¹ The publication history of all of this material is taken from the helpful online *New Readers Guide* provided by The Kipling Society. <http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/bookmart_fra.htm>. Accessed 14 March 2017.

Other Sketches.²² Confusingly Kipling also produced a short story concerning Lahore on a hot summer night titled 'City of a Dreadful Night'. This was first published in the *Civil and Military Gazette* on the 10th September 1885 and the *United Services College Chronicle* on the 7th March 1887. It was subsequently collected in *Life's Handicap*.²³

Kipling's choice of route back to England is significant. The usual route would have been westwards from India, through the Suez Canal (opened in 1869), then through the Mediterranean and back to England. This was one of the great sea routes of Empire, secured by the British Navy and populated by British merchant ships. The route constantly touched upon British settlements, garrisons, coaling stations and territory and was as much a tangible part of the Empire as any land would be. Instead of using this safe, convenient and predictable route, Kipling chose to go east, stopping at Burma, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan and finally the USA. At each stage, the colonial regime changed its character, appearing to Kipling's eyes to be less restrictive and intrusive, until it finally disappeared in Japan and America to be replaced by early signs of modernity. The letters are different in style and mood from his previous short stories, but, like those, still written for an Anglo-Indian readership. It may be, of course, that the difference can be accounted for purely by the epistolary nature of the material, intended to be published at intervals, in magazine fashion in the newspapers to fill space as required. My argument, however, is that they represent something far more important than that simple utilitarian view. During the journey away from the closed world of the Anglo-Indian community, they express an increasing freedom. There is an evident decentring present, moving Kipling as a writer away from commenting on, and for, the Anglo-Indians, to that of a writer concerned with the greater world system and writing for that world. In discussing the letters, I will take these in sequence and concentrate on his attraction to craftsmanship, to incongruity and the significance of humour.

Compared to his early fictional stories, the distance between narrator, subject and reader is reduced. In the early letter series 'Letters of Marque', which concern themselves with travel solely within India, the narrator is identified as 'the Englishman', and we see India through the 'Englishman's eyes', but, during the

²² Kipling, Rudyard. *From Sea to Sea and Other Sketches*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 2 vols. Abbreviated to *StS* for citation purposes.

²³ Taken from the Kipling Society webpage. "The City of Dreadful Night." <http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/rg_dreadful1.htm>. Accessed 15 March 2017.

series, the distance slowly reduces and an increasing identification becomes evident between narrator and subject.²⁴ From this foundation I move on to investigate the ‘Englishman’s’ relationship to the incongruities that Kipling discovers during his travels.

In the opening Letter I (November – December 1887), of ‘Letters of Marque’ the Englishman has his first view of the Taj:

It was the Ivory Gate through which all good dreams come; it was the realisation of the gleaming halls of dawn that Tennyson sings of; it was veritably the ‘aspiration fixed,’ the ‘sigh made stone’ of a lesser poet; and over and above the concrete comparisons, it seemed the embodiment of all things pure, all things holy, and all things unhappy. That was the mystery of the building. It may be that the mists wrought the witchery, and that the Taj seen in the dry sunlight is only, as the guidebooks say, a noble structure. The Englishman could not tell, and has made a vow that he will never go nearer the spot, for fear of breaking the charm of the unearthly pavilions. (*StS* 1: 4)

Distance is maintained between the observer and subject, but we are in no doubt as to the effect the Taj has on the mind of the Englishman. He is enraptured and captivated; it is an aesthetic and spiritual experience that would be destroyed if an attempt was made to repeat it. The ironic, cynical narrator of Kipling’s colonial stories, who only sees duty and suffering has gone, and instead we have an observer, an explorer even, who is pulled in towards the indigenous India from which he has for so long, at least in public, been distanced. The Taj presents Kipling with an aesthetic experience that overcomes the disparaging colonial descriptor of ‘a noble structure’, replacing the cold ethnographic description with a sympathetic attraction that defies rational explanation. The physical artefact that is the Taj, in a strange

²⁴ Kipling’s narrator ‘The Englishman’ is discussed in detail by Mary Condé in her essay “Constructing the Englishman in Rudyard Kipling’s ‘Letters of Marque’.” *The Yearbook of English Studies* 34. Nineteenth-Century Travel Writing (2004): 230-9.

doubling in which the material disavows itself, becomes a sign of an alternative to the material world. For Kipling, at that particular magical time and place, the Taj, like Ruskin's gothic, becomes a place-holder for a deeply spiritual dimension to human existence.

In 'Letters of Marque' there are frequent references to the timelessness of rural India, a sense of the hidden wealth and power of the land and a relative indifference to the British. The sympathetic description of the treasury at Boondi, in letter XVII, is one example:

The faces of the accountants were of pale gold, for they were an untanned breed, and the face of the old man, their controller, was frosted silver.

It was a strange Treasury, but no other could have suited the Palace. The Englishman watched, open-mouthed, blaming himself because he could not catch the meaning of the orders given to the flying chaprassies, nor make anything of the hum in the verandah and the tumult on the stairs. The old man took the commonplace currency note and announced his willingness to give change in silver. 'We have no small notes here,' he said. 'They are not wanted. In a little while, when you next bring the Honour of your Presence this way, you shall find the silver.' (*StS* 1: 176-7)

The Englishman has been admitted into the heart of an indigenous administration and watches in astonishment, 'open-mouthed', at the quiet and efficient office, a scene that is in complete contrast to the hubbub and disorder that a stereotypical colonial construction would create. The scene is incongruous, out of place, in that it does not fit with the established norm of colonial discourse. In this hidden place the English Sahib is an intruder with no authority, a stranger to be politely tolerated, strictly in the way of business, and then dismissed. The impression of the pale gold faces of the accountants and frosted silver of the controller is one of understated wealth and prosperity. Kipling, in making the comparison between skin colour and the precious metals, suggests that the inhabitants of Boondi, like the metals themselves, are timeless and of a value that is immortal. Imperial paper money, perhaps a token of encroaching modernity, is politely accepted and change provided

in real silver, of universal and timeless value, while the foreign visitor is quietly ushered out, to be once more on the outside of indigenous India. However, the serenity of the treasury and the accumulated wealth of India are under threat, not so much from the direct activity of the British, but from the complex linkages between British colonialism and increasing global capitalism.

The reality was that the silver-based Indian rupee was under great pressure with respect to currencies like sterling and the American dollar which were pegged to gold. During the last quarter of the nineteenth-century, silver production quadrupled, due in no small part to the discovery of silver in the USA.²⁵ During the period 1874 to 1894, this had a major impact on the value of the Indian rupee, resulting in a devaluation of approximately 40 percent with respect to sterling. By 1893 the mints were closed to the Indian public, and the bankruptcy of the British Indian government 'was imminent' (Rothermund 43-4). Kipling's portrait is a picture of a rapidly fading past, of a time where the relationship between wealth and precious metal was stable, and under the control of a long-established civilization, a civilisation, moreover, that was effectively isolated from a volatile and rapidly expanding global network of western capitalism and modernity, in which the British were major participants, but did not control.

In the final Letter on India, letter XIX of the 'Letters of Marque' series, Kipling critiques the Indian administration:

Across the Border [that is in the native administered states] one feels that the country is being used, exploited, 'made to sit up' so to speak. In our territories the feeling is equally strong of wealth 'just around the corner,' as the loafer said of a people wrapped up in cotton wool and ungetatable. Will any man, who really knows something of a little piece of India and has not the fear of running counter to custom before his eyes, explain how this impression is produced and why it is an erroneous one? (*StS* 1: 199)

What is significant here is the 'our' in 'our territories', signalling that the anonymous Englishman has been replaced by an insider, a knowledgeable Anglo-Indian Sahib.

²⁵ "The Silver Institute." <<https://www.silverinstitute.org/site/silver-essentials/silver-in-history>>. Accessed 2 Feb. 2015.

He is not the ignorant traveller, or a globe-trotter identified in letter I of the ‘Letters of Marque’ series, as ‘the man who does kingdoms in ‘days’ and writes books upon them in weeks’ (*StS* 1: 1). Rather, he is entitled to criticise and not merely observe. Here the criticism is sharp and direct. Kipling makes an unfavourable comparison between the directly administered states with their excessive regulation and increasingly westernised administration, and the older system of powerful experts operating under the direct authority of a native ruler.

The criticism is similar to one made in ‘The Man Who Would Be King’, where the narrator first encounters Davot:

‘If India was filled with men like you and me, not knowing more than the crows where they’d get their next day’s rations, it isn’t seventy millions of revenue the land would be paying – it’s seven hundred millions,’ said he; and as I looked at his mouth and chin I was disposed to agree with him. (*Wee Willie Winkie* 201 [1908])

Kipling is arguing that imperial administration, rather than fuelling economic growth in India is killing it. Individual effort and opportunism is required to break out of the grinding cycle of poverty that surrounded the mass of the population of British India. Perhaps the unacknowledged problem is that, as Bayly says, ‘The British never controlled the bulk of capital, the means of production or the means of persuasion and communication in the subcontinent’ (Bayly 7). The emphasis on individual effort occurs once again, from an independent source of selected Indian government papers on education of 1890, held in Bateman’s library. In a section dealing with deficiencies in the English education system introduced into India, the following appears and is underlined in heavy pencil: ‘It is men rather than systems that we require in India’ (*Selections*, 186).²⁶ Although post-dating the material I consider here, it does indicate that, like Kipling, the Anglo-Indian community was far from complacent in its view of the British administration. By assigning stagnation to the directly administered British areas and vitality to the native states, Kipling is quietly delivering a powerful blow to the policy of liberal imperialism. What the world

²⁶ *Selections from the Records of the Government of India. Home Department Serial No.8. Papers Relating to Discipline and Moral Training in Schools and Colleges in India.* Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, India. 1890. (Bateman’s Library).

needs, he argues, is less administration imposed from the top by its agent the bourgeois administrator and more direct action by skilled technocrats. By studiously ignoring the new Indian middle class of administrators, Kipling also neatly sidesteps the all-too-visible implications of that class, with its emerging confidence and self-awareness, and the implicit threat towards continued British control of India.²⁷

‘Letters of Marque’ concern themselves with travel within India, while the later series, titled ‘From Sea to Sea’, are concerned with travel outside it. In the later letters Kipling’s tone changes as the geographic range of travel extends, becoming noticeably different to his fictional work and to the earlier ‘Letters of Marque’. It is a development of the ‘Letters of Marque’ style but friendlier and more affectionate. The personal pronouns ‘I’, ‘us’, or ‘Us’, and ‘you’ are frequently used: ‘I’ refers to Kipling, of course, and ‘us’ either to the Anglo-Indian community or to the wider British community, conveniently identified as ‘English’. ‘You’ is used to address the Anglo-Indian readership directly. Kipling’s narrator identifies with the Anglo-Indian community and appears to be acting as an informant for them. The English are placed at some distance, almost as foreigners, people who are out of place and do not belong.

The following extract is taken from Letter II of the ‘From Sea to Sea’ series dealing with a short visit to Burma, formally attached to the Indian Empire but, as Kipling discovers, a different culture altogether:

In the Pegu Club I found a friend – a Punjabi – upon whose broad bosom I threw myself and demanded food and entertainment. [...] But he had come down in the world hideously. Years ago in the Black North he used to speak the vernacular at it should be spoken, and was one of Us.

‘Daniel, how many socks master got?’

The unfinished peg fell from my fist. ‘Good Heavens!’ said I, ‘is it possible that you – you – speak that disgusting pidgin-talk to your *nauker*?’

²⁷ A threat which is subject to an extended discussion in Metcalf, Thomas *Ideologies of the Raj*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. In particular see the claim for ‘equivalence’ (Metcalf 160).

It's enough to make one cry. You're no better than a
Bombaywallah! (StS 1: 226-7)

In this extract, apparently concerned with the simple problem of determining how many socks Kipling's acquaintance possessed, Kipling descends into the mundane. Such a trivial question, but probably not so trivial to the sock owner, requires an interaction between coloniser and colonised, and one that should, in Kipling's opinion, take place in the supposedly inferior everyday vernacular language and avoid bastardising English. However it does not, and imperfect English is used instead, degrading English to a 'disgusting pidgin-talk' that destroys its supposed purity. The extract is humorous: the incongruity of the subject (master's socks) is one factor; Kipling's apparently horrified reaction is another. But the object of the laughter is uncertain: does the laughter support the incongruity of 'pidgin talk' or does it laugh at the Punjabi, an Anglo-Indian now resident in Burma, who cannot speak the local vernacular and instead degrades English? Language is important; the ability to speak native tongues fluently and to avoid bastardising the English mother tongue is one definer of Us, of the true Anglo-Indian. As Bayly points out, the Urdu vernacular can evolve into a hybridised language, one that incorporates elements of Persian, Arabic and even English, and provide a common meeting ground in the public space of indigenous India, described by Bayly as the ecumene (Bayly 180-211). The Anglo-Indian in Kipling insists that English itself, as the language of the coloniser, must be protected from pollution and degeneration while it still has the authority to appropriate words (*nauker*) belonging to other languages. This appropriation is commented upon by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. She writes:

Kipling uses many Hindustani words in his text-pidgin Hindustani, barbaric to the native speaker, devoid of syntactic connections, always infelicitous, almost always incorrect. The narrative practice sanctions this usage and establishes it as 'correct', without, of course, any translation. This is British pidgin, originating in a decision that Hindustani is a language of servants not worth mastering 'correctly'. (Spivak, *Critique*, 162)

British pidgin or not, in this instance, Kipling's language reflects a dramatic change in the relationship between the colonised and the coloniser. It signifies a changing world: even the sacred English language is not stable, insidiously adapting itself to accommodate changing circumstances. Outside of the closed world of Anglo–India, Kipling experiences a different nuance of empire. In this empire, new trading patterns erode the old rigidities, replacing these with a degree of fluidity and accommodation, and this reality he tries to communicate to his old Anglo–Indian world.

In Singapore, Hong Kong and Canton, Kipling, for the first time, discovered the Chinese, not as a few isolated labouring coolies doing jobs that other races would not, but as large coherent communities. He writes in Letter IV of 'From Sea to Sea':

In the native town, I found a large army of Chinese – more than I imagined existed in China itself – encamped in spacious streets and houses, some of them sending block–tin to Singapur, some driving fine carriages, others making shoes, chairs, clothes, and every other thing that a large town desires. They were the first army corps on the march of the Mongol. The scouts are at Calcutta, and a flying column at Rangoon. Here begins the main body, some hundred thousand strong, so they say. Was it not De Quincey that had a horror of the Chinese – of their inhumanness and their inscrutability? Certainly the people of Penang are not nice; they are even terrible to behold. They work hard, which in this climate is manifestly wicked, and their eyes are just like the eyes of their own pet dragons. Our Hindu gods are passable, some of them are even jolly – witness our pot–bellied Ganesh; but what can you do with a people who revel in D.T. monsters and crown their roof ridges with flames of fire, or the waves of the sea? (StS 1: 245)

After making due allowance for Kipling's bias in emphasising the positive aspects of British colonisation, the description of the Chinese inhabiting 'spacious streets' and driving 'fine carriages' still appears as incongruous. According to colonial dogma, they are supposed to live in filth, continually engaged in gambling and drugged with

opium, not living in civilised conditions. These positive images are, however, mixed with other militaristic terms that compare the Chinese to an unstoppable army, possibly insect-like, who can never be eradicated. The Chinese are a puzzle to Kipling: they have ‘pet dragons’, and they ‘revel in D.T. monsters’ and celebrate destructive fire.²⁸ These are odd, incongruous people who release a flood of inquisitive energy into Kipling’s writing. Kipling may have still resorted to a well-worn trope of colonial writing, the ‘inhumanness and their inscrutability’ of the Chinese, but the ethnographic description is inadequate, and Kipling reverts to imaginative images to describe the strange people he encounters. Even in the domain of the Gods, where Kipling appropriates the Hindu God Ganesh as an image of normality, the Chinese appear to be beyond reason; they inhabit a world of their own. In this extract, Kipling confronts *his* otherness from a community of people who appeared so diametrically different to those he had encountered before. The Anglo-Indian colonial mind had adjusted itself to the differing cultures in India and had devised ways of controlling these through the construction of stereotypes and difference formulated around ethnographic description (Bhabha 94-120). In Koestler’s terms, the two frames of reference, of coloniser and of the colonised, have become fixed, with no possibility of change or interaction between them. One important element of this difference was the superior British work ethic, identified by Teresa Hubel when writing that ‘Kipling’s concern is to establish an Empire, or an ideal of an empire, based upon a masculine work ethic’ (Hubel 23). Kipling depicts the Chinese as a race who can work harder than the English and indeed are possessed of an almost demonic ability to work, are capable of organising themselves, have a long history of civilisation and possess a religious dimension which is alien to him. In Hong Kong, Kipling examines the workmanship of the Chinese and writes in letter VII of ‘From Sea to Sea’ admiringly, that even ‘the baskets of the coolies were good in shape, and the rattan fastenings that clenched them down to the polished bamboo yoke were whipped down, so that there was no loose ends’ (*StS* 1: 272). The craftsman-like attention to detail, evident in the coolie’s basket, produces a sympathetic reaction in Kipling: these are real people, not just invisible labourers. Through their work and the artefacts produced and used by

²⁸ D. T. (delirium tremens) is a severe form of alcohol withdrawal and appears frequently in descriptions of colonial and service life.

them, Kipling gives the Chinese a partial voice, and his brief depiction is significantly more nuanced than that Joseph Conrad produced of the coolies in his story *Typhoon* (1902).

Kipling continues, or rather his fictional companion the Professor does, ‘I don’t think much of him (meaning our Indian craftsman) as I used to do. [...] They are a hundred times his superior in mere idea – let alone execution’ (*StS* 1: 272). A fitting summary of Chinese superiority occurs later in the same letter, where addressing his Anglo–Indian readership he writes:

And you think as you go to office and orderly–room that you are helping forward England’s mission in the East. ’Tis a pretty delusion, and I am sorry to destroy it, but you have conquered the wrong country.

Let us annex China. (*StS* 1: 277)

This is ironic humour, turned inwards towards the Anglo–Indian Empire and mocking the idealism of liberal imperialism. Colonial India, Kipling argues, is stagnant and lacks the vitality that the Chinese demonstrate on the fringes of empire. Effectively Kipling is reiterating his criticism on directly administered India, in that greater creativity and vigour exist outside of the colonial regime than within it. The statement to annex China is meant to be ironic. He jokingly positions the British as a supreme power, while simultaneously deflating it. Kipling realises that such a proposition is ludicrous and beyond the power and legitimacy of the British. The Japanese unfortunately did not come to the same conclusions regarding their own empire when they invaded China in 1931.

In the Chinese, Kipling has discovered vitality and an appetite and ability for work that astounds him. Not only can the Chinese work very hard but they are also admirable craftsmen, which is to be more than a mere operative or unthinking labourer. A craftsman to Kipling is a being who thinks, knows and produces. Kipling’s schooling in craft and his eye for the incongruous prompt him to recognise the value of paying such attention to a mere coolie’s basket, and collapses his stereotype of the pigtailed Chinese, addicted to opium and gambling. In Kipling’s view, these strange people are no longer just ignorant day labourers, but a creative and imaginative people who work hard and value the tools that they use. As Kipling travelled, his world was no longer centred upon Anglo–India and the British Empire:

he had begun to experience the wider world, and that had shaken up some of his assumptions about British superiority.

Kipling next journeyed to Japan in 1888, which was a country in the midst of a modernisation. The restoration of the Meiji emperor in 1869 had instigated a number of important reforms that were rapidly turning Japan into a modern state. These reforms centralized government, developed the transport system, modernised and industrialised Japan's economy, improved education, modernised the army and navy, and created a new constitution.²⁹ The new dynamic Japan provided Kipling with another series of culture shocks, subverting the myth of European superiority over the Oriental. Indeed Japan appeared superior in so many ways – in art, taste, manners and skill – that Kipling could not reconcile its rush towards westernisation.

Kipling makes frequent mention of the new Japanese constitution modelled on English lines. In letter XI of 'From Sea to Sea' he writes:

I took the pamphlet and found a complete paper Constitution stamped with the Imperial Chrysanthemum – an excellent little scheme of representation, reforms, payment of members, budget estimates, and legislation. It is a terrible thing to study at close quarters, because it is so English.
(*StS* 1: 314)

With the Japanese adoption of an English inspired 'democratic' constitution, Kipling has discovered the Bergsonian incongruity of a lithe organic body being constrained by an unyielding coat. He is, in effect, asking 'Why place a manufactured 'democratic' straitjacket on a living culture?' There is laughter in Kipling's writing – at the Japanese for adopting such a course and at the preposterous idea that the English model is fit to be copied. After all, it can be held responsible for the rise of the new Indian administrative class, who, in Kipling's view, are a major impediment to real progress in India.³⁰ The Japanese constitution is terrible because it appears to Kipling to be a bland importation of a set of ideas and practices which have evolved in another hemisphere, concerning another people, and will be applied in a mechanistic way to a deeply rooted and organic society. The irony that this was the very thing that the British were doing to India in the guise of liberal imperialism

²⁹ For a detailed discussion of this transformation, see, Gordon, Andrew. *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

³⁰ See Kipling's criticism of the Bengal Legislative Council in 'City of Dreadful Night' (*StS* 2: 216 - 25).

would not have been lost on him. In both cases, the unnamed and unnameable disturbance was that of the spectre of modernity displacing old continuities.

The heart of Japan for Kipling was its efficient agriculture, its sociable tea rooms, its craftsmanship expressed in every facet of daily life and its refined and civilised society, quite different to the brashness and commercialism of the West. In letter XI of 'From Sea to Sea' he feels out of place in the quiet refinement of the house of a dealer in curiosities where he is offered tea:

What I wanted to say was, 'Look here, you person. You're much too clean and refined for this life here below, and your house is unfit for a man to live in until he has been taught a lot of things which I have never learned. Consequently I hate you because I feel myself your inferior, and you despise me and my boots because you know me for a savage. Let me go, or I'll pull your house of cedar-wood over your ears.' What I really said was, 'Oh, ah yes. Awf'ly pretty. Awful queer way of doing business.' (*StS* 1: 320)

The civilised English gentleman is now the barbarian, the ignorant tourist who neither sees nor understands, and Kipling illustrates the stiffness and the inability of the English visitor to amend his behaviour, by adopting the stereotypical English manner. The Englishman is the incongruity in the piece; it is he who, by his inflexibility, disrupts the scene by making himself ridiculous and the object of laughter.

In letter XIX of 'From Sea to Sea', Kipling writes of another jolt to the myth of Western superiority, given by a visit to a pleasant, comfortable and clean Japanese tea-house recently opened near Osaka:

Although it was not quite completed, the lower stories were full of tea-stalls and tea-drinkers. The men and women were obviously admiring the view. It is an astounding thing to see an Oriental so engaged; it is as though he had stolen something from a Sahib. (*StS* 1: 360)

To see such a thing as ordinary families sitting peaceably and sociably drinking tea destabilises Kipling's stereotypical view of the Oriental. Kipling can only describe it ironically as theft: the Japanese have stolen a civilised human pleasure from the all-

powerful Sahib. But of course they have not: the theft is reversed, and so is the incongruity. The tea-drinking Japanese are not the incongruity: that is the ignorant Sahib. The pleasures of the tea-house and garden are oriental. Imitated and stolen by the Europeans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and reinvented in places like the coffee houses of London that were integral to the surge in print culture of the time. In this short passage, the humour is ambivalent, not directed at the Japanese, but at the ignorant onlooker, the Englishman. Perhaps a Japanese reader will laugh at the Englishman's ignorance from a feeling of superiority. The English reader will possibly sympathise with the confused English tourist. There is, perhaps, the realisation in Kipling here that there is as much diversity in the oriental world as in the occidental world, and the interactions and interdependencies between the two spheres are considerably more complex than simple colonial dogma will admit. In this reversal of incongruity, Kipling's Englishman becomes the odd one out. He is the object of laughter and ridicule, because of his assumption that oriental society did not have, or could not have, a civilised social life. Suddenly there is the realisation that the Japanese and the English, at least the middle classes, share common, simple and innocent pleasures.

Art and craft is important to Kipling's perception of societies; it appears in his descriptions of architecture, of adornment to religious sites and to domestic artistic objects. He visits a number of workshops, one dealing in cheap articles for Western consumption and another producing true Japanese art for the Japanese home market. In letter XVI of 'From Sea to Sea' he describes the finishing process for enamelware destined for the Japanese home market:

A man sits down with the rough article, all his tea things, a tub of water, a flannel, and two or three saucers full of assorted pebbles from the brook. He does not get a wheel with tripoli [i.e. an abrasive wheel], or emery, or buff. He sits down and rubs. He rubs for a month, three months, or a year. He rubs lovingly, with his soul in his finger-ends, and little by little the efflorescence of the fired enamel gives way, and he comes down to the lines of silver, and the pattern in all its glory is there waiting for him. (*StS* 1: 388)

This artefact is completely different to the mass-produced western items or even the pseudo-traditional craft-wear produced by William Morris and his associates. Here it bears a true relationship to the human spirit that produces it, and its glory appears only as time and patient effort work their magic. Japanese art may be ‘purely mechanical’ as the Professor asserts, but the Japanese are ‘spiritually mechanical’ (*StS* 1: 390), and that is one of their great strengths. As Lockwood Kipling borrows from Ruskin when describing the Indian carpenter, so Rudyard Kipling appears to be borrowing from William Morris in describing the idealised relationship between human beings and work. The Japanese craftsman ‘rubs lovingly’, implying that there is a natural bond between the man and his work, and as the man patiently works, some of the spiritual force embodied within him imperceptibly appears in the artefact. Kipling has produced a sympathetic portrait of the craftsman, who, despite the apparently monotonous and repetitive work, appears to be a content and complete human being.

That meticulous attention to detail similarly impressed Kipling when he saw the Japanese system of land cultivation, and he writes in letter XIV of ‘From Sea to Sea’:

But the countryside was the thing that made us open our eyes. Imagine a land of rich black soil, very heavily manured, and worked by the spade and hoe almost exclusively, and if you split your field (of vision) into half acre plots, you will get a notion of the raw material the cultivator works on. But all I can write will give you no notion of the wantonness of neatness visible in the fields; of the elaborate system of irrigation, and the mathematical precision of the planting. There was no mixing of crops, no waste of boundary in footpath, and no difference of value of land. (*StS* 1: 350)

This passage is interesting, firstly, because of the dynamic around the phrase ‘wantonness of neatness’, and secondly, because of the implications of the Japanese system of cultivation on British agricultural policy in India. While Kipling is impressed by the neat and efficient use of land, he seems overcome by its apparent excess to the extent that its neatness becomes wantonness. The *OED*’s definitions of wanton (ness) include ‘wilfulness, wildness, unruliness, lustfulness, lasciviousness;

sexual promiscuity, extravagance, undisciplined, ungoverned; unmanageable.³¹ To say that neatness is driven by unruliness etc. is a contradiction. There seems to be two energies in Kipling's description: one is the urge to control, to order, to colonise and make neat. The other is its opposite, a wildness and unmanageable unruliness which threatens to make productive order so extravagant that it becomes disorder. Perhaps what Kipling is articulating is a sense of a disorder of productive order, which would be madness. Kipling's intention in writing this is unclear (to me at least), but it seems to be inconsistent and an incongruity that possibly reveals a hidden irony in his view of Japan. The apparent contradiction of extreme order resulting in disorder is a theme that I investigate further in my discussions of 'As Easy as A.B.C.' (Chapter Three) and 'The Gardener' (Chapter Six).

The second point of the extract deals with the productivity of the agricultural system which was a preoccupation of the British administration in India. Kipling would have been aware of the British efforts to increase land productivity, which was attempted with varying degrees of commitment and effect. Henry Maine, in his series of lectures collected in *Village Communities in the East and West* deals with this in some detail. Maine emphasises the difficulties (in British eyes) of establishing land ownership with the right to cultivate, and the apparent lack of a coherent Hindu law on land and rights (Maine 51). Although Kipling is quick to point to the weakness of the Japanese system of sewage manuring in spreading cholera (*StS* 1: 351), he recognises the efficiency of the arrangements. This was not a decayed indigenous system that had to be modernised and made economically productive, but a highly-organised, entirely Japanese affair that was worked by the people for their own benefit. And it appeared to be economically sound and fair, all land being equal in value, a far cry from the muddle and chaos the British believed that existed in India, which they probably exacerbated in their attempts at land reform. Maine's Lecture IV, for example, deals with the mistakes made by Cornwallis in trying to establish a natural aristocracy in lower Bengal, coupled with the failure to understand the system of allocating water rights by established custom rather than western contract (Maine 104-10). Rather than founding a model agrarian society, intent on 'improvement', Cornwallis's efforts to establish a rigid system of

³¹ "wantonness, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017.

contractual law onto a society governed by flexible custom produced a Bergsonian incongruity, to the general discomfort of both.

In Japan, Kipling found a vibrant country that was successfully transforming itself from an inwardly focused society, based upon a peasant–noble relationship, into a modern commercial and industrial state that apparently retained its old values of art, craftsmanship and spiritual foundation. And for Kipling, it was completing this transformation on its own terms; it was neither being held back by class self–interest nor having change forced upon it by some imposed colonial authority. It is worth noting that Kipling’s generally optimistic view of Japan in 1889 is countered, to some extent, by his later published letters of his second visit in 1892. In the letter ‘Our Overseas Men’ he writes of Japan ‘as an Oriental country, ridden by etiquette of the sternest, and social distinctions almost as hard of those of caste’ (Kipling ‘Our Overseas Men’). Kipling’s initial encounter with Japan is not unlike the reactions of British adventurers to the Ottoman Empire two centuries earlier. Gerald Maclean coins the phrase ‘imperial envy’ to describe the British reaction to ‘[the Ottoman’s] power, potency, military might, opulence and wealth’ (Maclean 20). Kipling’s reactions are perhaps in the same vein. There is admiration for a country that is coming to terms with modernity on its own terms and using its accumulated wealth to do it, admiration however coupled with a sense of envy that Britain, constrained by internal and imperial politics and obligations, cannot, or will not, act with the same freedom.

In his letter from Kyoto (letter XV of ‘From Sea to Sea’), Kipling meets with a group of English tea merchants and gains a view of how trade operated outside of formal empire. The rich and comfortable life that these tea merchants enjoyed was in direct opposition to that enjoyed (or suffered) by middle – and lower–ranking Anglo–Indians, and his conclusions on Anglo–Indian life are revealing:

I knew in a way that We were a grim and miserable community in India, but I did not know the measure of Our fall till I heard men talking about fortunes, success, money, and the pleasure, good living, and frequent trips to England that money brings. (StS 1: 367)

After his experience of travelling, Kipling is able to reflect upon the intensities of Anglo–Indian life and compare it to other, non–anglicised societies and alternative

modes of cultural interaction. The passage suggests a new dimension to Kipling's thought: he 'knew in a way' that the Anglo-Indian service was 'grim and miserable', and many of his Indian stories have that quality. However, this is the first time that he is able to clarify his thoughts to the extent that he feels able to explicitly express them. A shift from realism into something else occurs immediately after this, when Kipling talks of 'Our fall'. Fall from what? The most obvious is a fall from grace, of being ejected from heaven into a world where man must work to survive, a world where men, or at least the Anglo-Indians, are no longer masters of the world, but forced to exist in a form of bondage. This is irony, verging on satire, on the dream of imperialism. Empire in India, Kipling says, brings not wealth and due comfort to its administrators, but a miserable existence of grim endless work.

Modern America

The United States of America provided Kipling with another set of new and perplexing experiences. The conversation with 'the Californian' recorded in letter XVI of 'From Sea to Sea' (*StS* 1: 451-4) on the fatal results of carrying a gun, perhaps predisposed him to look for, and to find, lawlessness. In letter XXII of 'From Sea to Sea' Kipling presents a nightmare vision of the U.S.A., in which he recounted stories of turning a Gatling gun onto German rioters in Chicago, where 'the men were aliens in our midst, and they were shot down like dogs' (*StS* 1: 467). Kipling refers to the fictional America of Bret Harte and Mark Twain, and, while he encountered this, he found a nation in the making and a disturbing vision of the future.³² In a conversation on shooting street rioters and the relative restraint shown in England, Kipling's acquaintance from Louisiana points to the future:

'Then you've got all your troubles before you. The more power you give the people, the more trouble they will give. With us our better classes are corrupt and our lower classes are lawless. There are millions of useful, law-abiding citizens, and they are very sick of this thing. We execute our justice in the streets. The law courts are no use.' (*StS* 1: 468)

He continues:

³² Letter XXXVII of 'From Sea to Sea' concerns itself entirely with an interview with Twain (*StS* 2: 183-198).

‘Never mind; you Britishers will have the same experience to go through. You’re beginning to rot now. Your County Councils will make you more rotten because you are putting power into the hands of untrained people. When you reach our level, – every man with a vote and the right to sell it; the right to nominate fellows of his own kidney to swamp out better men, – you’ll be what we are now – rotten, rotten, rotten!’ (*StS* 1: 468-9)

In these extracts, which verge on the hysterical, the portrait drawn of modern democracy is a frightening one, where the freedom of a new self-sufficient middle class is threatened by ‘aliens in our midst who were shot down like dogs’ (*StS* 1: 467). Wealth has corrupted the natural leaders, the ‘better classes’, and law, that impartial guarantor of middle-class values, is ignored by the lower classes. Democratic reform, instead of encouraging responsibility in the people, merely deepens the web of corruption, and reasoned law and order is in danger of being replaced by bloody chaos. It is almost as if Carlyle was speaking through Kipling’s pen, reiterating the dogma that putting power into untrained hands results in corruption and failure. The parallels for Kipling are obvious. Firstly, native control of the civic councils in Indian cities has (in Kipling’s opinion) caused stagnation and corruption and delayed much-needed reforms. Secondly, alien emigration to America has reduced it to a state of lawlessness. Finally, increasing democratization of England will inevitably follow the precedents set in India and America and will ultimately lead to corruption and moral collapse.

America is not all despair. Kipling is entranced by the beauty and splendour of the country and by the dignity and restraint of many of the people he meets. The most striking are the people of the small towns and the farmers he encountered on his fishing trips. In a private letter to Edmonia Hill, dated 17th September 1889, he recorded his emotions at Concord:

This day I have spent in Concord – and this day has more impressed me with the ‘might majesty dominion and power’ of the Great American Nation than any other. (Let’s take a thicker pen). I wonder if you will understand how and why I came near to choking when I saw ‘the Minuteman’ and

realized that I was standing on the first battle field at the very beginning of things. I can't explain the emotion; but there it is for you. (*Letters* 1: 345)

There is in this letter the spirit of discovering a new beginning, an age of newly created freedom, and an innocent world which contrasts with his public letters and their sense of defilement. Publically, in letter XXX 'From Sea to Sea', he cites alien rioters sullyng the American Revolution, and the rich and vulgar invading Yellowstone Park, forcing soldiers to patrol to prevent its destruction by souvenir hunters (*StS* 1: 80). The tone of his criticism is not unlike his treatment of the destruction of his childhood by 'the Woman' (*SoM* 6). As Kipling's innocent childhood was destroyed by misplaced evangelicalism, then vulgarity and greed threaten the new America. However, the abundant energy and vigour of America impresses Kipling, and he possibly compared it to stagnation and lethargy within Anglo-India, addressed in letter XIX of 'Letters of Marque' (*StS* 1: 199) and 'The Man Who Would Be King' (*Wee Willie Winkie* 201 [1908]), discussed earlier in this chapter. He writes in letter XXXIII of 'From Sea to Sea':

Let there be no misunderstanding about the matter. I love this People, and if any contemptuous criticism has to be done, I will do it myself. My heart has gone out to them beyond all other peoples; and for the life of me I cannot tell why. They are bleeding-raw at the edges, almost more conceited than the English, vulgar with a massive vulgarity which is as though the Pyramids were coated with Christmas-cake sugar-works. Cocksure they are, lawless and as casual as they are cocksure; but I love them and I realised it when I met an Englishman who laughed at them. (*StS* 1: 130)

There are two aspects of this which I wish to comment upon. The first is the reference to the 'Englishman who laughed at them'. The Englishman laughs because the Americans are different to the idealised, civilized, urbane construct that he believes himself to be. The difference, and subsequent reflection, destabilises the Englishman, and, as Freud would argue, triggers a defence of superiority laughter. In this passage, however, Kipling makes the Englishman the incongruity, the unnatural thing that is out of place and on to whom the corrective laughter is ultimately

reflected. Kipling's sympathetic description of the Americans reverses the supposed norms of the Englishman, turning the raw, conceited, vulgar, cocksure and lawless Americans into people to be admired and loved for their naturalness. In terms of Ruskin's imperfect artefact, it is the unfinished imperfections that attract Kipling, not the smooth polished exterior of the finished English item.

Secondly, Kipling is entranced by the possibility of change, of taking a land and transforming it into a new nation, free of fossilised customs and restrictions. He tempers this vision with the reality of suppression and near annihilation of its native peoples that he writes of in letter XXVIII of 'From Sea to Sea' (*StS* 1: 61-2). The U.S.A., for Kipling, was a new power rising in the world and in letter XXXIII of 'From Sea to Sea', he talks of the two 'Great Experiments' and of the result: 'A hundred years hence India and America will be worth observing. At present the one is burned out and the other is just stoking up' (*StS* 1: 132). In this dream and under his idealised autocratic Anglo-Indian rule, India in 1988 could be what America was in 1888, dynamic and rich, and it would be achieved without requiring the extermination of its native peoples.

Summary

In this chapter, I have attempted to argue that Kipling's work arises from his reactions in encountering the oddness and unexpected in the world. Incongruity for Kipling does not generate hostility or a desire to enforce conformity; rather, it produces a sympathetic and creative form of an aesthetic response. In the early material covered in these first two chapters, Kipling investigates incongruities, things that shouldn't be there, and in their misplacement they generate and prolong an aesthetic reaction that, in Kipling, develops into a form of jest. It is a condition of Kipling's work that he maintained throughout his writing life, finding the out of place and using it in an aesthetic sense to critique the world system within which he existed. In my reading, Kipling's view of the world is a complex interaction of four main components: Carlyle's bourgeois heroic, a resistance to systemisation, a Ruskin-like value for the individualisation of the imperfect crafted item and finally the ethic of craftsmanship and the value of good work extolled by William Morris. All of these are mediated through the colonial culture that surrounded Kipling and in which he grew up.

The journeys that Kipling made at the end of his Indian sojourn and the return trip back to England were a form of epiphany, a revelation of the worlds that existed outside of the British Empire, all of them markedly different to that of the Anglo–Indian world in which he grew to maturity. During those journeys, which really begin in the final years of his Indian work and are covered in the descriptions of the native states in the ‘Letters of Marque’ series, Kipling experiences and articulates a number of profound shocks. Firstly, he realises the power of modern capitalism as it becomes established throughout the world. Initially he confronts it in Calcutta, writing in letter I of ‘From Sea to Sea’ that ‘Calcutta is no more Anglo–Indian than West Brompton. In common with Bombay, it has achieved a mental attitude several decades in advance of that raw and brutal India of fact’ (*StS* 1: 213). Even within the sphere of British power, development is uneven. In this case, the metropolitan centres of empire, centres of capital and big interconnected nodes within the colonial machine, are developing differently to the smaller places that constitute the ‘raw brutal fact of India.’ Modernity, in the shape of commercialism and capitalism, does not require self–sacrificing heroes to defend the frontier and keep the barbarian out. It simply needs operatives to keep the great machine of capitalism expanding, and in so doing dilutes the worth of the individual.

Secondly, Kipling senses that the Indian Empire, that has absorbed so much of his energies, is in danger of failing. Other oriental cultures have a greater dynamism, are better organised, and are more efficient than British–controlled India. Indeed, even the native states within India are apparently progressing at a greater rate than the directly administered areas. Of course, the native states rely upon British technical experts, but the administration remains organic within the indigenous society, is not an isolated layer sitting above it. Finally, the American experiences show a future that is both exciting and frightening. If the external frontier has been rendered irrelevant, then the danger is now from corruption and moral decay within. This decay is illustrated by Kipling in his Letter VIII of ‘From Sea to Sea’, with its depiction of white women in Hong Kong who exist on the margins of prostitution (*StS* 1: 278–79). Kipling writes about all these experiences in his cheerful and perceptive letters, actively engaging with the unexpected, constantly constructing and reconstructing a new and flexible view of the world. This is a world in which the mysterious human spirit, individualism and enforced conformity are entangled and in constant competition, a world where spirit and the machine compete for supremacy.

During his journey, Kipling discovered different forms of modernisations: the modern Calcutta was different to modernising Japan and different again to America, but they were all engaged, in different ways, in a global economic system. The Chinese were different again; a double incongruity, if that is possible. They did not conform to the stereotype, but presented something else and unidentifiable, and they also engaged in the global trading system. Kipling's travels revealed a new incongruity, the dynamics of people that he did not understand, all notably different to his expectations but all engaged in the evolving modern meta-system of global trade. What he witnessed and wrote about was the diversity and difference that existed under developing capitalism that Vivek Chibber and Neil Lazarus explore.³³ Kipling's concern with Japan is not that it is 'Eastern' or 'Oriental', nor that it is modernising, but that in its efforts to connect with the global trading system it will lose its uniqueness and become too English, and that difference will be removed.

³³ See Chibber, Vivek. *Postcolonial Theory and the Spectre of Capital*. London: Verso, 2013, and Lazarus, Neil. *The Postcolonial Unconscious*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Chapter Three: The Victorian Machine

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with Kipling's relationship with the machine as it appears in its physical and virtual forms. I approach this relationship through the idea that the machine, as a symbol of systematic scientific organisation, is important to understanding Kipling, not just as a colonialist writer who gloried in power (which is one common interpretation), but as a writer who attempted to understand a society that was technologically advanced and increasingly systemised. The works considered in this chapter concern a society during the *fin-de-siècle*, a period that was on the edge of modernity. It was a society in which colonialism, capitalism and the technologically modern combined with a spiritual energy to create great change, and a society with which Kipling, the promoter of the free individual, critically engaged. The materialist view of Kipling's time is balanced by considering the vibrant spiritual energies, typified by Bergson's *élan vital*, that seemingly thrived and permeated the period.

To explore the interaction between the machine and the human spirit I turn to Marx's work on the consuming machine to develop initial ideas arising from the consideration of the work of Carlyle and Ruskin. Where there are visible links between the philosophies of Carlyle and Ruskin and Kipling's material, there is no evidence that Kipling was directly influenced by Marx. However, in the context of the relationship between the free individual and systemised society, Marx's work on the consuming capitalist machine and its debilitating effect on the human spirit is particularly useful.

The chapter is divided into a number of sections. The first section discusses the machine, its treatment in Victorian literature, and how it appears in a positive light in Kipling's work. The next two sections present a Marxian view of the machine, viewing it as a consumer of human vitality and spirit and a holder of suppressed demonic energies. Two sections dealing with spiritualism and its interactions with technology follow, and the chapter concludes with the bleak situation where the human race has lost its spiritual energy and has become subservient to the machine.

The Victorian Machine

The machine in its physical and virtual manifestations has become a constant appendage to human life and, as Tamara Ketabgian says in her study *The Lives of Machines*, ‘Today we live in a world of hybrids and chimeras – of human, animal, and mechanical couplings and combinations’ (Ketabgian 1). Ketabgian questions the assumption that machines and humans are necessarily opposed to each other, and that the relationship between human and the mechanical must inevitably diminish the human (Ketabgian 1). She is suspicious of the high critical tradition that has ‘faulted literature as bad art when it does treat machine culture as an explicit subject of representation’ (Ketabgian 7), arguing that we must ‘examine their close mingling and identification’ (Ketabgian 1). Ketabgian locates her study in the English cotton mill, but I wish to move the focus to the Victorian Empire. The context that empire provides is not merely the local cotton mill with its owner, its overseers and its humble operatives, but the empire itself, its administration, its armies, its trade and all the organisational and physical machines that constituted its bodies and the peoples it ruled. From this standpoint, the empire can be visualised as a virtual machine (although a very real one), a global industrial-like organisation in which the manufactured product was a circulation of trade and concentration(s) of capital. I use the plural here to emphasise that, although a significant amount of capital ended up in London (perhaps most of it), there were regional and local centres as well. These centres were interconnected nodes between which capital and commerce flowed and which constituted a complex system of trade and cultural interchange (Bombay and Calcutta were Indian examples). An alternative way of expressing this would be to view the empire as a distributed system with humans, machines and the locale all inter-related in a highly complex way that defies the simplistic division of centre and periphery.

The idea of empire as a distributed, fragmented system is illustrated very well in Kipling’s problematic story ‘Mrs Bathurst’ (1904). ‘Mrs Bathurst’ is a haunting story, fragmented and distributed over space and time, and reflects the lives of lower-ranking men in the distributed system of empire. The story revolves around a respected woman, Mrs Bathurst, who runs a hotel in Auckland for non-commissioned officers. Four men – the narrator, Hooper, the railway engineer, the

sailor Pyecroft, and Pritchard the marine – meet, and while sharing some beer tell stories of their service lives. What emerges is a strange tale of Mrs Bathurst’s haunting presence and Pyecroft’s shipmate Vickery’s infatuation with her. The story ends after Vickery’s desertion following his obsession with Mrs Bathurst’s ghostly appearance in a demonstration of the new technology of moving pictures. Two burnt corpses, assumed to be those of Vickery and Mrs Bathurst, are found by Hooper along the railway line running north from South Africa, from which he retrieves a set of false teeth: Vickery’s teeth that, when he was alive, clicked like a telegraphic sounder.

‘Mrs Bathurst’ was seemingly conceived in a railway carriage in South Africa in 1901 or thereabouts. Kipling relates a chance memory, prompted by overhearing ‘the face and voice of a woman who served me beer there’ in a conversation about a woman in Auckland (*SoM* 101). Kipling’s recollection is as slippery as the story itself, a joining together of two random events by two travellers, who have no obvious connection with each other, but jointly occupy a railway carriage travelling through the modern suburbs of a colonial city. These events comprising chance, memory and the sharing of a space within a machine were apparently enough to bring ‘Mrs Bathurst’ slid[ing] into my mind, smoothly and orderly as floating timber on a bank–high river’ (*SoM* 101). Whether true or not, this account does reflect the strangeness of the story, for it is a story of seemingly unconnected events and characters, joined together in a chain of dislocation and connectedness which they cannot comprehend and seemingly cannot resist.

The place of narration is Cape Town in South Africa where an out–of–service railway van has been hauled to a cool location near the sea. The railway van, like the characters that collect within it, is transient. They will all co–exist for a few hours and then be dispersed through the system that is the imperial network. The sailors will go back to their ships, the van with Hooper the railway engineer, back to where he ought to be, managing the flow of imperial traffic, and the narrator back to silence. This is a story of margins, of an ‘atomistic technological society’ (Sussman 40), populated by displaced people with no fixed homes, moving from ship to ship, from railway section to railway section and from story to story, creating transient communities that live briefly and then die. The railway van is one of these transient spaces, a temporary node of communication for the operatives of the imperial machine. The central protagonists, Vickery and Mrs Bathurst, appear only through

the narrations of others, which in turn are voiced by the anonymous narrator. These two characters reach the reader only through two stages of mediation; they are doubly displaced, doubly dead if that is possible, spectral figures that seem to haunt the story. Mrs Bathurst has an especially magical quality, apparently having access to the fourth dimension, able to move through time and space, and a spirit unconstrained by physical boundaries.

From Kipling's earliest time in India as a junior on the *Pioneer* and throughout the rest of his life, he was enmeshed in this distributed, interconnected web of empire, the technologies that supported it and the human beings who passed along its networks. Jan Montefiore writes that 'Kipling was among the first English writers to respond creatively to the revolutionary technologies of the early-twentieth century – radio, cinema, motor cars and air travel' (Montefiore, *Kipling*, 123), and it is in the context of a creative response to both technology and empire that I read Kipling. For Kipling, the machine is more than just the product of rational systematic thought and endeavour; mostly it becomes a token of modernity and progress, a sign of enterprise and worth. Occasionally the machine becomes a demonic creature, an inanimate object that suddenly releases an energising spirit that seemingly overpowers its human companions. Conversely, when systemisation is applied to society, be it in the notional metropole or the periphery, it becomes an oppressive force that destroys individualism and the value of human life. A chilling example of this occurs in 'The Gardener' where Helen Turrell sensed herself 'being manufactured into a bereaved next-of-kin' (*Debts* 345).

Before moving on to consider more specific examples from Kipling, I wish to provide an appropriate context in which to work. Perhaps the most persistent and troubling question arising from the Victorian machine is the question of hierarchy. As Ketabgian interprets Samuel Butler's question in *Erewhon*, 'Is the worker a prosthetic attachment to the machine, or is the machine a prosthetic organ of the human body?' (Ketabgian17). Tools, such as a hammer, chisel, lever or pen, are a straightforward extension of the human; they increase or focus the force available at the point of application to allow the human to perform a specific task. As the tool evolves into a much more complex machine, there comes a point at which the tool stops serving the human and the human serves the machine. Of course, even the humblest of tools have to be manufactured by someone who quite possibly has to spend his or her working life doing that task. One can think of 'the hands' in

Dickens' *Hard Times* as serving the machine, but the machine still serves the machine owner Bounderby in his quest for the accumulation of capital. Even Bounderby is not the free agent he imagines himself to be: he is bound to the great machine that is capitalism as much as the hands are, but at a different and superior level.

The impact on the human race of the introduction of political economy, capitalisation and successive industrial revolutions has been profound. In the context of this thesis, it is worth identifying the works of Thomas Carlyle, Edward Ruskin, Mahatma Gandhi and Samuel Butler. Butler, in his satire *Erewhon* (1872) questions the impact of machines on human life. Central to Butler's concern is the idea of hierarchy. While accepting the usefulness of machines to provide power, transport, food etc., Butler, like Carlyle, is concerned about the dilution of the spiritual dimension to life by the mechanistic. In Butler's view, there is a danger of humans becoming merely servants of the machine, and he predicts a time when life will consist entirely of machine tending or of a machine-like existence, dictated by work or convention. Machines (the tool of the capitalist perhaps) are cunning. They have a plan: 'the art of machines – they serve that they may rule' (Butler 124). He continues:

They have preyed upon man's grovelling preference for his material over his spiritual interests, and have betrayed him into supplying that element of struggle and warfare without which no race can advance. (Butler 124-5)

Butler asserts that machines have an 'art', which implies something akin to a magical craft that will allow them to dominate humankind. Perhaps in Butler's hypothesis, craft, that power to create recognisable form out of ideas, passes from humankind to machines, and in so doing diminishes the human race. The troubling idea of hierarchy provides a useful platform to consider Kipling's characters and their position in the colonial machine. They are not the equivalent of the mill owner Bounderby; these are the wealthy merchants and capitalists of Bombay, Calcutta and London, about whom Kipling does not construct his fictions. Kipling's characters are more like the skilled engineer or craftsman, who designs, makes and maintains the machine, and who therefore has a degree of control over it. Often and less optimistically, however, they are more akin to the machine operative, bound and

contracted to serve the machine without question, as Kipling was contracted to the *Gazette* in the Ilbert Bill affair (*SoM* 49-51).

Katherine Hayles defines the human ‘as part of a distributed system [...] [where] the full expression of human capability can be seen precisely to *depend* on the splice rather than being imperilled by it’ (Hayles, *Posthuman*, 290). That is, human capability is dependent upon communication and connectivity, the connection between humans, and in this context between the human and the machine. In Hayle’s distributed system, it is the sharing between participants that allows the human to develop to the fullest extent. I would add to this, the relationship between humour, creativity and sharing, explored in the first chapter.

The idea of enrichment of the human lived experience (by this I mean the enrichment of both the physical and metaphysical dimensions to life), that occurs because of the human–machine interaction is developed a little further by Ketabgian. She writes with specific reference to the Victorian textile factory and the steam engine:

These two technologies serve as figures not only of utopian self–control but also of irrational animalism, fuelling fantasies of idealized social coordination and dangerous affective power [...]. In their narratives of prosthetic struggle and alliance, these texts show how technological supplements both undermine prior forms of identity and produce new communities and compensations. (Ketabgian 5)

Ketabgian’s first sentence, identifying ‘utopian self–control’ and ‘dangerous affective power’ could be applied in many instances to Kipling’s Sahib figures, but I wish to concentrate upon the final sentence. She writes that ‘technological supplements both undermine prior forms of identity and produce new communities and compensations.’ For Ketabgian, increasing the density of the relationship between the human and the machine can, in some unidentified way, compensate for loss of the old and contribute to bringing newness into the world.

Butler recognises the impact of machines upon the human:

Man’s very soul is due to the machines; it is a machine–made thing; he thinks as he thinks, and feels as he feels, through the work that machines have wrought upon him, and their

existence is quite as a *sin quâ non* for his, as his for theirs.

(Butler 124)

The machine and the human have thus become inseparable, which is a feature of a number of Kipling's works. It is very apparent in 'Mrs Bathurst', where the male characters are defined by the machines they serve. In 'They', the narrator is defined by his modern motor car, and, in the poem 'McAndrew's Hymn', the marine engineer and the marine engine co-exist in a close relationship. Butler suggests that machines can be viewed as extra limbs: the human grows or acquires as many as necessary, and the more powerful and rich the human, the more limbs they have (Butler 137). Butler places the richest and most powerful people in control of most machines (i.e. those capitalists who use modern technology to enrich themselves) and these are the people that become the aristocracy. Butler suggests that increasing dependence upon the machine carries a penalty (it diminishes human vitalism and spontaneity) and he argues that, in many spheres of life, free will is not possible. He uses the example of the railway engine driver who can operate only within the rules of his profession (Butler 133). We can extend this by adding the capitalist who is tied to the machine of capitalism, and Kipling's Sahibs and possibly Kipling himself, subservient to the colonial machine.

Sussman, in considering the impact the machine had on Victorian thought, writes that:

For Carlyle, Ruskin, and Morris, as well as for Dickens, Wells, and Kipling, the machine is important not merely as an image, a representation of a visual experience, but as a symbol, an image that suggests a complex of meanings beyond itself. (Sussman 3)

What the machine suggested to the individuals mentioned is not necessarily clear. Carlyle recognised the material advantages of abundant power and materials but could not reconcile the mechanistic application of systems to human society. Ruskin appeared to retreat into a fantasy of medieval craftsmanship, and Morris fundamentally objected to the commoditisation of labour. Dickens, Wells, and Kipling are ambivalent. Kipling appears to veer between a passion for progress and a hatred of mechanistic society. An illuminating example of the machines' ambiguity is provided by Jan Montefiore in discussing the symbol of the revolutionary

Victorian technology of the railway. She writes that in ‘The Man Who Would Be King’:

The train represents the possibilities of conquest, chance and mobility open to the colonists. In the more benign world of *Kim*, the invention of the ‘*te-rain*’ is unthreateningly progressive. (Montefiore, *Kipling*, 126)

These two examples illustrate different aspects of the machine. In the first, technology allied with capital expands the possibility of acquiring more power and capital; in the second, it becomes instrumental in providing benevolent material improvement for the ordinary people. This was the improvement that Marx envisaged the railways would eventually bring to India (Marx and Engels 84). But even in the relatively benign world of *Kim*, the site of the machine, that is the railway, is a site of violence. Kipling has the two railway police, Barton Sahib and Young Sahib, using the ‘fire-carriage’, which is the prime mover for the ‘*te-rain*’, to ambush the two would-be assassins of Mahbub Al, beating one senseless and leaving ‘much blood on the line’ (*Kim* 141-2).

Ketabgian follows a relevantly optimistic path of investigation, looking to recover the enrichment that factory and industrial life could give to the ordinary worker. Sussman, on the other hand, is pessimistic, arguing that the change in Victorian life caused by widespread industrialisation was profound. It bound together technological progress, inner life, and empirically based thought in a web of complex relationships so that, ‘as mechanization expands the affective life declines’ (Sussman 4). The implication of Sussman’s argument is that the individual is no longer a free individual, but a node, usually a minor one, simultaneously enriched and constrained by its topographical position in a distributed system. Sussman continues:

Only the literary symbol of the machine can express this complex interrelationship which defines Victorian life; for, as symbol, it eradicates the misleading antithesis of external technological change to internal emotion and intellectual change. (Sussman 6)

The implication of Sussman’s argument is that the widespread introduction of machine-based technological change irrevocably altered the way in which internal

emotion and intellectual thought operated. No longer were these nebulous quantities contained entirely within the human self, but were affected by the increasing presence of the machine and its impact on lived existence. This interrelationship is so complex, Sussman argues, that it can only be expressed by way of metaphor – the machine. He illustrates this argument by reference to Butler’s ‘The Book of the Machines’ writing that:

The delight lies in his [Butler’s] ability to play with the modern machine as philosophical metaphor for the central paradox of Western philosophy, the conflict between the deterministic implications of science and the inward apprehension of volitional freedom. (Sussman 155)

In this interpretation, the machine is now the symbol of ‘the central paradox of Western philosophy’, the seemingly irresolvable conflict between scientific determinism on one hand and individual free will on the other. A logical conclusion to Sussman’s argument is that not only did the machine affect the material dimension of life, but it affected the way life itself was perceived and understood. That is, life has moved from a simplistically human-centred experience into one in which the human is only one component in a hugely complex distributed system. Some of this complexity appears in the deeply moving story ‘They’, in which time, space, life and death all become entangled. Kipling’s mobile narrator is the figure of modernity, disrupting the apparently peaceful and settled old house, with the motor car and the ability to move both through space and seemingly time. In ‘They’, the lived experience of modern life, centred on modern technology, alters from a stable arrangement of place and time into something far more diffuse and indefinable.

Sussman modulates the literary argument for and against the machine into one of ugliness or beauty, illustrating two modes in nineteenth-century literature: ‘The first either attempts to escape what it considers the ugliness of the mechanised world or [the second] works in a realistic mode which describes this ugliness’ (Sussman 7). H.G. Wells and Kipling are the two authors that Sussman identifies as portraying that ugliness realistically. It is worth repeating some of Sussman’s observations on Wells, as they help to form a context in which to analyse the Kipling material. Sussman argues that Wells made the machine the ‘emblem of modern society’ (Sussman 171) and that he ‘endow[ed] the machine with a grotesque

vitality' (Sussman 172). Wells, Sussman argues, was ambivalent towards science: 'For every selfless investigator of nature's secrets, there is a mad scientist' (Sussman 163). Madness is interesting, as it suggests a loss of reason or the inability of reason to resolve the product of the bisociation of two different frames of reference, the human and the technological.

Finally for this thesis, there is Sussman's view on ugliness. Kipling was not reticent about illustrating some, but by no means all, of the ugliness of colonisation. From the earlier definitions of incongruity discussed in Chapters One and Two, ugliness can be approached as dissidence, the incongruity that defines the beautiful; and in investigating that ugliness one could be said to be investigating the incongruous. In so doing, there is a movement from the defined and known into the undefined and unknown, from the static to the dynamic, from the finished to the unfinished. Wells writes that:

There is nothing in machinery, there is nothing in embankments and railways and iron bridges and engineering devices to oblige them to be ugly. Ugliness is the measure of imperfection; a thing of human making is for the most part ugly in proportion to the poverty of its constructive thought, to the failure of its producer fully to grasp the purpose of its being.' (Wells, *Modern Utopia*, 113)

That is, there is nothing intrinsically ugly in the machine, for ugliness lies in its faulty conception and application, and the machine could be beautiful rather than ugly. Sussman writes that 'with his [Wells's] biologist's sense of function, he saw that the machine could create a new form of beauty' (Sussman 168). The perception of the beautiful and the ugly can be associated with two different frames of reference, the emotional and the rational or the aesthetic and the utilitarian. I argue that, it is the bisociation of these two that produces the productive encounter which encourages Wells and Kipling to investigate the machine. Wells continues by describing the ugliness of modern industrial life arguing that, even if all the machines were destroyed, the ugliness would still be present because of 'our intellectual and moral disorder' (Wells 114). The remedy he suggests is through craftsmanship:

But in Utopia, a man who designs a tram road will be a cultivated man, an artist craftsman; he will strive, as a good writer, or a painter strives, to achieve the simplicity of perfection. (Wells 114)

Wells, rather like Kipling, views craftsmanship as a special property: not only does it create form from mere ideas, but in Wells's view it creates beautiful form and replaces the ugly with the beautiful. The artist craftsman is the being who inhabits a magical in-between space, able to reconcile the seeming irreconcilable spheres of the emotional and the rational. It is the craftsman who achieves a resolution between utility and the aesthetic, and a machine that achieves harmony and beauty in its utility is a productive machine, one to be admired.

Kipling's Productive Machine

The Secret of the Machines (Modern Machinery)

We are greater than the Peoples or the Kings –

Be humble, as you crawl beneath our rods! –

Our touch can alter all created things,

We are everything on earth – except The Gods! (41-44)

(*Poems 2*: 941)

I wish to start the exploration of Kipling's relationship with the machine by examining his verse 'The Secret of the Machines' first published in *A School History of England* by C.R.L.Fletcher and Rudyard Kipling.³⁴ One assumes that the machine is a natural servant of the human race, a spiritless thing that simply executes a set task, but in these verses Kipling has given the machine a voice.³⁵ *It* has the authority of narration, and *It*, not the human, establishes the rules for a future life of service to the human. In this poem, the normal terms of reference are inverted: the 'we' in the poem is not the human subject, but the machine. The human reader is not standing

³⁴ A book that was not met with universal approval, see for example, the hostile review 'Misinformed History'. *The Irish Review* (Dublin) 1.9 (1911): 467-8.

³⁵ I use the version of the poem collected by Pinney in his *Poems 2*: 941-2.

on the outside looking at the inanimate object and discussing it, but is inside, listening to the Marxian commodity that is the machine telling us the nature of its being. This simple inversion has introduced a new frame of reference, that of the machine. What emerges is the incongruity of the machine controlling the narrative. Perhaps this is recognition of the emergence of a machine–human hybrid that Sussman identifies when he writes: ‘when praised by Carlyle, the machine is no longer inert matter but takes on the qualities of life; it becomes spiritualized’ (Sussman 23). It is this spirit that I attempt to locate in the poem, and, although written for a children’s book, the poem should be treated seriously.

We were taken from the ore–bed and the mine,
 We were melted in the furnace and the pit –
 We were cast and wrought and hammered to design,
 We were cut and filed and tooled and gauged to fit. (1-4)

Lines 1-4 describe the extraction of primeval elements from the earth, then the smelting and production of metals and finally, the manufacture of the individual parts of the machine, effectively encompassing all the heavy manufacturing and engineering trades of the day. The final lines of the first stanza (5-8), briefly describe the needs of the machine (water, coal and oil), all of which require other machines and manual labour to produce. With ‘And a thousandth of an inch to give us play’ (6), Kipling emphasises the skill required to build and run the machine, suggesting a similarity to an organised and regulated human society. Too little freedom between the parts will result in friction, heavy wear and a seizing up; too much freedom and the parts bang together in disaccord causing a breakdown and failure. In these opening lines, Kipling captures the skills that were required to produce the Victorian machine. Not all the tasks required mere brute force: mining and quarrying were difficult dangerous jobs certainly, but they involved the acquisition of specialist knowledge and skills; work in the iron foundry and smithy were just as dangerous and difficult, but again required knowledge and skill. The final process that Kipling describes: ‘cut and filed and tooled and gauged to fit’ (4) was less physically demanding but required a high degree of skill. The Victorian physical machine was not merely a repetitive part produced by another machine, such as the production of the twenty–first–century motor car has become, but a complex assembly of parts that required real craftsmanship. In this opening stanza, Kipling hints at the evolution of

the craftsman. Gone is Ruskin's medieval stonemason, working in a stone-cutting proto-industrialisation factory, producing stone for the master mason to finish. Instead we have the skilled Victorian blacksmith, the fitter and turner, all able to work to accuracies of a thousandth of an inch. The craftsman's product has also changed, from the static cathedral to the dynamic engine. Kipling has changed the context of the craftsman's work but the machine is still the work of craftsmen, the human creating the machine and using other machines to do it. Finally, in the last two lines of the stanza (7-8), Kipling has the benevolent machine asking to be set to work, where it will become a faithful servant requiring no rest or sleep and able to produce abundant power for humankind to use.

In the chorus (9-12), the willingness to work is followed by a statement of the wide range of tasks modern machines can execute. The machines' usefulness is not limited just to tasks which the human is too weak to complete, but, as developed in the second stanza, it can replicate sensory and cognitive skills that the human already has. Kipling, or rather the machine, is suggesting that it has evolved beyond a simple prosthesis, beyond simply multiplying human power, or compensating for a lack, but developing into a being that is, if not an equal to the human, then rapidly becoming so. Kipling's machines are not fixed in place; they have the power to interconnect the world, shrinking space and time:

Would you call a friend from half across the world?
 If you'll let us have his name and town and state,
 You shall see and hear your crackling question hurled
 Across the arch of heaven while you wait.
 Has he answered? Does he need you at his side?
 You can start this very evening if you choose
 And take the Western Ocean in the stride
 Of seventy thousand horses and some screws! (13-20)

No longer limited to the merely mechanical, the machine communicates by 'hurling' the 'crackling question' (15) across the world. Kipling no doubt has in mind the noise of the electric spark, generated by the early wireless spark transmitters, as it arced across two electrodes, before being inductively coupled into the antenna and the world's electromagnetic field. Kipling's imagery here suggests the God Thor

hurling thunderbolts across the heavens. The machine is not just a subservient assistant to humankind; it has the power to delve into the mystical world of the supernatural, a world that has been, until now, the preserve of the Gods.

The chorus (21-24) sings that steam-powered machinery has freed humankind from dependence upon horses, wind and weather. Machines can now transport the human across the globe, using unimaginable amounts of power and energy. There is a sense of foreboding however; a new voice usurps the narration as ‘the monstrous nine-decked city goes to sea’ (24). ‘Monstrous’ implies a monster, something beyond the natural, a creature distorted and menacing. No longer is the machine singing its own praise, but an outsider is commenting on the application of the machine. A similar criticism from Kipling appears earlier in the novel *Captains Courageous* (1897), where the brash Atlantic liners callously run down the Cape Cod fishing boats in the fog. Perhaps Kipling is hinting that the opulent display of power and luxury that far exceeds its utility value, is morally wrong, a corruption of the work ethic of the machine itself. The verse was published in 1911, a year before the loss of the *Titanic* in April 1912, and it is possible that Kipling could sense a degree of recklessness in the quest for Atlantic speed. Equally, the biggest passenger ships of the time, *Mauretania* and the sister ship *Lusitania*, were built partly with government money to ensure that Britain maintained the largest (and the best) maritime fleet in the face of competition from Germany and America. In effect, they were an extension of the naval race typified by the dreadnought warships, and it is possible that ‘monstrous’ refers to this aspect.

The only human identified is the Captain, who controls the ‘monstrous nine-decked city’ (24). The humble stokers, labouring in appalling conditions, feeding coal into the boilers in order to produce the ‘seventy thousand horses’ are not mentioned. It is as if they have been subsumed by the machine and are merely mechanical parts of the monster.³⁶ As Sussman remarks of Carlyle, Kipling has become so ‘entranced’ by the work ethic that he has lost sight of the workers (Sussman 204).

Do you wish to make the mountains bare their head

³⁶ See Kennerley, Alston. "The Seamen's Union, the National Maritime Board and Firemen: Labour Management in the British Mercantile Marine." *The Northern Mariner/Le Marin du nord* VII.4 (1997): 15-28. ; The *Mauretania* (launched 1906) was one of the earliest passenger ships to make use of the new steam turbine technology pioneered by Parsons which developed approximately 70, 000 hp.

And lay their new-cut forests at your feet?

Do you want to turn a river in its bed,

Or plant a barren wilderness with wheat? (25-28)

The third stanza and its chorus (25-36) contrast the monstrous use of machines to provide luxury travel with a real utility that allows timber to be harvested, water to be diverted to irrigate crops to feed humankind, and power to allow industry to flourish. Machines have become an instrument of colonisation and capitalism, claiming virgin lands (ignoring the prior use and ownership of these by indigenous peoples) and turning these into productive places. Productive in this instance, refers to becoming part of the greater capitalist system of production through the agency of empire. Kipling in 1911 appears to be arguing that there is a moral dimension to the use of machines. The poem makes the point that, machines used to increase the productive capacity of land, to help the human race to feed itself, to relieve human suffering, and to enable the human to work productively, are considered good, but used simply for unnecessary luxury, they are considered bad. He ignores the condition in which the appropriation of land by machines places the indigenous peoples, in much the same way that the early British capitalists ignored the plight of the British people displaced from work and land by their enterprises.

But remember, please, the Law by which we live,

We are not built to comprehend a lie,

We can neither love nor pity nor forgive.

If you make a slip in handling us you die!

We are greater than the Peoples or the Kings –

Be humble, as you crawl beneath our rods! –

Our touch can alter all created things,

We are everything on earth – except The Gods! (37-44)

According to Kipling machines are soulless creatures. The final stanza (37-44) argues that they follow a pre-planned sequence of operations and do not know or care about truths or lies, life or death, love or pity. The machine, although a willing servant, is now more powerful than human Kings or ordinary people. Interference by either will result in injury or death. The machine is the new King and only in the metaphysical world of the Gods does the old order still stand. Kipling writes as if a

new creature has entered the universe, one that is willing to be of service, but equally, if it's almost infinite power is not respected, will crush the human.

Though our smoke may hide the Heavens from your eyes,
 It will vanish and the stars will shine again,
 Because, for all our power and weight and size,
 We are nothing more than children of your brain! (45-48)

The final chorus (45-48) concludes in an optimistic but slightly ambiguous vein. Optimistically, machines are, after all, only the product of human rational thought, and, following the desolation wrought by their introduction and use, there is hope for a return to a more natural world: 'Though our smoke may hide the Heavens from your eyes, / It will vanish and the stars will shine again' (45-46). A world which has been materially enriched by the machine, but its dirt and smoke has been banished and the heavens will be visible once more. Perhaps this world will be akin to Wells's Utopia, designed by craftsmen to be both useful and beautiful. Kipling's machines 'are nothing more than the children of your brain' (48), but the goddess Athena was born out of Zeus's head and Kipling appears to suggest more than just a little Greek mythology.³⁷ While the machines are 'greater than the Peoples or the Kings' (41), they are 'everything on earth – except The Gods!' (44), so perhaps Kipling's Athena-like creatures are false idols rather than true Gods. Machines, like idols, are products of human imagination rather than true creatures of the spiritual; false Gods of human creation that could serve until the true Gods return, 'and the stars will shine again' (46).

In this poem Kipling's machine is a child of the human brain, a machine child produced for the world system of production and communication, and it appears in a book written for children. Fiona McCulloch argues that childhood is a performance (McCulloch 69), and Kipling's verse can be read as a script for the child's performance in partnership with the machine, a partnership where the human child and machine child are increasingly dependent upon one other. In this poem, produced for a child's history text book, Kipling's machine child is teaching the human child the role of the machine. Possibly, the human child is expected to learn from the machine, that work, duty and improvement are worthy things to aspire to, and needless luxury is 'monstrous'. In this sense, monstrous is read in the same

³⁷ I am indebted to Barbara Franchi for this reference.

sense that Nancy Armstrong argues for, in her preface to McCulloch (Armstrong xiv), where the monstrous appears when the given adult rules of behaviour are broken by the child. McCulloch says that Victorian childhood was represented as ‘the epitome of ‘innocence’ (McCulloch 1), and if the human child was innocent then Kipling’s machines could also be innocent. But the Victorian machine and its industrial setting would not seem to be a site for innocence, and, as James R. Kincaid argues, the child is also a site of desire (Kincaid 61-103). In the human child, desire appears in the form of love; in the machine child, I argue, it is power that attracts. The potential power of the machine to colonise, to accrue capital, to produce needless luxury, and to dislocate the existing and replace it with the new, is the power that creates the desire. Kipling’s innocent machines are caught in that circle of desire. Using this interpretation produces a dilemma: Kipling’s machines would seem to be the antithesis of the idealised child; they are not simple and most certainly are not, as Andrews argues for the Victorian human child, pastoral (Andrews, *Child*, 25).

To explore the relationship between machine and child a little further, I turn to Kipling’s most notable literary child, Kim. Kim is the orphaned offspring of an Irish father and mother, living by his not inconsiderable wits in the streets of Lahore, like a native Indian street boy. Kim is a site of contestation, between the native India that seems to have adopted him and the machine of empire that seeks to use him as an agent in the ‘Great Game’ against Imperial Russia (Suleri 116). His entry into the museum (the Wonder House) in Lahore is significant, for Kim ‘clicked round the self-registering turnstile’ that stood in the entrance and entered the world of catalogued and ordered British knowledge (*Kim* 6). Symbolically, it is as if the turnstile was the mechanical entry point into the machine of empire and Kim was an article to be processed by that machine. Later in the story, Kim is inducted into the school of St Xavier’s in Partibus to be educated, or at least trained in the western technologies of mathematics and cartography that will equip him for his role as government surveyor (*Kim* 164). Sara Suleri writes that ‘Kim is the Game’, the object of desire, and that his collaboration with the colonial system is illustrative of the ‘terrifying absence of choice in the operations of colonialism’ (Suleri 116). Kim’s choices may be limited: already a product of the colonial machine, he is being further processed to become an agent for that machine, a conditioning of a child that verges on the monstrous. Kim’s induction into the machine of empire is the first

stage in his progression into the Great Game. In its usual interpretation, the Great Game is taken as the military contest of espionage between, mainly Russia and Britain for supremacy in South Asia.³⁸ The Great Game first appears in *Kim* in a conversation between Mahbub Ali and Creighton:

‘Why? He [Kim] went there alone before he came under the Colonel Sahib’s protection. When he comes to the Great Game he must go alone – alone, and at the peril of his head. *Then*, if he spits, or sneezes, or sits down other than as the people do whom he watches, he may be slain. Why hinder him now? Remember how the Persians say: The jackal that lives in the wilds of Mazanderan can only be caught by the hounds of Mazanderan.’ (*Kim* 129)

Kipling makes it clear that Kim’s induction into the Great Game will be in the service of the machine of empire, but Kim will be beyond its protection. The personal risk to which Kim is exposed, and willingly accepts, suggests Kipling’s Great Game is greater than the struggle between Western Powers for Empire; rather it includes a struggle for the very heart and mind of the boy Kim.³⁹ Kim’s induction into the colonial machine may be monstrous, but Kim, in his mixture of East and West, somehow resists becoming a sign of ‘the monstrous hybridism of East and West’, attributed to stereotype Babu, Hurree Chunder Mookerjee (*Kim* 239). Rather, through the survival of his internal spirit, his rebelliousness and his ability to slip away from the machine of school to return to native India – there remains a possibility of escape from the machine. Kipling’s ‘The Secret of the Machines’ is a statement of the contestation between the machine and the human spirit, and a warning that machines, and the comfortable materialism of modernity, are not a substitute for the spiritual dimension of human life. In *Kim*, Kipling has retained Kim’s independence and vital spirit, and the result is that machine and human can apparently co-exist happily, if only during the time of Suleri’s ‘adolescence’, a period of temporal disruption, that denies the past and delays the future (Suleri 109-

³⁸ ‘*Kim*. Chapter VII.’ < http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/rg_kim_notes7.htm>. Accessed 15 March 2017.

³⁹ For an extended discussion, see Hopkirk, Peter. *Quest for Kim: In Search of Kipling’s Great Game*. London: John Murray, 1996.

31). In my terms, this is the period of Kipling's jest, the unconscious time of dream and play, before the emergence of reason and adulthood and the domination of the machine.

Marx's Machine

In contrast to Kipling's relatively optimistic view of the machine, at least in the productive physical realisation of it, Marx presents a rather more sombre assessment that addresses areas that Kipling does not appear to recognise. In general Kipling did not construct his fictions about the highest level of capitalists, the elite of western society, but rather about those in the middle and sometimes those at the bottom of society. These are the people caught within the system of capitalism which also concerned Marx. Adapting Marx's ideas of the consuming machine allows the investigation of Kipling's machine to be viewed in a wider context than solely as an instrument of colonial expansion and power.

There are significant differences in approach between Marx and Kipling, and, as Jan Montefiore points out, Kipling provides a view of the machine in its application, not in its production:

For Kipling, technological progress is a matter of civil engineering (bridges, roads, aqueducts, canals) or of communications technology (steamships, railroads, telegraphs, radio, air-transport), not of factories producing goods. What the machines of the poem *don't* do, for all their tireless power and pride, is to make goods or other machines (machine tools are not part of Kipling's world). (Montefiore, *Kipling*, 127)

As Montefiore writes, Kipling centres his fictions upon the machine when it is complete and tangible, for example a ship in 'The Ship that found Herself' (1895), and a railway locomotive in '.007' (1897). In these stories, the machine is used as an analogy for human society. The story 'The Woman in his life' (1928) is the nearest view that Kipling provides of the industrial environment that gives birth to the machine. Even in this story, staged around the breakdown of the engineer and factory owner John Marden, the factory is marginal. Machine tools represent the interior of factories, the lathes, mills, shapers, skill hierarchies and all the

paraphernalia required to produce machines that are accurate enough to be used to produce even better machines. This is the plebeian world, controlled by capital, managed by the engineer, performed by the draughtsman, the tool maker and the fitter and turner and all the other metal-working trades. It is a world of labour, of unionism and of the industrial terraced house in work-stained Victorian cities. In the stories of the *fin-de-siècle* period, the world that produces machines is as foreign to Kipling as the Punjab would be to the metal worker of Birmingham, the riveter on the Tyne or the collier a thousand feet under the Rhondda valley; albeit they are all, ultimately, part of the same distributed capitalist system of empire. It is at the point of application, where the machine produces an output, that it becomes visible in a coherent and complete form, if it indeed ever attains such a form. This is the point that the machine becomes most visibly a symbol of a progressive and modernising system of empire and colonisation, or alternatively one of repression and control.

To investigate further the relationship between the machine and the human, I turn to Marx and an analysis based upon a reading of Chapters Seven and Fifteen of volume 1 of *Capital*.⁴⁰ Karl Marx takes a view of the capitalist system as one of steadily increasing layers of consumption (Marx 290). Material is extracted from the earth and worked upon by labour which consumes that material to produce a higher, refined material, which is then worked upon and consumed by more labour, until a product of some sort is produced. Labour itself is a commodity, bought by the capitalist and consumed by him, in order to produce goods which are then sold on (Marx 292). At each stage, the item produced has consumed the work and the materials that have gone into it. If the end product is a machine; a railway locomotive for example, then the resulting machine has consumed the materials and all the labour that has contributed to the product; everything from the coal, oil, iron, all the engineering trades and the factory complex that provide the conditions of work. Moreover, the machine continues to consume labour and materials all of its working life.

Marx deals in materialistic terms, but recognises the human vital energy that is so much the part of the labour process that the machine has consumed.

⁴⁰ Marx, Karl. "The Labour Process and the Valorization Process." *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. vol. 1. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1976. 283-306. and "Machinery and Large-Scale Industry." *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. vol. 1. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd. 492-639.

A machine that is not active in the labour process is useless. In addition, it falls prey to the destructive power of natural processes. Iron rusts; wood rots. Yarn with which we neither weave nor knit is cotton wasted. Living labour must seize on these things, awaken them from the dead, change them from merely possible into real and effective use-values. Bathed in the fire of labour, appropriated as part of its organism, and infused with vital energy for the performance of the functions appropriate to their concept and to their vocation in the process, they are indeed consumed, but to some purpose, as elements in the formation of new use-values, new products, which are capable of entering into individual consumption as means of subsistence or into a new labour process as means of production. (Marx 289-90)

Marx's machine is a repository for the dead: all of the energy that it has consumed can only be brought back to life when it is 'Bathed in the fire of labour, appropriated as part of its organism, and infused with vital energy' (Marx 289). Marx's language suggests something beyond the material: not only has the machine consumed the hours of labour taken in its building and its operation, but also the human spirit (the 'vital energy') of those hours. When the dead machine is brought back to life, then the human spirit that it has consumed is reawakened and released into the work product of the machine. Marx visualises labour as a living entity. It brings back to life dead things; it appropriates; and it has a fiery vitalism. Labour, according to Marx, is the living element that brings to life the spiritual potential that lies within the worked material, and it is the capitalist that provides the means of production. Marx claims the machine, by itself, has no value:

Machinery, like every other component of constant capital, creates no new value, but yields up its own value to the product it serves to beget. In so far as the machine has value and, as a result, transfers value to the product, it forms an element in the value of the latter. Instead of being cheapened, the product is made dearer in proportion to the value of the machine. And it is crystal clear that machines and systems of

machinery, large-scale industry's characteristic instruments of labour, are incomparably more loaded with value than the implements used in handicrafts and in manufacture. (Marx 509)

There are two parts to this citation that are worth discussing; the first is the dead nature of the machine and the fact that it only yields value to the product it produces. In the approach taken in this thesis, this value is both material and also spiritual, in that the machine gives up a proportion of the consumed human spirit that has gone into its making and operation. The more parts that are made, the lower the proportion of the human component in each part, and the less the human spirit contained within. Once the living human capital (labour) has been consumed by the machine, it changes from a living potential to a dead past. It is dead capital; it can never be restored, only fragmented and re-circulated in the objects that the machine produces. The second part of the citation is the economic argument that capitalism impoverishes the people. Wealth is bound up in the machines of capitalism rather than in the hands of the craftsman and local communities, which is the argument of Mahatma Gandhi, William Morris and of socialism.

Marx adds another comment on the nature of the workers employed in the mechanised system. He differentiates between unskilled machine attendants (feeders), who are in the vast majority, and a minority of skilled technicians and craftsmen, whose responsibility is to look after the machine and its mechanisms: 'This is a superior type and class of workers, in part scientifically educated, in part trained by handicraft' (Marx 545). Macaulay's Western educated Indian colonial administrator could conceivably be an example of this class of worker. Marx's superior workers can bridge the worlds of scientific rationalism and practical craft, taking the two streams of knowing to produce a third, the machine, and they fit into that magical space occupied by the 'craftsman'. In the context of viewing empire as a global, distributed machine for concentrating capital, Kipling's Sahibs can be either class of worker. At their most optimistic, they are part of the second grouping, a modern form of the craftsman keeping the machine running and making improvements to it, while at their grimmest, they are consumed by the machine and merely feed it with the material required to keep it functioning.

It is to the lesser set of workers that Kipling's story 'Mrs Bathurst' addresses itself. It is a story of men and machines and spiritual loss, all located within the greater deterministic system of empire. The story is saturated with machines: the railway, the place of revelation and terrifying climax; the telegraph, that like a Marconi ticker, clicks away in Vickery's false teeth; the new technology of moving pictures in which Mrs Bathurst, displaced in space and time, materializes. The male characters inhabit the machines of empire, the railways and the warships. Indeed, the sailors' lives are determined by the internal spaces and the movement of the ships. The men are consumed, not only in the material sense of their hours of labour, but in the sense that their vital energy and spirit is also consumed by the machines to which they devote their lives, and in turn those machines are consumed by the greater system of empire. The energy within this story arises not from the consumption of human spirit, but its demonic escape from the machine. Terry Eagleton makes the point that, 'it is often enough forgotten, in fact, just how rigorously deterministic the period actually is, given the more familiar images of random impression and fragmentary sensation' (Eagleton, 'Flight', 16). This point is important: the characters are locked in a deterministic system that requires them to be constantly on the move and always available for the service.

There are two extremes: constant service and constant instability. Nothing is fixed, everything is fluid and the world seems to have lost its physical stability, except for the hotel that Mrs Bathurst runs, which provides a fixed point about which the story revolves. Only the men's trades and professions remain stable, and that is because they are needed to tend the machines, just as the hotel tends for the men's needs. Movement dominates – even the place of the railway van is only temporary, put into place for a few hours to provide a shelter from the heat. This machine world seems to have lost its stability and is only held together by the grim humour and bonds of service. Even then, the stability seems doubtful, as Pyecroft says:

I know something o' maniacs, as every man in the Service must. I've been shipmates with a mad skipper – an' a lunatic Number One, but never both together I thank 'Eaven. I could give you the names o' three captains now 'oo ought to be in an asylum, but you don't find me interferin' with the mentally afflicted till they begin to lay about 'em with rammers an' winch-handles. (*Traffics* 358)

Mental and physical instability seem to be inseparable in this machine of empire and Vickery was, in Pyecroft's view, as mad as any of them: 'Mad? The man was a dumb lunatic – must 'ave been for months – years p'raps' (*Traffics* 358). Madness, the release from the sane rational world, is an affliction, now treated medically with drugs. It might also be the result of a struggle between the spiritual and the material.

Sussman writes in connection with 'Wireless':

In his [Kipling's] early stories, then, the object of criticism is not technology itself but the proud self-sufficiency of a rationalism which is symbolised by the machine. And to accept technology while rejecting scientific rationalism, Kipling, like Carlyle, transforms the machine into the embodiment of spiritual forces rather than of deterministic natural laws. (Sussman 199)

If the wireless and the telegraph and the cinema are in some way an embodiment of spiritual forces, then so might be, the greater machine of the empire. The madness and lunacy, wryly commented upon by Pyecroft, could be an external sign of that spirit, not the beneficial and positive spirits of Bergson or Nietzsche but a mad demonic spirit, the residual of the human spirits consumed by the capitalist machine of empire.

The Demonic Machine

The final stanza of Kipling's verse 'The Secret of the Machines' seems to give away the secret, to strip away any mystique from the inanimate objects that machines really are; they are simply the products of human reason. But, conversely, Kipling says that they are children, and children carry an imprint of their parents, a copy of the DNA, and a recreation in miniature of the complex biological path that culminated in their birth. In Bergson's terminology, children inherit the timeless *élan vital*, the spirit of humanity which instils individuality and prevents them being merely passive creatures of reason. It is the idea of a form of *élan vital* within the machine child of the human brain, analogous to Shaw's life force, which I wish to

investigate.⁴¹ The question is whether Kipling's machines are merely rational servants of human reason or something else, a holder or metaphor for the human inspiration that caused their birth. As Ketabgian observes:

Victorian machines [...] led a rich figurative life, yielding a broad literary array of habits, feelings, communities, and subjectivities. As science and technology studies have shown, these engines served as coordinated dynamic networks, with systems of complex interdependence that formatively shaped physiological and thermodynamic models of life. Unlike the static Hobbesian watches of the Enlightenment, they were power motors whose regulation of fire, coal, and steam supported a capacious vision of engines as living instinctive organisms, of animal bodies fuelled by industrial forces, and of allied natural, mechanical, and psychic energy driving these systems. (Ketabgian 2)

I wish to investigate, in a little more detail, the idea of the 'power motor' and 'psychic energy'. The problem revolves around the central idea that the machine has somehow changed from the static and regulated Hobbesian watch into a creation that appears to have a life of its own.

In 1897, Kipling found himself invited to attend the sea trials of a new steam-driven torpedo boat, working from Chatham Dockyard in Kent. He wrote enthusiastically to James Conland about that experience, and this is the letter that I examine next.⁴² As it is a private letter, it is reasonable to assume the text is spontaneous, that is it has not been carefully crafted and polished for publication, and therefore reveals something of Kipling's private emotions and relationship with the idea of the machine. Kipling concentrates on the machine's point of use, which in my interpretation of Marx is the place where the use value, the machine's potential value that comprises the labour energy and spirit consumed in its making, is released. It is at the point of use that the traces of the energy and spirit consumed by the machine are brought to life again by the application of labour, to be re-circulated (or possibly reincarnated) in the products of the machine. The point of use can be

⁴¹ MacIntosh, J.W. *The Origins of George Bernard Shaw's Life Force Philosophy*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2011.

⁴² Letter to James M. Conland, 1 June 1897, *Letters* 2: 298.

visualised as the place where the dead spirit, the spectre of the human capital that has been consumed by the machine, is brought back to life, and is in effect a séance place.

Torpedo boats were a new invention, and as the name implies were designed to carry and deploy the new weapon of the navy, the torpedo. They were developed into the destroyer, which was bigger than the boat Kipling journeyed in, and carried additional armaments.⁴³ Kipling's boat would have carried a version of the Whitehead torpedo, developed by Robert Whitehead initially for the Austro–Hungarian navy, who bought the manufacturing rights in 1869. Other navies rapidly secured the right to manufacture: Britain in 1871, the French, German, Italian, Russian, and Chinese navies soon after, and the Americans in 1892.⁴⁴ The torpedo was a weapon that every major navy had to acquire. It was in the very forefront of the naval arms race, and it was to play a major role in changing the face of naval warfare when carried by the submarine during World War I. The torpedo and the vessels that carried it; the new designs of battleship and the development of smokeless propellants along with the bolt–operated, magazine–fed, infantry rifle were all technological signs of the new warfare that was to erupt in 1914. In fact, the ship Kipling travelled on was already obsolete, its high–speed steam–reciprocating engine having been superseded by Charles Parson's steam turbine. Parson demonstrated the turbine–powered *Turbinia* in 1894 at the Fleet review at Spithead where powered by a single steam turbine of one thousand horsepower, it was faster than any Royal Navy ship present.⁴⁵ Perhaps Kipling's invitation for the trip was an attempt by the manufacturers, Thornycroft, to promote their product in the face of Parson's turbine.

The machine is the important subject of the letter, humans are secondary. After all, the boat is the child of someone's brain, and it is in the child that the future lies. Kipling mentions a small number of characters during the letter; including the Captain who only appears briefly, a vomiting sailor overcome by the motion; a grey bearded coxswain at the helm, presumably instilling some sort of confidence, and two engineering types. These last two are given a little more space, belonging to Marx's 'superior class of workers, in part scientifically educated, in part trained by

⁴³ Kipling's boat is identified by Pinney as the future *H.M.S. Foam*.

⁴⁴ Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whitehead_torpedo.

⁴⁵ "Turbinia." <<http://www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/register/138/turbinia>>. Accessed 7 April 2015.

handicraft' (Marx 545). One was a 'fascinating old navy engineer who represents the admiralty', identified by Pinney as William Joshua Harding, Chief Engineer, Royal Navy (*Letters 2*: 299). The other was 'Thorneycroft's head man George Brown who had attended more than 2000 trials!' and was 'tremendously interesting: a born engineer' (*Letters 2*: 299). Kipling makes the acquaintance of the boat at the dockside:

This is about all there was to the boat. She was 19.5 ft beam 7ft draft aft and 5 forward and 210 overall. She was filthy black – no bright work anywhere: and covered with oil and coal dust – a turtle back forward to turn the worst of the seas: a conning tower plated with half inch steel to turn rifle–fire: but her skin was three sixteenths of an inch everywhere else! Her deck was covered with some sort of compo–like floor cloth but she 'tumbled home' so that her widest available beam wasn't over ten feet. (*Letters 2*: 299)

The boat is ugly and dirty, 'filthy black', 'covered with coal dust and oil' and has not been cleaned. Equally, there is no polished teak or brass to be seen, and the floor is covered by a type of synthetic flooring such as might be used in some industrial factory. Tied up along the dockside, the boat merely looks the part, but the spirit within it has not yet been awoken by the human labour necessary to sail and steam it. This machine is strictly functional, designed for speed, with a 'turtle back' forward and a 'tumble home', to keep the sea, or at least the worst of it, out. It has a place for the captain to command the vessel from and a minimum of protection for the crew. Kipling does not mention any other facilities. Sussman argues that, 'to the early Victorian writer, the mechanised world presented a countenance of unquestioned ugliness' (Sussman 41), and Kipling is quick to recognise this ugliness. There is none of the prestige and glamour of a mighty battleship or cruiser in the torpedo boat. It was meant for killing, and its sole function was to use its speed to get close enough to a major warship to launch its torpedoes and then escape. Yet Kipling remains fascinated by the machine, as if the ugliness becomes a symbol of the sublime (Sussman 31). Perhaps it becomes the maritime equivalent of Philipp Jakob Louterbourg's painting 'Coalbrookdale by Night' (1801) with its resonances of man–made power and industrial activity obliterating a half–seen pastoral setting.

Ugly or not, the machine was no mere piece of domesticated clockwork, rather a form of water-borne devil:

Our stoke-hold was open. Then I heard someone say to the captain, – ‘we’ll shut down as soon as you say sir’ and they screwed down the stoke-hold hatches and a fan (700 revolutions a minute!) began to pump forced draft into the fires. Then the captain said ‘Let go!’ or words to that effect until – well do you know the feeling of standing up in a car when the thing starts up quick. I nearly fell down on the deck. The little bitch jumped from 22 to 30 like a whipped horse – and the three hours trial had begun! (*Letters 2*: 299)

To attain full speed, air entering the furnaces had to be controlled, so that it was channelled through the fire bed to increase the rate of combustion and the amount of steam available to drive the boat. Kipling describes this process and the closing of the stoke-hold doors (hatches). But the hatches are not just closed, they are screwed down, suggesting force, pressure and the need to contain pent-up suppressed energy. It is almost as if energy was being prevented from escaping and was being forced into the engine instead, and then the thing was ‘let go’ like a wild animal. This is no ordinary machine, and Kipling’s writing enters a Dickensian-like mode (Andrews, *Laughter*, 77-98), using language and diction that rapidly gathers pace and momentum: a fan ‘700 revolutions a minute!’, ‘began to pump...’, ‘then the captain said...’ and just when the crescendo is near its peak there is pause, a moment of bathos ‘– I nearly fell down’, followed by the rapid ascent once more, ‘The little bitch jumped like a whipped horse.’ This passage conveys an impression of great energy, a latent force waiting to be unleashed, as if the machine was about to burst upon the world and change it forever. Kipling describes the machine as a ‘bitch’, and the *OED* suggests that bitch could refer to a ‘lewd or sensual woman’, ‘a malicious or treacherous woman’, ‘something outstandingly difficult or unpleasant’, the ‘female of the dog’.⁴⁶ The inference is clear enough: the machine is not to be trusted, its great power is barely under control and given a chance, it will turn on its human (male) masters.⁴⁷ The spirit of this particular machine has to be treated with care –

⁴⁶ "bitch, n.1." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017.

⁴⁷ Labelling the machine a ‘bitch’ is, perhaps, an example of Kipling’s casual misogyny.

perhaps the bitch that lives within it is some kind of female she–devil, inhabiting the inferno of furnaces, and kept under control by the screwed–down hatches and the implied skill of the male engineers and sailors.

‘The trial had begun’ but Kipling makes it into a trial for humankind rather than the machine:

It was like a nightmare. The vibration shook not only your body but your intestines and finally seemed to settle on your heart. The breeze along the deck made it difficult to walk. I staggered aft above the twin screws and there saw a blue–jacket, vomiting like a girl; and in the wardroom which is right in the stern of her, I felt my false teeth shaking in my head! The pace was too good for her to roll. All we could do was to get under the lee of the conning tower and hang on while this devil's darning needle tore up and down the coast. We passed 17 knot passenger boats, flew ten miles past 'em; turned and came back and overtook them. By the way when she turned she slung you to one side like a bicycle. The wake ran out behind us like white hot iron: the engine room was one lather of oil and water: the engines were running 400 to the minute: the gauges: the main–steam pipes and everything that wasn't actually built into her were quivering and jumping: there was half an inch of oil and water on the floor and – you couldn't see the cranks in the crank pit. It was more like Hell, on a ten foot scale, than anything you ever dreamed – and through the infernal din of it George Brown shouted in my ear ‘Isn't she a darling!’ (*Letters 2*: 299)

It was nightmarish; the machine penetrated Kipling's body and settled on his heart. An experienced sailor, a blue–jacket, was reduced to ‘vomiting like a girl’, and even Kipling's false teeth, mechanical prostheses inside his mouth, shook in sympathy with the machine outside. The machine had taken control, transforming the boat into a miniature Hell, and the devil himself, the engineer in charge George Brown, delighted in his infernal creation, the ‘devil's darning needle’. Kipling's language is full of energy. The sentences are short, the language staccato–like, uttered between

taking quick gulps of breath and ducking the waves, shouted at the top of his voice to enable the reader to hear him amidst the noise of the machine. There is one long, connected sentence ('The wake ran out [...] in the crank pit,') as if there is not even time to pause for the period to take effect. Everything is fast and moving: a 'white hot wake', a 'lather of oil and water', 'running 400', gauges, pipes quivering, oil water, 'couldn't see cranks in the pit'. This is a machine that is rapidly taking its passengers to a form of hell, and Kipling is desperately trying to keep up. If, as Jan Montefiore says, Kipling has no interest in science or the commercial exploitation of technology, then why is he interested in technological progress? 'The answer', she says 'seems to lie in the thrill of power, the reassurance of discipline, and the pleasure of knowledge' (Montefiore, *Kipling*, 128). This letter provides at least some of the possibilities. Certainly the thrill of producing and using power is clear enough, but the attraction seems to go deeper than this. The stable knowable world has been transformed by this undisciplined devil of a machine into a vibrating, moving blur that invades the body and even, after a period of rest, takes control of the meticulous craftsman's writing:

Just for fun – because she had been tested already on the measured mile – the skipper said: – 'we'll take her over the mile.' That is marked by two red admiralty buoys – and is the official testing mile for all ships of the navy. The first time we had the wind at our back going almost as we were: so I wasn't blinded. Well, we all timed her and away we went! The buoys simply seemed to be flying to us and we covered the mile in 1. 50 1/2, or something over 32 knots to the hour. Just try to think of it. That's faster than any trotter or bicycle – and most trains. Then we turned her round (by this time the contractor's men were damning in heaps because they were out for the straight away trial and all these turns were knocking a little speed off her). We faced into that thirty knot gale and for the honour of the thing I *had* to stay up on the bridge. That was pure hell. The wind got under my sou'wester: and I was nearly choked by the string round my throat. But we did the mile in the face of wind and tide in 2.5-6 or 8 – the timings did not agree. Then we went on and

on and on till we all turned white with fatigue. Up and down we flew and as it was impossible to sit down to a meal they gave us sandwiches (cut ashore: you don't cut meat on a destroyer) in a basket and some drinks. At last those awful three hours came to an end: but not before the speaking-tubes to the captain's bridge had been smashed off by the vibration. Then we drew breath: and every one said Thank God! She'd done ninety knots in those three hours: but if it had been straight away in deep sea, we'd have done 31. Everything was quite cool and nothing had smashed up and they all said I was the mascotte. Every engineer aboard knew McAndrew's Hymn by the way and enjoyed it. Well then we jogged back to Sheerness at 20 knots an hour. We were all as black as sweeps; and utterly played out. It took me two days to get the 'jumps' out of my legs. But I wouldn't have missed the trip for anything. (*Letters 2: 299*)

This excerpt is all about speed, scientific measurement and control of forces and energies that are not fully understood. It is 'fun': perhaps the serious scientific trial to prove the boat is fit for service has turned into a kind of game, pitting the human, the machine and natural forces into a three-cornered contest. The speed test is conducted between two markers and it is official, sanctioned and conducted in a scientifically approved place, a place where machines are examined and either accepted or rejected from the service of the empire. It is serious, and Kipling solemnly relates the times and the speeds achieved, while with mock seriousness he relates his heroic stance on the bridge and the endurance required to remain in control of the mad machine. Like the steam engine, the power source hidden away among the coal dust, oil and water, Kipling has to take on fuel in the form of sandwiches to sustain him during the trial, while, on it went until 'we all turned white with fatigue' (*Letters 2: 299*). The 'awful' trial ended at last, but not until the violence of the machine had 'smashed the speaking-tubes to the captain's bridge' and humans were covered in black coal dust and soot, no longer fully distinguishable from the machine but partly subsumed by it (*Letters 2: 299*). Kipling's body had

been taken over by the machine: its violence and power remained in him for two days afterwards before he could ‘get the ‘jumps’ out of [his] legs’ (*Letters* 2: 299).

There is, in Kipling’s writing, a sense of the living demonic machine, a vitalism, not human, but something alive and only just under control, threatening to break out and wreak havoc. Sussman, when discussing Wells’s treatment of the machine, writes of ‘the Victorian convention of endowing the machine with a grotesque vitality’ (Sussman 172), which is exactly what Kipling has done, with the result that this grotesque vitality has taken control. This machine is no mere automata as Descartes would have defined it (Ketabgian 50). It may not have a divine soul, but to Kipling, it does not appear soulless. This is a Victorian power motor that ‘supported more potent – and potentially destructive – forms of physical and economic power’ (Ketabgian 50). This more potent power was ultimately the growth and protection of capital through empire. Kipling’s machine is not an orderly disciplined mechanism: it jumps about like a ‘bitch’; it smashes itself in its own frenzy; it throws the crew about until they vomit; and it enters the human body. This machine is beyond the mechanical and is some way towards becoming a living thing, an unruly extension to the romantic metaphor of a ‘living organism’ that replaced ‘the mechanistic intellectual model of the cosmos’ (Sussman 5). Kipling’s mechanical torpedo boat is part of that living organism, neither servant nor master to humankind, but partnered with humans in a distributed system of aggressive industrialised existence.

Spiritual Science

Kipling’s story ‘Wireless’ (1902) has been critiqued from a number of perspectives. J.M.S. Tompkins found it ‘too full of crowded detail’ (Tompkins 91), Anne Weygandt read it as a sign of Kipling’s regard for Keats (Weygandt 82-83) and Andrew Lycett identifies it as ‘a story that explored the relationship between psychic communications and the new science of telegraphy’ (Lycett 336). It is this relationship between science and the spiritual, identified by Lycett that I concentrate upon, and specifically the question of whether the technology becomes ‘the embodiment of spiritual forces rather than of deterministic natural laws’ that Sussman associates with the Victorian machine (Sussman 199). Before discussing

‘Wireless’ in more detail, I provide a short overview of the relationships between the emerging technology of wireless communication and the interest in the spiritual and spiritualism, that emerged during the *fin de siècle*.

Terry Eagleton writes that in the context of Conrad, Kipling and others, the era is ‘fascinated by the various Lamarckian and Bergsonian vitalisms, all of which envisage some inexorably unfolding dynamic which shucks off creeds, conventions and institutions as so many empty shells’ (Eagleton, ‘Flight’, 15). For Eagleton, ‘the *fin de siècle* was populated and characterized by ‘a kind of mystical positivism’ (Eagleton, ‘Flight’, 15) to which Matthew Beaumont adds ‘[and] a kind of positive mysticism’ (Beaumont 166). These interactions of spiritual, mystical, and material energies form the basis of my discussion of Kipling’s story ‘Wireless’.

The view that spiritualism partly refuted the materialism that the Darwinian world posited is taken by Jill Galvan, because ‘with its purported empirical evidence of a spirit world it refused the pain of existential and religious uncertainty, even as it borrowed the basic outlines of Darwin’s theory’ (Galvan 82). Galvan points out that the post-human nature of the séance and of spiritualism posits that ‘life’, or some form of intelligence, exists outside of the bodily sphere of the human (Galvan 83-4). One manifestation of this inquisitive approach is, according to Galvan, a ‘rich interplay between the phantasmal and the technological’ (Galvan 79), which to the Victorian spiritualists often meant the electrical and the mysterious ethereal fields that seemingly surrounded them. The new technologies of magnetism and electricity are discussed by Richard Noakes, who writes that ‘invisible magnetisms and electricities, the electric telegraph and early radio [...] seemingly broke free of recognisable bodily constraints and inhabited another dimension’ (Noakes 36). These technological entities, like the modern view of information, were as Galvan says bodiless, immaterial and spiritless (Galvan 88). These were things of the infinite, beyond normal human senses (although gifted mediums could perhaps tune in and eavesdrop) and, even if spiritless, could provide a conduit to the spirits, information gateways, as it were, to the other world. Galvan, referring to Katherine Hayles’ *How We Became Posthuman*, makes the argument that:

Information would have satisfied a spiritualistic reaching out for the infinite in a way materiality could not, not only because materiality meant mortality, but also because of the

dramatically different dialectics that, according to Hayles, apply to matter in information. (Galvan 88)

The nexus of technology, information, spirits, death, and I add misinformation, all haunt Kipling's stories 'Wireless', 'Mrs Bathurst' and 'They.' In 'Wireless', Cashell's tuning of the equipment with pieces of tinfoil disturbs the ethereal field with 'the tense, knuckle-stretching sound of the electric spark' (*Traffics* 223), and Cashell's eavesdropping on the Royal Navy, going about its imperial duty, seemingly interacts with the spiritual messages coming through in the other room. Kipling's narrator in 'Wireless' is caught between these two spaces, unable to fully comprehend either of them. W. B. Dillingham writes of this dilemma:

His [the narrator's] intense excitement derives not so much from his awareness that this new technology is working but principally from his eagerness to have proof that such technology will have uses that go beyond the apparent. In the future perhaps it will help humankind to eavesdrop on eternity as he believes he has been doing in witnessing the behaviour of Shaynor in his trance. (Dillingham, *Rudyard Kipling: Life, Love and Art*, 46)

The wireless, according to Dillingham, has the potential to provide not only a conduit to the far spaces of the earth, but a channel to eternity where the dead reside. It becomes a means of bringing the dead back to life, not in the form of a physical resurrection, but in a spiritual reincarnation induced by the powerful spark of the transmitter and the magic properties of the coherer. Seemingly, the combination of electromagnetism from the wireless, and the effect of drugs on the human body, will open the gateway to eternity.

The story is set in a modern chemist's shop, a cold, uncomfortable place devoted to the exchange of medicine for cash, perhaps the postponement of death, and entry into the spiritual world, in exchange for the currency of the material world. The shop is divided into two spaces, each dedicated to a particular form of communication. The rear is given to young Mr Cashell and the new art of wireless communication through the ether by electromagnetic induction. The front, illuminated by reflections from large coloured jars and scented by the products of the chemist's craft, is given to a form of séance and the reception of spiritualist

messages. It is in the interaction between these two forms of communication that the story develops, and ‘Wireless’, according to Kipling, is partly a recreation of the séance. He says so at the end of the story, and of course the story teller never lies. William B. Dillingham disputes this, and while recognising all the paraphernalia of the séance that Kipling deploys, he argues that ‘Wireless’ is principally about ‘sexual obsession’ (Dillingham, *Rudyard Kipling: Life, Love and Art*, 47).

Cashell, the young experimenter, expounding the magical properties of the coherer, and eagerly looking forward to the application of wireless, captures fragments of wireless messages from the ether:

‘That’s one of ’em complaining now. Listen ‘*Disheartening – most disheartening.*’ It’s quite pathetic. Have you ever seen a spiritualist séance? It reminds me of that sometimes – odds and ends of messages coming out of nowhere – a word here and there – no good at all.’

‘But Mediums are all impostors,’ said Mr Shaynor, in the doorway, lighting an asthma-cigarette. ‘They only do it for the money they can make. I’ve seen ’em.’ (*Traffics* 239)

The world of Kipling’s ‘Wireless’ appears to be a treacherous world, for ‘Mediums are all imposters’ and the unreliability of the new technology of wireless is ‘*most disheartening.*’ Equally the confused narrator attempts to construct an elaborate theory, based upon the practice of spiritualism, to rationalise the interactions between the electromagnetic field and the spirit world, and gives up in confusion (*Traffics* 230-1).

Pamela Thurschwell writes that ‘Wireless’ ‘suggested some of the ways in which analogies between technological mediums and spiritualists’ ones were being deployed by the cultural imaginary of the early twentieth century’ (Thurschwell 90). Certainly in ‘Wireless’ there is a sense of some kind of empathy between the new technologies of communication and the spiritual world, as Jan Montefiore describes it:

But what makes Kipling’s fictions of communication emotionally interesting is his awareness that the ‘Power’ of steam or electricity or radio connects with something beyond human understanding. (Montefiore, *Kipling*, 133)

This connection with the unknown is present in ‘Wireless’, but the connection itself is beyond the rational, ‘beyond human understanding’. ‘Wireless’ is a story that is rich in uncertainties. The narrator attempts to construct a rational theory connecting spiritualism to wireless technology, and fails, going home to bed tired and exhausted. Science, in the guises of spiritualism and the new technology of wireless, is uncertain and Dillingham argues that Shaynor is a fraud. Where for a moment, at the beginning of the story it seemed that the new science of the electromagnetic field and its derived machines could provide a gateway to the eternal world of the spirits, by the close, it proves impossible. ‘Wireless’ stands in opposition to Kipling’s letter about the torpedo boat: in that experience, the machine and the spirit world seemingly become entangled in one breath-taking experience, which defies rationalist explanation. In ‘Wireless’, entry to the spiritual world cannot be found through the application of logical scientific reason, it has to be found in something intangible, and in my reading, that intangible property, at its most vital in Kipling, is humour and the jest, properties that are conspicuously lacking in ‘Wireless’.

The Death of the Human

Once there was The People – Terror gave it birth;

Once there was The People and it made a Hell of Earth.

Earth arose and crushed it. Listen, O ye slain!

Once there was The People – it shall never be again!

(‘MacDonough’s Song’, *Diversity*, 44)

‘As Easy as A.B.C.’ was first published in 1912 and collected in *A Diversity of Creatures* (1917) and is a sequel to the earlier story ‘With the Night Mail’. Both should be read in the context of an increasing awareness of the military implications of an emerging aviation technology. ‘With the Night Mail’ was first published in the U.S.A. in *McClure’s Magazine* in November 1905, then in the United Kingdom in *The Windsor Magazine* in December 1905, and finally collected in *Actions and Reactions*. It is a story in which the machine is integrated into the narrative of empire

to produce a confident prediction of the future. A future in which the machine remains subservient to humanity, with its seemingly magical power source, 'Fleury's Ray' kept under watchful guard and safely contained. Kipling, in the magazine versions, added an appendix that mimicked the newspaper advertisements of the time, in which there is a myriad of aviation advertisements that seemingly burst out of the containing page.⁴⁸ Peter Lawson characterizes 'With the Night Mail' as a 'science fiction story depict[ing] a global utopia at ease with social, cultural and political matters' (Lawson 44) and argues that it 'presents a completely confident future vision of the world' (Lawson 46). By contrast, Lawson considers 'As Easy as A.B.C.' 'a far darker narrative with distinctly dystopian connotations.' Lawson follows Angus Wilson in arguing that: 'As Easy as A.B.C. is 'in part a response to the Liberal Government headed by Lloyd George which won a landslide election in 1906' (Lawson 44).⁴⁹ In the reading presented here, I acknowledge the political backdrop to the story, and Kipling's Carlylean – like antagonism towards modern democracy, but focus upon the conflict that arises between a machine – like determinism and a suppressed human spirit.

Kipling's depiction of the spiritually dead world controlled by the A.B.C. is in marked contrast to the spiritually vibrant world of the late Victorian and Edwardian invoked by Eagleton. In this section, I examine work in which the machine, in its physical and systemic forms, dominates human existence. This is a world where the machine and its demonic spirit is no longer partnered with the human in some modernising enterprise, but a world in which the machine rules absolutely, and Bergson's *élan vital*, the human spirit, is dead.

The period preceding the outbreak of the World War I was a time of increasing interest in the technology of aviation, particularly in relation to its military use. Lord Roberts, a figure much admired by Kipling, made a speech in early December 1909 to the Royal United Services Institution in London which was subsequently reported in *Flight* magazine of December 11 1909. In this paper entitled 'How Airships are Likely to Affect War', Roberts advocates rapid development of the technology because they 'would probably be of the greatest value in the next war' (L. Roberts 798). The report concludes with Roberts admonishing the 'Britishers' for their apathy, 'We were so apathetic about

⁴⁸ Partly reproduced in *Actions and Reactions* 143-167.

⁴⁹ Wilson, Angus. *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1977. 248

everything' (L. Roberts 798). Michael Paris in his study credits Jules Verne and his novel *The Clipper of the Clouds* (1886) with originating a literature focused around world domination through air power (Paris 125[1993]). Paris also identifies a considerable number of authors predating and post-dating Kipling's two stories that followed the theme of domination through air power (Paris [1989]). Some, like William Moffat and George Griffiths deal with fictional material, and others such as the journalist R.P. Hearne present a detailed factual study. Hearne, incidentally, was a motoring journalist, so Kipling may have known him through the Royal Automobile Club. Air power was clearly seen to have significant military uses, not least for the policing of distant colonies, where aviation offered the prospect of exerting control at less expense than the traditional army column (Paris 128[1993]). Paris credits 'As Easy as A.B.C.' and 'With the Night Mail' as significant in raising general awareness of the potential of air power to establish and maintain imperial domination (Paris 126-7[1993]).

In my reading, 'As Easy as A.B.C.' paints a bleak picture of a materially rich world, but one which is sterile and dying and represents a future world aptly described by Sussman:

With the introduction of the thesis that control of the machine must pass to an elite, the scientific romances necessarily come to an end. For the conflict at their centre, the struggle of ordinary man against amoral technocracy, a conflict represented by the physical battles between Victorian adventurers and machinery symbolizing this amoral rationality, has been resolved. (Sussman 192)

'As Easy as A.B.C.' has been subjected to a substantial degree of criticism, a summary of which is presented by John McGivering on the Kipling Society webpage⁵⁰ and which I briefly reproduce here. Angus Wilson suggests that the work is a vision of a future utopia, but one which is accompanied by a 'sense of inestimable loss' (A. Wilson 249-50). Conversely, Charles Carrington argues the story is not utopian, but factual statements of what may well occur given the rapid advances in aerial technology (Carrington 374-5). The theme of Kipling's alleged hate is referenced by John McGivering in citing David Gilmour: 'The years before

⁵⁰ "As Easy as A.B.C." <http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/rg_easyabc1.htm>. Accessed 10 Jan. 2016.

the First World War exhibit many of Kipling's virtues and nearly all his unpleasantness. It was his decade for hating' (Gilmour 212). Following on from this is the supposition that, 'As Easy as A.B.C.' could well be a text of hate. However, the most perceptive summary comes from J.M.S Tompkins who writes that:

The basic energy of life is failing in a world where men do not struggle and suffer to their full scope. [...] Everything in the tale is double-edged, and there is no conclusion, but it is not Kipling's blueprint for the future. (Tompkins 95-6)

But the question immediately arises of why this should be so, given Kipling's valorisation of the machine elsewhere? And that is the basis upon which I analyse the material.

In this tale of Kipling's, the contest between 'ordinary man' and 'amoral technocracy' has been resolved and is never questioned by the characters. The machine is God, and the ordinary citizen has abdicated all responsibility for the future of humanity. 'As Easy as A.B.C.' is a post-cataclysmic story narrated by the Aerial Board of Control's Official Reporter. The world has been subjected to a discontinuity caused by uncontrolled democracy resulting in disruption, violence, plague and chaos, and a hundred years later stability has been restored with the emergence of a new modern order. The story is a tale that invokes spectral images of soulless modernity haunted by a lost world, a lost world that perhaps resembled Ruskin's mythical and innocent medieval paradise before it was destroyed by disorder, war and finally capitalist-driven systemisation. In the new world, material want and disease have been eliminated and people live to enjoy over a hundred years of fit and active physical life. As the character Dragomiroff says:

'I am rich – you are rich – we are all rich and happy because we are so few and we live so long. Only *I* think Almighty God He will remember what the Planet was like in the time of Crowds and the Plague. Perhaps he will send us nerves. Eh, Pirolo?' (*Diversity* 5-6)

But behind this plenitude of material wealth lies a nebulous fear, a half-remembered history, a haunting of crowds, democracy, strife and disaster, which is echoed in the verses of 'MacDonough's song'. The new world has been organised to facilitate the free movement of traffic, which is policed by science-fiction-like airships under the

control of the A.B.C., ‘that semi–elected, semi–nominated body of a few score persons [that] controls the Planet’ (*Diversity* 1). So powerful has the A.B.C. become that its motto ‘Transport is Civilisation’ encompasses the whole of human activity. Human civilisation has been reduced to a mechanistic flow of material across the face of the planet, accomplished by advanced airships and a comprehensive information network. The world has been distilled into one huge colony, a form of neo–imperialism dedicated to privacy of the individual and controlled by the enlightened despots of the A.B.C. In this world, a flexible and constantly evolving human culture has been restrained, as surely as if Bergson’s rigid coat had been fitted over it. There is no centre and eccentric, no significant variations, and the cracks and faults of the incongruous have been eliminated. The teeming, quarrelling humanity of Zola’s *Germinale*, the vibrant street–life Dickens depicted in *Sketches by Boz* (1836), and the inquisitive energy of Emma Roberts’s *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindustan* (1835) have been replaced by privacy, order and quietness. Messy life has been transformed into a quiet, ordered and private death. It is a world where difference has been eliminated, and the incongruous is now a woman who has borne a child, for it is a world largely without children.

This new world is dying because humanity has become afraid and is tired of living, as the character Dragomiroff says:

The Planet has taken all precautions against crowds for the past hundred years. What is our total population to-day? Six hundred million we hope; five hundred we think; but – if next year’s census shows more than four hundred and fifty, I myself will eat all the extra little babies. We have cut the birth-rate out – right out! For a long time we have said to Almighty God, ‘Thank You, Sir, but we do not much like Your game of life, so we will not play.’ (*Diversity* 5)

Not playing the game of life would appear to include not only public participation but physical reproduction as well. In this story, where public debate and intellectual argument are silenced, the silent, dark world of material plenitude is sterile and is dying. The world is like a physical artefact that is perfect and without flaw: there are no incongruities, no unfinished scratches, no place for creativity and renewal. Human development has effectively ceased: it exists only in the long, but

increasingly empty life spans of the inhabitants. This world is an example of the machine-dominated hierarchy that Ketabgian, in discussing Marx and *Capital*, identifies ‘as an extended prosthetic conglomeration, the machine not only surpasses its human host, it also threatens to supplant the human entirely’ (Ketabgian 20). That is, in the post-human system produced by an increasingly dependent relationship between human and machine, the human becomes more machine-like and subservient. In Kipling’s story, humans have indeed become machine-like, existing in a closed world of privacy and subservient to the machine of the A.B.C.

There are two exceptions to this bleak conformity: the elite, who provide safe entertainment for the population and who, from within the closed ranks of the A.B.C., expend energy and creativity to produce new machines. The second exception is the Serviles who retain a ghostly memory of a socialist-orientated democracy. This democracy, parodied by Kipling as ‘popular government’ (*Diversity* 23), is characterized by a habitual will to vote and to argue, whose communalism is as sterile as the majority’s privacy. These pathetic remnants of the past, threatening the privacy of the citizens of North Illinois, are the cause of the dispatch of A.B.C.’s war fleet:

Northern Illinois had riotously cut itself out from all systems [...] As a matter of fact, it is of no importance whether Northern Illinois stay in or out of planetary circuit; as a matter of policy, any complaint of invasion of privacy needs immediate investigation, lest worse follow. (*Diversity* 2)

In the new world order, established after the great crisis, public disorder and strife has been practically eliminated and the disruption to traffic from Northern Illinois represents a threat to a calm and static world. The imperative is not in dealing with the immediate, but minor inconvenience of the closure of a few routes, but rather the loss of privacy that has caused the shutdown. It is accompanied by the haunting fear that a return to the old ways of argument and democracy could occur. The stasis is such that the Aerial Board of Control, which is charged with the maintenance of a free flow of traffic ‘and *all that that implies*’ (*Diversity* 2), has a war fleet of over two hundred airships which it has never had to deploy. The disruption caused by the pathetic Serviles is a chance for the machine to test itself. The human officers of the A.B.C. and the physical airships become one entity, the distressed humanity of

Northern Illinois merely material for the machine to consume and process. As Ketabgian writes, ‘Capital’s human part thus doubles as a machine part, a motorized appendage whose place among the living and the dead, the human and the nonhuman is far from secure’ (Ketabgian 24). Kipling has created a tale in which the inhabitants of Chicago have become decadent, neurotic, and adjuncts to the machine of the A.B.C. These machines are merely part of a greater machine, the machine of world order and wealth, a symbol of what Marx termed capital, and in this story is represented by the A.B.C. It has brought wealth, but its ruthless materialism is dependent upon the unhindered flow of ‘traffic’ (the disciplined and controlled flow of material across the globe) and a reduction of the world to a managed, globalised system.

The mechanistic and orderly world with its blessing of peace and material plenitude has however come at considerable cost. In the reaction against democracy and anarchy, the population has retreated into privacy, elevating it into a form of religious belief with homes that are physically isolated and protected from each other. In this new world, privacy and isolation is extended from the merely physical private space into the public intellectual area. The *vox populi* (the voice of the people) is silent, or at least is only raised, as in this story, when privacy is threatened. Not only are the people silent but they are also deaf. De Forest, ‘whose business it is to know out the districts’ (*Diversity* 4), gives a sketch of the population of Illinois:

They were, he said, noticeably kind, quiet folk, but a little exacting, as all flat countries must be, in their notions of privacy. There had, for instance, been no printed news – sheet in Illinois for twenty – seven years. Chicago argued that engines for printed news sooner or later developed into engines for invasion of privacy, which in turn might bring the old terror of Crowds and blackmail back to the planet. So news–sheets were not. (*Diversity* 4)

The fear of resurrecting the old devils of democracy and crowds through the use of printing machines has silenced the people. All public debate and participation in government has ceased. The retreat from public activity has produced a world that seemingly, is in darkness and silence. Sussman says of Carlyle that, his ‘main concern is always the inward sense’ of mechanization, its effects on the psychic life’

(Sussman 20). When discussing ‘With the Night Mail’, the precursor to ‘As Easy as A.B.C.’ Sussman writes ‘Like Morris, Kipling sees mechanized society as increasingly effete, increasingly isolated from what is natural and organic’ (Sussman 207). This ‘mechanised society’, regulated and controlled like a machine by a machine, even to the extent that human internal creative energies are suppressed, is what ‘As Easy as A.B.C.’ depicts. Humankind has grown afraid of being human and people exist as isolated biological machines, carefully programmed and managed to avoid meaningful contact with others.

The people are caught in a dilemma: they must remain individuals but somehow form a collective voice to have the Serviles removed. They have become so concerned and agitated over this that a crowd has formed to protest, a crowd that violates all principles of the new privacy, and looks in horror on itself (*Diversity* 25). The dilemma that ‘the people’ cannot be ‘the people’ is irresolvable except by the intervention of an external agent, the A.B.C. The people, or rather the isolated individuals who cannot form ‘the people’, are afraid. They cannot construct any form of collective voice, they cannot govern themselves, and the only collective action that they can undertake would be disorderly and violent. The inward mechanisation that so troubled Carlyle has driven out humanity from people, leaving only fear and no alternatives to machine-like passiveness or brute animalism. Kipling is arguing that, without a cohesive social dimension to society and a non-material dimension to life, humanity will retreat into sterile isolationism. Without any belief and faith in themselves as social beings, dependent upon other social beings, individuals can only, and will only, react in a violent, animalist way to defend themselves by killing the Other, the Serviles.

There are two recognisable places of resistance to the authority of the A.B.C. The first one occurs at the isolated farm in Illinois where the A.B.C. officers first land, and the second is the market square where the crowd has formed to protest about the Serviles. In both places, ‘Woman’ becomes the focus of resistance. Before I discuss these two instances, I would like to refer to Kipling’s verse ‘The Female of the Species’ written in 1911 and contemporary with the story of the A.B.C.⁵¹ ‘The Female of the Species’ appeared towards the end of the period that saw the rise of the suffragette movement, a series of political and cultural disturbances and growing

⁵¹ I take the text of ‘The Female of the Species’ from Pinney’s *Poems* 2: 1137.

imperial uncertainty, all loosely grouped together as the period of the *fin-de-siècle*. Geoffrey Annis presents a summary of criticism of the verse, from which I take the view that Andrew Lycett and Peter Keating interpret it as an attack on the suffragette movement and Gilbert Frankau as an attack against women generally.⁵² However, I wish to use 'The Female of the Species' specifically, to examine the women figures in the texts selected for this chapter.

Before I discuss Kipling's verse, I refer to Robert Hampson's essay 'Kipling and the Fin-De-Siècle', where he discusses Kipling's *fin-de-siècle* Woman figure in relation to the novel *The Light that Failed*.⁵³ In this work Hampson investigates the relationship between Kipling's figure of male masculinity and the emerging 'New Woman.' He writes that 'the white ruling-class male is positioned as the central reference point of an epistemology built on a system of binary oppositions in which he always occupies the privileged position' (Hampson 13). Hampson continues that, 'in other words, Maisie's separate identity seems to be a threat or a challenge to Dick. Certainly, his 'love' for her tends to express itself as the desire to impose a role upon her' (Hampson 18). What I think Hampson is describing in Kipling's work of 1891 is the recognised colonial relationship of power, of binary relationships and the threat of emerging individuality. In *The Light that Failed*, Maisie is a threat because she is emerging from the stereotype allocated for Women, in 'As Easy as A.B.C.' and 'The Female of the Species' it is the stereotype Woman that poses the threat. Kipling's exterior view of 'Woman' is counterpointed in Chapter Six by examining work in which Kipling presents a much deeper interior view of women.

In 'The Female of the Species' Kipling has turned Woman into a species of fighting machine, appropriately 'armed and engined for the same' (26), as Woman is the custodian for human survival, her whole being designed to be the guarantor of human fertility and survival: 'And to serve that single issue, lest the generations fail, / The female of the species must be deadlier than the male' (27-29). Kipling's Woman, and here I am using the capitalised Woman to denote a special construction,

⁵² Annis, Geoffrey. "The Female of the Species." The Kipling Society. <http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/rg_female1.htm>. Accessed 25 July 2016.

⁵³ For a further discussion of male/female relationships in Kipling see Nagai, Kaori "Kipling and Gender". *The Cambridge Companion to Rudyard Kipling*. Ed. Howard J. Booth. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 66-79.

is a rather strange creature. It (I am deliberately not using she) is a link to the very origins of the human race, a metaphor for the primitive past and the ability of the human race to renew itself. Kipling's Woman is perhaps related to the idea of a noble savage, a creature living, or directly descended from an idealised existence, untainted by modern rationalism and selfishness. Woman is shown as a creature central to humanity for: 'She who faces Death by torture for each life beneath her breast' (29). The fundamental life and death struggle that is at the heart, the very essence of Woman, leaves no room for Man's reason. Where the survival of her own offspring is concerned Woman cannot afford pity: 'May not deal in doubt or pity' (30). She must ensure her own children's survival above all else. Woman is the 'Other Law' (32) – the law of survival. Woman is the embodiment of the fundamental law of existence, that is to ensure the survival of her kind, and that law is above mere reason: 'To some God of Abstract justice—which no woman understands' (48). It is instinctive: 'Her instincts never fail' (51), a direct link to the origins of humankind and the primitive state from which humankind has evolved. Kipling seems to be saying that it is Man's role to use His reason to organise the present and protect Woman: Woman's is to use Her instinct to ensure a future, by protecting the new-born and the yet-to-be-born. Perhaps Kipling's Woman is a metaphor for the will to live, the *élan vital*, the mysterious spirit that drives life forward, and the existence of a state of being that is beyond the material.

Applying this reading to 'As Easy as A.B.C.' places Woman in direct opposition to the rationally organised, modern and ultimately sterile world managed by the A.B.C. In the first encounter between the A.B.C. and the citizens, it is Woman in the shape of the farm girl who reacts against the officials. Firstly, she immobilizes them and then unleashes a big agricultural cultivator onto their grounded airship. The 'vicious machine shot just underneath us, clawing as it went' earns the girl the epithet of a 'nice little spit-kitten' (*Diversity* 9). Woman is antagonistic and spiteful, perhaps, like the powerful torpedo boat, a 'little bitch' and not to be trusted. In the market square where the main crowd has gathered, the Serviles are in imminent danger of being lynched and have to be locked up 'to prevent the women killing 'em' (*Diversity* 19). It is the women who want blood; the men are prepared to find a way out of the impasse. As Kipling puts it in 'The Female of the Species':

Man, a bear in most relations—worm and savage otherwise,—

Man propounds negotiations, Man accepts the compromise.

Very rarely will he squarely push the logic of a fact

To its ultimate conclusion in unmitigated act. (17-20)

Kipling's women of Illinois are not prepared to let the Serviles escape and remain behind as the main crowd disperses: 'These mean business' the Mayor whispered to Takahira. 'There are a goodish few women there who've borne children. I don't like it' (*Diversity* 25). The women become more threatening: 'drawing in towards the prisoners. It reminded one of the stealthy encircling, before the rush in at the quarry, of wolves around round musk-oxen in the North' (*Diversity* 27-8). Kipling's women become ever more dangerous as they group to protect their children, as he writes in 'The Female of the Species': 'Wakened female of the species warring as for spouse and child' (40).

The fertile woman in this society is not the dutiful housewife of the suburban dream but a repository of the last remaining human spirit. Nietzsche's 'will to life' and Bergson's vitalism still burn within these characters or within the few who have the ability (and perhaps a divine duty) to keep the species alive. The Woman speaks for the remainder:

'I don't suppose you men realize how much this--this sort of thing means to a woman. I've borne three. We women don't want our children given to Crowds. It must be an inherited instinct. Crowds make trouble. They bring back the Old Days. Hate, fear, blackmail, publicity. 'The People' – *That! That! That!*' She pointed to the statue and the crowd growled once more. (*Diversity* 29-30)

The Woman's children must be protected from the devouring Crowd and all the agonies and terrors of the past given material shape by the shrouded statue of The Negro in Flames, symbolic of slavery and oppression –*That! That! That!* The tense situation peaks as the Woman draws a knife and goes to cut her own throat, a sacrificial act, that, as Kipling makes clear, is intended to incite the crowd, for 'if that woman had killed herself, they would have killed every Servile and everything related to a Servile throughout the district by nightfall' (*Diversity* 34). The suicide is stopped, the woman is unharmed and the Serviles are saved from being lynched, because 'we can't waste a life like yours on these people' (*Diversity* 31).

The fertile woman, the carrier of the species and the race is too precious lose, and the Serviles are eventually transported away to become harmless entertainment. In this story, the female of the species are the recognisable survivors of the age of primitivism. The women in this story may be ‘violent, hysterical and dishonest’ (Lawson 48), and they may be associated with the trouble, as Jan Montefiore says of the female figures in ‘Mrs Bathurst’, ‘They’ and ‘Wireless’, ‘who without being exactly to blame for the terror or power or grief invoked, [are] somehow implicated in it’ (Montefiore *Kipling* 133), but they are not guilty. The women in this story are most certainly at the heart of the trouble and they, like the men, may have been ‘scared into seclusion and selfishness’ (Lawson 47), but they are acting according to Kipling’s timeless law of survival and carry no guilt.

The Woman in A.B.C. and in ‘The Female of the Species’ remain outside of the machine, at least in terms of their biological role in continuing the human race, and retain what Kipling obviously regards as their innermost identities and drives. They are in marked contrast to the Woman, Mrs. L Embsay, in the war poem ‘The Song of the Lathes’ (1918)

Once I was a woman, but that’s by me.
 All I loved and looked for, it must die with me.
 But the Lord has left me over for a servant of the Judgment,
 And I serve His Judgement here! (34-37)

(*Poems* 2: 1110-1)

Mrs Embsay is a widow, her husband and son killed in war; she works in a munitions factory manufacturing artillery shells, and has been consumed totally by the war machine. Kipling makes her the servant of an avenging God, but in reality she is merely a machine operative, along with the other ‘Seven thousand women keeping quiet in the darkness’ (16), tending the machine of war, and all consumed by it.

Sally Ledger, in her essay ‘The New Woman and the Crisis of Victorianism’, writes of the slipperiness of the New Woman:

The elusive quality of the New Woman of the *fin de siècle* clearly marks her as a problem, as a challenge to the apparently self-identical culture of Victorianism which could

not find a consistent language by which she could be categorized and dealt with. All that was certain was that she was dangerous, a threat to the *status quo*. (Ledger 22-24)

The women in Kipling have something of this quality, no matter how much Kipling tries to reconcile them with the colonial and supposed Victorian norm. Mrs Hauksbee and her circle are something more than just a circle of gossiping, bored mischief-makers living the comfortable life of the colonial elite. They, in their scheming and manipulations and usurpation of power, seem to be questioning the validity of the male colonial enterprise. The native women in 'The Taking of Lungtungpen' laugh in derision at the male soldiers, shorn of the uniform trappings of empire. The degraded women in Letter VIII of 'From Sea to Sea', with its depiction of white women in Hong Kong existing on the margins of prostitution (*StS* 1: 278-87), illustrate the reality of a subaltern existence at the fringes of the colonial enterprise, shattering the concept of the idealised woman and mother of the race, and the women in A.B.C are most certainly a threat to the *status quo* of the dying world in which they live.

Symbolically, Kipling locates the confrontation between the A.B.C., the Serviles, the now redundant local mayor and the crowd of lost individuals in the Old Market. This is a place that predates the crisis, and like the statue of The Negro in Flames placed in it, still has a ghostly reminder of a past world. The narrator does not give any details of the statue, until it is destroyed, but the reader can assume that it evokes a period of suffering and injustice, and is kept shrouded except once a year when it is unveiled. The statue would appear to have a special power, to be part of a ritual that combines its visual presence and the singing of MacDonough's song in a brief symbolic return to the old days of discord and a brutal life (*Diversity* 24). The final act of restoring peace is to destroy the Old Market and the statue, by driving a road-making machine over them or in the brutally unfeeling words of the mayor 'Slag the Nigger before you go on to fuse the market' (*Diversity* 32). Only when the artwork is melting away from the heat of the road-making machine is there a glimpse given of the inscription: 'To the Eternal Memory of the Justice of the People' (*Diversity* 32). Extreme individualism and privacy, it would seem, require the extermination of memory, artistic spirit, and of artefacts that re-ignite old emotions, or indeed any emotion at all.

The spiritual, along with the concept of human interdependency, has been eliminated from the world of the ordinary inhabitants. There is no spiritual dimension and there is no 'folk.' Death has been postponed (*Diversity* 34), but not completely eliminated, and contact with the spiritual, in any of its forms, has been lost in a culture of unremitting materialism and rationalism. 'God', however, still maintains a symbolic presence in the speech of the elite (*Diversity* 5). Even the aesthetic power of 'art', to kindle an emotional or spiritual response, is feared. In this world, the vulgar, gross but ultimately fertile and regenerative world of Bakhtin's folk carnival has been sanitised and eliminated. The potential to regenerate society from the restless, ill informed, vitality, fertility and inclusiveness of the plebeian world has been lost, and the world is slowly dying in a materialist post-cataclysmic society.

The A.B.C. has to deploy its arsenal of force fields and sensory-deprivation weapons to pacify the crowd before dispatching the Serviles to become entertainment in London, rather like peoples from the colonies were at the great imperial exhibitions. Kipling's description of the new technological weapons of the A.B.C. is striking:

We saw, we heard, but I think we were in some sort swooning. The two hundred and fifty beams shifted, re-formed, straddled and split, narrowed, widened, rippled in ribbons, broke into a thousand white-hot parallel lines, melted and revolved in interwoven rings like old-fashioned engine-turning, flung up to the zenith, made as if to descend and renew the torment, halted at the last instant, twizzled insanely round the horizon, and vanished, to bring back for a hundredth time darkness more shattering than their instantly renewed light over all Illinois. Then the tune and lights ceased together, and we heard one single devastating wail that shook all the horizon as a rubbed wet finger shakes the rim of a bowl. (*Diversity* 15)

There is in this, a sense of pleasure in power, the ability to use power to manipulate people. Perhaps Kipling is visualising a human-made *aurora borealis*, the result of immense energy released by the collision between the solar wind and the high

altitude atmosphere. Kipling's lights and sounds are a cataclysmic event, a recreation of the birth of the world, or the intervention of the spirit world into the physical. The officers of the A.B.C. are playing God, conjuring up demonic spirits to subdue the populace, but they are not God: their power is only a mask which serves to disguise the sterility of the world they manage. Kipling must have enjoyed writing that passage. It demonstrates the sublime nature of great force, but ultimately, that power is useless. It cannot renew humanity, and in that sense, it demonstrates that power, and the love of power, is itself sterile. The Serviles are saved from physical death but are destined to be exhibited in a theatre, a place where otherness can be controlled and transformed from a spectral presence into a harmless, commoditised, banal entertainment. Carlyle's heroic elite of the A.B.C. are not tyrannical monsters, but in default of public participation are world 'managers', maintaining and improving the World system in the interests of unimpeded traffic flow. In this story, human development has ceased, and America, which to the Kipling of 1888 seemed to offer so much opportunity for development into a new metropole, has collapsed. There is an inverted sense of development in this story. Modernity, so evident to Kipling in his early travel letters, has destroyed itself, and modern systemisation has become so powerful that it has consumed human vitality.

The final scene of the story has the hapless Serviles looking out of the airship down on London where there were:

Three million people spread out at ease inside her ring of girdling Main-Traffic lights [...] [and] Leopold Vincent's new company looked, with pale faces, at the silence, the size, and the separated houses.

Then some began to weep aloud, shamelessly – always without shame.

(*Diversity* 42)

Kipling does not offer an explanation why they wept. Are they weeping because of the damage that ill-judged 'democracy' has wrought on the world or because the world has lost its humanity? And where does the shame lie? In the Serviles and democracy, or the frightened weak people who refuse to live as humans should and take the world back from the machine? Kipling has produced a world which is

materially rich but is spiritless; where the incongruous and the out of place are ruthlessly suppressed; and the incongruity is the fertile woman. In an extreme form, he posits two views of the world: one is a democratic, socialist chaotic nightmare; the other a collection of materially rich individuals who refuse to interact with each other or take any responsibility for the larger society. In both cases, disaster is inevitable, either from war and violence or from extinction due to sterility and a falling birth rate. The magical craftsman, who is able to insert 'a thousandth of an inch to give us play' in the machine to prevent breakdown, is absent (*Poems 2*: 941).

Finally, I wish to return to 'Mrs Bathurst' which I read as a narrative of loss, in which the character Mrs Bathurst is a spiritual presence, an excess, compensating for the loss of human spirit consumed by the machine. She has a special property, 'It', and that is what the men who meet her never forget (*Traffics 352*). She seemingly haunts the men and appears to them through the machine of the cinematograph, walking towards the audience and announcing her presence by the clicking of Vickery's teeth. All of this is the routine of the séance that the men sitting in the dreamy, cool, sheltered space of the railway van, unwittingly conduct, while consuming their magical drink of Bass beer. In 'Mrs Bathurst' spiritualism forms a framework through which the spiritual is approached but contributes no more than that. The men living rigidly deterministic lives within the machine of empire become enmeshed with the spiritual world that Mrs Bathurst symbolises. She becomes a haunting that challenges the organised *sane* world of the men. She is that machine world's Other, the binary complement to the deterministic and ultimately empty world of the men. The Other that destabilises and destroys the world of the material, except that both she and Vickery die while following the symbolic railway machine of empire in an attempt to escape to a new life. Freedom and survival, Kipling implies, exist not outside of the system but inside it, by seeking out the incongruities and empty spaces within it. The tragedy depicted in 'As Easy as A.B.C.' is that the world is full of empty spaces, but incongruity and the special space of the jest has ceased to exist, and there is no one to seek and colonise these empty spaces.

Chapter Four: The Colonial Stereotype

Introduction

In this chapter I explore the development of the late Victorian colonial stereotype from its origins in a mercantile empire, to its maturity in a world of Victorian capitalism and imperialism, and finally to some of the energies undermining it. This is essentially a theory chapter to establish a foundation for my discussion in Chapter Five of the Kipling figure of Hurree Chunder Mookerjee.

I take two opposing views of the colonial stereotype. The first is that the colonial stereotype is a manufactured commodity, a product of the capitalist machine and effectively an example of the attempted suppression of the human spirit by a manufactured item. The second, in line with Homi Bhabha's arguments, is that it is a psychological construct. Bhabha views the stereotype as 'a complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation, as anxious as it is assertive' (Bhabha 100). Bhabha's stereotype is simultaneously ambivalent, knowable, and menacing. It is truly some kind of monster, a phantom with no definable form, neither human nor beast, white nor black. What I attempt to do is to give the stereotype a more realizable form by examining how it comes about, what is its interior life and finally how does it die. I do this by considering the stereotype as a Marxian commodity, a thing made by the machine of Victorian systemisation.

Origins of the stereotype and its development

The colonial stereotype is a strange and disturbing figure; in some cases it represents the very lowest level of colonial society, for example the Irish 'Paddy', the American plantation 'Coon', or the Chinese 'Pigtail'. In other cases, it occupies an anomalous position midway in that hierarchy, as in the Indian 'Babu'. In general we can only see the exterior of that stereotype and, most often in Western literature, how it appears to the classes who have created it.

The late-colonial stereotype did not appear spontaneously; rather it was a construct that changed over time and reflected particular historical moments. In the

context of the ‘effeminate Bengali Babu’, Mrinalini Sinha argues that it ‘was substantially modified to respond to the political and economic shifts of the last quarter of the nineteenth century’ (Sinha 14). One factor in Sinha’s ‘political and economic shifts’, was undoubtedly the expansion of western capitalist economic activity and the changing relationship between the industrialised metropole and the periphery, from a mercantile into a colonial and later an imperial relationship.

Capitalism was a force, perhaps a form of hidden law that operated and shaped the West, and through forms of colonialism and imperialism influenced the whole world. A process that Neil Lazarus argues continues today (Lazarus 15-17). Benita Parry argues that capitalism in its modern camouflage of globalisation remains relevant to postcolonial criticism (Parry, *Postcolonial Studies*), an argument also followed by Crystal Bartolovich and Neil Lazarus. The tension that has arisen between the classical Marxist theory of capitalism and modern postcolonial theory is addressed by E. San Juan, Jr. where he advances a plea that Marxism, or more specifically the power of capitalism should not be ignored by postcolonial critics. He writes that:

It might be instructive to note that the charge of Euro-centrism levelled against Marx does not permit a nuanced and rigorous appraisal of his critique of bourgeois thought and practice, or distinguish the nature of capitalist modernity as a specific epochal form, one which is constituted by the complex, uneven relation between colonizer and colonized. (San Juan 229)

In my discussion and reading of Kipling’s Babu figure in Chapter Five, it is precisely the dynamic of ‘bourgeois thought and practice’ that assumes prominence and is a source of conflict between the Anglo–Indian coloniser and a newly reconstituted and rapidly developing Indian middle class.

Marx, citing the introduction of railways into India, claims that capitalism is a force for change. Marx visualises the railways as an agent of capital, operating as a mechanism that will unite the ‘stereotype and disconnected atoms’ of colonial Indian communities (Marx and Engels 84). However, he dismisses this as a benevolent act by the colonial master; indeed he predicts further misery but ultimately material progress:

All the English bourgeoisie may be forced to do will neither emancipate nor materially mend the social conditions of the mass of the people, depending not only on the development of the productive powers, but on their appropriation by the people. But what it will not fail to do is to lay down the material premise for both. Has the bourgeoisie ever done more? Has it ever effected a progress without dragging individuals and peoples through blood and dirt, misery and degradation? (Marx and Engels 85)

Marx argues that machines (in this case railways) introduced by the coloniser to increase their trade and profit at the expense of the colonised land would, eventually, lead to an improvement in that colonised land, *even* if that was not the coloniser's intention. In Marx's view, once the forces of capitalism are released then they become uncontrollable, obeying a set of natural laws which do not take account of politics or indeed postcolonial theory. Rather, the political and social narratives become influenced and subject to the effects of capitalism.

Capitalism was not necessarily the single unifying force that one might expect. As Manu Goswami writes:

Although colonial practices incorporated subaltern classes into the universalized social relations entailed in commodity production for the world market, they also at the same time objectified bound particular social groups in a territorial and social particularity. The homogeneity towards which colonial and economic practices tended contained their own negation in the form of intensified differentiation and unevenness. (Goswami 64)

The view taken from Goswami's analysis, is that, as Marx argued, capitalism, as it developed through colonial economic practice, produced uneven development that not only differentiated between the metropole and the colony but also within those separate spaces.

The relationships between late-Victorian imperialism, capitalism and Orientalism are explored by Mrinalini Sinha in the context of the emergence of the 'effeminate Bengali'. She writes that modern imperialism 'was an integral part of the

historical contradictions in the development of capitalism and the modern' (Sinha 13).⁵⁴ The interpretation taken in this thesis is that the late-Victorian colonial stereotype was one product of the 'historical contradictions' highlighted by Sinha. Effectively, it became a constructed sign of a commodity that reduced the complexity of a living entity to an easily categorized emasculated sterile creature. In this interpretation, the construction of a stereotype is an act of power; it signifies the authority to construct and to map out the sphere of activity of another human being. The stereotype also becomes, as Bhabha argues and I discuss later in this chapter, a spectral haunting, an indefinable thing that challenges the authority that brought it into being. Assuming that the stereotype emerges out of a pool of knowledge, however mistaken, inaccurate or intentionally biased, then Edward Said's comments on the construction of the Occidental pool of knowledge constituting the Orient becomes relevant:

The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony, and is quite accurately indicated in the title of K. M. Panikkar's classic *Asia and Western Dominance*. The Orient was Orientalized not only because it was discovered to be 'Oriental' in all those ways considered commonplace by an average nineteenth-century European, but also because it could be—that is, submitted to being—*made* Oriental. (Said, *Orientalism*, 5-6)

In this interpretation the late-colonial stereotype is one product of this pool of knowledge, a figure that has been created by one culture to define or encapsulate the properties of another. In that sense, it becomes a figure of power and simultaneously a symbol of loss. Conversely, in Bhabha's ghostly incarnation, it can become a figure of menace (Bhabha 126).

⁵⁴ See also: Schumpeter, Joseph. *Imperialism and Social Class*. Tran. Heinz Norden. Ed. Paul Sweezy. New York: Augustus M. Kelly. Inc, 1951.

The Colonial Indian Babu

The meaning of the term Babu, as used by the Anglo–Indians in India, changed from early use as an honorific into a term of mockery, especially when applied to the Bengali.⁵⁵ The standard Anglo–Indian dictionary of colloquial Anglo–Indian words, Henry Yule’s *Hobson Jobson* provides a short introduction:

Properly a term of respect attached to a name like *Master* or *Mr.*, and formerly in some parts of Hindustan applied to certain persons of distinction. Its application as a term of respect is now almost or altogether confined to Lower Bengal (though C.P. Brown states that it is also used in S. India for ‘Sir, My Lord, your Honour’). In Bengal and elsewhere, among Anglo–Indians, it is often used with a slight savor of disparagement, as characterizing a superficially cultivated, but too often effeminate, Bengali. (Yule 44)

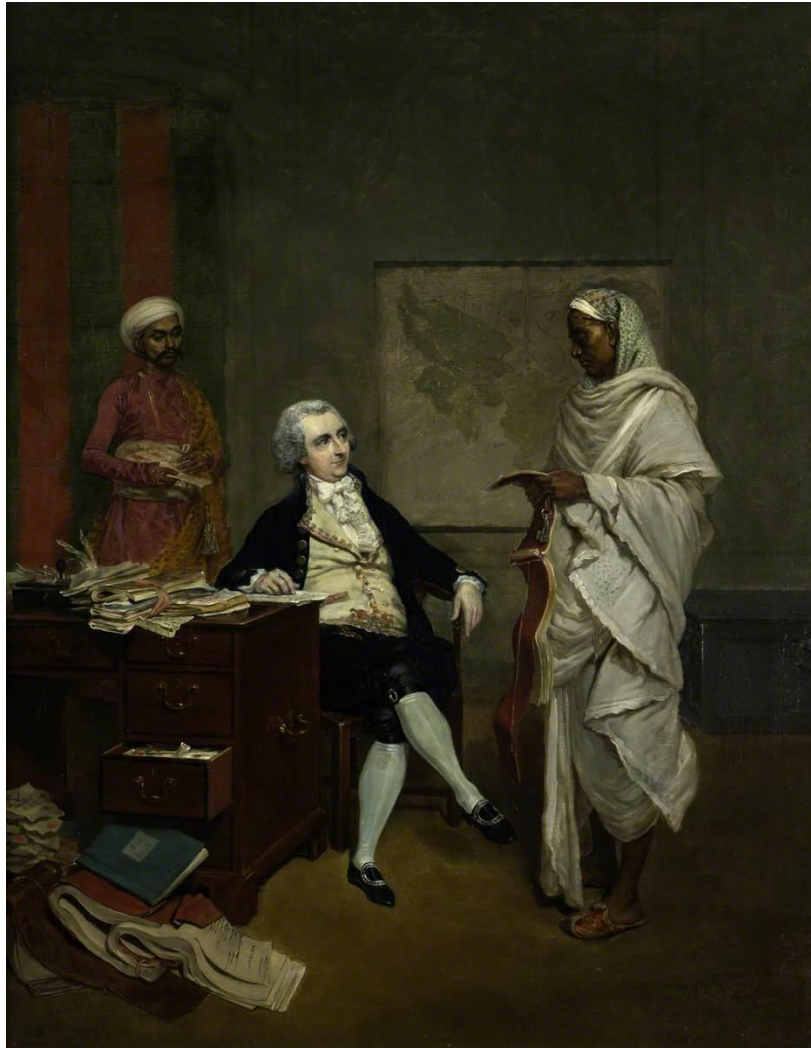
They add that, Babu is also used to indicate ‘a native clerk who writes in English’ (Yule 44). The term ‘Babu’, used in this thesis, applies to the colonial stereotype constructed by the Anglo–Indian, and is approached through the view that this was a particular construct that arose in a particular historical setting, which in the context of Kipling would be the approximate period between the 1860s and the early 1900s. This historical particularity is important, for the Babu stereotype was not a stable construction: it morphed from a comical figure that could be ridiculed into submission into the later nationalist and independence fighter, just as the laughable Paddy figure changed into the Fenian Irish Republican.

The Indian Babu stereotype was a middle–class figure, the product of developing modernity. The Babu was not an ‘Englishman’, neither was the Babu the degenerate bestial figure of the Paddy, but rather something else who seemingly posed an indefinable threat to colonial mission. Significantly, perhaps, the colonisers had to work alongside the Babu and were dependent upon him, while the Paddy and the other figures I have mentioned, remained subservient. I argue that the Babu stereotype was as much a product of capitalism, acting through the machine of

⁵⁵ Babu is frequently spelt as Baboo in colonial texts.

empire, just as much as it was a figure of colonial angst. I begin the argument by briefly tracing the development of English representations of educated Indians into the Babu stereotype, from the early days of the British East India Company, up to Kipling's time in India in the late 1880s. From the earliest contact, the British were always dependent upon Indian assistance – initially with finance and to establish trade contacts, then to understand and record the system of law and land ownership. Finally, they had to administer the accumulated territories and to run the many organisations such as the telegraph, the post, taxation and local government that developed and expanded under the Raj. The native intermediary therefore became a critical node in the system of empire.

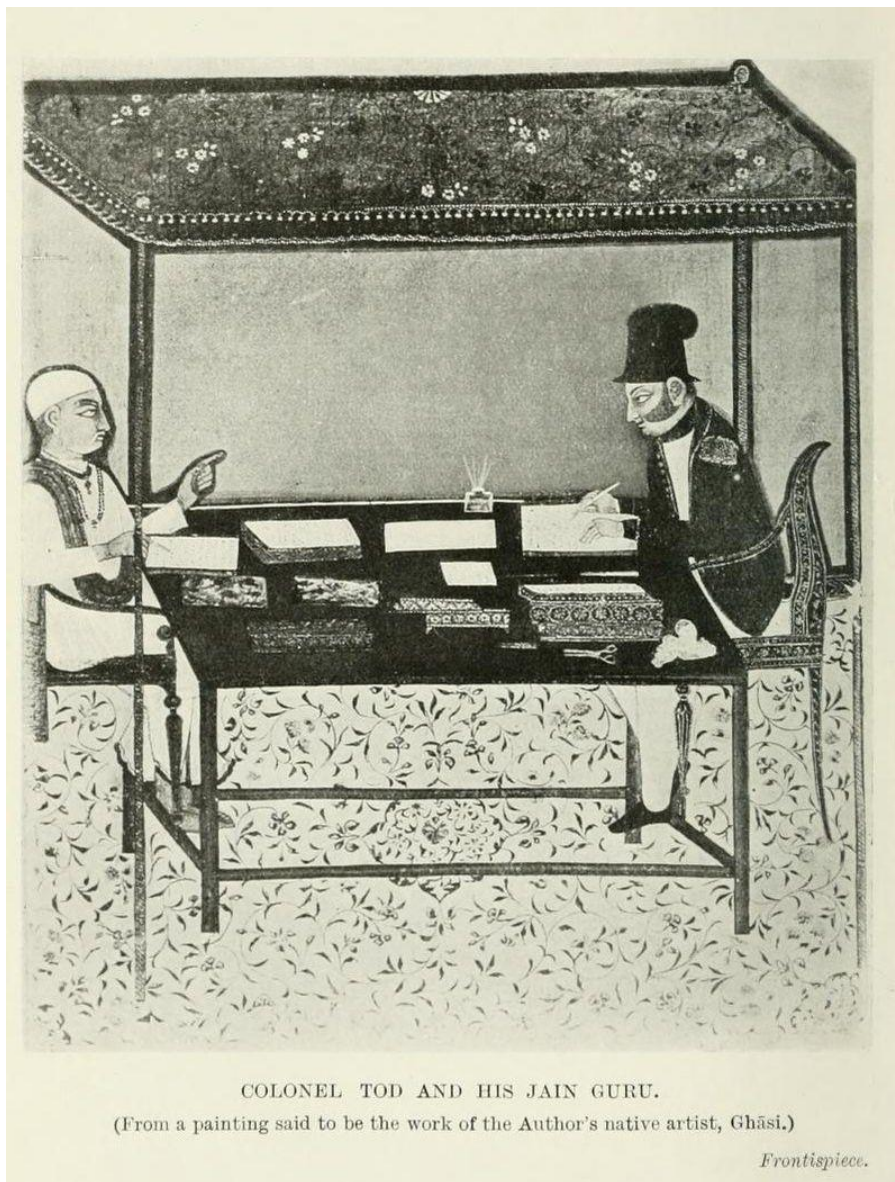
The first instance of the Indian mediator that I consider is the portrait of John Mowbray dated c. 1790 and attributed to Thomas Hickey. In this portrait, Mowbray is sitting at the desk, which is in disorder with papers piled on top and ledgers spilling onto the floor. The company's business appears to be in disarray and possibly Mowbray has been sent out from London to restore order. Mowbray is in charge: he is sitting and listening, calm and relaxed, while the standing Banian (money agent) is talking. Another figure is standing attentively by, ready to implement Mowbray's instructions. Mowbray is formally dressed in European attire and the native figures are depicted in high quality Indian robes: the scene could be part of any eighteenth-century English gentleman's estate, where the gentleman owner is discussing business with his estate servants, such as the steward or lawyer. The standing figures are servants, part of the natural order, inferior in social rank to the gentleman but respectable, and not to be treated in a derisory fashion.



John Mowbray Calcutta Merchant c1780

<<http://artuk.org/discover/artworks/john-mowbray-calcutta-merchant-191016>>.

The second instance is taken from the early 1800s, most probably the period 1818 to 1822, when James Tod was appointed as Political Agent for a number of states in Rajputana (modern Rājasthān). It is used as the frontispiece to the 1920 edition of Volume III of the Humphrey Milford edition of James Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han or the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*. The illustration shows the developing relationship between the East India Company's incoming officers and the established native Indian administrators, as the



engagement between them changed from mercantile to colonial. The picture is attributed to the Indian court artist Ghasi and shows a different perspective to the previous example of Mowbray.

Both James Tod and the Jain Guru are equal in status, they are seated at the same table, surrounded with the paraphernalia of administrative bureaucracy, pens, papers, ledgers etc., and both are shaded from the heat of the sun by a canopy. The epaulettes on the shoulders of Tod's coat and the suggestion of braiding to the front, coupled with the high stock to the neck, indicate that Tod is shown in his company uniform. The Englishman is not now an elegantly dressed English milord, but a uniformed servant of the company, a corporate employee and an agent of capital.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ During Tod's appointments to the West Rajput States, between 1818 and 1822, government revenues increased significantly. <http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/rg_marque_tod.htm>. Accessed 3 March 2017.

In the picture, both Tod and the Jain Guru are seated at the same table and as Ghasi was employed by Tod at the time, the equality of status suggested by the picture must have been agreeable to Tod (Talbot 192).

Moir and Zastoupil, citing Bayly *Empire and Information*, argue that the incoming British administrators of the East India Company were dependent upon the co-operation of the Indian literate class and local administrators. They write:

Crucial intermediaries in this process were the munshis, or the community of writers whom Bayly demonstrates played such an important role both in the pre-colonial ecumene and the early colonial period. [...] The munshis were desperately needed by the British as they manoeuvred their way through diplomatic exchanges and political intrigues in their rise to power. For their part, the munshis saw themselves as educating their British employers and thus keeping alive the political culture of which they were the guardians. (Moir and Zastoupil 2)

This is the process that seems to be depicted in Ghasi's painting. Tod is in the process of recording in his book some information given to him by the Guru.⁵⁷ Notice the symbolism of Guru's pointed finger and the emphasis given to Tod's ear by the artist. It is as if the Guru is teaching Tod the intricacies of the region's history or administration. This dependence upon local knowledge is identified by Cynthia Talbot. She writes:

Since his [Tod's] access to the history of the region was so heavily mediated by local scholars and assistants, it was inevitable that Tod's perspective on Rajput history would bear their imprint. (Talbot 192)

Clearly from the artist's perception, the Guru is in charge and the company officer is doing what the experienced native Indian administrator is instructing him to do, as if they are partners in a new enterprise.

The partnership depicted by Ghasi in administering what already existed was, however, under threat. Thomas Metcalf describes in some detail the development of a set of codified governing principles of law and the process that the British

⁵⁷ The text is identified by Talbot as the poem *Prthvīrāj Rāso* and the native figure "Gynachandra, a Jain yati or lay cleric." (Talbot, 192)

undertook to understand existing laws and land rights in upper Bengal. Metcalf writes that, by the end of Lord Cornwallis's years as Governor-General (1786-93), these were formulated, but 'for the most part [...] were drawn from their own [British] society, and included the security of private property, the rule of law, and the idea of 'improvement' (Metcalf 17). Cornwallis's administration's avowed objective was to increase government revenue by improving the agrarian productivity of Bengal. It engineered a permanent settlement of land, where the existing tax gatherers (the zamindar) were converted into a property-owning class with the object 'to provide capital for land improvement and to kick-start an agrarian revolution in Bengal' (Metcalf 21). The initiative failed, because, according to Metcalf, 'a significant number of zamindars became *rentiers*, residing in Calcutta and extracting exploitive rents from their tenantry' (Metcalf 21). The failure rankled, and Cornwallis announced that 'Every native of Hindustan, I verily believe, is corrupt' (Metcalf 24). The disconnection between the incoming British, eager to increase the capital value of the newly acquired territories by reforming and 'improving' in the best enlightenment tradition, and a long-established civilisation with deeply entrenched customs and usage, was not just confined to material issues, it extended to spiritual values as well. Metcalf quotes Alfred Lyall:

We can scarcely comprehend, he wrote, 'an ancient religion, still alive and powerful, which is a merely troubled sea, without shore or visible horizon, driven to and fro by the winds of boundless credulity and grotesque invention. (Metcalf 136)

Lyall is articulating a collision between cultures, where the ontology of each is so different to the other that understanding becomes impossible, as if Lyall's orderly Christian world looks out into a sea of chaos and recoils in horror.

The solution would seem to lie in the reinvention of the munshis, the intermediaries who could administer India for the British in the British way, as the often quoted 1835 minute of Macaulay expresses it:

In one point I fully agree with the Gentlemen to whose general views I am opposed. I feel with them that it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our

best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern[–]a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of this Country. To enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population. (Moir and Zastoupil 171)

Macaulay's minute was not spontaneous, but the result of a long-standing debate about Indian education. It revolved around the question of continuing with the practice of classical education in both Islamic and Hindu traditions, first initiated by Warren Hastings in 1781, or the introduction of a Western-based curriculum focused around literature, maths and science. Both sides had supporters. For example, the prominent Hindu Rammohun Roy argued in 1823 for a reformed education policy that would enable Indian students to acquire modern Western scientific learning:

If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British legislature. But as the Improvement of the native population is the object of the government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction; embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy, with other useful sciences, which may be accomplished with the sum proposed by employing a few gentlemen of talents and learning educated in Europe, and providing a college furnished with the necessary books, instruments, and other apparatus. (Moir and Zastoupil 113)

Roy's letter pleads for an increase in knowledge throughout India, knowledge that can only be obtained from the West, from the 'present rulers of India' (Moir and Zastoupil 111), and protests against the establishment of 'a Sanskrit school under Hindu pundits, to impart such knowledge as currently exists in India' (Moir and Zastoupil 111). This thirst for desperately longed-for knowledge is what Macaulay is responding to, and, in so doing, he cites the case that Indians voluntarily pay for English education but have to be paid a stipend to study the classical curriculum (Moir and Zastoupil 168).

Macaulay concludes in a conciliatory tone:

I would strictly respect all existing interests. I would deal even generously with all individuals who have had fair reason to expect it a pecuniary provision. But I would strike at the root of the bad system which has hitherto been fostered by us. I would at once stop the printing of Arabic and Sanscrit books. I would abolish the Mudrassa and the Sanscrit College at Calcutta. Benares is the great seat of Brahminical learning; Delhi of Arabic learning. If we retain the Sanscrit College at Benares and the Mahometan College at Delhi, we do enough and much more than enough in my opinion, for the Eastern languages. If the Benares and Delhi Colleges should be retained, I would at least recommend that no stipends shall be given to any students who may hereafter repair thither, but that the people shall be left to make their own choice between the rival systems of education without being bribed by us to learn what they have no desire to know. The funds which would thus be placed at our disposal would enable us to give larger encouragement to the Hindoo College at Calcutta, and establish in the principal cities throughout the Presidencies of Fort William and Agra schools in which the English language might be well and thoroughly taught. (Moir and Zastoupil 172)

And so it was eventually implemented and Macaulay's minute (which in Moir and Zastoupil runs to eleven pages) signals the opening of an intensified effort to

produce compliant Indian-born, but western-educated, administrators to serve the colonial machine. These, western educated, elite men, initially assisted the Anglo-Indian colonial officer. Later they competed against them for positions within the Indian Civil Service when it was tentatively opened up to competition entries in 1855. This competition posed a threat. As Anindyo Roy says, they became the ‘competition *baboo*’ – the educated Indian vying for the same privileges promised to the British colonizer’ (Roy, *Civility and Empire*, 2).⁵⁸

Macaulay’s scheme was intended to produce subservient labour to service the machine of empire, but, from the written material of Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Nazir Ahmad and Wilayat Ali Kidwai, discussed later in Chapter Five, it becomes very apparent that something far more complex and different emerged.⁵⁹ Macaulay’s minute produced men who were educated in the western mode, who dressed in western fashions and who spoke English with Indian accents. It also, according to Roy, posed a threat to its colonial originators in the ‘growing disaffection among the educated classes of Indians’, while it also introduced ‘unpredictability’ (Roy, *Civility and Empire*, 3). Perhaps, from the Anglo-Indian viewpoint, the threat that arose from Anindyo Roy’s ‘unpredictability’ was something similar to Bhabha’s ‘ambivalence’ or T. J. Clark’s ‘contingency’.

Finally, I take an example that illustrates a collapse in colonial confidence following the violence of 1857. Following his father – James Mill, John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) joined the East India Company in 1823, becoming a colonial administrator. He worked in the Company Political Department, finally becoming the Examiner for Indian Correspondence in 1856, remaining with the Company until its abolishment in 1858. During his time within the Company, Mill never visited India. Rather he relied upon company correspondence between India and England for his information. At the end of his career, following the Rebellion of 1857, Mill involved himself in the process of transferring authority in India to the British Government, and one element of this was an attempt to influence the future direction of British involvement in India. In the introduction to Mill’s *Writings on India*, Martin Moir notes that Mill’s ‘A President in Council’ was ‘published as [an] anonymous pamphlet designed to influence public opinion during the crucial Parliamentary debate

⁵⁸ See also G. O. Trevelyan’s *The Competition Wallah* (1868).

⁵⁹ Bankim Chandra Chatterji is, where appropriate, abbreviated in the text to Bankim. His novel *Ānandamaṭh, Or, the Sacred Brotherhood* is referenced in the bibliography by its author’s published name of Chatterji, Bankim Chandra.

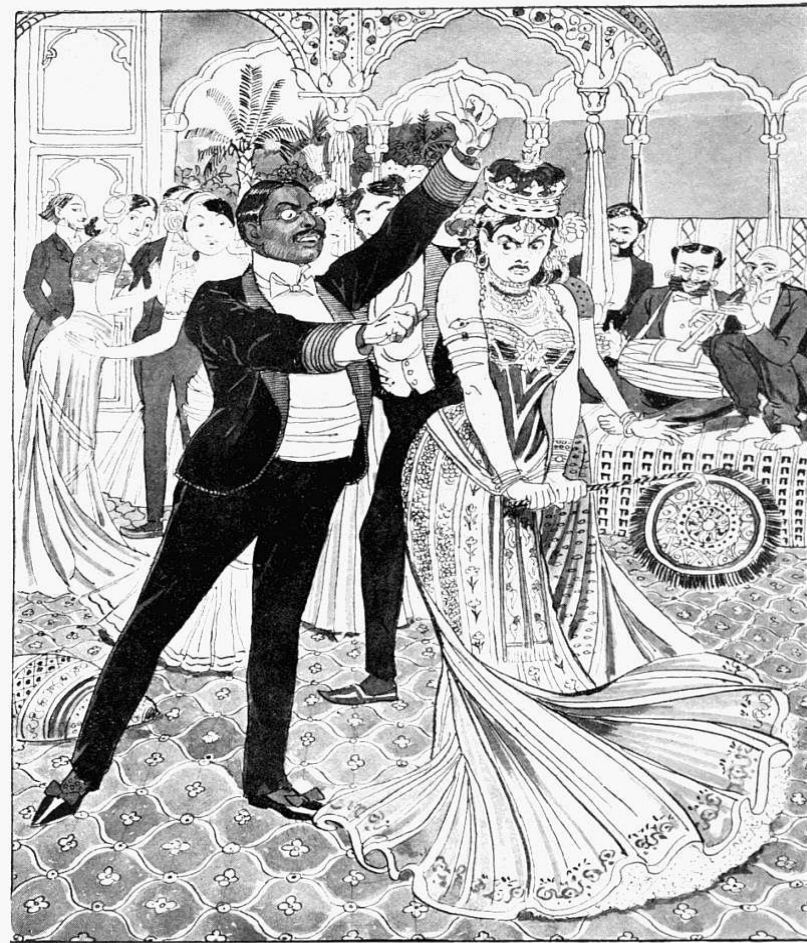
of 1858.’ (Mill, *Writings on India*, xl). An editorial note to the text states that it was first published in London by Penny in 1858 (Mill, *Writings on India*, 200).

The question is, in what manner Great Britain can best provide for the government, not of three or four millions of English colonists, but of 150 millions of Asiatics, who cannot be trusted to govern themselves. This is evidently a far more difficult task, than the one which the British nation acknowledges itself to have failed in. It is not likely that the very plan which has failed everywhere else, should be perfectly sufficient and satisfactory in the case in which the difficulties are the greatest. One would say, even before the subject is considered, that if success can be attained in such a case, it must be by some arrangement much more carefully and nicely adapted for the purpose. (Mill, *Writings on India*, 201)

The Asiatics of India ‘cannot be trusted to govern themselves’ suggests that the relationship of equality and trust between the British and the Indian depicted by Ghasi had broken down. In summary, then, I approach the emergence of the late - Victorian colonial Babu stereotype from the origins of the distrust of Cornwallis and Mill, the bafflement of Lyall, the reforming zeal of Macaulay, and the desire of intelligent Indians for Western ‘scientific’ knowledge, compounded with Anglo-Indian recognition of an emerging threat.

The final illustration of the Babu construct is taken from the frontispiece of F. Anstey’s *A Bayard from Bengal* (1902), and in this, the educated Babu, has been moved from India to the urban setting of Pembridge Square, Bayswater, but everything is confused and misplaced. On the reverse side of the illustration, Anstey provides some explanatory notes. The woman, apparently a Duchess, is inappropriately crowned, the Indian Babu has broken etiquette by wearing a smoking jacket, and the musicians, who have removed their shoes and socks, are playing Indian instruments. It is as though India is taking over England, changing the appearance of men and women, and, through the decor of the room, England itself. Anstey uses his character, Hurry Bungsho Jabberjee B.A., to critique the illustration, and, in the process, transcribes the illustrator, Bernard Partridge, as Bernadhur

Pahtridhji (Anstey, *Bayard*, Frontispiece). It would appear as though the process of colonisation has been reversed, thoroughly confusing England and India, to produce what might be termed an example of ‘the monstrous hybridism of East and West’ (*Kim* 239). Anstey often has the Babu figure placed in some ridiculous relationship with an English woman which perhaps reveals a sexual as well as more general anxiety. Comparisons with Fanon’s mimic man are all too obvious and Anstey’s figures are deliberately set up to appear ridiculous in their attempts to be more English than the English themselves. Anstey’s work was marketed as comic, and perhaps it was intended to be just that, without malice, but the reoccurring racial overtones and a lack of any sympathy towards the English–educated figure, caught between two worlds, suggests otherwise. Arthur Koestler’s observation that the comic must contain an element of malice and aggression is worth considering in Anstey’s case (Koestler 115). What the illustration does show very well is the Babu as a bright, shiny manufactured item that is defined by external appearance and newness.



EXHORTED HER, WITH AN ELOQUENCE THAT MOVED ALL PRESENT,
TO ABANDON HER FRIVOLITIES AND LEVITIES

Anstey, *Bayard*, Frontispiece

Anstey's Babu, is a modern thing, incongruous and out of place and it is productive to view Anstey's caricatures in the context of a manufactured commodity. The colonial stereotype is not a natural thing. If it is something other than Bhabha's elusive spectre, having a graspable form or shape, it has to be made, and, in my view it is made by the machine of imperialism. That is not to say that the stereotype is simplistically material, for as Marx writes:

The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists therefore simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men's own labour as objective characteristics of the produce of labour themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things. Hence it also reflects the social relation of the producers to the sum total of labour

as a social relation between objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers. Through this substitution, the products of labour become commodities, sensuous things which are at the same time suprasensible or social. (Marx, *Capital*, 165)

Marx argues that the commodity, that endlessly repeated and traded object that I view the colonial stereotype as, reflects the labour of the producers. The colonial stereotype therefore reflects the coloniser, and in some way the Indian Babu and the Irish Paddy reflect the Anglo-Indian officer and the Anglo-Irish settler, respectively. Similarly, in a mysterious way, the manufactured colonial stereotype becomes, as Marx writes of the commodity form, a ‘sensuous thing [...] [that is] at the same time suprasensible or social’ (Marx, *Capital*, 165). Marx’s formulation is similar to Bhabha’s idea of the elusive spiritual presence of the stereotype, in that within it, there is a hidden form of creativity and of life.

One aspect of the slipperiness of the colonial stereotype is the language attributed to the stereotype. By this, I do not mean the natural speech patterns and language of the human beings that were categorized by the stereotype construct, but the language given to them by the external observer, and used as part of the stereotyping. Anstey, for example, uses an imagined form of ‘Babu English’ to parody the educated Bengali, and to reinforce the colonial Babu stereotype:

To the highly educated native gentleman who searches your printed articles, hoping fondly to find himself in a well of English pure and undefiled, it proves merely to fish in the air. Conceive, Sir, the disgustful result to one saturated to the skin of his teeth in best English masterpieces of immaculate and moderately good prose extracts and dramatic passages, published with notes for the use of the native student, at weltering in a hotchpot and hurley-burley of arbitrarily distorted and very vulgarised cockneydoms and purely London provincialities, which must be of necessity to him as casting pearls before a swine! (Anstey, *Baboo Hurry Bungsho Jabberjee, B.A.*, 1)

Anstey (also Kipling, Conrad and other writers) speak the high language of literature and, therefore, what they represent is an imagined stereotype language. As in Marx's commodity, what appears in this manufactured stylised language is a reflection, not only of the stereotype commodity, but of the author and the system that manufactured it.

In his essay 'Sly Civility', Bhabha discusses the claims of J.S. Mill for the civility of British government in India, founded upon a system of extended recordation of the 'the spirited sound of the *vox populi*' conducting a civil debate (Bhabha 134). But only those who could, or choose to, speak and write in a common language could be part of that civility and the hegemony that a common civil space implies. Bhabha claims that the authority of the colonizer is threatened because of the ambivalence of its address, both as 'father or oppressor' (Bhabha 138). He continues that, 'in the native's refusal to satisfy the colonizer's narrative demand, we hear the voices of Freud's sabre rattling strangers' (Bhabha 141). Language for Bhabha defines the limits of the civil state and hegemony, and, if this interpretation is applied to the idea of a manufactured stereotype language, it puts the stereotype outside of civility and the assumption of hegemony, or at least that civility that does not speak the stereotype language. Anindyo Roy writes that:

In the nineteenth century, civility was regarded as an unalienable part of the definition of a 'gentlemanly' character. 'Language' and 'civility' were tied through a shared space: both relied upon hierarchies that invested individuals with different kinds of social and cultural authority. (Roy, *Civility and Empire*, 6)

In Roy's example, language positions the individual within a given society. As Roy says, 'the *baboo*'s flagrant disregard for the norms of linguistic civility' (Roy, *Civility and Empire*, 5) with his 'hybrid and aberrant form of English' (Roy, *Civility and Empire*, 4) places him outside of civil society and, I add, at least that of the civil society of the colonizer. Problematically perhaps, language raises the question of the status of Kipling's Irish soldiers, characterized by Mulvaney's Oirishisms, in 'The Taking of Lungtungpen'. As Bhabha might argue, it introduces ambivalence. It is debatable whether Kipling's linguist power imprisons the soldiers into the Irish or

cockney stereotypes, or whether, rather like Shakespeare's Fluellen in Henry V, it establishes them as individuals within the wider civil society.

Bhabha's complexity of the stereotype

Homi Bhabha views the colonial stereotype as a psychological figure rather than a Marxian commodity. He comments upon the fetish nature of the stereotype which constantly occurs in colonial discourse and 'gives access to an 'identity', which is predicated as much on mastery and pleasure as it is on anxiety and defence' (Bhabha 107). This identity is not the single identity of the object – the Babu – but also the identity of the observer: 'for it is a form of multiple and contradictory belief in its recognition of difference and disavowal of it' (Bhabha 107). That is, the stereotype is what I am not or, at least, the stereotype is what I think I am not, for the ambivalence in the stereotype renders proof impossible (Bhabha 95). Ambivalence, Bhabha claims, gives the stereotype its currency, allowing it to re-circulate, and produce a probabilistic truth that is in excess of what can be empirically proved or logically construed. Bhabha's ambivalence promotes movement, and movement signifies life, for, if the figure was totally fixed and really knowable, then it would not constantly reappear, and, in a similar way as the fact that the earth revolves around the sun, it would simply rest in a space of known facts. According to Bhabha, the stereotype is an 'ambivalent mode of knowledge', and it 'unfixes' fixed colonial identities' (Bhabha 95) by its ambivalence, disturbing fixed relationships and interpretations. So Bhabha's stereotype is a powerful figure. It not only represents a space of movement and unstable identities, but also:

A scene of fetishism [that] is also the scene of reactivation and repetition of primal fantasy – the subject's desire for a pure origin that is always threatened by its division, for the subject must be gendered to be engendered, to be spoken.
(Bhabha 107)

Bhabha claims that the fetish of the stereotype becomes a space for imagined origins. It becomes a place of imagining a pure descent, untainted by hybridisation, by corruption of other races or cultures and allows the primeval fantasy of superiority to be re-enacted.

The ambivalence of Bhabha's stereotype extends to the place of the stereotype in the colonial power hierarchy. He writes that:

The epic intention of the civilizing mission [...] often produces a text rich in the traditions of *trompe-d'œil*, irony, mimicry and repetition. In this comic turn from the high ideals of the colonial imagination to its low mimetic literary effects mimicry emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge. (Bhabha 122)

One source of Bhabha's ambivalence is the contradiction between a serious 'epic intention' to civilise and the comic turn of mimicry. As discussed later, the writings of Bankim illustrate that the dividing line between mimicry, the desire to be like someone, and parody – an exaggerated similarity intended to ridicule – is very fine indeed. For if the stereotype could be used to support colonial power by demeaning or caricaturing the colonised subject, then that same stereotype, by reflecting back onto the coloniser a parody, could destabilise the notions of superiority and power. Bhabha says that 'mimicry represents an *ironic* compromise' (Bhabha 122), but a compromise between what? Servility and independence, desire and repulsion possibly, and at what direction is the irony targeted – at the coloniser or at the erstwhile colonised, the mimic man perhaps? As Malcolm Andrews says, 'laughter undoes the self' (Andrews, *Laughter*, 99): the defined and known disintegrates into a sea of possibilities.

If the stereotype could indeed be said to be stable, to encapsulate the defining properties of the colonised subject, then as Bhabha quotes Said, it becomes the holder of 'the median', the place where all the variableness of that subject is lost in one representative figure (Bhabha 104-5). This gross simplification becomes 'a method of controlling what seems to be a threat' (Bhabha 104-5). The stereotype, in Said's interpretation, is the figure that remains after all the deviance, all the out of place, all the abruptness that provide individuality has been removed. The place where incongruity, in all of its forms, has been suppressed in favour of a manufactured commodity that is capable of infinite replication. But the manufactured item, the stereotype, is itself an incongruity, an extreme example of Bergson's ill-fitting coat, constraining a living human being, turning that human

subject into a commoditised object. In effect, the stereotype represents a human subject that has had all the productive incongruity suppressed in favour of an imposed incongruity that forces conformance. With this commodity, the coloniser can have control, for it defines the colonised. Bhabha, again quoting Said, writes that it can ‘designate, name, point to, fix’ (Bhabha 101).

Bhabha would question the concept of the stereotype as a simple manufactured commodity in favour of a more nebulous concept.

Stereotyping is not the setting up of a false image which becomes the scapegoat of discriminatory practices. It is a much more ambivalent text of projection and introjection, metaphoric and metonymic strategies, displacement, over-determination, guilt, aggressivity; the masking and splitting of ‘official’ and phantasmatic knowledges to construct the positionalities and oppositionalities of racist discourse. (Bhabha 117)

Bhabha’s stereotype would seem to be a creature of the séance, an indefinable spiritual being that must undergo a process of translation by a suitable spiritualist before it becomes amenable for analysis, if it ever does.

Bhabha does provide a moment of insight into how the contradictions can be understood – but not resolved. He writes:

In each case what is being dramatized is a separation – *between* races, cultures, histories, *within* histories – a separation between *before* and *after* that repeats obsessively the mythical moment or disjunction. (Bhabha 118)

Bhabha’s stereotype, therefore, is a signifier of separation, but not everlasting difference, but of a unity that has fractured, and what it emphasises is the point of discontinuity. In Bergson’s terms, the discontinuity arises from rigidity and the failure to accommodate the Other. The stereotype is not immediately productive; on the contrary, it is a self-justifying symbol of Bhabha’s separation and a distortion of the product of Koestler’s bisociation. By distorted, I mean that all of the differences have been ascribed to the Other. If however, the incongruities of the constructed stereotype that arise from the flaws in its construction are engaged with in a sympathetic, rather than defensive or aggressive manner, then it can become a

productive thing. This possibility of moving on from the fixed stereotype is the new dimension that incongruity brings to Bhabha's stereotype theory.

Discontinuities, disruption and doublings are properties associated with Bhabha's stereotype, and mimicry creates all three. Mimicry, Bhabha argues, is disruptive. It creates a double vision:

The *menace* of mimicry is its *double* vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority. And it is a double vision that is a result of what I've described as the partial representation/recognition of the colonial object. (Bhabha 126)

Mimicry, according to Bhabha, is the art of camouflage, of being mottled against a mottled background so as to appear invisible (Bhabha 121). When that camouflage breaks down, when the mottled figure suddenly appears as a recognisable form, betrayed by dress or speech or mannerism, then a discontinuity can arise. The figure appears not as a natural part of the background but as a mimic-type figure that reflects the observer in some way, and, if the incongruity in that discontinuity is recognised, then a productive encounter may take place. Whether the encounter is productive or destructive, Bhabha argues that, the 'authority' of the discourse is disrupted. The stereotype Babu is that discontinuity, forever interfering with the official discourse, forever returning that discourse in a weak diluted form that challenges (Bhabha's *menace*) its originators.

Bhabha says that mimicry *repeats* rather than *re-presents* (Bhabha 125), that is to say it does not, and cannot, alter the original discourse. By repeating, mimicry cannot rewrite that discourse to reverse the roles of the coloniser and the colonised so the text of the discourse remains. What does change is the strength of that discourse, its ability to propagate and to carry, for the discourse is weakened by the reflections and the doubling, and that is the power of mimicry. When mimicry is altered from a passive state to an active state, when it actively distorts and rewrites that discourse, deliberately directing that rewritten text back to the originator, it turns to parody. Parody is not a complete rewriting to reproduce an original text, but a deliberate manipulation of the original to render it ludicrous, making it the subject of laughter. Parody overturns the order of things; it makes the source the incongruous

object, transforming the object of laughter from the mimic to the origin. To laugh at a parody of oneself is to laugh at oneself, or more likely to become extremely angry and incapable of laughter. Parody is a sign of change; mimicry a sign of rigidity, for in mimicry the object always appears to be the same, forever repeated without change, and the ambivalence in determining whether mimicry or parody is present is one source of Bhabha's menace.

Comedy

Hurree Chunder Mookerjee, pride of Bow Bazar,
 Owner of a native press, 'Barrister-at-Lar,'
 Waited on the Government with a claim to wear
 Sabres by the bucketful, rifles by the pair.

Then the Indian Government winked a wicked wink.
 Said to Chunder Mookerjee: 'Stick to pen and ink.
 They are safer implements, but, if you insist,
 We will let you carry arms wheresoe'er you list.'

Hurree Chunder Mookerjee sought the gunsmith and
 Bought the tubes of Lancaster, Ballard, Dean, and Bland,
 Bought a shiny bowie-knife, bought a town-made sword,
 Jingled like a carriage-horse when he went abroad. (1-12)

[...]

Killar Khan the Marri chief, Jowar Singh the Sikh,
 Nubbee Baksh Punjabi Jat, Abdul Huq Rafiq –
 He was a Wahabi; last, little Boh Hla-oo
 Took advantage of the Act – took a Snider too.

They were unenlightened men, Ballard knew them not.
 They procured their swords and guns chiefly on the spot

And the lore of centuries, plus a hundred fights,
 Made them slow to disregard one another's rights. (17-24)

[...]

What became of Mookerjee? Ask Mahommed Yar
 Prodding Siva's sacred bull down the Bow Bazar,
 Speak to placid Nubbee Baksh—question land and sea—
 Ask the Indian Congressmen—only don't ask me! (45-48)

‘What Happened’ (*Poems*, 29)

It is not difficult to find hostile laughter directed at the colonial stereotype, as Kipling’s verse ‘What Happened’ illustrates, parodying the emerging Indian colonial bourgeois. Kipling’s poem was first published in the *Pioneer*, January 2nd, 1888, and the *Pioneer Mail*, January 4th, 1888. It is a response to a resolution by the National Congress for the repeal of the Indian Arms Act of 1878 (Act II 1878) which prohibited non–Europeans, unless specifically authorized, to carry arms.⁶⁰ The poem reiterates Kipling’s view, expressed in his letter to Margaret Burne–Jones (28 Nov 1885–11 Jan 1886), of the impossibility of a unified Indian national identity. In this letter, Kipling, after constructing a series of oppositions and conflicts between the peoples of India, writes: ‘There is no such thing as the natives of India [...] You may rest assured [...] that if we didn’t hold the land in six months it would be one big cock pit of conflicting princelets’ (*Letters* 1: 97-98). The poem is a statement of conventional Anglo–Indian opinion of the time, ridiculing the educated Bengali, the National Congress and the concept of a united India which is able to live in peace with itself. Kipling’s colonial rhetoric claims that the Bengali, by claiming equivalence to the Anglo–Indian, will cause his own destruction. For Hurree Chunder Mookerjee may have ‘[...] sought the gunsmith and / Bought the tubes of Lancaster, Ballard, Dean and Bland.’ (9-10), which were sporting guns and could be legitimately owned by any English gentleman, but he was the exception, for the other peoples and tribes of India ‘were unenlightened men’ (24). These were men

⁶⁰ Pinney (*Poems* 29) provides the original header to the poem which was a copy of the Congress resolution calling for the modification of Act II 1878. See also “What Happened.” <http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/rg_whathappened1.htm>. Accessed 1 March 2017.

who equipped themselves with traditional weapons, and, the notably powerful British Indian Army rifle – the breech loading .577 Snider–Enfield.⁶¹ The result, Kipling says, is destructive chaos, in which India fragments into a collection of hostile and competing factions, and the non–martial Bengali is destroyed. It is worth noting that the laughter of the poem is directed at the murder of the Bengali, a conclusion in which Kipling seems to take particular pleasure.

However, comedy and laughter do have a more productive role in understanding the myriad of relationships surrounding the stereotype. As Bhabha argues, the colonial ‘civilising mission [...] often produces a text rich in the traditions of *trompe-d’œil*, irony, mimicry and repetition’ (Bhabha 122). I have argued that the late–colonial stereotype is an example of Bergson’s incongruity, for it is a laughable deviation from the natural, and with the pleasure of superiority it can be laughed into oblivion. Except that, the colonial stereotype did not obediently go away. It continued to repeat itself, and the laughter reveals more about the observer, Freud’s isolated individual, than the incongruous stereotype.

Freud provides an observation which is relevant to Bhabha’s slippery idea of the stereotype:

Caricature, parody and travesty (as well as their practical counterpart, unmasking) are directed against people and objects which lay claim to authority and respect, which are in some sense ‘*sublime*’. (Freud 260-1[1960])

From this observation arises the possibility that when mimicry morphs into caricature, parody or travesty, it enters the region of the sublime, attacking those forms of authority which should be sublime and beyond simple rational understanding. In this interpretation, the colonial Babu stereotype is not merely a passive mimic, a pale copy of the coloniser, but a subversive *thing*, that in some unidentifiable way, is undermining the authority of the colonial masters.

Comedy, Zupančič suggests, is movement:

The argument of this book is that comic subjectivity proper does not reside in the subject making the comedy, nor in the

⁶¹ “Snider-Enfield.” <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snider%E2%80%93Enfield>>. Accessed 6 March 2017.

subjects or egos that appear in it, but in the very incessant and irresistible, all consuming movement. (Zupančič 3)

According to Zupančič, comedy produces movement and is a dynamic force. Laughter from colonial authority, directed at the stereotype, attempts to maintain colonial power structures and to prevent the stereotype from unravelling. On the other hand, laughter originating from the individuals contained within the stereotype, directed either at colonial authority or at the stereotype construct itself, resists the rigidity of the stereotype, and it undoes the (colonial) self. In this second form, laughter erodes and undermines, imperceptibly dismantling divinely appointed superiority, and it questions the legitimacy of imposed authority, producing the possibility of movement and change. Zupančič says that comedy is a surplus (Zupančič 185), and in this case it could be the surplus that compensates for the loss of a way of life that existed for generations before the invasion of foreigners and the onset of modernity.

The repetitive nature of the stereotype has been noted on numerous occasions from the Belgian, Gustave de Molinari (Curtis 1) to Bhabha, and is most easily accounted for by assuming that repetition is a sign of anxiety or a statement of superiority. If the repetitive stereotype is a product of the urge to contain and control, then the comedy inherent in its constant repetition (Zupančič 174-5) can also be a force for fragmentation and freedom. Laughter from colonial authority, directed at the stereotype, may well signify a feeling of superiority, but that superiority is a denial of alternative images of the self that are too disturbing to be acknowledged. The absurdities of middle-class culture, symbolised by Anstey's Babu Stereotype, threaten to break open the modern self, revealing the hybridity, the chaotic borrowing and absorption from other cultures that constitute the self. Andrews provides an interesting contrast of views on the process of fragmentation. He writes about Lacan's fear of fragmentation and hybridity and Bakhtin's joy in it, summarizing Lacan's position as:

The nightmare image of the fragmented body visualizes the grotesque hybridity of the self which may precede or underlie the constitution of the 'I' as a coherent, totalized, bounded entity. (Andrews, *Laughter*, 100)

Laughter from the outside, *at* the stereotype, attempts to maintain the ‘constitution of the ‘I’. Laughter from *within* the stereotype threatens to undo that coherent constitution, the civilised modernising coloniser. Lacan’s despair at the loss of uniqueness is Bakhtin’s joy at the prospect of acknowledging togetherness. Andrews compares Lacan’s rigid formulation of the ‘I’ with the rigidity and the suppression of the human spirit that Henri Bergson was so concerned with (Andrews, *Laughter*, 100-1). Lacan’s individual becomes, like Bergson’s incongruous example, a human spirit that is trapped within a rigid construction of an imposed self that prevents Bakhtin’s body of the people from reinvigorating it. In effect, there is a contest between opposing energies acting upon the stereotype; one creative laughter from the inside tending towards fragmentation and individuality, and the other laughter from the outside tending towards conformity. In Chapter Five, I examine these in more detail in the context of Kipling’s character in *Kim*, Hurree Chunder Mookerjee.

Chapter Five: Kipling's Babu Figure

Introduction

In this chapter, I take the concept of the colonial stereotype, partly drawn from Bhabha and partly from the idea of the Marxian commodity, and apply it to Kipling's character Hurree Chunder Mookerjee in *Kim*. Bart Moore–Gilbert identified the fragmented characteristic of Hurree, writing that 'The key question posed by Kipling's work is the degree to which he is conscious of the destabilisation of the imperial consciousness by ambivalence and hybridity' (Moore–Gilbert, *Writing India*, 134). However, Moore–Gilbert did not identify the possibilities of an alternative Marxian–based approach to Bhabha's 'ambivalence and hybridity', which is how I investigate Hurree. The stereotype could be said to have two sides to its head, one interior and the other exterior. I take the exterior view from Kipling and the interior view from real human beings, such as Bankim Chandra Chattarji and Nazir Ahmad, who found themselves in the position of a colonial Babu, and wrote about that experience. The chapter concludes with a detailed discussion of Kipling's Hurree Chunder Mookerjee in *Kim*, in which I argue that, what Kipling has produced is a witnessing of *his* Babu stereotype in disintegration.

Kipling's Silence

A community that is absent from Kipling's fiction is that of the Indian community of letters, and by that I mean print material produced by, and for, the non–Anglo–Indian that C. A. Bayly might describe as the print dimension of the Indian ecumene (Bayly 191). It comprised an extensive amount of printed material in newspapers, pamphlets, magazines and books and included poetry, prose and illustrations. A count of the works discussed by Abida Samiuddin identifies approximately 58 authors writing and publishing works in Urdu between 1850 and 1890.⁶² Indian print material also included a considerable number of satirical magazines, styled on the

⁶² For a comprehensive survey of Indian literature from medieval to colonial times, see Pollock, Sheldon I. *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

London *Punch*. The *Avadh Punch*, published in Lucknow under the editorship of Munshi Sajjad Husain, was one such publication from which Mushirul Hasan presents a number of extracts. Hasan writes that:

By the end of the 19th century, 70 *Punch* papers/magazines appeared from more than a dozen cities. Each one of them reflected on British rule, not from the colonial government's standpoint but from the experience of over 300 million Indians. (Hasan 12)

A large number of these works would have been current during Kipling's time there, and given his connections to the print trades, he must have encountered them in some form or another.⁶³

Partha Mitter provides a detailed discussion of the appearance of political cartoons in newspapers and magazines of India during the period. In addition to many 'Indianised' versions of *Punch*, he identifies the English-owned *Bengal Hurkaru* and the *Indian Gazette* as carrying political cartoons by Indian artists as early as the 1850s (Mitter 137). He continues that, 'within decades', cartoons targeted at the colonial administration appeared in Indian-owned papers, with the nationalist paper of Bengal, *Amrita Bāzār Patrikā*, publishing its first cartoon in 1872 (Mitter 137). Mitter writes that the *Oudh Punch*, owned since 1877 by Muhammad Sajjad Husain of Lucknow and produced in Urdu, was a pioneer comic magazine in North India with a circulation of 500 in 1851 (Mitter 158). Christopher Bayly writes that by 1880, Allahabad and Lucknow, between them, contained approximately twenty public archival collections and libraries, and fifty or more private ones, compared with perhaps four private and half a dozen small public libraries in 1830 (Bayly 349-50). This increase implies a rapid increase in non-Anglo-Indian print culture and its accessibility to the Indian reading classes, which Kipling must have been aware of and which he apparently ignores. This is the omission in Kipling's work that I now discuss.

There is no evidence that Kipling could read Bengali or Urdu, rather the opposite. Charles Allen makes a brief reference to some study for the Indian Army's Lower Standard Urdu examination and the employment of a *Munshi* (Allen, *Kipling*

⁶³ See *Letters* 1: 24-5 and my later discussion in this chapter.

Sahib, 149), but does not provide any further information. Presumably Allen has in mind Kipling's letter to Cornell Price of 29 August 1883 where he writes that 'Urdu is a difficult tongue to write, at least I find it so, and an easy one to read' (*Letters* 1: 40-1). More substantive arguments over Kipling's lack of proficiency are provided by Harish Trivedi. Trivedi draws upon a number of sources to make a convincing argument that Kipling was not literate in Urdu or Bengali, or indeed in any of the 'vernacular' languages, but was confined to the usual superficial colonial Hindustani used to communicate with servants (Trivedi 194). That is not to say that he did not use 'vernacular' words (bastardised or not) imaginatively and creatively in his English texts. Trivedi writes that *Kim* 'needs to be appreciated and acclaimed as one of the supreme examples of radical multi-lingual transactions in the whole world of English literature' (Trivedi 202). The available evidence does strongly suggest, however, that it is unlikely that Kipling could read, write or converse fluently in any of the native languages of India. This point is important, because it means that Kipling would have had no direct knowledge of the Indian texts that I discuss in this chapter. Kipling was in India during a period which saw a resurgence of Indian literature and, as Sheldon Pollock demonstrates, this was a widespread movement that included material from, amongst others, Tamil, Urdu and Bengali sources – from which I take examples from Urdu and Bengali material as most relevant to Kipling's time in India. The Bengali material originates from the movement later termed the 'Bengal Renaissance'. However, this term is disputed as too narrow, mimetic and singular in its definition. Ramesh Rawat, for example, has some difficulty in entirely accepting the term when applied to this period, instead describing it as 'the phenomenon of modernisation in 19th- century Hindu literature' (Rawat 95), arguing that it was a mixture of many indigenous sources combined with the assimilation of English and foreign texts. Rawat also contends that the growth of colleges, universities and other cultural and literary organisations that occurred under British rule was a significant factor in this literary revival (Rawat 105). The growth of books, booklets, pamphlets and magazines after the 1870s mushroomed, and Rawat argues, 'was in fact, an outcome of the religious and social reform movements and not [the Rebellion] of 1857' (Rawat 105).

Rawat argues that the upsurge in Hindi and other Indian literature could be seen as part of a bi-directional cultural exchange between the West and the East, which was given considerable impetus by the 'discovery' and publication of Sanskrit

literature, translated into English, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Citing D. P Singhal's *India and World Civilisation*, Rawat argues that the migration of words between languages is one sign of exchange, and he highlights the assimilation of Indian words into English usage. He writes that this migration was 'conditioned by the nature and need of inter-cultural relations', commencing with a commercial vocabulary and later acquiring a more literary turn (Rawat 102). Rawat cites Milton, Dryden, Orme, Burke, Scott, Thackeray and T.S Eliot as authors who made 'effective use of Indian words' (Rawat 102). However he adds, 'But this kind of cultural intercourse was thwarted by Macaulay and Kipling, and the hostility to India bred by tales of the mutiny' (Rawat 102).

Rawat's reference to Macaulay is understandable, given the often quoted sentence extracted from the Minute on Indian Education: 'I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabic' (Moir and Zastoupil 165). However, Rawat does miss Macaulay's support for continuing Hindu and Islamic education for those who wanted it, but why Kipling should have 'thwarted' cultural exchange he does not elaborate. Given the number of Indian words, names and locations used in his many stories, it seems strange that he could be thought to have blocked cultural interchange. Kipling, as Gayatri Spivak points out (Spivak, *Critique*, 162), and Harish Trivedi expands upon (Trivedi 193-198), does rely heavily on the Hindustani pidgin language of the coloniser, rather than a natural and authentic vernacular. Perhaps it is to that Rawat is referring, or perhaps to Kipling's hostile depictions of the Hindu 'Babu' in his early stories. By contrast, Andrew Smith in the essay 'Kipling's Gothic and Postcolonial Laughter' cites Harish Trivedi and Sudipta Kaviraj in identifying the European translation of Sanskrit, along with the re-emergence of irony in Bengali literature, as factors in an apparent intertextuality between the early Kipling stories and native texts (Smith 63). Smith continues that Kipling 'absorb[ed] such native texts in his work [...] in order to illustrate the seemingly Gothic encounters typically confronted by the Anglo-Indian' (Smith 63). Smith specifically identifies the 'demonic laughter' in *Morrowbie Jukes*, 'laughter, revealingly, [that] can also be located within the Indian culture' (Smith 62). This intertextuality, if true, is of a far more subtle kind than the borrowing or bastardisation of a few words. In comparison to words, which are the surface of a text, the intertextuality referred to by Smith is not present on the mere surface, but

(quite possibly unconsciously) in the very conception and intent of the work. If Kipling was hostile, as Rawat says, then it was to a particular section of the Indian community: the new political and administrative classes who were educated under the system that Macaulay was ultimately responsible for creating. For example, in Chapter III 'The Council of the Gods' of 'The City of Dreadful Night', (*StS* 2: 216-25), Kipling criticises the Bengal Legislative Council, arguing that the system of law and governance which ought to protect the people has been usurped by its practitioners. Perhaps, in Kipling's eyes, Macaulay's system of creating a new class of English-speaking Indians has worked too well. Not only have the trappings and garments of English education and law been successfully transplanted, but so has the path to modernity, for Kipling writes, that Calcutta 'in common with Bombay, has achieved a mental attitude several decades in advance of that raw and brutal India of fact' (*StS* 1: 213).

Soumvajit Samanta agrees with Ramseh Rawat that the Bengal Renaissance was a form of cultural fusion, that among others, it occurred between the erstwhile colonisers and the colonised but applies a Marxist interpretation. Samanta writes that British imperialism in India 'unleashed the forces of bourgeois revolution' (Samanta 5-6). Rather more strongly he argues that the centralized governance of the British Empire and the introduction of machines and industrial production 'led to the historical inevitability of the bourgeois revolution, without which India could not emerge into the Twentieth century' (Samanta 5-6). Samanta argues that the arrival of 'Western ideology and political thought' diverted the Bengal Renaissance 'from a revival or Renaissance of ancient literature, art and culture to a nationalist struggle' (Samanta 7). He continues:

In a supreme paradox the Bengal Renaissance attained the character of a hybrid movement and culture since it imbibed Western influences not merely to return to roots but also engaged in its debunking. (Samanta 7)

Macaulay, presumably, would have been pleased at the surge in Indian print culture which he could point to as echoing the 'great revival of letters amongst the Western nations' (Moir and Zastoupil 166). However, as Samanta writes, the supreme paradox is that Macaulay's scheme to make the Indians 'English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect' (Moir and Zastoupil 171) seems to have worked

too well. Macaulay may have forgotten that the English tradition included free-thinking radicals, such as Thomas Paine and William Cobbett, who delighted in debunking imposed authority.

Samanta's 'forces of bourgeois revolution' also challenged J. R. Seeley's theory of English supremacy as he expressed it in *The Expansion of England*:

There is then no Indian nationality, though there are some germs out of which we can conceive an Indian nationality developing itself. It is this fact, and not some enormous superiority on the part of the English race, that makes our Empire in India possible. If there could arise in India a nationality-movement similar to that which we witnessed in Italy, the English Power could not even make the resistance that was made in Italy by Austria, but must succumb at once. (Seeley 179)

The literature that arose during this period is the visible beginning of a nationalism that did eventually, even though it divided along religious lines, throw the English out of India. It is possible that Kipling's silence originates from the recognition that, in some way, the vernacular print surge posed a threat. There is a reference to Indian newspaper articles in a very early letter from Lahore in 1882:

Some thirty papers go through my hands daily – Hindu papers, scurrilous and abusive beyond everything, local scandal weeklies, philosophical and literary journals written by Babus in the style of Addison. Native Mohummedan, sleepy little publications, all extracts, Indigo papers, tea and coffee journals, jute journals and official Gazettes all have to be disembowelled if they are worth it. (*Letters* 1: 24-5)

Perhaps, if Kipling had been able to read in the vernacular, then he would have seen beyond mere imitation to decipher the emerging voices of a new spirit.

The Babu Writes Back

In this section, I deal with material written by men who occupied an in-between place as native Indians working within the colonial administration, voices

that Kipling apparently did not consciously hear or acknowledge. The first group of material originates from Muslim writers, predominately in North India, the second from Hindu Bengalis. Nazir Ahmad's *Son of the Moment*, published in Delhi in 1888 (first published in English in 2002), is contemporary with Kipling's experiences in India but, unlike Kipling's fictions, written and published in Urdu for an elite North Indian readership, both Hindu and Muslim. Ahmad took government service and rose to become the Revenue Member for Hyderabad (Ahmad xiv). Ahmad therefore wrote of the Indian administrator working under the Raj from first-hand experience, and *Son of the Moment* can be viewed as a voice of the knowledgeable insider. Ahmad sets his story in the aftermath of the Rebellion of 1857 and he specifically engages with those events, something from which Kipling shied away. Ahmad is by no means hostile to the English rulers, but his story reveals a divide between cultures that, despite well-intentioned efforts on both sides, seems impossible to bridge. Although it is set in the period immediately after 1857, the story is concerned with the problems of the 1880s and the tensions within the Indian empire at that time. It is relevant that the India, and the relationship between the English and the North Indian community, that Ahmad was concerned with, was also the India of Kipling's experience.

Ahmad's central protagonist, Ibn-ul-Vaqt, is a highly intelligent, educated, but rather naive nobleman, with little real understanding of the colonial government. Ibn-ul-Vaqt, at considerable risk to himself and with no ulterior motive, for he 'performed his religious, rather than human duty', rescues a wounded English officer and in return is rewarded with a government position (Ahmad 78). The story is essentially concerned with the difficulties of maintaining cultural integrity while adapting and learning from another. It is written around the misadventures of Ibn-ul-Vaqt as he sets about his task of reforming and modernising the Muslim community with the latest Western knowledge and practice (Ahmad 51). However, in his enthusiasm to widen access to this new knowledge, Ibn-ul-Vaqt offends the religious sensibilities of his own community by adopting western dress and by sharing meals with the English:

For weeks, nay, for months Ibn-ul-Vaqt was the talk everywhere. The common masses entertained one thought: 'He has become a Christian; he has become a Christian!' They kept harping on it. According to them his taking meals

with an Englishman and that too on a dining table with a fork and knife that he had become a Christian. [...] In the courts, however, everyday scores of people saw him clad in English dress and taking his lunch and smoking cheroots in the company of Englishmen. The real distress was felt, as a matter of fact, by the members of his family. People would unnecessarily tease them. They had become the target of reproof because of him. (Ahmad 106)

The unfortunate Ibn-ul-Vaqt has found himself caught between two communities: on one side he offends his hereditary culture by apparently discarding and insulting it; on the other, he is rejected because of apparent imitation and claims to equality with the English. Ahmad says of the English: ‘The Englishmen had no reason whatsoever to envy him but most of them in their arrogance of being the rulers were also strongly opposed to him’ (Ahmad 108). Ahmad also opens a debate within the Muslim community by critiquing concerns about the corruption of Islam by Western practice and religion, writing that ‘the problem was that with his English lifestyle he called himself a Muslim which irritated them’ (Ahmad 108).

The problem, at least in the view of the English, could be easily resolved, if Ibn-ul-Vaqt would just conform to his natural place and stop trying to cross cultures. As the Englishman Sharp says to Ibn-ul-Vaqt:

‘Your brother Mr Hujjat-ul-Islam has removed all my doubts about you. I regret my mistake. If you keep to the lifestyle of your brother, which shows your national identity and which you yourself had for the greater part of your life, and let me say, which is befitting and comfortable for every noble Indian, then we will be good friends for life.’ (Ahmad 192)

That is, stop trying to be an Englishman and destabilising my identity; stay with your own, one that I can recognise. Both sides are afraid of losing their uniqueness; each wants, and apparently needs, to display a difference. In one, there is a sense of losing old-established religious and cultural principles; in the other there is an anxiety about losing superiority. Ahmad cannot resolve this intractable division for, in the conclusion to *Son of the Moment*, Ibn-ul-Vaqt’s brother advises that the adopted

European lifestyle is ‘not helpful. Give it up. And, if you still want to suffer the punishment for it, it is your discretion!’ (Ahmad 224). And ‘give it up’ is what Ibn-ul-Vaqt does. The irresolvable difference is restored, the existing system is maintained and modernity is postponed. In conflict with the insistence on difference, however, there is also a genuine desire on both sides for material improvement and a transfer of knowledge, or at least certain types of useful knowledge. The problem that Nazir Ahmad is unable to resolve, is that, useful scientific and economic knowledge is entangled with religious and cultural practices, and ultimately with insatiable economic acquisition and modernity.

Ahmad is open about the difficulties the English have inflicted upon the Indian community. In Chapter 11, ‘Ibn-ul-Vaqt’s Speech’, devoted to Ibn-ul-Vaqt’s agenda of reform, he lists the problems that the Muslim community face (Ahmad 77-103). Ahmad deals in great detail with these, but prominent among his complaints is the increasing poverty in India and the diminishing wealth that Marx identifies in his theory of uneven development. For all the modernising efforts of the British, India, Ahmad says, is becoming poorer:

With all my good wishes for the Government, I am obliged to say that it will remain the same ignorant and uninformed Government as it was before the Mutiny. In governance, the interests of the subjects and of the Government are inter-related. While the Indians have received manifold advantages from the peace and freedom of the English rule, which as a matter of fact were absent earlier, it also cannot be denied that England too has become all the more rich for it. (Ahmad 78)

The heart of the problem, Ahmad says, is the disconnection between the English rulers and the colonial subjects. He writes that the ‘main cause of the English Government’s shortcomings is that there is no rapport between the ruler and the ruled. They are not even well acquainted with each other’ (Ahmad 101).

There is a discontinuity between two relatively easily defined groups, coloniser and colonised, and also within those groups:

In short, religiously speaking, Ibn-ul-Vaqt had his own interpretations. English education instilled in him thoughts of

freedom, and the desire for absolute freedom stirred thousands of people. They were restive and looking for an opportunity to give vent to their feelings. Such people considered it their good luck to make Ibn-ul-Vaqt their shield. Thus, there cropped up a large group of Muslims of new thinking just like the swarming worms which creep out of the earth after the first shower in the rainy season. Had there been some temptations also, along with the change in lifestyle and reform in beliefs, more than half the Muslims might have taken to the new way like the proverbial sheep. But on the one hand, members of his community severely criticised and admonished him and on the other hand, the English people were indifferent to him, and the change in lifestyle also did not suit anyone. The result was that such people were ‘neither here, nor there; they were lost,’ They were blighted as soon as they had sprouted. (Ahmad 111)

Ahmad’s modernisers, like Fanon’s western-educated colonial Negro, found themselves in no-man’s-land, liminal people. This in-between space, a world of dislocation, of numbness and nothingness, and a world defined by a sense of inestimable loss, is the space that most concerns Fanon. Fanon writes of the colonial Negro who goes to the metropole to receive the coloniser’s education, another language, another culture, and then returns, but is no longer part of his native society:

And the fact that the newly returned Negro adopts a language different from that of the group into which he was born is evidence of a dislocation, a separation. (Fanon 25)

Education, or at least colonial education that promotes the coloniser’s culture and demotes the indigenous one, is akin to an act of violence. It dislocates and separates, and Fanon’s colonial Negro, like Ahmad’s Muslim modernisers, falls between two cultures, occupying neither and located in some in-between place. In my interpretation of the machine of imperialism, the colonial education machine has consumed the ‘native’ raw material and manufactured a commodity, the educated native.

Perhaps overshadowing Ahmad's argument is the figure of the new Indian bourgeois, the Bengali Babu. As Mr Sharp says:

'They have taken it into their heads that with their broken English they have become like the Europeans and that they should be treated like them. But basically they are not like Europeans. They have no 'nationality' (national unity), no public opinion, no freedom, no bright-mindedness, no perseverance, no steadfastness, no courage, no truthfulness, no spirit of the search for truth, concord and unity like that of the Europeans'. (Ahmad 192)

To be in that middle space, to appear to move from one culture into another and to acquire a new exterior, Ahmad argues, is to invite ridicule and to become an outsider, in effect to become a Bergsonian incongruity.

To provide a Bengali perspective of the situation that the educated colonial subject found themselves in, I use material from the Bengali writer, Bankim Chandra Chatterji.⁶⁴ Bankim is an important figure in Bengali literature, who, from the viewpoint of an educated Bengali, serving within the colonial Indian government, produced material that critiqued colonial Bengali society of the time. Born in 1838 near Calcutta (present day Kolkata) to a respected Brahmin family, Bankim followed his father into the Bengal Civil Service, and like him, became a deputy collector and magistrate (the highest rank a Bengali was permitted to attain at the time). Bankim was a highly educated man: through his family he was educated in the classical Bengali tradition of Sanskritic learning, and through the English schools he received a modern English education, graduating from the University of Calcutta in 1858. He was a learned man, someone to whom the term 'babu' could be applied in its proper honorific meaning. Bankim published thirteen novels with probably his most notable being *Ānandamaṭh, Or, the Sacred Brotherhood*, first published in serial form between 1881 and 1882. He also published the Bengali monthly journal,

⁶⁴ This short introduction of the Bengali writer, Bankim Chandra Chattopādhyāy is heavily indebted to Julius J. Lipner's introduction to his 2005 translation of *Ānandamaṭh, Or, the Sacred Brotherhood*. There is no accepted uniform English transcription of Bankim's family name; it commonly appears as Chatterjee or Chatterji. I follow Lipner's practice of using Bankim Chandra Chatterji for citation purposes, and where appropriate, noting any variation as they occur. In conformance to Western academic practice I use the first name of Bankim in discussion of his work.

Baṅgadarśhan, between 1872 and 1876.⁶⁵ *Ānandamaṭh* is credited with being a key text in the Hindu nationalist movement, running to five editions published between 1882 and 1892, and first published in English in 1906. Bankim died in 1894.

Like Ahmad, Bankim served in the colonial government and was well placed to write about the erstwhile middleman and the effect that English modernity was having on Bengali culture. Rather like Kipling in some respects, he engages with the problem of modernity represented by Western scientific knowledge and material advantage, and the seemingly inevitable destruction of the *élan vital* of his own culture. To Bankim, language is at the heart of the dilemma. He argues that competent knowledge of English is necessary to learn and exploit Western scientific and empirical practice, but, equally, Bengali literature, as the holder of Bengali culture, should not be abandoned. In the opening preface to *Baṅgadarśhan* (1872), entitled ‘Patrashuchana’ (Gupta 1-8), he attacks the notion of the absolute superiority of the English language:

Those who publish books or periodicals in the Bengali language are farsighted indeed. But the educated elitist native readers are often not interested in reading their writings. The so-called lovers of English are steadfast in their belief that nothing written in Bengali is worthy of their attention. In their judgement whoever writes in Bengali are either uneducated, unskilled as writers, or mere translators of English books. Moreover they believe that whatever is written in Bengali is either unreadable or is the mere shadow of some English book. If it exists in English what is the use of degrading oneself reading the same thing in Bengali? As it is, we try to excuse our incriminating black skin so why should we give ourselves away even further by reading Bengali? (Gupta 1)

To read Bengali, Bankim argues, is to reveal the roots of origin, to openly display the ‘incriminating black skin’ hidden under the artificial white mask of the English-educated Bengali. Later in the essay he continues this theme and directly relates the

⁶⁵ I use Tapati Gupta’s edited and translated collection (that includes other essayists in addition to Bankim): Gupta, Tapati, Ed. *Bankimchandra’s Bangadarshan: Selected Essays in Translation*. Kolkata: Das Gupta & Co. Pvt. Ltd., 2007.

‘lack of interest in the Bengali language [...] [to] the root cause of society’s lack of interest in the Bengal community’ (Gupta 7). Bankim continues that it is a self-perpetuating spiral of decay, because lack of reading prevents ‘well educated Bengalis’ from writing in Bengali (Gupta 7). Bankim argues that the Bengali is in danger of becoming nothing more than an uncritical consumer of Western culture, or, at least, a consumer of the material that the English schools in India provide.

The new English education and the rapid Westernisation of the Bengali elite, Bankim argues, has caused more than just decay in Bengali literature; it is instrumental in a more profound decay in Bengali life. The letters ‘Teen Rakam’ (Gupta 157-63), published in 1875, three years after the introduction of *Baṅgadarśhan*, and supposedly written by women (but in fact by Bankim) attack the self-importance of the English-educated new Bengali middle-class male:

Listen let me tell you the difference between the ancient and the modern. The ancients did well unto others; you do well only unto your own selves. The ancients spoke the truth; you utter only pleasantries. The ancients revered their fathers and mothers – moderns revere wives and mistresses. The ancients worshipped gods and Brahmans; your god is the brown sahib, your Brahman is the goldsmith. It is true that they were idolaters. But you are worshippers of the bottle. (Gupta 158)

Language and modernity are to Bankim interrelated, and in the opening preface to *Baṅgadarśhan*, he discusses the implications of the introduction of English to the Bengali elite. Modernity, in the form of English, corrupts, firstly, the intellect through language and then, the body through wealth, self-importance and finally alcohol. While Bankim recognises the utility of English because it ‘is the language of the Raj’ and ‘at the moment it is our only stairway to knowledge’ (Gupta 2), he decries its divisive nature. English, Bankim says, is effectively the language of power within the Raj, because the ‘Englishmen would understand only English; and if the Englishmen could not understand us, our prestige would be at stake’ (Gupta 2). The veneration of English by the Bengali, combined with the arrogance of the English Sahib, separates and divides, for ‘what the Englishman cannot hear, is like a cry in the wilderness; what he does not see, is equivalent to pouring butter over ash’

(Gupta 2). English, however, can be useful to the peoples of India in an unexpected way, for ‘English is the meeting ground of the Bengalis, Maharashtrians, Telegus and Punjabis. With this string the knot of India’s unity should be tied. Hence let English spread as far as is necessary’ (Gupta 3). Bankim omits the obvious sequel to that sentence, which presumably would run something like: ‘and once united we can get rid of the English masters,’ – which is what Kipling could not envisage, and exactly what Seeley warned against. Language is an instrument of power: it has the power to subdue, the power to teach, the power to unite communities and create a national consciousness, and finally the power to take control of one’s own destiny.

Irony runs throughout Bankim’s introductory preface, criticising both English arrogance and Bengali avarice: the Bengalis are obviously an inferior race for, ‘it is impossible for Bengalis to become like the English. Compared to the Bengalis the English are by far more talented and enjoy more privileges’ (Gupta 3). In the preface ‘Patrashuchana’, Bankim develops the argument that, where the English language is a language of power, Bengali can be a language of healing the ‘extreme schism that appeared between the upper and lower castes’ (Gupta 6). He continues:

A root cause of such difference is the difference in language. The intentions of the educated Bengalis are difficult to understand unless propagated in a simple Bengali language so that the ordinary Bengali would understand them and realize their significance by coming into contact with them.
(Gupta 6)

English education of the Bengal elite, Bankim argues, has exacerbated the historic divisions of caste. As the English look down upon the Bengali, creating a protective barrier around themselves, so the Bengali elite, in slavishly copying the English, will continue to isolate themselves from the ordinary non-English-speaking Bengali. Language can, it seems, provide a common platform between groups while simultaneously erecting divisions within those groups. What Bankim is omitting to say is that the creation of common ground between the English-speaking Bengalis, Maharashtrians, Telegus and Punjabis is actually a common area where a new Indian bourgeois joint consciousness can be constructed.

Sudipta Kaviraj presents Bengali texts from colonial India that question the identity of the stereotyped Babu. He provides an alternative to the colonisers' view, a view from the inside, from the invisible (to the coloniser) side of the mirror, as it were. Kaviraj illustrates the positive aspects of ironic laughter in a citation from Bankim's 'Anukaran' of 1887 that is a satirical portrait, illustrating some of the supposed attributes of the Babu stereotype:

By the grace of the Almighty an extraordinary species of sentient life has been found on earth in the nineteenth century: they are known as modern Bengalis. After careful analysis zoological experts have found that this species displays the external bodily features of homo sapiens. [...] Some believe that in their inner nature too they are similar to humans; others think that they are only externally human; in their inner nature they are in fact beasts. Which side do we support in this controversy? We believe in the theory which asserts the bestiality of Bengalis. We learnt this theory from English newspapers. According to some redbearded savants, just as the creator had taken atoms of beauty from all beautiful things to make Tilottama, in exactly the same way, by taking atoms of bestiality from all animals he has created the extraordinary character of the modern Bengali. Slyness from the fox, sycophancy and supplication from the dog, cowardliness from sheep, imitateness from the ape and volubility from the ass — by a combination of these qualities He has made the modern Bengali rise in the firmament of history: a presence which illuminates the horizon, the centre of all of India's hopes and future prospects, and the great favourite of the savant Max Mueller. (Kaviraj 379)

Bankim satirically presents the modern Bengali as a created being, a Frankenstein creature, human in outline but internally composed of essences of the beast. These atomistic essences are not the noble characteristics of bravery, humour, honesty or generosity and the like, but their opposites in character, slyness, cowardliness, sycophancy etc. It must be so, because the English newspapers (and Bankim refrains

from saying so, but it is well-known that they carry only the absolute truth) tell the Babu so. It is as if the Babu has been created as noble humanity's Other. In this superb piece of humorous satire, Bankim exposes the dilemma of a newly manufactured class of people, asking who are we, where do we come from and what are we here for? Are we merely servants of the foreigners; are we here to materially enrich ourselves, or have we a deeper purpose, not yet realised? Bankim is undoing the Bengali stereotype constructed by the English newspapers, and he is doing this through humour, gentle satire that ruthlessly questions the purpose of the modern Bengali. This is the highly literate Bengali speaking, not the commoditised stereotype, for the language is literary, ironic and distanced, and it critiques the system and the stereotype. But here a doubling occurs, because Bankim was a native colonial administrator, a Babu himself and so part of the system. Therefore it is critiquing one part of his life. As Kaviraj argues, this is a period of reflection and of taking stock. A time of making choices, whether to continue with the old or to become something new, which Kaviraj identifies as to become an Indian (Kaviraj 380).

Kaviraj argues, that in India, 'reflection on modernity came primarily through literature' and in particular literary humour (Kaviraj 381), and the process that Kaviraj describes is curiously similar to the creative process associated with humour that I have discussed in Chapter One. Bengali satirical humour is productive and, as Kaviraj mischievously writes, it 'discussed how they could acquire what they lacked, and become even more perfect than they were' (Kaviraj 381). Kaviraj writes that:

The Bengali self is thus a deeply historical construct, always unfinished, always under negotiation, formed and unformed at the same time. (Kaviraj 381)

The Bengali self, as identified by Kaviraj, has many of the properties of Ruskin's imperfect artefact. Unlike the commoditised stereotype, the Bengali self is unfinished, open to new developments and a fertile place of productive incongruity, an incongruity that is different to the incongruity of suppression associated with the stereotype.

Kaviraj argues that the period of Bankim and the resurgence of Bengali literature in the 1880s was the time of a remaking of individual and collective identities. Kaviraj argues that this remaking was a 'dual process', that of the

‘individual self’ and a collective identity that could be shared by ‘all educated Bengalis’ (Kaviraj 381). One would assume the literary space of the Babu was necessarily determined to be a place of conflict between two factions: Bankim and his fellow Bengalis seeking to liberate the Babu from the stereotype and Kipling with his fellow colonisers, and their newspapers, drawing the stereotype ever more closely around the Babu. Later in this chapter, I examine Kipling’s final contribution to this debate with the character Hurree Chunder Mookerjee, to suggest that Kipling’s contribution was not as polarised as is commonly assumed.

Kaviraj makes the point that the new Bengali middle class profited from the English colonisation of India, and that advancement provided the stimulus for a new form of Babu-centred humour that originated from an existing ironical tradition in Bengali literature. Kaviraj identifies a number of factors that stimulated the resurgence of Bengali irony. There was ‘self-advancement’ with ‘inexplicable cases of rise to fortune’ and the elevation of a class of people ‘to positions of evidently undeserved eminence’, all of which was accompanied by an uneasiness caused by this rapid change in fortune (Kaviraj 382). The humour, Kaviraj suggests, was associated with ‘contradiction and regret’, and although not necessarily shared by all of the new class, Kaviraj argues it was exemplified by Bankim, through to Tagore and Sukumar Ray (Kaviraj 382). An example of Bankim’s brilliant irony and satire appears in his *Ingrajstotra* (Hymn to the Englishman), predating *Bāṅgadarśhan* of 1872, which simultaneously criticises the Babu, the Englishman and the literary misuse of a hymn of praise. Kaviraj concludes the quotation with the following lines:

Please grant me wealth, honour, fame, fulfil all my desires.
 Appoint me to high office, a raja, maharaja, raybahadur, or a member of the Council. If you cannot grant these, invite me at least to your homes and dinners; nominate me to a high committee or the senate; make me a justice or an honorary magistrate. Please take notice of my speeches, read my essays, encourage me; then, I would not take heed of the denunciation of the entire Hindu society. (Kaviraj 390)

Mrinalini Sinha writes that Bankim’s work can be read in the context of an early nineteenth-century Bengali critical movement, which satirized the ‘culture of the *nouveau riche* in Bengali society’ and used the term ‘babu’ to do so (Sinha 17). In

this verse, Bankim criticises the Babu and uses the voice of the Babu stereotype to do so; the self-seeking, subservient Babu is ridiculed for the effacement of his own culture and his humiliating attempt to mimic the Englishman – in fact to become ‘English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect’ (Moir and Zastoupil 171). Kipling’s Mr. Grish Chunder Dé, M.A., in the story ‘Head of the District’ (1890) is one such Babu. Bankim’s criticism is equally reflected back on the English, who with their insistence upon invented English middle-class customs and norms, aped from the old aristocracy, refuse to accept the Hindu as an equal. The westernised Babu appears as a miserable imitation of the English ideal, but that very imitation turns the parody back onto the venerated Englishman and, as Kaviraj wryly notes, ‘clearly, there are two levels of meaning in this false hymn’ (Kaviraj 90).

There is a further contemporary view on the Babu from the North Indian perspective taken from *The Avadh Punch*, published in Lucknow, and partially reproduced in Mushirul Hasan’s *Wit and Humour in Colonial North India*. (2007), that I wish to consider. Wilayat Ali Kidwai, using the pseudonym ‘*Bambooque*’, wrote a number of humorous short pieces for the *The Avadh Punch* attacking the figure of the newly English-educated Indian. The piece ‘The England-Returned,’ from 9th September 1911, opens with this description:

Disdainful of grammar, devoid of euphony and destitute of sense the phrase ‘England – Returned’ well suits the type. For the England-Returned is the disappointment of fond parents and the disillusionment of foolish friends. He is the personification of false hopes, the embodiment of extravagant expectations and the incarnation of utterly vain delusions.

But with all that he is a living example of metempsychosis, for he left India an unkempt, badly clothed and almost unwashed crudity, and has returned to her a marvel of tailor made respectability. (Kidwai 129)

Kidwai is not writing with Kipling’s political agenda, or with Kipling’s racism, but he is attacking the figure of the newly created Indian bourgeois administrator, and like Kipling, using a Babu stereotype to do it. But the stereotype is not the same. Kipling’s stereotype is that of the educated Bengali, and is constructed from the

outside by the English. Kidwai's figure is a North Indian figure, and is constructed from the inside, from the experiences of Indian families and individuals who have undergone an English education and travelled to England, or have witnessed its effects. In that sense, it is a similar figure to the one that Bankim satirises, except that Bankim's figure is of the Bengali. Both Kidwai and Bankim use stereotypical images, not to support the idea of English superiority, but to attack the moral decay that continuing submission to English colonialism brings. The relationship between Kidwai, Bankim and the stereotype is important, because the question of exactly who is speaking has to be resolved. That is, are they speaking through the stereotype or is the voice that we hear that of the stereotype? In the case of Kidwai and Bankim, what we hear is the voice of the individual resisting the imposition of the stereotypical shell and using the stereotype to do it, conversely in Kipling, it is the externally imposed voice of the stereotype that we hear.

Returning to the Bengali perspective, Kaviraj demonstrates three stages of the Bengali Babu (de)construction. Firstly, there is the ironic depiction of mimicry by Bankim, which includes, although not mentioned by Kaviraj, the ironic depiction of the Bengali as Tigers and Lords of the jungle in 'Tiger-Savant Long-Tail' (1872) (Gupta 9-17). Secondly, there is Sukumar Ray's nonsense transformation of the Babu into an imaginary Babu land of animals (Kaviraj 399-401); and finally there is Tagore's transformation of the sedentary, servile figure into an imaginary man of action seeking, and achieving, freedom (Kaviraj 401-4). In all of these analyses, Kaviraj makes the point that the Babu figure, the incongruous and ambivalent connection between two cultures, was a productive force. He writes:

In my longer study of Bankimchandra I have attributed this self-ironical laughter to a peculiar, almost miraculous, configuration of artistic and political circumstances in Bengali history. It created a sense that two different ways of being in the world, coming from two civilizations, were available to the cultivated Bengali, and a person of real refinement found it hard to make a wholly one-sided choice. The two civilizations had been brought into contact by history, each providing entirely sensible grounds for criticizing the other. European culture offered arguments undermining superstitions of traditional Indian social norms.

But Indian culture, equally, offered reasonable grounds for being sceptical about the immodest claims of western, especially, colonial rationalism. This kept the ‘Bengali’ character, his collective personality, in a state of tension, of unfinishedness and search. (Kaviraj 406)

It is precisely this contact between two separate frames of reference, analogous to Koestler’s bisociation and the resulting incongruity and openness that I investigate in Kipling’s depiction of Hurree Chunder Mookerjee in *Kim*.

Kim’s Ghostly Stereotypes

The colonial stereotype, as envisaged by Bhabha, seems to be a creature of the séance, an indefinable ambivalent spiritual presence that seemingly haunts the colonial consciousness. It is the haunting character of Hurree Chunder Mookerjee in *Kim* that I investigate in this final section, and I use the bas-reliefs produced by John Lockwood Kipling and reproduced in the early editions of *Kim*, as an introduction. Throughout this section I take textual citations from the Oxford University Press version (2008) of *Kim*, and illustrations from the early Macmillan edition of 1901, edited by Jeffrey Meyers.

Lockwood Kipling’s bas-reliefs are crafted objects, not machine-made commodities. They were crafted by hand and, like Ruskin’s fabled artefacts, carry the marks of those hands. In that sense, they are physical holders of the incongruous and of the human spirit that prompted Kipling to create the characters and drove Lockwood Kipling to produce the symbolic objects. Lockwood’s figures are neither flat nor fully rounded. They are a strange in-between construction that relies upon the reflection of light to accentuate or obscure details. In so doing, they create another representation of the figure which exists in the language of the text, and perhaps, as a preconceived image in the reader’s mind. These figures, like the text, belong to a time that existed approximately three or four generations ago. Kipling describes the care taken by Lockwood Kipling to have the reliefs photographed, particularly in the placing of shadow to lift the figures from the flat of the page onto a living three-dimensional entity:

Here it was needful to catch the local photographer [...] and to lead him up the strenuous path of photographing dead things so that they might show a little life. (*SoM* 141)

The figures are dead, only coming to life when subjected to the scrutinizing energy of a reader, which they return, echoing energy from the lost time of the past. They haunt the present, not only with the ideas and ferments of the past and all of *its* spectres, but also with the spectres of the present. If the Kiplings exert any influence on today's world, they do it in a ghostly fashion, for they exist now as spirits, spectral figures from the past. Jameson in critiquing Derrida's concept of 'Hauntology' writes:

For the ghost is very precisely a *spirit*, and the German *Geist* marks even more strongly the way in which a ghostly spirit or apparition and spirit as spirituality itself, including the loftier works of high culture, are deeply and virtually unconsciously identified with each other. You domesticate the ghost from the past by transforming it into an official representation of Spirit itself, or in other words, at least in American and English, into what we call Culture, high art, the canon, in short the humanities in general.

(Jameson, 'Marx's Purloined Letter', 49-50)

Kipling's ghosts disturb. Even now his writing voices the unacceptable, perhaps because it contains work that is considered at this moment in time, racist, bigoted and orientalist. The ghosts that emerge from Kipling's fictional texts and John Lockwood Kipling's figures resist domestication and commoditisation. They continue to disturb, which is why they are still worth studying. The Kipling ghosts are analogous to the disturbing presence Jameson identifies when discussing Marx's materialism (Jameson, 'Marx's Purloined Letter' 58). Ghosts, spectrality and disturbance are for Jameson an essential part of the present, for without these nebulous spirits the world exists only as the present – a world that is uncomfortably like the world of Kipling's 'As Easy as A.B.C.', which is a world that is dying because the dead cannot return to give life. The disturbance and uncertainty, dislike, hatred even, that sometimes surfaces when Kipling is mentioned, or when his work

is read, is a form of life, the ghosts of a colonial past that refuse to die and still influence the present.

There are two contrasting Lockwood figures that I discuss, and they are stereotypical characters: one is the horse-trader Mahbub Ali, and the second is the Babu Hurree. One is a figure of knowing certainty, and the other of change and uncertainty. Edward Said, when discussing the relationship between the Occident and the Orient, as defined by the British imperialists Arthur James Balfour and Lord Cromer, writes that:

Yet what gave the Oriental's world its intelligibility and identity was not the result of his own efforts but rather the whole complex series of knowledgeable manipulations by which the Orient was identified by the West. (Said, *Orientalism*, 40)

Mahbub Ali is a product of this Oriental knowledge, Said's Orientalism writ small and given form through the craftsmanship of the Kiplings. From Mahbub Ali's shoes to his turban, this is the oriental East as defined and disciplined through Western knowledge. The bearded figure stands confidently in front of his horses, hands on hips, his head framed by an arch and his hookah by his side. By his feet are a few samples of his trading, a carpet of sorts and a sack containing – who knows what? His clothing is suitably oriental, free flowing, and, although facing the viewer, he is not looking at the viewer. His eyes are cast upwards and sideways, looking to the heavens, or more likely into some half-open window where an adversary is engaged in plotting against him. Mahbub Ali is a well-travelled Pathan, wily, devious, and worldly wise. Even in the flat picture, the texture of his clothes and body stand out, and one can sense the smell of horses, tobacco and bazaar spices surrounding him. He is Rudyard's character Mahbub Ali cast in flesh, or more precisely Rudyard's prose and Lockwood's clay: a crafted object, a familiar, safe, stereotyped and thoroughly orientalist figure.



(*Kim* 33[1901])

The relief of Hurree stands in contrast to Mahbub Ali: his clothing is native, suitable for hill walking, but he wears practical English boots and carries a book in one hand and a parasol in the other. Behind him are the outlines of a few trees and under his feet, the stony ground slopes away as if he is on top of the world. This is the Hurree of the hills, the ‘courteous Dacca physician’ (*Kim* 233), who carrying a blue and white umbrella (*Kim* 226) that acted as a ‘fine fixed point for cadastral survey’ (*Kim* 233), guided Kim and the Lama to the Russians. The umbrella is symbolic as well as practical. In Hindu mythology, it (*Chatra*) is an auspicious symbol, an emblem of the Hindu god Varuna, and an embodiment of Kingship. Hurree’s book indicates a man of learning, and that, when combined with his occupation as a wise Dacca physician and the symbolism of the umbrella, suggests

that the Hurree shown here is a Brahmin, a man of high learning and a man to be respected. Hurree's head is turned slightly to the left and he is looking straight ahead, not directly at the observer, but past him or her into the distance. His face is serious, and his jaw firmly set. Where Mahbub Ali is almost posing for the western tourist, Hurree has stopped in his journey for a quick snapshot before moving on, and his look suggests that he is intent on a future journey rather than concerned with the present. Hurree's haircut and robes are reminiscent of a Roman, a senator or a politician perhaps.



(*Kim* 284[1901])

I will discuss Hurree in more detail later, but this is not how the Babu should be presented, or at least how the constructed stereotypical figure should be. This figure is strange, seen as out of place by a western observer, an incongruity in the hierarchical colonial order of things. Is Hurree a figure of the past haunting the present? But he has modern boots and a book, most certainly he is not the despised Babu clerk, but what is he? Lockwood's figures are ghostly, having a strange

ethereal quality of light and dark that gives them a physical form, and as Rudyard Kipling says, 'a little life' (*SoM* 141).

It is worth repeating the concern of Ruskin, Morris and Lockwood Kipling to preserve the spiritual dimension of the craftsman, and Rudyard Kipling's disparaging comment on the Indian craftsman when he encountered the Japanese discussed in Chapter Two. Deepali Dewan writes, in the context of the Indian craftsman, that the craftsman was a site of conflict: on one side, a carrier of cultural heritage; on the other, a commoditised operative working in the machine of capitalist production (Dewan 118-134).⁶⁶ Lockwood Kipling's time in India was spent at the focus of this conflict in attempting to revive the native craftsman and his art in the face of a flood of cheap imported commodities.⁶⁷ Lockwood Kipling's figures can be read in the context of either commodities or expressions of free will and I read the figure of Mahbub Ali as a commodity, manufactured by the machine of Orientalism. Conversely, I read that of Hurree as something else. In Hurree, there is a dispute between the stereotype, individualism and Lockwood's sympathetic view of the native Indian craftsman. The figure of Hurree is problematic, but in that ambivalence there is the ghostly trace of the human voice trapped within the stereotype, even though the figure is produced by an Englishman who resided in India for approximately thirty years.

Kipling's *Kim* is a representation of colonial space, produced by Rudyard and apparently with a significant contribution by John Lockwood Kipling; it could be considered as a hybrid text, constructed from the interactions of two people with different experiences of colonial India (*SoM* 138-42). The experiences of these individuals were real, they happened, and what they produced in *Kim* was a text that reflected their theoretical knowledge (Said's Orientalism) and their sensed experiences. Bhabha defines such a combination thus: 'It [the colonial system] employs a system of representation, a regime of truth that is structurally similar to realism' (Bhabha 101) – and, I would add in the context of *Kim*, a representation of sensed aesthetic experience. What is interesting is the way *Kim* represents colonial

⁶⁶ Dewan makes the point that the British, in trying to rescue the Indian craftsman from Western corruption, and to increase trade and Government revenue, felt they had to intervene with education, which was one justification for the colonial presence (Dewan 129).

⁶⁷ See. Flanders, Judith. "The Keeper of the Wonder-house: John Lockwood Kipling." The Kipling Society. <http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/members/paper_flanders.htm>. Accessed 21 August 2013.

India, and in the context of this discussion, how it (re)presents the stereotypes. The horse-trader Mahbub Ali is pretty solid, combining the skill, duplicity and slipperiness of a horse dealer with an exotic flavour of the East. He is the crafty, worldly-wise Hillman who will survive and go along with the system for as long as it suits him. He is a free man, one to be admired and better left alone while discretely bribed to be an ally. The same reasoning can be applied to many of the characters in the story, the old soldier and his sons (*Kim* 46) and the old lady and her retinue (*Kim* 65), for example. The Lama is an intruder into the colonial picture, but does not represent a threat. Rather, he is an object to be incorporated into the colonial system of knowledge, as Kim takes him into his possession (*Kim* 12).

Kipling's depiction of the idealised colonial officer appears in the St George-like figure of the 'faultlessly uniformed' District Superintendent of Police on the road (*Kim* 75). Country born, hybrid in culture, if not in biological race, and, like Kim, able to join in the secret freemasonry of the insult. This is the ideal colonial officer, English by race, native in understanding. As the old lady says approvingly:

'These be the sort to oversee justice. They know the land and the custom of the land. The others, all new from Europe, suckled by white women and learning our tongues from books, are worse than the pestilence.' (*Kim* 76)

This same policeman (Strickland) has the magic property of reinvention, and he appears later in the railway station at Delhi playing the other policeman stereotype: 'belt, helmet, polished spurs and all, – strutting and twirling his dark moustache' (*Kim* 207). Creighton, the man who controls the secret service, is another idealised figure. He is able to hide behind a disguise, to act decisively when Kim delivers the white stallion message (*Kim* 36-7), complicit in dispatching troops to 'punish' rebellious tribesmen and yet not contemptuous of other races: 'True; but thou art a Sahib and the son of a Sahib. Therefore do not at any time be led to condemn the black man' (*Kim* 119).

Kim and these idealised figures are in stark contrast to the lower operatives of the colonial system. Lurgan Sahib, who dressed like a Sahib, but 'the accent of his Urdu, the intonation of his English, showed that he was anything but a Sahib' – is one such second-class Sahib (*Kim* 151). Similarly, the lower-ranking and lower-class railway policemen, who engaged in a brutal attack on the two men who were waiting

to attack Mahbub Ali, (*Kim* 141-2) and the lowly drummer boy from the suburbs of Liverpool who called the Indians ‘niggers’ (*Kim* 102) – all act to emphasise the idealised Sahib figures of Kim, Creighton and the policeman Strickland. In the secondary figures, Kipling has inverted the sense of self and otherness: the self has become Kipling’s native India, or at least a representation of it, and the intruders, the others who disturb it, are the second-rate Sahibs and the intruding foreigners.

The Witnessing

Before discussing the figure of Hurree Chunder Mookerjee in detail, I wish to briefly highlight two texts, one is a long lost Anglo-Indian magazine, and the other is Kipling’s story ‘The Head of the District.’ These texts ought to pre-determine Hurree but they do not, and the difference between Hurree as he emerges from a careful reading of *Kim* and what he *should* have been is interesting. Real Anglo-Indian anger at the Babu can be found in the Anglo-Indian magazine, *The Foghorn*, volume II, Jan 1897 to July 25 1897, published by the Civil and Military Gazette Press in Lahore, and held in Bateman’s library. The magazine, occasional in nature, provides a fleeting snapshot of the life of the Anglo-Indian. It is loosely modelled on the London *Punch* and is largely humorous and light hearted, with the stated aim that it ‘wishes to be mirthful without being vulgar’ (*Foghorn*, 1 January 1897). The copy at Bateman’s has the following inscription written into the front fly-sheet, and was presumably produced by acquaintances of Kipling:

To

The First and Greatest of the Indian Journalists

From

The Latest and the Least

‘The Editor’

July 1898.

The issue of 20 February 1897 contains an article titled ‘A lecture on India,’ in which it playfully lampoons a number of characters in the Anglo-Indian circle and is light hearted until it comes to the section on the Babu, which is short and to the point:

The Babu I propose leaving out, as he would require a whole lecture to himself. Suffice it to say that he is a strange compound of pomposity, puerility and patent leather; a cross between a Webster's Unabridged Dictionary and a Whittaker's Almanack, who is slowly, but surely, undermining British power in India. (*The Foghorn*, 20 February 1897)

This is not humorous at all; it is vindictive and hostile, and presumably indicative of the general feeling of the Anglo-Indian community. Peter Childs writes that:

Kipling, and to a greater extent Conrad, show the crisis in colonial authority that Homi Bhabha perceives to be the result of hybridity: the contact with the Other, whose mimicry or 'sly civility' deflects and inflects the identity of the colonizer, always instilling unease in the most confident exercises of power. (Childs 17)

Childs's 'crisis in colonial authority' expressed through ridicule of the stereotype is present in *The Foghorn* extract and in a number of early Kipling stories. *The Foghorn's* publication date is worth noting, some two years before *Kim* was first published in magazine form, and it is reasonable to assume that it would have been read by Kipling during the period that he was writing *Kim*. These few lines from an obscure, long since forgotten magazine finally bring me to the point that I wish to examine in detail. How and why does Kipling's representation of the Bengali Babu, Hurree Chunder Mookerjee in *Kim*, differ to what the contemporary material would lead us to expect?

The Babu character appeared in a number of Kipling's earlier stories, and I wish to briefly investigate one of these before dealing with *Kim*. The 'Head of the District' (1890) presents what is now taken as the consensual Anglo-Indian view of the Bengali Babu, and it has as its theme ethnic violence and is set in a remote province of India, near the frontier. It opens with the death of the English Deputy Commissioner Orde, who by his self-sacrificing devotion to duty has successfully contained the rivalries and hostilities of the frontier clans. Orde is in debt, worn down by overwork and disease, reliant upon his fellow Anglo-Indian Sahibs to settle

his financial affairs and to find the money to send his wife ‘back home’. The Viceroy in Calcutta, for political reasons of his own, elects to replace Orde with a Bengali civil servant – the Babu figure. Kipling does not spare the bitter irony in describing the Viceroy —sarcasm might be a better description of the language he employs. The Viceroy is an idiot, using the manners and superficial orientalist knowledge acquired in London to rule India, interfering in things which are not his concern, and belittling the qualities of Kipling’s hard-working, time-served Anglo-Indian men with their dearly bought experience (*Life’s Handicap*, 122-125).

The opening is as much a bitter attack on the ideas of liberal imperialism and the drawing room culture of far-away London as it is upon the Bengali Babu. Predictably, the tribesmen refuse to accept the authority of the new Bengali Deputy Commissioner, violence breaks out, which has to be put down by quick-thinking and resolute Anglo-Indians, while Mr. Grish Chunder Dé, M.A, effectively runs away. Kipling’s description of Dé shows many of the stereotypical characteristics associated with the new Babu class. He is educated in the western style, and has visited England and charmed the drawing rooms. He is one of Trevelyan’s ‘competition wallahs,’ entering the Indian Civil Service through examination, and beating less formally educated, but more manly and suitable English candidates (*Life’s Handicap* 123).⁶⁸ Dé has produced pamphlets and had ruled a ‘crowded district in East Bengal,’ which to Kipling, does not contribute to his ability to control a volatile area near the frontier. Later Kipling adds the charge of effeminacy and corruption against Dé: the Bengal district was where all his ‘sisters and his cousins and his aunts lived’, and Dé let ‘everybody have a chance at the shekels’ (*Life’s Handicap*, 126). Above all, Dé is ‘more English than the English’ and that perhaps is the main reason for the dislike (*Life’s Handicap*, 124). In Kipling’s story, Dé is not just a Fanon-like mimic man, a reproduction that has something lacking, but a travesty, and perhaps a parody of what Kipling’s idealised colonial officer should be. The story concludes with the successful escape of Mr. Grish Chunder Dé by railway, and the savage suppression of the revolt by Tallantire, Orde’s passed-over deputy. The conclusion is similar to that of the story ‘The Man Who Would Be King’, with

⁶⁸ See: Trevelyan, George Otto. *The Competition Wallah*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

the return, by ‘the unabashed Khoda Dad Khan’, of two severed heads (*Life’s Handicap*, 146). One is that of the native leader of the revolt, ‘the Blind Mullah, whose evil counsels have led us to folly’ (*Life’s Handicap*, 147), and the other of Dé’s brother. Kipling writes with a degree of savage satisfaction, equal to that displayed in the poem ‘What Happened’, saying that it was a ‘crop-haired head of a spectacled Bengali gentleman open-eyed, open-mouthed – the Head of Terror incarnate’ (*Life’s Handicap*, 147). Terror, for Kipling, appears to lie not in death by disease or fighting on the frontier, but in the form of the modern colonial administrator, the highly educated Bengali Babu. It is a violent, savage story, framed by the pun of its title and the conclusion of the decapitated head of the Bengali, an example perhaps, of the ‘deep brutal laughter’ that Wurgaft finds in Kipling (Wurgaft, 127).

One would expect that in *Kim*, Kipling’s only successful novel, the Babu figure would appear very much in the mould of the two examples just given, or perhaps as in Anstey’s caricature; but Kipling presents the reader with something far more interesting and confusing. Hurree Chunder Mookerjee MA, University of Calcutta, makes his appearance in the back of the shop of the second-rate Lurgan Sahib in Simla. Hurree appears as ‘a hulking, obese Babu whose stockinged legs shook with fat’ (*Kim* 159), and, after inspecting Kim, he ‘swung out with the gait of a bogged cow’ (*Kim* 160). Kipling is setting up the Bengali Babu stereotype: he is fat, obese even, and his ‘hulking’ proportions suggest a degree of menace. He moves with the gait of the sacred Brahmin cow, and at first appears to be all that a spy should not be. Kim asks in astonishment, ‘I do not understand how *he* can wear many dresses and talk many tongues’ (*Kim* 160). Later in the narrative, Hurree introduces himself to the foreign agents whom he has journeyed to intercept, appearing as ‘an oily, wet, but always smiling Bengali, talking the best of English with the vilest of phrases’ (*Kim* 236). Kipling writes that he:

wring out his wet clothes [it has been raining hard], slipped on his patent-leather shoes, opened the blue and white umbrella, and with a mincing gait and a heart beating against his tonsils appeared as ‘agent for His Royal Highness, the Rajah of Rampur, gentleman, What can I do for you, please?’ (*Kim* 236)

In these vignettes, Kipling has Hurree behave and dress in the manner of the stereotypical Babu. Like the figure in *The Foghorn*, he wears patent-leather shoes (real leather being a cow product and anathema to the Brahmin), is easily frightened ('heart beating against his tonsils'), is servile in his address to the foreign white men; and, with his 'mincing gait' and his giggling (*Kim* 221), he has the air of effeminacy about him. The example taken here is from the episode where Kim is subjected to Huneefa's drugs and magic. Kipling has Hurree hiding safely on the balcony, where he takes notes for his rejected papers to the Royal Society on Indian folk custom. After coughing nervously, Hurree's voice is heard:

'Do not interrupt this ventriloquial necromanciss, my friend',
it said in English, 'I opine that it is very disturbing to you,
but no enlightened observer is jolly well upset.' (*Kim* 179)

Hurree's English language is characteristic of the Babu stereotype; it is English, but is not spoken by an Englishman, rather it is formal English that has been learned from intense study, rather than a naturally acquired mother tongue. Hurree uses the term 'ventriloquial necromanciss', which is taken to mean 'ventriloquial necromancies', That is, a multiplicity of sounds produced by ventriloquism that: 'predict the future by supposed communication with the dead; (more generally) divination, sorcery, witchcraft, enchantment.'⁶⁹ The mispronunciation of necromancies, allied to the juxtaposition of a lofty 'enlightened observer', with a descent to a public schoolboy description of being 'jolly well upset', turn Hurree, at that time, into a comic figure, a figure to be laughed at. Following Bhabha's and Anindyo Roy's criteria for civility, Hurree's language would position him outside of the supposed British colonial civil society.⁷⁰ But Kipling does not exclude him from the secret society of the Great Game, a society that is hidden from the public and official face of empire, and that, in *Kim*, represents the real India.

A final aspect of the stereotype construct that I wish to illustrate is the alleged cowardice and the deceitful character of the Bengali Babu. Hurree is a 'fearful man' (*Kim* 221) who, armed with the philosophy of Herbert Spencer and the certainty of reincarnation, can face death calmly but is afraid of a beating (*Kim* 223), and who, after the affray with the Russians and the assault on the Lama, 'for the hundredth

⁶⁹ "necromancy, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017.

⁷⁰ See my discussion on language and civility in Chapter Four

time dissolved in tears' (*Kim* 248). Hurree can lie fluently – he lies to the Russians about their surroundings (*Kim* 239); and he can play the traitor when he regales the Russians with his grievances against the British (*Kim* 237-8). Hurree is ambivalent, conforming to Bhabha's concept of the shadowy figure. Is he really playing the traitor to the Russians or have we been given a glimpse of his real intent to undermine the British? We simply do not know.

Edward Said makes some relevant comments on Hurree, arguing essentially that the Babu is in the story for two reasons: one is as a vehicle to parody aspects of western Orientalism (Said, *Culture*, 180); the other is to act as a double to Creighton. Said writes that 'Kipling always takes Creighton seriously, which is one of the reasons the Babu is there' and that 'lovable and admirable as he [Hurree] may be, there remains in the Babu the grimacing stereotype of the ontologically funny native, hopelessly trying to be like 'us'' (Said, *Culture*, 184-5). Said seizes upon the predictable negative aspects of Hurree. He is simply a vehicle for lampooning misplaced liberal imperialism and to emphasise the idealised Sahib character of Creighton. Hurree is merely a figure of fun, an incongruity to be safely and comfortably enjoyed and laughed over, and, undoubtedly for many Kipling readers, that is precisely how Hurree appears.

Alternating with these predictable snapshots of the Babu stereotype are other images which suggest something else, an array of characteristics which slowly fracture the rigid shell of the stereotype. *The Foghorn* insinuates the Babu's duplicity where he is 'slowly, but surely, undermining British power in India'; but Hurree uses his slipperiness to play the Great Game to aid the British. He assumes the Babu mask when asking the Russians for a 'testimonial' (*Kim* 268), even though he has been instrumental in their downfall. He hides behind the screen of a Babu when instructing Kim on the use of secret recognition phrases: 'I am only a Babu showing off my English to you. All we Babus talk English to show off' (*Kim* 183). He has the power to play many parts, for instance, a 'courteous Dacca physician' (*Kim* 233), and to totally discard the Babu skin, when deep in conversation with the Lama:

Kim looked on with envy. The Hurree Babu of his knowledge – oily, effusive, and nervous – was gone; gone too was the brazen drug vendor of overnight. There remained – polished, polite, attentive – a sober, learned son of

experience and adversity, gathering wisdom from the lama's lips. (*Kim* 226)

The image here is so powerful that it is difficult to judge just how much of a performance this is, and who is or what is the real Hurree.

Hurree's supposed fearfulness, his lack of spirit, is subverted by the many contrary events in the narrative. Hurree 'full-fleshed, heavy-haunched, bull-necked, and deep voiced [...] did not look like a fearful man' (*Kim* 225); he had 'bucketed three days before' through a storm which 'nine Englishmen out of ten would have given full right of way' (*Kim* 235). Kim summarizes Hurree's part of the adventure:

'He robbed them,' [...] 'He tricked them. He lied to them like a Bengali. They gave him a *chit* (a testimonial). He makes them a mock at the risk of his life – *I* never would have gone down to them after the pistol-shots – and then he says he is a fearful man. [. . .] And he *is* a fearful man.' (*Kim* 281)

Hurree remains elusive, disguising his appearance only to reappear magically, hoodwinking Kim, and then just disappearing (*Kim* 219). Hurree has the phantom-like ability to slip into and out of the Babu stereotype, to emerge from the mottled background and then just to vanish into it again. Hurree is a 'made' character, and possibly Lockward Kipling influenced his son in Hurree's creation. Certainly, Kipling credits Lockwood with contributing to *Kim* (*SoM* 138-42). Hurree is a liminal figure, formally educated in the western system, displaced from his indigenous culture, and yet not accepted as an equal by his educators. Only in the secret, imagined community of the Great Game, which is concerned only with cunning, deceit and power, is he accepted as an equal. In fact, Hurree is considered one of the very best (*Kim* 161). Hurree is an educated and intelligent character: he uses his knowledge of French to eavesdrop on the spies, his medical knowledge is an asset, and he draws upon ethnology to invent the 'Son of the Charm' password (*Kim* 183). Combined with this, Hurree knows the *craft* (*Kim* 163), which in my interpretation is the magical power to create realisable form from ideas, and this he imparts to Kim. In this instance, craft is the possession of the secret skills required to survey the virtual and physical terrain and to successfully play the Great Game of power to gain entry to the magic circle. Outside of the Great Game, Hurree exists in an in-between world, caught between different sets of beliefs and life practices.

When the trembling Hurree asks, ‘How am I to fear the absolutely non-existent?’ (*Kim* 180), Kipling’s narrator does not, and cannot, resolve the dilemma. Instead of resolution there is a distanced and ironic comment that, ‘it is an awful thing still to dread the magic that you contemptuously investigate – to collect folklore for the Royal Society with a lively belief in all Powers of Darkness’ (*Kim* 180). Hurree appears to the Russians as a representative ‘in petto [of] India in transition – the monstrous hybridism of East and West’ (*Kim* 239). This is true not only to the Russians, but to many observers also. Anindyo Roy, for example, writes of Hurree’s ‘objectified hybridity as the visible mark’ of ‘a dizzy and muddle-headed ‘crammed’ man who can only follow but never lead’ (Roy, *Civility and Empire*, 7). But is that the real Hurree of the story or just his outer face? Kipling casts the Russians as ignorant outsiders, devoid of true understanding, and therefore the image of Hurree as a monstrous hybrid, a creature that breaks the given set of rules, is possibly one that Kipling is now unable to fully accept.

There is ambivalence in Hurree’s character. He is clever, he has behaved bravely and well and yet is still fearful, and, as Nazir Ahmad’s Mr Sharp instructs, keeps to a lifestyle that shows his ‘national identity,’ albeit an identity which is changing and not yet fully defined (Ahmad 192). He certainly is not the corrupt and cowardly Mr. Grish Chunder Dé, M.A, but neither has he entirely escaped the Anglo-Indian stereotyping. Towards the end of the story, Hurree reappears ‘robed as to the shoulders like a Roman emperor, jowled like Titus, bareheaded, with new patent-leather shoes, in the highest condition of fat, exuding joy and salutations’ (*Kim* 278), and that is the Hurree depicted in John Lockwood Kipling’s striking bas-relief. Lockwood Kipling has added a roman haircut, and what appears in this strange three-dimensional representation is a Roman emperor in waiting, the consummate politician carrying the umbrella, the traditional prerogative of a noble prince. Hurree is not the stereotypical Babu of Chunder Dé or the lawyers and council members of Calcutta that Kipling writes about in the letter series ‘The City of Dreadful Night’ (StS 2: 201-269). These are manufactured modern creatures that possess all the external attributes of the English middle class to the extent that they present an uncomfortable mirror to that class, but none of the supposed internal attributes. On the contrary, they do in fact highlight and emphasise the defects in that class, for they do not suffer, or acknowledge the morality of redemption through suffering, that Kucich argues justified the English middle class (Kucich 9-11).

Hurree is almost the opposite of these Babus: his dress does not mimic English dress, although he still wears the patent-leather boots, and he gladly endures hardship and suffering, although he claims to be a 'cowardly man'. Kipling has taken the detested Hindu stereotype and placed it in the inner core of a prestigious magic group, and the question has to be asked why? What is interesting is that Hurree is a magical creature that belongs to two groups: one is the group of Kipling's despised Hindu Babus, a creature that *The Foghorn* and Kipling's Anglo-Indian associates demonised as destroyers of British India. The other is a highly placed and respected member of the most secret of all magic groups, playing the Great Game. Hurree is a character who justifies his place in the group of the Great Game by accepting his share of the suffering, a Bengali who does not stay at home and grow rich, but a man who operates out in the field, revelling in hardship with scant material reward. As long as that doubling can hold, then Kipling's India can hold together. If they separate, and Hurree fragments, then the unity of British India will also fragment.

Edward Said suggests that Hurree exists as a double of Creighton, an inferior version whose function is to demonstrate Creighton's superiority (Said, *Culture*, 184). While this may have been Kipling's intention, I argue that Hurree as he materialised out of Kipling's writing is something far more significant. What I suggest is that Kipling, consciously or not, has produced a witnessing of *his* colonial Babu at a moment of disintegration. Gone is the confident depiction of an inferior; instead, we have a figure that is fragmentary, spectral and confusing. I argue that Kipling had no substantive knowledge of the literary material of Bankim, Ahmad or Kidwai discussed earlier, and the character that he presents in Hurree is a figure drawn from the outside, an exterior construct. And that construct is fundamentally unstable, scattered throughout the text with no coherent centre, except those few lines at the end of the story and Lockwood Kipling's bas-relief. Hurree is a strange figure, a native of colonial India, and educated and wise. He is a chaotic figure, cowardly and brave, foolish and wise, effeminate and manly; deriving his ideas from a wide variety of occidental and oriental sources and is intellectually, but not biologically, a hybrid.

I return to Macaulay's 1835 Minute, where he advocates a creation of a replica of the English middle class, but 'Indian in blood and colour' (Moir and Zastoupil 161), and which is intended to be a manufactured labour commodity to serve the machine of empire. Hurree originates from that class; he is not the dull,

boring council men of Calcutta, aping the behaviour of the equally boring English, but the intelligent and manly Bengali reclaiming his blood and colour and working alongside the English professionals as an equal. Hurree is not the Babu of Anstey, Bankim, Ahmad or Kidwai. Neither is he the servile traitorous figure of Anglo-Indian imagination, although he contains elements of all these. Hurree is something different. He is a new creation. Bhabha places Kipling firmly in the line of descent of the 'mimic man', arguing that the line goes from Macaulay to Kipling, then to Forster, Orwell, Naipaul and finally Benedict Anderson (Bhabha 125). Hurree, I argue, is the end of Kipling's 'mimic man', not because it is the last 'India story', but because with Hurree, the process of disintegration cannot be halted. The Kiplings, father and son, have crafted a Hurree that is full of incongruities and oddness that signify Kipling's Babu stereotype in its disintegration. It is a process of dissolution brought about by internal energies, no longer able to be constrained by the stereotype construct, fracturing Bergson's rigid outer coat of that construct in a productive process of splitting. The forces emerging in the revival of Indian literature – self-confidence, maturity, a sense of being and Bergson's 'vital spirit', have somehow entered into Kipling's Hurree and are splitting the stereotype apart. These are internal forces, not yet complete, not yet finalised, and most certainly not understood, but powerful enough to escape the containing shell. In his speech 'Canadian Authors', Kipling says that:

We who use words enjoy a peculiar advantage over our fellows. We cannot tell a lie. However much we may wish to do so, we only of educated men and women cannot tell a lie – in our working hours. ('Canadian Authors' *The Times* 13 July 1933: 8)

For once I believe the writer is not lying. He wrote what he saw, albeit, at the time he produced *Kim*, the lenses that enhanced his vision were those of the Victorian Anglo-Indian, embedded within a culture of colonisation. In his speech, Kipling develops the argument that all the forces and experiences that have shaped his language must invariably appear when he writes, and that is what is happening with the Babu, Hurree Chunder Mookerjee, a gentleman of Bengal. Hurree appears as if Kipling is witnessing the disintegration of his old colonial certainty, even as he writes a novel that is often read as a work to shore up that certainty. Kipling was

trained as a journalist to honestly report what he saw, and what he saw was *his* stereotypical Babu in a process of disintegration, and that witnessing, twenty years or so before E. M. Forster's *Dr Aziz*, is what appears in the fragmented, chaotic images of Hurree. The Babu colonial stereotype arose through a historical process, and Kipling's witnessing of its disintegration in one form does not mean its complete disappearance, for it continued in other forms.⁷¹ It appeared recently, for instance, in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) in the character of the Oxford-educated, but essentially incompetent and destructive Chacko. Chacko might be as expected, but Kipling's fragmented Hurree satisfies no one, because he is neither the heroic Bengali nationalist nor is he a servile colonial Babu, but something different, new, discernibly modern and incongruous.

⁷¹ See Lahiri, Shompa. *Indians in Britain: Anglo-Indian Encounters, Race and Identity, 1880-1930*. London: Frank Cass, 2000.

Chapter Six: Engagement with Modernity

The real poet [...] will appear about the first quarter of the next century [...]. The Great War between 1905 and 15 will make him find himself: and about 1925 or so the people will know who he is. [...] It's a great shame because if I had been born twenty years later I might have seen and understood the drift of the new century: it began in 1889 as nearly as I reckon but we are all bond slaves to our childhood.

Letter to John St. Loe Strachey, 2 Jan 1899. (*Letters* 2: 358)

Introduction

In this final chapter, I investigate the final development of Kipling's jest, through the examination of a selected set of stories produced immediately before and following World War 1. Chapters One and Two contribute to the idea of an unreasonable domain of laughter and humour that is in productive collision with a world formalised by reason. The idea of a collision between reason and unreason is taken further in Chapter Three in its discussion of the spiritual machine and the examination of an indefinable spiritual dimension to life. Chapters Four and Five expand upon this by examining the breakdown and fracturing which occurs to an imposed identity, when that construct can no longer contain the energies and spirits of the individuals constrained by it. Chapter Six follows these developments, by examining the relationships between the individual and a wider society, and the possibilities of the individual achieving a form of empowerment through a spiritual revelation.

The material examined in this chapter has, with the exception of the 'Legend of Mirth', the characteristic that Frederic Jameson terms 'spatial disjunction', and the immediate consequence is, 'the inability to grasp the way the system functions as a whole' (Jameson, 'Modernism', 157). Kipling's characters are situated in a world economic and political system that acts upon them in intangible ways. 'Aunt Ellen' is the exception, in that the result is regenerative, but in the other stories there is a

sense of loss from which the characters struggle to escape. The material selected dates from a period of uncertainty, and a period of a turning away within intellectual circles from the ideas of empire and imperialism. Orwell termed it a period of Kipling's isolation, his time of sulking (Orwell 30). Putting aside this acidic interpretation of Kipling's work, I investigate the degree to which his fictional writing becomes increasingly critical and unsure of the way British society is developing. Rather than sulking, I argue that Kipling's later work is a development of his earlier material, in that it develops a critique of a world system that is composed of capitalism, colonialism and modernity and is in competition with an indefinable spiritual dimension to life. The works selected are necessarily a small part of his output from this period and have been chosen because they continue the themes of questioning and uncertainty of the earlier investigated material.

Material examined here is taken in thematic order, rather than chronologically and is parcelled up into three sections. Section one investigates a series of optimistic material, and it does so by discussing the verse 'The Legend of Mirth' (1917) as an introduction to Kipling's late philosophy of mirth, and the stories 'Aunt Ellen' (1932) and 'The Vortex' (1914). All are works that postulate the continuing presence of the jest and the retention of agency by the individual. These are works that fit into J.M.S. Tompkins's consideration of Kipling's late farces which she categorized into three broad types. Firstly, there is a group that includes 'Aunt Ellen' and culminates in 'the moment of physical disorder, the inversion of human and official dignity' (Tompkins 33). The second group of farces are categorized by 'ridiculous incidents that serve some extraneous purpose as ordeal or gauges' (Tompkins 34). This grouping would include 'The Puzzler' and 'The Vortex', where 'the Heavenly Lark is commandeered to serve as a political allusion' (Tompkins 36). C. A. Bodelsen refined Tompkins's initial two groups, by identifying a special group of farcical stories: 'Brugglesmith', 'My Sunday at Home', 'The Puzzler', 'The Vortex', 'Aunt Ellen', and 'The Prophet and the Country' (Bodelsen 7). Bodelsen defines this special group as stories in which Kipling 'tells the reader more about his private feelings, hopes and disappointments than elsewhere,' (Bodelsen 7). More importantly, 'their real point is not the sequence of fantastic happenings that constitute the action, but a spiritual experience which they are an attempt to express' (Bodelsen 8). Bodelsen differentiates 'Brugglesmith' from the other six stories in his special group because:

The fundamental difference between ‘Brugglesmith’ and the other stories is, however, that it is about a succession of comic events, while the others are about the spiritual experiences which these events produce. (Bodelsen 23)

In other words ‘Brugglesmith’ is an example of the comic, whereas the others are special, because the jest in these farces attains its most powerful form to open a spiritual gateway to a world beyond reason. Tompkins’s third group comprises those ‘punitive farces, in which the killing ridicule, sometimes physical, is aimed by angry men at an offender’ (Tompkins 34). This final group includes ‘Beauty Spots’ and ‘The Village that Voted the Earth was Flat’, where the ‘mood of the story [...] is also astonished, disquieted and bitter’ (Tompkins 35). Bodelsen adds to this group ‘Little Foxes’ and those ‘Stalky’ stories, ‘which contain descriptions of semi-hysterical hilarity,’ because in all of these, laughter is part of ‘revenge or retribution’ (Bodelsen 8). Bodelsen also excludes stories where laughter acts predominately as a healing force (he cites ‘The Miracle of Saint Jubanus’), arguing that these belong to a separate group because ‘laughter has not the character of a ‘revelation’, and for another they are not farces’ (Bodelsen 8).

I follow Bodelsen’s and Tompkins’s classification of late stories, selecting ‘The Vortex’ and ‘Aunt Ellen’ from the special group that culminate in an inversion of order and a subsequent revelation. ‘Aunt Ellen’ concerns itself with renewal through the fertile and regenerative properties of the jest and a society that is visibly renewing itself after a devastating war. In that sense, it fits well with the revelation of the importance of laughter in ‘The Legend of Mirth’. ‘The Vortex’, although chronologically predating ‘The Legend of Mirth’, is a premeditation of a great catastrophe and a vain hope of a return to normality after a short interruption. It seems logical to place this story at the end of the first section where it is immediately followed by material that deals with that failure of a return to pre-war normality. The second section loses its optimism in a reading of ‘The Madonna of the Trenches’ and ‘Mary Postgate’. These are violent tales, devoid of mirth, material that could be considered ugly rather than beautiful, and deal with breakdown arising from a combination of modern warfare and modern society. They are stories in which the jest appears in the form of a violent confrontation between the spiritual and the material, resulting in a violent overturning of the normal reasonable world.

Section three tackles the enigmatic story ‘The Gardener’ and develops the ideas of breakdown, by examining a story that seemingly finds a resolution in the spiritual domain, and in which spiritual love offers the possibility of repairing a fractured material world. In that sense, it is a circular referral to the earlier ‘Legend of Mirth’, but it is not a humorous story, rather, it is one of the most serious works which Kipling produced. Like the stories in the second section, it shows a world in which the jest, a place-holder of indefinable human vitality, has been denied to human life and can only reappear in the form of a spiritual experience. Placing the material in this sequence also allows me to illustrate an increasing interiority in Kipling’s writing, and in particular in his treatment of women.

Optimistic Renewal and Benevolent Chaos

Renewal through laughter

The first three works considered, ‘The Legend of Mirth’, ‘Aunt Ellen’, and ‘The Vortex’, all have humour and laughter in common; they delve into the relationships between order and disorder to disclose a chaotic mesh of interrelationships and connections within English society. All three works, although written over of a period of eighteen years immediately preceding and following World War 1, are haunted by Kipling’s ‘Great War’ of 1905 to 1915 and the effect that had upon society.⁷² I start with the verse ‘The Legend of Mirth’ attached to the version of the story ‘The Horse Marines’ published in 1917 in *A Diversity of Creatures*. Pinney, in his *Poems* carries a copy of the verse with a note to say that, it did not appear with the 1910 magazine version of ‘The Horse Marines’, so presumably it can be dated between 1910 and 1917 when *A Diversity of Creatures* was first published (*Poems* 2: 965). It is ‘conventional’ Kipling, in so much as the work is masculine, concerning itself with divine authority and the behaviour of the male agents, or operatives of that authority, and it identifies the failings of those agents. It points to the existence of two parallel worlds, one of ordered reason and disciplined behaviour, and the other of disorder, which Kipling implies is the real experienced existence of humanity. Disorder appears through the benign agent of

⁷² Letter to John St. Loe Strachey on 2 Jan 1899 (*Letters* 2: 358).

humour, an impossible-to-define property that seems to be uniquely human. My reading of this work proceeds on the basis that it is not simply a facile piece of humour dressed up in elaborate language, neither is it solely a piece intended to provide solace to a grieving population. Rather, I read it as a work that probes at the boundary between reason and unreason, between earnestness and uncontrollable laughter and mirth. It also hovers around the distinction between a cultural system that is preordained and closed to new development, and one that is open to change and renewal.⁷³

Kipling's verse concerns heaven, or at least the business conducted in the entrance hall, where the spirits of the dead are collected and ushered to their eternal homes. There is an omniscient being supervising the four Archangels; Raphael, Gabriel, Michael, and Azrael, whose 'charge' is to conduct the human spirits into heaven. These four:

Being first of those to whom the Power was shown,
 Stood first of all the Host before the Throne
 And, when the Charges were allotted, burst
 Tumultuous-winged from out the assembly first (3-6)

Note the repetition of 'first' in these lines emphasising the archangel's self-importance. As in the earthly brethren that Kipling fictionalises, the archangels are bound in duty to their work but, like their human charges, they are prone to over-zealousness and self-importance:

Zeal was their spur that bade them strictly heed
 Their own high judgment on their lightest deed. (7-8)

They are in danger of becoming mere impersonal tools of the heavenly machine, spiritual versions of Marx's machine operatives, and in their earnestness and the devotion to the heavenly task risk losing their true spiritual essence. It would be easier here to talk of the loss of their 'humanising spirit', or Bergson's 'vital spirit', but the archangels *are* spirits, so it is appropriate to talk in terms of a loss of 'heavenly spirit' and a descent into mere operatives of the heavenly machine. The vital spirit is absent because heaven has become a deterministic machine that is

⁷³ The text of 'The Legend of Mirth' is taken from Pinney's *Poems 2*: 965-8.

rather like the world of ‘As Easy as A.B.C.’ in which uncertainty and randomness has been suppressed. As John Milton expressed it in *Paradise Lost*, chaos and disorder were banished by God to create an ordered and mathematically defined world of reason (Milton, Book VII 174-5). According to Biblical tradition, chaos is a place apart from the ordered world that mankind inhabits, an otherness that has been deepened by enlightenment reason, of which Haydn’s *Creation* is perhaps the sublime example. Less sublimely, in the world of Victorian Britain, apparent chaos is replaced by deterministic laws and the applications of political economy to industrialising Britain and its colonies. To investigate the importance of chance and the chaotic in this particular work and in Kipling’s oeuvre generally, I turn to a brief discussion of deterministically chaotic systems.

In the colonial context, chaos would appear to be a property which belongs to the Other, to Africa, to the Orient, to the non-Western, dark ‘uncivilised’ parts of the world. Places where, from the coloniser’s reference frame, Western colonisation can be justified. From the colonised people’s viewpoint however, the incoming coloniser may well be an agent of chaos, disturbing and destroying settled civilisations and ways of life. From the late Victorian period, Western certainty that chaos was ‘other’ in relation to the modern world has, in light of increased scientific understanding of the physical world, been slowly eroded. With the realisation that chaos is omnipresent, the rigid segregation between linear and nonlinear, between order and chaos is now increasingly seen to be untenable. Harriett Hawkins writes:

Occurring everywhere in nature’s nonlinear systems and operating in humanly unforeseeable ways, deterministic chaos is the context, the medium we inhabit in everyday life. Ubiquitously allowing for, and indeed mandating individuality as well as unpredictability within a physically determined order, as in the case of a snowflake or a snowstorm. (Hawkins 1-2)

Chaos, as Hawkins argues, is a strange motor that lies behind a seemingly infinite number of physical phenomena, producing random beautiful items, such as individual snowflakes to overwhelming snowstorms, which can produce further chaos in the ordered, mechanised world. Chaos, it seems, is the motor for individuality; indeed Hawkins writes that it mandates individuality. Chaos, Hawkins

argues, is always there, always ready to intrude and to upset apparent stability. Roger Lewin writes that: ‘If anyone still believes that systems may not be toppled from a poised, quasi–stable condition into sudden chaos, they should start reading the newspapers’ (Lewin 200), to which Hawkins, after citing Lewis, adds in a footnote: ‘alternatively, they could have a look back at Milton’s epic’ (Hawkins 6). Chaos has always been there, always ready to intrude and upset things. The problem is how to cope with this uncontrollable force.

‘Chaos’ appears originally in the myth of the Greek God KHAOS; it is associated with the Hindu God Kali and is also present in the biblical account of the creation. The *OED* provides a number of examples which derive from these ancient origins.⁷⁴ Chaos is ‘a gaping void, yawning gulf, chasm, or abyss: (chiefly from the Vulgate rendering of Luke xvi. 26).’ It is the source of the world, the ‘formless void’ of primordial matter, the ‘great deep’ or ‘abyss’ out of which the cosmos or order of the universe was evolved.’ And it can be a condition of human existence, ‘resembling that of primitive chaos; utter confusion and disorder’. Chaos, it would seem, is a null property, one that is meaningless and unproductive. There is however, an addition citation derived from mathematics and the study of nonlinear systems, which transforms the meaning. According to this, chaos can be ‘unpredictable, apparently random behaviour exhibited by a dynamical system governed by deterministic laws.’ Chaos, produced by deterministic laws, or so–called deterministic chaos, is meaningful. Deterministic chaos is not just random purposeless behaviour, but behaviour which is so complex that we do not understand it. The idea of the chaotic is addressed by T. J. Clark, writing that contingency ‘points to the features of [...] the turning from past to future, the acceptance of risk, the omnipresence of change, the malleability of time and space’ (T. J. Clark, 10-11). He continues: ‘What it does not mean, I should stress, is that modern life is characterized by an absolute, quantitative increase in uncontrolled and unpredictable events’ (T. J. Clark 11). That is, life has always been unpredictable but for modern societies, and for the fortunate classes, that unpredictability has been reduced so that when it does occur the effect is greater.

Katherine Hayles argues that chaos theory is founded upon:

⁷⁴ "chaos, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017.

the discovery that hidden within the unpredictability of chaotic systems are deep structures of order. 'Chaos', in this usage, denotes not true randomness but the orderly disorder characteristic of these systems (Hayles, *Chaos*, 1).

A similar observation is made by Hawkins, she writes that: 'Chaos theory depicts a universe that is deterministic, obeying the fundamental physical laws, but with a predisposition for disorder, complexity and unpredictability' (Hawkins 9). Hawkins continues that the identification of orderly disorder and 'complexity and unpredictability' returns chaos to the domain of God, where somewhere there is a guiding hand producing 'deep structures of order' (Hawkins 9).

Kipling follows a similar path to this much later theory by moving 'The Legend of Mirth' into the realm of disorder, and in so doing, restores the true spiritual dimension of human life and death. Chance leaves one Seraph alone in Heaven, awaiting the call to duty, a duty not exercised often, for it is 'to make men mirth' (24). Heaven, like the earthly world, would appear to be a rather solemn place, where, in contrast to the jolly pagan Gods of the ancient world, mirth and laughter is unusual. Kipling's 'chance' (divine intervention perhaps) is a random event occurring in the great system of heaven, resulting in the invisible hand of its controller, God, dispatching the slumbering Seraph to the zealous archangels. Heaven is part of the deterministic chaotic system of the world, perhaps the most innermost part that houses the rules (Kipling's laws perhaps) that govern the universe and couple the worldly objects into an interdependent whole. God is the omniscient being that has to intervene occasionally, adjusting the relationships between parts of the system to keep the whole working properly. In the spirit world, the innermost place of the world system, humankind is a type of traffic to be managed by, 'Guiding and guarding with devoted mind / The tedious generations of mankind' (29-30). I interpret tedious as 'tired, wearied, or exhausted'.⁷⁵ Death is inescapable, and as Kipling reminds the reader in stanza three of 'The Legend of Mirth,' none of us can 'escape the ministry' (32). In this context, it is worth noting the publication date of 1917, which is towards the end of Kipling's long predicted 'Great War' (that became World War 1). Kipling's archangels have human-like properties. They are, 'Yet patient, faithful, firm, persistent, just / Toward all that

⁷⁵ "tedious, adj." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017.

gross, indifferent, facile dust' of humanity (33-34). It is not too preposterous here to compare the archangels with Kipling's colonial Sahibs, who labour to 'discharge their trust/ By precept and example, prayer and law' (35-36) and like the Sahibs they are beset by doubt, 'The Doubt that sickens: 'Have I done my best?''(39) Kipling's archangels are like his Sahibs, they are conscientious and they labour but apparently they have no love for their subjects.

The seraph is sly, the subject of Mirth is approached obliquely and, in a Rabelaisian descent from the higher and nobler aspects of the world, he 'Prolused of humankind promiscuous' (45). 'Prolused' appears to be a Kipling invention, 'to give an introductory discourse'.⁷⁶ 'Promiscuous' is taken in the sense of the *OED* definition to be 'random, indiscriminate, [and] unsystematic.'⁷⁷ It suggests openness and a place of random unrestricted connections or couplings, a condition that is similar to the rhizome concept of Deleuze and Guattari, a chaotic space where 'any point of a rhizome can be connected to any other, and must be' (Deleuze and Guattari 7). Promiscuous implies randomness rather than systematic order in human activity, perhaps a desire to live without imposed rules controlling everyday life. Kipling's heaven, though, is a kind place, accepting the frailties of humankind and reluctant to condemn to eternal hell those who depart from Protestantism's righteous path of denial and sacrifice. Kipling's seraph is also a storytelling philosopher who rejects the metaphysical in favour of the phenomenological: 'And, since the large contention less avails / Than instances observed, he told them tales' (46-47). Perhaps this is a clue to how Kipling imagined his own work, telling tales of the world as experienced in order to make a point, although that point is often extremely difficult to grasp. The seraph's tales are more Rabelaisian than Kipling's, dealing explicitly with areas of human life, or more precisely with death, subjects at which a respectable author could only hint:

Tales of the shop, the bed, the court, the street,
Intimate, elemental, indiscreet:
Occasion where Confusion smiting swift
Piles jest on jest as snow-slides pile the drift

⁷⁶ "proluse, v." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017.

⁷⁷ "promiscuous, adj. and adv." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017.

Whence, one by one, beneath deriding skies,
The victims' bare, bewildered heads arise (48-53)

In the disordered world, death occurs at the most inconvenient times. Not on a Romantic battle-field where a noble death is possible, or even to be sought, but where death is undignified and messy: in 'the shop, the bed, the court, the street/ Intimate, elemental, indiscreet' (48). Humankind, Kipling asserts, is a hapless victim of God's jests, and it dies in every sense unreasonably – in confusion and bewilderment. The Seraph's tales 'of the passing of the spirit, graced/ With humour blinding as the doom it faced' (54-55) break the barrier between death and laughter – 'Stark tales of ribaldry that broke aside / To tears, by laughter swallowed ere they dried –' (56-57), causing tears of laughter, not of sadness or superiority nor malice but simply because of the incongruity of the event. The Seraph's tales are:

Tales to which neither grace nor gain accrue,
But only (Allah be exalted!) true,
And only, as the Seraph showed that night,
Delighting to the limits of delight. (58-61)

The tales are ribald, to be told discretely to friends and enjoyed simply because of the escape they provide from the earnest, solemn world of reason, to the chaotic world of unreason. They delight because, despite the ribaldry, they are innocent and truthful, and illustrate humanity as it really is in the private spaces of life. The tales are Rabelaisian, rejecting ordered reason and an idealised metaphysical view of life and noble death, in favour of an experienced earthly life, an example in miniature perhaps of the spirit of Bakhtin's carnival.

Kipling argues that storytelling is an art – 'These he rehearsed with artful pause and halt, / And such pretence of memory at fault' (62-63) – to be introduced craftily, hesitantly, in such a manner as to induce the readers to participate and insert their own tales into the incomplete text provided by the storyteller. The art of storytelling, Kipling says, is to provide a vehicle to be subconsciously hijacked by the listener and used to tell their own tale. Kipling's storyteller is like the craftsman, a special person able to give form to abstract ideas, rather like the Indian craftsman drawn by Lockwood Kipling in 1870 (Dewan 119). Deepali Dewan describes this

drawing as ‘suggest[ing] an ‘authentic’ moment of production in which the knowledge of traditional Indian arts was captured in the process of being transferred from the craftsman’s body to the object he produces’ (Dewan 119). Rudyard Kipling’s depiction of the storyteller illustrates the moment at which the idea is transferred from his body, not into a block of wood or stone, but into the bodies of his listeners. The method is crafty: it cloaks a story in a spiritual guise, whereas the intent is to deal with more earthly and immediate concerns.

The secret of storytelling, Kipling suggests, is in the hidden detail of ordinary existence, ‘Matters dismissed long since as small or vain’ (66), that only reveal their true significance when the noise and chaos of everyday life is stripped away. For Kipling, seeing the significance of ordinary things brings enlightenment, not the enlightenment of reason but that of an intuitive understanding of the nature of the world. Mirth produces an understanding that defies logical ordering, but produces a reaction such that, ‘Each marvelled at his own oblivious past’ (70). Laughter, like heaven, is a separate place from the world of work and toil, and entry to it has to be negotiated, but, once inside, the outside world is banished and its celebrants can, ‘In utter mirth forg[e]t both Zeal and Pride!’ (74). Kipling’s archangels return from the place of the revelation of mirth to their ordinary work, not in a disciplined order but ‘weak with merriment, the Four returned’(76), and like sailors of the navy returning to ship after a run ashore, ‘shoutingly adrift ‘twixt star and star’ (80). They are drunk, not with alcohol, but with laughter and happiness, and have thrown off, even if temporarily, the cares and conceits of everyday duty. Laughter, and as Kipling implies, joyous storytelling, have brought a sense of freedom. During their return, oblivious to the discomfort of the inhabitants, the archangels jest with planets, ‘Reeling a planet's orbit left or right /As laughter took them in the abysmal Night’ (80-81), and into the cold, dark world of deep space bring joy. This newly discovered joy, which only be the joy of existence, that of a newly discovered freedom revealed by the disorder of laughter, is so intense that it even touches and connects with those souls, ‘Gehenna's bondsmen’ (87), condemned to hell.

Kipling has moved into the realm of chaos and disorder in order to illustrate how laughter rejuvenates. Rabelaisian laughter has restored the archangels, the officers of heaven, and has brought to them a sense of brotherhood (Annan 18). Laughter has seemingly changed the archangels from ethereal spirits into recognisable human forms, gifting them a humanity and warmth that Kipling

possibly longed to see in the materialist culture of the modern world. As J.M.S. Tompkins writes: ‘The Archangels have received new light on their tasks from frivolity, and they tell the tale roundly against themselves in Heaven’ (Tompkins 40). Genuine friendship and love of fellow human beings engendered by telling tales and sharing laughter, laughing with people, rather than at them, is creative. It creates a new bond, a new series of connections: ‘Oh, lovelier than their morning majesty, / The understanding light behind the eye!’(92). Sharing promotes understanding, it spawns connections that are open and negotiable rather than closed and authoritarian: ‘Oh, more compelling than their old command, / The new–learned friendly gesture of the hand!’(93-94). Kipling makes the point that connections between humans are as much in the physical and absurd arenas as in the intellectual and the reasonable ones. It is similar to the condition that Georges Simenon cites in *Cécile is Dead* (1942). Simenon writes of his character Maigret, who induced a ‘state of physical lethargy, [in which] his mind seized upon connections that sometimes seemed absurd, following paths along which pure reason would not have led him’ (Simenon 94). Maigret’s induced lethargy is analogous to the state of storytelling where the mind becomes detached from the physical body and is free to follow the incongruities and twists of the tale. The connections formed are so nebulous and chaotic that they can only be given realizable form through a poem of spiritual Mirth and through the craft of the artful storyteller. Significantly, that realisable form is created by invoking that most difficult and nebulous of all human faculties – humour.

‘Aunt Ellen’: an ascent into the chaotic.

‘Aunt Ellen’ of 1932, published in *Limits and Renewals*, is a recognisably modern story, in that it deals with machines, mass communication in the form of public radio broadcasting and post–World War 1 society. ‘Aunt Ellen’ like ‘The Legend of Mirth’ is a masculine story, one where women exist as shadowy figures that cause the story to come into being. The exception is Mrs Shemahen, who, rather like the Kilu Sahiba in *Kim*, is a virtuoso of insult and seems to hold some power over the men.

The story develops the idea of beneficial but intangible connections brought about by forms of humour that ‘The Legend of Mirth’ introduces. ‘Aunt Ellen’ is a

modern story, in that it depicts a society driven by new forms of economic enterprise, renewing itself after the trauma of World War 1. It is an optimistic tale that does not postulate a barren world, but rather a Darwinian society, where individuals have the freedom to compete. The world in which the story is situated is a world where the pre-war social hierarchies have been disturbed, and perhaps blurred, by the common experience of devastating war. I read the 'Aunt Ellen' as an example of a beneficial, chaotically connected, open system that reveals a network of hidden and unsuspected connections to illustrate a world in the remaking. 'Aunt Ellen' is a tale of chaos and disorder that, rather like the dream sequences in 'The Brushwood Boy', occupies the space of a disorderly night world, a place where reason is usurped by unreason. C. A. Bodelsen, writing in 1964, describes the breakdown of Kipling's characters that follows a sequence of bizarre events, culminating in 'an orgy of uncontrollable mirth,' where they 'roll on the ground, gasp, shriek and groan, till they are on the point of suffocating' (Bodelsen 11). This is Malcolm Andrews' argument that, 'laughter undoes the self' in a highly explicit form, order is replaced with extreme disorder and the world is transformed into apparent chaos. But perhaps that chaos is really the norm and the carefully constructed events in the stories are the path that leads to the borderland giving access to this other world? Bodelsen continues that:

The familiar scene is exposed to a kind of shock which for a brief while makes it settle down into a pattern other than the accustomed one. The narrator suddenly finds himself in a universe governed by an internal logic other than that of his normal world, whose laws are earnestness, order and duty. The cosmic powers have discarded their severe mask, and their innermost essence is shown, at least for the moment, to be comic. (Bodelsen 10)

The world of disorder and of misrule evoked in 'Aunt Ellen' gives access to a deeply hidden understanding of the way the universe operates, one that is quite different to the normal world of 'earnestness, order and duty' of the archangels in 'The Legend of Mirth.' The story is most easily categorized as a farce, in that it is a text of chaotic interactions and connections, a rhizome in miniature perhaps, where everything is connected to everything else and nonsense seems to prevail.

The plot is simple enough: a professional man and his male travelling companion have to undertake a night journey by motor car from Grantham in the English Midlands to London. They travel along the Great North Road, an old turnpike road steeped in myth, once travelled by literary characters as diverse as Austen's Darcy, Dickens's Pickwick, the highwayman Dick Turpin and many others. The road also shared some alignment with Ermine Street, the Imperial Roman route from London to York, the spine of the Roman Empire in England. The road is a palimpsest, a modern surface overlaying the remnants of the past. It is easy to visualise the journey along a long dark road, still showing traces of the old stagecoach turnpike, as a journey into the past, or at least a place where the present and the past touch each other. Kipling's story is a modern story with random encounters between the travellers (entanglements is a fitting term), innocent householders, policemen, artisan lorry drivers with their foul-mouthed, sharp-tongued spouses, and a pair of students. The characters are engaged in, and influenced by, new forms of economic activity that all contribute to a rather chaotic evolutionary society, one that is in the process of being remade.

The story is preceded by the verse 'The Playmate' (1932):

When, finger on the pursed lip;
 In secret, mirthful fellowship
 She, heralding new-framed delights,
 Breathes, 'This shall be the Night of Nights!'

Then out of Time and out of space,
 Is built an Hour and a Place
 Where all an earnest, baffled Earth
 Blunders and trips to make us mirth; (4-12)

(Poems 2: 971)

This is a story in which, for a short time, Kipling's demon of mirth takes control, banishing the normal world of order and sowing bafflement and confusion to reveal a series of hidden relationships. It is a story of collisions, between motor cars,

classes, men and women, and above all between order and disorder. Behind these chaotic events lie a deeper set of relationships, those of a shared experience of war, of mirth and work, and, in the context of the great road, what has been.

The narrator takes a present for a superannuated servant in his car, an eiderdown and other small items wrapped up in a ‘coffin’ shaped package (*Limits* 121), a wrapping that suggests the rituals of the passing of life into death and a journey from one world to another. The motor journey is erratic; it is not a celebration of Marinetti’s aesthetic of speed or power, rather a journey of accidents.⁷⁸ Kipling’s machines here are defined by their deficiencies and vulnerabilities, rather than the modern excellence and reliability of the motor cars in ‘The Vortex’ and ‘The Bull that Thought’. The journey continues by way of a university town in which the passenger, Lettcombe, a former army officer, now film promoter, is collected, and a collision in which ‘a thick-set youth in a canoe-ended natural wood sporting machine, rammed me on the starboard quarter and declared it was my fault’ (*Limits* 123). The incident is followed by the comment from the youth’s companion that the erratic driver ‘had been tuning-in’, that is, like Lettcombe, he had been drinking alcohol (*Limits* 123).⁷⁹

Lettcombe, talks about his enterprise, ‘Pan-Imperial Life-Visions’, which was to be run in conjunction with the new American Hollywood. Apparently this is a place of:

Energies unparalleled, and inventions beyond our imaginings, controlled by super-men who, having no racial prepossessions, could satisfy the ‘mass-appetence’ of all the races who attend ‘Sinnymus’. (*Limits* 123)

Lettcombe can only describe this new form of western monoculture in convoluted, meaningless, bastardised words such as ‘crypto-psychic-apperceptiveness’ (*Limits* 124). Kipling’s ironic convoluted vocabulary implies a form of madness, or at least stupidity, which he implies extends to the concept of having no ‘racial prepossessions’. If one interprets racial as a term that includes cultural as well as

⁷⁸ See Blum, Cinzia Sartini. *The Other Modernism: F.T. Marinetti's Futurist Fiction of Power*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

⁷⁹ “Tuning in” would most obviously to refer to the tuning in of early wireless sets but here it is taken as a slang term to mean the consumption of alcohol. See John McGivering’s notes to ‘Aunt Ellen’, <http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/rg_auntellen_notes.htm>. Accessed 13 March 2017.

biological heritage, then the idea that this combination would not imprint its complexity and nuances on any human immersed within them is, for Kipling, untenable. There is a clear rejection here of a universal monoculture that can be satisfied by global consumerism. Cultural difference, Kipling implies, will or should resist a consumerist ‘mass–appetence,’ a criticism that is similar to Adorno’s rejection of a modern mass culture inextricably aligned to materialism and consumerism.⁸⁰

The journey continues to a place where the road ‘ran straight for a few hundred yards’ before turning at a wood (*Limits* 124), the straightness (unusual in an English road of the time) suggesting an alignment with the lost Imperial Roman road. This is a special place, where the coffin–wrapped present falls and is run over by the car containing the students encountered earlier, and a place of unplanned, rhizomatic–like connections where order is usurped by disorder. It is a place where:

thought merges into Intuition and Prophecy, [where] my
Demon of Irresponsibility sang: –‘I am with you once more!
Stand back and let Me take charge. This night shall also be
One of the Nights.’ (*Limits* 125)

Kipling’s demon of mirth takes charge and the story develops into a gigantic jest where the narrator seeks revenge for the earlier ramming. The story revolves around glorious incongruities and assumes farce–like proportions in which the driver of the students’ car is convinced that he has run over and killed some hapless pedestrian, an incident which leaves the students’ car in a rather battered condition:

The ditching had not improved the car, but she was still far from contemptible. Her left fore–wheel inclined, on its stub–axle, towards (technically speaking) the Plane of the Ecliptic; her radiator sweated like Samson at Gaza; her steering–gear played like all Wordsworth’s own daffodils; her swivelling head–light glared fixedly at the ground beneath it like a Trappist monk under penance; but her cranking–handle was beyond comparison, because it was not there. (*Limits* 129)

⁸⁰ Adorno, Theodor W. *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*. Ed. J. M. Bernstein. London: Routledge, 2001.

J.M.S Tompkins comments on this passage, identifying it as ‘self–pleasing arabesque’ (Tompkins 255), writing that it has ‘an unexpectedness that can be found in Dickens, together with a literary allusiveness which was outside his range’ (Tompkins 256). It is a piece that satisfies in itself, the incongruous allusions that Kipling makes between the broken parts of the motor car and the literary are likely to produce delight and laughter. Kipling introduces another element to the developing jest, that of a lorry driver and his wife:

A lorry passed the scene and enquired ‘how much of the road’ they required: Lettcombe replied in the terms of the front–line of ’16; the lorry hurled them back with additions from the same gory lexicon, laughed pleasantly and went on.
(*Limits* 126-7)

The interchange of insults, using a secret language that discloses a hidden alliance and connections, is similar to the hurling of insults in *Kim* that cement the relationship between Kim and the Indian people and between the old lady and the Indian–born English policeman, Strickland, on the Grand Trunk Road.⁸¹ In ‘Aunt Ellen’ the insult is brought to its pinnacle by the lorry driver’s wife Mrs Shemahen (She–mayhem perhaps). Mrs Shemahen is, like the women in ‘As Easy as A.B.C.’, an agent of disturbance, a creature outside the normal reasonable world of men, who to general acclaim left the ‘Master Sergeant Stinking Inspector General of Police’ (*Limits* 141) ‘morally more naked than at birth’ (*Limits* 142). There is a kind of freemasonry in the insult or the jest, in which privileged access to this interchange of riotous disorder connects the participants in an equal relationship, one in which Mrs Shemahen is a full participant. In Noel Annan’s terms, the insult is another means of identifying the special groups of Kipling’s characters and in locating the boundaries between them (Annan 326). The hapless student driver is outside of the jest, or rather its victim, while everyone else is part of the knowing group, although all are under the thrall of Kipling’s disorderly demon.

⁸¹ See Doyle, Peter, and Julian Walker. *Trench Talk: Words of the First World War*. Stroud: The History Press, 2012, for one explanation of an alternate ‘slang’ language arising from the 1914-1918 war. ; The policeman is Strickland who appears earlier in “Miss Youghal’s Sais” (*Plain Tales from the Hills* 27-34), and “The Return of Imray” (*Life’s Handicap* 260-277).

A further incident of note occurs somewhat later when the cars have to stop due to overheating and an innocent householder is dragged in to supply water. It emerges that this character is a wireless enthusiast:

In democratic England, if you make noise enough in public, someone, official or unofficial, will attend to your wants. While our twin Klaxons were developing this theme, a man came out of a gate in a hedge, and told us reproachfully that he had been sitting up solely in order to catch 'W.E.A.F.' on the midnight hush. Lettcombe said that at the present conjunction of the planets there was no chance of this till crack of dawn. Instantly all arguments dissolved into the babble of fellow imbeciles. (Limits 132-3)

Madness it seems is contagious: Lettcombe and the student driver, who had been 'tuning-in' by drinking alcohol, join the bystander in a discussion of the propagation of medium-frequency radio signals; and in so doing, by tuning-in via the new technology of wireless, they create a new subgroup of 'fellow imbeciles' within the larger group. Kipling uses a scientific, although at the time a popular theme, in the middle of this story to illustrate that life is absurd and chaotic. WEAFF was a powerful radio station in New York that under some conditions could be heard in Europe. It was the flagship station of AT&T Western Electric, later purchased by the Radio Corporation of America, and formed a kingpin of the RCA's National Broadcasting Company's red network. WEAFF carried a programming mix of light entertainment and commercial advertising in a format which would have been quite different to that of the BBC service (Hilmes 60-7). It was an example of Adorno's modern consumerist 'culture industry', financed by capital and, through the material it broadcast, extending the influence and power of that capital.

The discussion by strangers, conducted by the roadside in the middle of dark England, concerned a radio – propagation effect now known as the grey line. This is the ability of medium, and, high frequency radio signals to briefly achieve an extended range at the boundary between day and night. The so-called grey line is a short phase during which the chaotic behaviour of the reflecting ionosphere can be temporarily strengthened by the different intensities of solar radiation along its

Path – in this case from the East coast of the USA to Europe. The discussion concerns the question whether this effect is strongest at the time of sunset in America (midnight in England) or midnight in America and sunrise in Europe. This brief instant can be thought of as some kind of magical time, on the boundary between day and night, and a period when reflections are bounced across the world from the discontinuities of the ionosphere. The ‘imbeciles’ attempting to listen to WEAFF are akin to the spiritualist mediums tuning-in to another world only here, that other world is the culture of commercial America, and it is leaking into the conservative world of middle-class England by courtesy of the chaotic ionosphere. This is eavesdropping, where reflections leak from one world to another, bypassing official methods of communication, imperceptibly connecting across cultures in random and indefinable ways. Anybody who could afford a wireless set, or could build one, could participate in this process of connecting up, and it illustrates a facet of individualism and fragmentation working in the process of change. The isolated individual in his roadside cottage is able to eavesdrop upon the other side of the world, albeit only transiently, bypassing ‘official’ channels and imperceptibly adding to the leakage between cultures.

The WEAFF episode illustrates that the world Kipling is writing about has changed from the closed world of Victorian England and the Indian Raj. It is now a more open and porous world, where cross-cultural contact is not limited to seaports, the armed services or the colonial services, but occurs in the very heart of England, even if pursued by ‘imbeciles’, mad people who exist in an alternative, random, chaotic even demonic culture. Kipling’s fictional world has changed from the colonially determined world of the sahib and the native into one which is fluid and seemingly chaotic, a world driven by indeterminate economic energy, and the world of modernity.

A way of visualising this interconnected world is by freely adapting Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the rhizome. The not-so-trivial caveat in my adaptation is that the rhizome is a means of visualising a series of indefinable connections, including energies driven by capitalist development, rather than a topology that frees the world from a universal Marxian model of capitalist-driven development.

Deleuze’s rhizome is an imagining of the connections between things, perhaps the topology of entanglement between bushes and plants in a neglected garden or a virgin forest. In such a situation, the points of connections between

objects and the interferences define and shape the whole, and in ‘Aunt Ellen’ the story revolves around the connections of motor technology, the radio, economic enterprise, the war, family and an intangible sense of belonging. The rhizome is a space of apparent confliction and confusion, a chaotic space where ‘any point of a rhizome can be connected to any other, and must be’ (*Deleuze and Guattari* 7). The rhizome is, according to Deleuze and Guattari, a viral-like concept that is ‘not amenable to any structural or generative model, it is a stranger to any idea of genetic axis or deep structure’ (*Deleuze and Guattari* 13). And like a virus, or uncontrollable laughter or hysteria, it evolves and changes, continuously establishing ‘connections between semiotic chains, organisations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles’ (*Deleuze and Guattari* 8). The rhizome represents a web of influences that include ‘semiotic chains’ that comprise seemingly unrelated:

diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages. (*Deleuze and Guattari* 8)

The rhizome is a ‘map’, ‘a scheme of connection, a route map, an interconnection scheme rather than a rigid copying of a fixed entity’ (*Deleuze and Guattari* 13). And what it attempts to map is chaotic, a jumble of influences and connections out of which emerges some sort of entity, a culture or an idea perhaps. Deleuze and Guattari are emphatic that the rhizome is not a hierarchy, but is instead ‘a multiplicity’ (*Deleuze and Guattari* 8). It ‘has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo’ (*Deleuze and Guattari* 27). This is a world of apparent chaos, Kipling’s world of the night where his demon has taken charge and order has apparently been banished, but Kipling’s chaos acts through the products of capitalism. The motor car; the independent lorry driver, making a living delivering produce to the great capital; Kipling’s irritating companion Lettcombe, an agent of the film-making industry of Hollywood and finally the mysterious radio station WEAFF, a flagship of the great Radio Corporation of America—all these existed and could only exist through the accumulation of capital. The effect of modern capital permeates every part of Kipling’s story, and, while it may be an

ever-present energy in modern life, the rhizomatic map of activity is not. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the rhizome is not a static, fixed entity that forever repeats itself but a dynamic thing: 'it is short-term memory, or antimemory. The rhizome operates by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoots' (*Deleuze and Guattari* 26). Felicity Colman writes that the rhizome is a living entity:

a moving matrix, composed of organic and non-organic parts forming symbiotic and aparallel connections according to transitory and as yet undefined routes (Colman 231)

The transitory nature of the rhizome is interesting. Kipling's characters act out their brief existence only while the story is being interrogated, but, like the old road that the story is set upon, they become traces in the long-term memory of the reader. In the context of memory the rhizome can be visualised as a complement to James George Frazer's long-term memory, the 'engram.' The 'engram' comprises the traces that remain of what has been, while the rhizome is a possibility for the present and the future, a map of unceasing activity and change.⁸²

In a Rabelaisian dénouement, the forces of order (the luckless police) are finally caught and brought under the influence of Kipling's demon of chaotic mirth. The unfortunate young policeman who intercepted the motorists is overwhelmed by flying feathers from Aunt Ellen's eiderdown, and the Sergeant, still suffering from Mrs Shemahen's verbal onslaught, is reduced to tears of laughter:

The Sergeant, as advised, had kept out of the picture, and so had been able to see exactly how it was done. He sat at the base of the lamp-post at the crossing of the arterial road by-pass, and hugged its standard with both arms. After repeated inquiries, none of which he was able to answer, because he could not speak, we left him there, while the Policeman persisted in trying to moul. (*Limits* 145)

As Malcolm Andrews says, 'Laughter undoes the self' (Andrews, *Laughter*, 99). In this case, it is also sign of a fertile disorder. Kipling's demonic chaos of night has overturned established order and revealed something new, a mesh of hidden

⁸² Frazer, James George. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. London: Macmillan, 1974. ; Engram is defined by the *OED* as: 'A memory-trace; a permanent and heritable physical change in the nerve tissue of the brain, posited to account for the existence of memory.' ; "engram, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 26 August 2017

connections and interdependencies between individual members of a culture in a period of great change and uncertainty. This is perhaps a picture of Kipling's imagined modern society, apparently random and developing in a rhizomatic way, but a society which is inclusive and has space for the free individual. 'Aunt Ellen' is a hopeful and inclusive story, where bitterness has been excluded to be replaced by a playful, joyful and innocent revenge that is likely to reduce the reader 'To tears, by laughter swallowed ere they dried –' ('Legend of Mirth' 57).

The Vortex: energies unparalleled

The final work that I consider in this opening trilogy is 'The Vortex' of 1914, a story concerned with disruption and recovery. Like the other stories considered, it is located at the boundaries of reason, unreason and the rejuvenating effects of humour, and is included by Bodelsen in the group of special stories that attempt to express a very private spiritual experience for Kipling (Bodelsen 6-7). Tompkins however classes it as farce in which 'the Heavenly Lark is commandeered to serve as a political allusion' (Tompkins 36). It is also a story that is concerned with a temporary break in normality rather than profound change, a glimpse perhaps of the world beyond reason. 'The Vortex' was first published on the eve of World War 1 (Kipling's 'Great War'), and later included in *A Diversity of Creatures* (1917). It is a story that is concerned with the pulsating raw energy of the present, but is also, in some intangible way, linked to the past and continuity of an (idealised) English civilisation. Before I discuss 'The Vortex' in some detail, I would like to follow up the idea of the 'pulsating raw energy' of the world and the presence of randomness and the chaotic in the world of Kipling's fictions. Recent and ongoing research demonstrates that the chaotic is inherent in the natural world and apparent chaos is merely a product of the inability to see and understand the rules that govern system behaviour (Hayles, *Chaos*, 1-2). Despite this, chaos is still often regarded as a binary state to order: chaos creates a 'gaping void, yawning gulf, chasm, or abyss,' a discontinuity in the world of order.⁸³ The cliff edge of this 'gaping void' is the 'ferociously active frontier that has been found to exist between stability and incomprehensible disorder' (Briggs and Peat 33), and Hawkins writes that it 'is of

⁸³ "chaos, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017.

course the frontier that has proved most fertile in major artistic portrayals of the ways of the world' (Hawkins 8).

The resonant phrase 'ferociously active frontier' provides one alignment with the colonial enterprise and with C. A. Bodelsen's borderland. In this context the colonial frontier, with Kipling's Sahibs struggling to impose order upon a seemingly chaotic native population, becomes relevant. Kipling's characters struggle on the 'grim and miserable' frontier (*StS* 1: 367), which is not always a humorous one, but this is the fertile space that provides Kipling with most of his ideas. Kipling's Sahibs are employed in defending that frontier, not so much the line drawn on the map dividing the red-coloured part of India from the rest, but the line between civilisation and its Other or between order and chaos. Civilisation and Other are relative terms. In the context of Koestler's frames of reference, and in subsequent bisociation, they depend upon which reference frame the observer uses: the coloniser or the colonised. Neither are order and chaos absolute, they too depend upon the viewpoint. To the colonising British, for example, India with its multicultural population and customs might appear to be the epitome of chaos. To the Sikh, the Bengali, and the Punjabi, the British with their desire to change, improve and to 'modernise', driven by the imperative of capitalist expansion, could well represent chaos. From whatever frame of reference is used as a viewpoint, chaos arises from the inability to reconcile the result of Koestler's encounter between different cultures.

Kipling, in the poem 'Arithmetic on the Frontier' writes from the reference frame of the coloniser, making the colonial frontier the space where two cultures collide. As he writes in the poem, the frontier is where chaos and reason fight for supremacy:

A scrimmage in a Border Station—
 A canter down some dark defile
 Two thousand pounds of education
 Drops to a ten-rupee jezail.
 The Crammer's boast, the Squadron's pride,
 Shot like a rabbit in a ride!

No proposition Euclid wrote
 No formulae the text-books know,
 Will turn the bullet from your coat,

Or ward the tulwar's downward blow.
 Strike hard who cares – shoot straight who can
 The odds are on the cheaper man. (13-24)

(*Poems* 1: 97)

This is the frontier where an expensively educated and trained British officer is shot by a ten rupee jezail, ordinary soldiers panic and run, madness overtakes sanity and ‘the odds are on the cheaper man’. For Kipling, it is a place where modern Western teleological development is halted and where apparent chaos is stronger than imposed colonial order, and, as in the story ‘Thrown away’, western modernity and the growth of capital, in the shape of the expensively educated army officer, fail when exposed to the realities of colonialism. There are at least two sides to empire and colonisation; the ‘ten–rupee Jezail’ and the ‘tulwar’s downward blow’ may well upset colonial order with chaos, but they attempt to protect the order of the cultures that the coloniser is threatening with chaotic change. Kipling’s frontier illustrates the fluidity and unevenness of colonial expansion and capital outreach and, quite possibly, Kipling’s own uneasiness over the idea of Western imperialism. But it is Briggs’s ‘ferociously active frontier’ that, for Kipling, is the most productive and fertile space from which to develop fiction.

‘The Vortex’ was first published in 1914 and later in *Diversity of Creatures*. It focuses on a discontinuity that replaces benign chaos by destructive chaos caused by a vortex of enraged honey bees. The story is a coded reference to the impending World War 1, and perhaps the use of the honey bee as the agent of destruction is a reference to Bernard Mandeville’s poem *The Fable of the Bees* (1705). In this work, Mandeville illustrates the damage a prosperous and contented society, living with a degree of corruption, suffers when the abstract notion of virtue is imposed from outside. In effect, a society going about its normal business is destroyed by outside interference, justified by abstract ideas of right: an analogy that would probably appeal to Kipling in the context of World War 1.

The story is preceded by the verse ‘The Fabulists’, and I start with its first and last stanzas. ‘The Fabulists’ becomes associated with ‘The Vortex’ in the 1917 edition of *Diversity of Creatures*, so is a retrospective comment on the story:

When all the world would keep a matter hid,
 Since Truth is seldom friend to any crowd,
 Men write in fable, as old Æsop did,
 Jestng at that which none will name aloud.
 And this they needs must do, or it will fall
 Unless they please they are not heard at all (1-6)

(Poems, 971-2)

There are, Kipling argues, truths in the world which are suppressed, which for one reason or another cannot be made visible and subjected to the cold light of reason. They can, however, be illuminated by the use of fable, bypassing reason and using the mode of the jest, deliberately moving into the unreasonable and the disorderly chaotic mode to connect with the reader. Kipling argues that the pleasurable sociability produced by sharing laughter will allow the storyteller to impart unpleasant truths that are camouflaged beneath the jesting, chaotic laughter:

What man hears aught except the groaning guns?
 What man heeds aught save what each instant brings?
 When each man's life all imaged life outruns,
 What man shall pleasure in imaginings?
 So it hath fallen, as it was bound to fall,
 We are not, nor we were not, heard at all. (25-30)

(Poems, 971-2)

At the end of the poem, chaos is not the happy free chaotic world of laughter that gifts a fertile alternative to reason, renewing the appetite for life, but the deadly, terrible chaos inflicted by war. This is a chaos that levels, not by laughter but by destruction. Kipling bitterly argues that the deadly chaos of war brought on by cold calculating reason takes away all 'pleasure in imaginings.' It reduces man to a creature of the 'instant', not the pulsating energy of happy normal life, but a more destructive force. Gone are memory and the continuity that it can bring, gone is the comforting cloak of materialist consumption, to be replaced by the machine of war with its 'groaning guns' and its own consumption of human life.

'The Vortex' concerns a group of men who undertake a tour of the English countryside and have a grand misadventure, rather along Dickensian lines. One of

these men, Lingnam, is an avid enthusiast for the imperial dream, of which the narrator (perhaps Kipling himself) is rather tired. The narrator enquires about this enthusiast:

‘What's his name?’

‘We call him all sorts of names, but I think you'd better call him Mr. Lingnam. You won't have to do it more than once.’

‘What's he suffering from?’

‘The Empire. He's pretty nearly cured us all of Imperialism at home. P'raps he'll cure you.’

(*Diversity* 382)

The choice of name is interesting. Lingnam is not so different to lingam with its phallic overtones and association with the Hindu God Shiva. Rashna B. Singh, (Singh 115), picks up on this point, associating Shiva with strength and regeneration and by implication the imperialist Lingnam. She also notes the cryptic nature of the story, and, in my decoding, I go one stage further by examining the destructive aspect of Shiva. In my reading, Lingnam is a deliberate pun, and, by spouting his imperial nonsense with a terminology closely related to socialist democracy, he is both an agent of destructive chaos and a ‘prick’. That is, as the *OED* defines it, a penis, or in coarse slang, a stupid annoying person, someone who is conspicuously out of place.⁸⁴ For as Penfentenyou say's ‘You won't have to do it [that is call him Lingnam] more than once’ (*Diversity* 382).

The journey commences and is described:

Well settled on the back seat, he [Lingnam] did not once lift his eyes to the mellow landscape around him, or throw a word at the life of the English road which to me is one renewed and unreasoned orgy of delight. The mustard-coloured scouts of the Automobile Association; their natural enemies, the unjust police; our natural enemies, the deliberate market-day cattle, broadside-on at all corners, the bicycling butcher-boy a furlong behind; road-engines that

⁸⁴ "prick, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 19 August 2017.

pulled giddy-go-rounds, rifle galleries, and swings, and sucked snortingly from wayside ponds in defiance of the notice board; traction-engines, their trailers piled high with road metal; uniformed village nurses, one per seven statute miles, flitting by on their wheels; governess-carts full of pink children jogging unconcernedly past roaring, brazen touring-cars; the wayside rector with virgins in attendance, their faces screwed up against our dust; motor-bicycles of every shape charging down at every angle; red flags of rifle-ranges; detachments of dusty putteed Territorials; coveys of flagrant children playing in mid-street, and the wise, educated English dog safe and quite silent on the pavement if his fool-mistress would but cease from trying to save him, passed and repassed us in sunlit or shaded settings. (*Diversity* 385-6)

Of special interest is the great connected sentence that commences ‘The mustard – coloured [...]’ and that runs through to the end, emphasising in formal text the unity of the scene, even though the scene is chaotic. Kipling starts the sentence by setting up a binary relationship between the agents of the (wealthy) motorist of the time, that is the employees of the Automobile Association and the agents of the civil authority, the unjust police. He extends this by setting the party in the motor car, against all the other users of the road, the deliberate market-day cattle and so on. These are ‘natural’ oppositions, rather like different animal species in the jungle, each following some natural set of behavioural laws in order to survive. The road is competitive: water dependant, steam-powered road-engines, in defiance of land owners’ prohibition notices, drawing water from where they can find it; motor-bicycles charge at every angle, and pony-drawn governess carts full of children contest the road with ‘brazen touring cars.’ What starts out as a simple binary opposition quickly escalates into a scene full of independent entities all pursuing their own interest. This is a loving recreation of the bustling road, full of movement and apparently chaotic, but, like the images of the Grand Trunk Road in *Kim*, at peace with itself and following some unfathomable internal logic. To present an interpretation of this, I turn to the theories of deterministic chaos.

To consider chaos is to consider complexity. Deterministic chaos, which is what I am referring to when I talk about chaos, is not just randomness but apparently random behaviour overlying a deeply hidden determining law or set of laws. An often cited example is the weather, in which apparently random behaviour is caused by an immensely complex interaction between numbers of relatively simple parts. The meteorologist, Edward N. Lorenz demonstrated in 1963 that the coupling of three separate and apparently simple differential equations into a greater system, where each influenced the other, produced chaotic behaviour.⁸⁵ This behaviour is not boundless; indeed it is contained within a bounded space, now termed the Lorenz ‘strange attractor.’ The behaviour is chaotic in the sense that it cannot be predicted or controlled, yet it is not random. Deeply buried and unobservable are the three determining equations. The system follows a set of ‘laws’, only the ‘laws’ are not visible to the external observer, and it is from this invisibility that the terminology of ‘deterministic chaos’ arises.

The idea of linkages and order hidden deep within chaos is commented upon by both Katherine Hayles and John McCarthy. Hayles suggests that chaos can lead to self-organising systems (Hayles, *Chaos* 3) such as motor traffic flow, and McCarthy argues that chaos theory leads to openness and an ability to connect between the previously un-connectable:

Once we begin to distance ourselves from the binary mode and think complementarily – even holistically – we begin to notice linkages previously unsuspected. (McCarthy 71)

This idea of chaotic interconnections has a resonance with the ideas contained within Deleuze’s rhizome theory and in Kipling’s works, as discussed in this chapter. The conceptual problem of reconciling chaos with order is addressed by Hayles, who argues that they are not simple oppositional binaries but interdependent entities. She writes that ‘at the centre of chaos theory is the discovery that hidden beneath the unpredictability of chaotic systems, are deep structures of order’ (Hayles, *Chaos*, 1). This is a point which is elaborated upon by Giuseppina Botta:

Chaos has its own order; in other words, as chaos is the complete subversion of order, it has its own rules which are

⁸⁵ Lorenz, Edward Norton. ‘Deterministic Nonperiodic Flow.’ *Journal of the Atmospheric Sciences* 20.2 (1963): 130-41.

completely antithetical to the common notions of organization, regulation, classification, categorization, stability and harmony. (Botta 56)

The order, buried deeply under the noise of life, Botta suggests, may not be order as commonly understood, but is something ‘antithetical’ to all that we commonly associate with order, almost belonging to another world or dimension. In the colonial sense, it is the coloniser’s inability to understand a form of order that is apparently ‘antithetical to the [coloniser’s] common notions’ that produces the view of a chaotic ‘native’ culture. Similarly, from the viewpoint of the colonised, the incoming coloniser’s intervention can represent chaos because the coloniser’s ‘order’ is antithetical to the established order of the colonised. Chaos can be interpreted as either a constructive or destructive phenomenon, a distinction which arises from the laws of thermodynamics as David Porush identifies. As Porush says, the classical view, attributed to Carnot and Lord Kelvin, is that energy is finite. Energy once used is not recoverable, and it leads to ‘the universe winding down inexorably towards randomness and cold,’ so-called heat death (Porush 56). Darwinism, on the other hand, depicts a ‘more heated aspect of the cosmos that evolved towards complexity and differentiation,’ i.e. the process of evolution (Porush 56). In the former case, chaos is associated with death, literally the end of the world, while in the latter with renewal and fertility. Kipling’s chaotic road is not a portent of chaotic death, but a scene that expresses the vitality of human life through a description of chaotic activity. In my reading, it becomes a metaphor for a progressive, evolving and self-organising modern society.

The road is not completely peaceful, however; the progression of the English scene is disrupted by the appearance of soldiers along the trunk road signalling the imminence of war with ‘red flags of rifle-ranges and detachments of dusty putteed Territorials’ (*Diversity* 386). The immediate threat in the story is not from Kipling’s hated Hun, but from the stupidity of Lingnam and the enraged honey bee. The idiot Lingnam is an incongruity, one who does not fit, and by not understanding the self-organising traffic flow creates another incongruity by crashing the car into a cycling boy. For the boy is carrying four fully-populated bee hives, and in the upset, releases a vortex of enraged bees upon the village, its summer fete, and the visitors. Farce develops from the encounter, and the villagers flee under the stinging attack of the

bees, which Kipling describes in militaristic terms. The narrator, ironically a fully paid up member of the county Bee-keepers Association, is left 'alone in an inhospitable world where everyone was shutting windows and calling children home' (*Diversity* 391).

Normal life has ceased, and the scene resembles that of a battle-field:

The Foresters' band no more knew what was coming than do troops under sudden fire. Indeed, there were the same extravagant gestures and contortions as attend wounds and deaths in war; the very same uncanny cessations of speech—for the trombone was cut off at midslide, even as a man drops with a syllable on his tongue. They clawed, they slapped, they fled, leaving behind them a trophy of banners and brasses crudely arranged round the big drum. (*Diversity* 392)

The happy, noisy, chaotic fête has been replaced by a sterile, macabre graveyard. The scene recalls the devastating effects of concentrated rifle-fire on unprepared troops, experienced by the British in the Boer War and it predicts the deadliness of the forthcoming World War 1. Human-made chaos of a living bustling culture has been replaced by a madness imposed by the stupidity of a fool and an alien creature, the humble honey bee.

Like the governments of war-like nations, the bee is no longer the provider of sweetness and innocent pleasure but appears transformed into an agent of destruction:

Obviously, since her one practical joke costs her her life, the bee can have but small sense of humour; but her fundamentally dismal and ungracious outlook on life impressed me beyond words. She had paralysed locomotion, wiped out trade, social intercourse, mutual trust, love, friendship, sport, music (the lonely steam-organ had run down at last), all that gives substance, colour or savour to life, and yet, in the barren desert she had created, was not one whit more near to the evolution of a saner order of things. The Heavens were darkened with the swarms' divided counsels; the street shimmered with their purposeless sallies.

They clotted on tiles and gutter-pipes, and began frenziedly to build a cell or two of comb ere they discovered that their queen was not with them; then flung off to seek her, or whirled, dishevelled and insane, into another hissing nebula on the false rumour that she was there. (*Diversity* 396-7)

Kipling could almost be describing the effects of poison gas swirling and blowing across a battle-field or the boiling cauldron of a primeval universe devoid of life and filled with undirected and unrecognisable streams of energy. The normal world has ceased and life is at a standstill, but, fortunately for the folk, a natural force even more potent than that of the bee exerts itself. A thunderstorm of biblical proportions (sent by the Gods perhaps) literally washes the bees into submission and allows normality to return.

The narrator, paralysed with a laughter that contrasts strongly with the real intent of the story, describes the return to normality:

I staggered out-of-doors again, and fell into the car, whose ever-running machinery masked my yelps and hiccups. When I raised my forehead from the wheel, I saw that traffic through the village had been resumed, after, as my watch showed, one and one-half hour's suspension. There were two limousines, one landau, one doctor's car, three touring-cars, three tricars, one traction-engine, some motorcycles, one with a side-car, and one brewery lorry. It was the allegory of my own imperturbable country, delayed for a short time by unforeseen external events but now going about her business and I blessed Her with tears in my eyes, even though I knew She looked upon me as drunk and incapable. (*Diversity* 398-9)

The narrator falls into the comforting modern machine of the motor car, whose reliability can be depended upon to restore modern normality and banish the 'yelps and hiccups' of unreason and chaos. Continuity, symbolised by the gently pulsing car engine, which like a heartbeat, continued through the disruption caused by Lingnam's ignorance and stupidity, is restored and the moment of contingency curtailed. Friendly chaotic normality returns and the flow of traffic has been restored,

a hoped-for allegory of the rapid ending of a war and a return to mirthful chaos and peace. It is a message of hope for the thoughtful reader and perhaps a reasonable hope in 1914, but by 1917 it must have appeared impossible, for, as Kipling writes in 'The Fabulists', 'So it hath fallen, as it was bound to fall, / We are not, nor we were not, heard at all' (*Diversity* 29-30). There is in the story two modes of chaos, two modes of the jest perhaps, one life-giving and self-organising, represented by the road descriptions and the other destructive and life-taking, illustrated by the allegory of the deadly vortex of the bees. The former is produced by normal life, natural unruliness and by evolutionary development which somehow becomes self-organising and beneficial through multiple unseen and unrecognised connections. The latter is constituted by a war, produced by cold calculating deadly reason, that results in isolation and uncontrolled destruction in which the participants are literally in the hands of the Gods.

Engagement with the Modern

In this section I move on to examine Kipling's critique of English society in the period following World War 1. It was a society that was determined by the economic flows of capitalism, structures of power and conformity that owed much to the ethos of colonial power, rapidly changing technologies and the expansion of mass culture. In the stories examined here, it is also the time when Kipling's 'Jest' seemingly vanishes, where that special place between imagination and reason is ground out by the grimness of ordinary life. That is not to say that Kipling did not continue to include humour, as well as pathos and tragedy in his material. Rather, that the three stories examined here stand in contrast to comic material that includes the fable: 'The Enemies to Each Other', the 'Stalky' stories 'The United Idolaters' and 'The Propagation of Knowledge' in *Debts and Credits. Limits and Renewals* includes, 'The Miracle of Saint Jubanus' with its healing laughter that recovers the traumatised ex-soldier Martin; the comedies 'A Naval Mutiny' and 'The Tie'; and the tale of black humour and revenge 'Beauty Spots', as well as 'Aunt Ellen' discussed earlier. 'The Village that Voted the Earth was Flat' is another story of revenge that appeared in *A Diversity of Creatures*. Finally, from *Land and Sea Tales for Scouts and Guides* (1923) there is the tale of a hopeless boy scout who finds his natural talent as a cook in 'His Gift'.

In the three stories selected for commentary, the central characters are the victims of incongruity, condemned, like Bergson's unfortunate individual, to conform to artificial rules of conduct. In these later stories, the struggle is to locate the human creative energies within the incongruity in order to enter the jest to regain some form of agency. Kipling's work discussed here probes at the rigidity of English society, often brutally and violently, to produce some stark conclusions. In my reading, he argues that rule-bound English bourgeois society was broken and needed careful rebuilding.

A Madonna of the Trenches

The first story that I consider in the final trilogy, 'A Madonna of the Trenches', departs from the use of humour, but remains on the boundary between the spiritual and the material, and illustrates the destabilising effect of World War 1 upon English society. It is an intense and disturbing story of haunting and love, in which the harshness of war destroys the facade of an apparently stable society to reveal a network of hidden and chaotic connections. Stability and continuity is replaced by contingency, by uncertainty, and the supposed security of family life is revealed to be a lie. The story opens in a Masonic lodge meeting in suburban London, a lower middle-class place, typified by anonymous modernity and the quotidian. Like the chemist shop in 'Wireless', the lodge is an urban place, an unremarkable building in a modern town, immediately adjacent to small shops and businesses. Located in an unfashionable part of the metropole, a marginal world unrecognised by the ideologies of colonialism or imperialism, it is a bleak place that is representative of the modern city. But behind its closed doors there is the caring society of the Masonic lodge in which a high proportion of ex-soldiers meet, recovering from World War 1.

According to Noel Annan, Kipling's world is a ruthless world of Darwinian competition, populated by men who revel in a fertile competitive world. He writes:

This adds to his picture of society as ordered by laws but nevertheless as dynamic. Bursting at the seams, untidy, full of rascals and shrewd men operating on a shoestring and ready to exploit any sucker. A world without hardness, a world in which fairness, in which men's rights were

scrupulously weighed, would be for Kipling a devitalised world. (Annan 337)

This is a world of ‘winner takes all’, of chaotic competition and of constant renewal, the kind of world that has been eliminated in the bleak tale of ‘As Easy as A.B.C.’. Kipling’s world may be harsh with only the elite, proven by competition, having access to power, but it is not a completely brutal world, and as, J. M. S. Tompkins argued, there is a healing dimension (Tompkins 174). There are hidden parts of the system that can heal and they extend beyond individual groups. Annan writes:

‘Ritual’s a natural necessity of mankind,’ says one of the Brothers in the Lodge, ‘the more things are upset, the more they fly to it.’ Science or communion with Nature, rascals, laughter, and dogs can heal them. The worst disease of all, introspection and self-pity — the refusal to accept Necessity — can be cured only by contact with mirth, vitality, and love. (Annan 341)

If all else fails, then the intangible spiritual forces, the hidden coupling coefficients of Lorenz’s equations, can hold the groups and the individuals together. Mirth, vitality and love, properties that transcend Annan’s in-groups, intangible coupling between deterministic equations add another dimension to the ‘laws’ that maintain human culture. The nondescript Masonic lodge is one such place of healing: a place of continuity and ritual, of an attempted normality in an unstable world, where men gather to find friendship and companionship and to put their lives back together. Like the railway wagon in ‘Mrs Bathurst’ and the chemist’s shop in ‘Wireless’, this is a séance place where events that occurred in separate locations and times are brought together in an attempt to reconcile these with the present.

In ‘A Madonna of the Trenches’, domestic life of lower middle-class London interacts inexplicitly with violent death and the confusion of trenches in war-torn France to produce a schism that disrupts a return to normality. The story unfolds through three principal characters: the narrator, a medical doctor Keede, and a young man Strangwick. Keede and Strangwick have served alongside each other in the trenches, and Keede has treated Strangwick after a breakdown there. The meeting follows its normal course and, after the usual Masonic ritual, it moves onto a dreary lecture, during which a distraught Strangwick runs out and is taken care of by Keede

and the ever-present narrator. As Strangwick is persuaded to talk, aided by drugs administered by Keede, a world emerges of another time and place. This is the world of the trenches where the living and the dead are horribly intermixed. Kipling creates a representation, if only a fictional one, of a mechanised war that profoundly shocked and horrified those who endured it, and his equally graphic depiction must have been painful for Kipling's readers. Keede directs Strangwick to a rickety chair:

He hooked up a chair behind him with one foot, held the patient's hands in his own, and sat down. The chair creaked.

‘Don't!’ Strangwick squealed. ‘I can't stand it! There's nothing on earth creaks like they do! And—and when it thaws we—we've got to slap 'em back with a spa-ade! 'Remember those Frenchmen's little boots under the duck-boards?... What'll I do? What'll I do about it?’ (*Debits* 205)

There is in this citation, and some of the others of Strangwick, a form of hysteria, or uncontrolled emotion, a property that Zohreh Sullivan identified in Kipling's early writing (Sullivan 15). However, I suggest that the examples in this story could be viewed as deliberate melodrama, a technique acquired by Kipling on his visits to the London Music halls in the 1890s or from reading Dickens's work (see *Barnaby Rudge* for example). My reading is that Kipling, in attempting to express a form of madness or hysteria, has reached back to reuse a Victorian theatrical form, but the physical conditions of trench warfare that he describes do appear to be based upon real soldiers' experiences.⁸⁶

Strangwick is transported back to the trenches where the duck-boards covered the frozen corpses of dead soldiers, where the still living are surrounded by the already dead. This is a place where the dead define the terrain:

‘I remembered that too. But it was just on dark an' the fog was comin' off the Canal, so I hopped out of Little Parrot an' cut across the open to where those four dead Warwicks are heaped up. But the fog turned me round, an' the next thing I knew I was knee-over in that old 'alf-trench that runs west

⁸⁶ See Captain J. C. Dunn's description of soldier's corpses partially buried at the bottom of a trench. Dunn, J. C. *The War the Infantry Knew 1914-1919*. London: Abacus, 1994. 318.

o' Little Parrot into French End. I dropped into it—almost atop o' the machine-gun platform by the side o' the old sugar boiler an' the two Zoo-ave skel'tons. That gave me my bearin's, an' so I went through French End, all up those missin' duckboards, into Butcher's Row where the *poy-looz* [corpse's] was laid in six deep each side, an' stuffed under the duckboards. It had froze tight, an' the drippin's had stopped, an' the creakin's had begun.' (*Debits* 215)

Strangwick's world is a chaotic place of mud, fog, and the dead, where navigational order over the terrain is imposed by waypoints marked by heaped rotting corpses. This is a place of artificial order imposed upon the chaos of war, itself determined by a reasoned logic of war. The night cold had temporarily halted the decomposition of flesh, stiffening it into a world that creaked and groaned as it found a new alignment. There is no mirth to enliven this grim story. No brief flashes of absurdity, or happy madness, such as in 'The Tender Achilles' of 1929, where the surgeon Ruthven had to operate on some Australian soldiers, cut down by enemy fire. These wild individuals had broken into a milliner's shop earlier, and 'he had to cut three of 'em out of their undies afterwards' (*Limits* 354).

Strangwick's world is determined by killing and random death. 'Jerry' fires a new mortar and scores a hit, 'mopp[ing up] 'alf a dozen' before 'our 'eavies could out it' (*Debits* 214), and Strangwick moves through it, distributing leave notices to fortunate troops. Leave is fourteen days away from the front line and a little time in the other world of ordered civilian life. Except that, the world of home and family is as treacherous as that of the trenches. Hidden behind the public face of the extended family is a hidden love between Strangwick's father figure, Sergeant Godsoe, and his mother's sister, Aunt Armine. A truth that is kept hidden from Strangwick and the rest of the family:

'Why? Was Godsoe your Uncle?' 'No,' said Strangwick, his head between his hands. 'Only we'd known him ever since we were born. Dad 'ad known him before that. He lived almost next street to us. Him an' Dad an' Ma an'—? an' the rest had always been friends. So we called him Uncle—like children do.' (*Debits* 210)

In suburban lower middle-class London, the decencies are observed and respectability preserved under a veil of deceit that protects children and allows a rich family life:

‘Yes—Auntie Armine—Ma’s younger sister an’ she nearer fifty than forty. What a mix-up! An’ if I’d been asked any time about it, I’d ’ave sworn there wasn’t a single sol’tary item concernin’ her that everybody didn’t know an’ hadn’t known all along. No more conceal to her doin’s than—than so much shop-front. She’d looked after sister an’ me, when needful—hoopin’ cough an’ measles—just the same as Ma. We was in an’ out of her house like rabbits’. (*Debits* 211)

Like Mrs Bathurst, Aunt Armine is the enigmatic character that haunts the men, and like Mrs Bathurst she is only given a presence and a voice through the narration and actions of the men. These silences are in striking contrast to Grace Ashcroft and her visitor Mrs Fetterly in ‘The Wish House’, who are given direct voices through the dense vernacular speech that characterizes that story of loving sacrifice. Aunt Armine is the ‘Madonna’ that appears in the physical hell of the trenches and is perhaps a reference to the ‘Angel of Mons’ fable that arose during the fighting retreat of the British army from Mons in September 1914. The term ‘Madonna’ is significant to give to a woman who has a love for a married man, when conventional respectability at that time would disown her. In Kipling’s tale she is equated to the biblical Mother of Jesus and identified through the title as Our Lady, a superior being. Kipling is making a point, which he reiterates in ‘The Gardener’, that natural love, outside of marriage, should not be a stigma.

Godsoe and his legal wife might have been a rather superior couple for the district, with Godsoe’s retired sergeant’s pension providing sufficient money that allowed them to furnish the sitting room with Indian curios, which the children could view occasionally on Sundays (*Debits* 210). Colonialism provided Godsoe with an occupation and a modest income, which in turn generated economic activity that ultimately supported the trade of empire through the acquisition of Indian curios. It also maintained the outward respectability of Godsoe and his wife as a lower middle-class couple. If this cloak of respectability was the Sundays-only sitting room, entered through the front, the back door was always open for the children of

the extended family to go in and out 'like [promiscuous] rabbits' in a perfectly free and natural existence.

Even this quotidian family life in the metropole has been affected by modern war. Godsoe wrote regularly to Strangwick's mother about him, knowing that she would have to ask Auntie Armine to read the letters, not because she was illiterate but because 'Ma's eyes had gone bad followin' on air raids, 'Blood-vessels broke behind 'em from sittin' in cellars an' 'bein' sick.' (*Debits* 211). This is truly a modern world where security has vanished and things are in a state of profound change. Ordinary people living in the great metropole of the great empire can now be randomly killed by the enemy's flying machines and, terrified, have to shelter below ground. This is a time of terror, perhaps not unlike the French revolutionary Terror referred to by T. J. Clark, which he suggests was a time when contingency emerged (T. J. Clark 21), a time when the stable world of the fortunate was being challenged by new revolutionary forces. In Kipling's story, the challenge comes not from the mob and the guillotine, although there was considerable social unrest during the 1920s, but from an external enemy and new technologies of war.⁸⁷ This is a modern world of deceit, but, in this extended family, the deceit is not of hatred, but of love and perhaps guilt, a deceit woven and maintained to preserve stifling respectability under which human relationships are maintained, even if haunted by a deep sadness.

Unknown to Strangwick, Auntie Armine is dying of breast cancer. She and Godsoe have apparently made a death pact, where at long last they can be reunited in the world of the spirits. She gives Strangwick a note to take back to Godsoe when he returns to the front:

'I see,' said Keede. 'And she said to you?'

Strangwick repeated: 'Tell Uncle John I hope to be finished of my drawback by the twenty-first, an' I'm dying to see 'im as soon as 'e can after that date.' An' then she says, laughin': 'But you've a head like a sieve. I'll write it down, an' you can give it him when you see 'im.' So she wrote it on a bit o' paper an' I kissed 'er good-bye—I was always her favourite, you see—an' I went back to Sampoux.' (*Debits* 213)

⁸⁷ See for example Florey, R. A. *The General Strike of 1926: The Economic, Political and Social Causes of that Class War*. London: John Calder, 1980.

Aunty Armine's drawback is the developing lump in her breast and, knowing that she will die soon of cancer, she arranges to meet Godsoe in heaven. Kipling does not condemn his characters to hell for being human and breaking the rules of convention, especially those subaltern characters that do not usually find a voice in the literature of this period. Rather, like his early soldier stories, he gives voice to a hidden and all-too-often silent aspect of British life that stands in opposition to the polished exterior.

After her death, Auntie Armine materialises as a spectral presence to Strangwick, and to Godsoe:

'Well, I am,' 'e says. '*I am . . .*' An' then – 'give you me word I didn't recognise the voice—he stretches out 'is neck a bit in a way 'e 'ad, an' he says: 'Why, Bella!' 'e says. 'Oh, Bella!' 'e says. 'Thank Gawd!' 'e says. Just like that! An' then I saw—I tell you I *saw*—Auntie Armine herself standin' by the old dressin'-station door where first I'd thought I'd seen her. He was lookin' at 'er an' she was lookin' at him. I saw it, an' me soul turned over inside me because—because it knocked out everything I'd believed in. I 'ad nothin' to lay 'old of, d'ye see? An' 'e was lookin' at 'er as though he could 'ave et 'er, an' she was lookin' at 'im the same way, out of 'er eyes. Then he says: 'Why, Bella,' 'e says, 'this must be only the second time we've been alone together in all these years.' An' I saw 'er half hold out her arms to 'im in that perishin' cold. An' she nearer fifty than forty an' me own Aunt! You can shop me for a lunatic to-morrow, but I saw it—I *saw* 'er answerin' to his spoken word! . . . Then 'e made a snatch to unsling 'is rifle. Then 'e cuts 'is hand away saying: 'No! Don't tempt me, Bella. We've all Eternity ahead of us. An hour or two won't make any odds.' Then he picks up the braziers an' goes on to the dug-out door. (*Debts* 217-8)

The questioning in 'Wireless', and ultimate rejection of a science of spiritualism founded upon empirical reason, has now been replaced by a very real and poignant spiritual world. There is no questioning; no puzzlement, disbelief or irony in this scene. The hopeless brutality of war and sterile respectability of peace have been replaced with a deeply spiritual experience that symbolises the continuity of the life cycle: birth, life and death.⁸⁸

Godsoe commits suicide by carbon monoxide poisoning (a fact concealed by his fellow soldiers) and, in a world surrounded by grotesque death, it goes unremarked. Except, that is, by the soldier Grant, who was gifted with second sight (*Debts* 213-4) and Strangwick, who struggles to come to terms with the world of deceit and hidden love with which he has been confronted:

‘For I saw ‘er,’ he repeated. ‘I saw ‘im an’ ‘er – she dead since mornin’ time, an’ he killin’ ‘imself before my livin’ eyes so’s to carry on with ‘er for all Eternity – an’ she ‘oldin’ out ‘er arms for it! I want to know where I’m *at!* Look ‘ere, you two – why stand *we* in jeopardy every hour?’ (*Debts* 220)

For Strangwick, certainty has collapsed: the secure and loving family that he took for granted, modelled on the bourgeois ideal, has vanished, to be replaced by a world of suppressed passion and forbidden love. Life’s certainty has been lost and replaced by Clark’s contingency. The modest comfortable house with its Indian curios is empty, and what is left is the unanswerable question, taken from 1 Corinthians 15.30 concerning the resurrection of the dead: ‘why stand *we* in jeopardy every hour?’ Real life, Kipling argues, is not about respectability or comfortable marriage, but about spiritual and intangible human connections. As Strangwick says, through his drug induced state and his concern over a looming breach of promise action against him:

‘And I’m damned if it’s goin’ to be even once for me!’ he went on with sudden insane fury. ‘I don’t care whether we ‘ave been pricin’ things in the windows. . . . *Let* ‘er sue if she

⁸⁸ For further discussion of the reawakening of spiritualism following the end of the First World War, see Johnson, George M. *Mourning and Mysticism in First World War Literature and Beyond: Grappling with Ghosts*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, and Lodge, Oliver Sir. *Raymond: Or, Life and Death, with Examples of the Evidence for Survival of Memory and Affection After Death*. Fourth edition. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd, 1916.

likes! She don't know what reel things mean. *I* do—I've 'ad occasion to notice 'em. . . . *No*, I tell you! I'll 'ave 'em when I want 'em, an' be done with 'em; but not till I see that look on a face . . . that look. . . . I'm not takin' any. The reel thing's life an' death. It *begins* at death, d'ye see. *She* can't understand. . . . Oh, go on an' push off to Hell, you an' your lawyers. I'm fed up with it—fed up!' (*Debits* 220)

Strangwick has discovered that internal life is not planned and organised in a neat hierarchical structure, capitalist inspired and mapped out in a bourgeois pattern, but something much more random and chaotic. Hidden rhizomatic-like connections between life and death; between people acting on suppressed natural emotions; impersonal forces of capital and national interest; power networks in which the individual is marginalised, all dominate Strangwick's life. A rhizome is a multiplicity (*Deleuze and Guattari* 8), and Strangwick is the focal point of this multiplicity of connections which resists the simplistic determinist development path that he has been conditioned to accept. Strangwick's simple constructed identity, that fixed him in a relationship with the surrounding meta-system, has been broken by the revelation of the complexity of the environment that surrounds him. As Deleuze writes, 'a rhizome is not amenable to any structural or generative model. It is a stranger to any idea of genetic axis or deep structure' (*Deleuze and Guattari* 13). With the collapse of stable familial relationships and the loss of Deleuze's 'genetic axis', Strangwick's teleological development, from an eligible bachelor into a solid bourgeois husband complete with a wife who consumes the latest manufactured goods, is shattered.

Real life here is not represented by material things, by convention or marriages of convenience, but by a deeply spiritual force, a hidden force revealed to Strangwick by the apparition of Auntie Armine. Heaven is the place for spirits to unite in peace and a true ordering based upon love; hell is for lawyers and an ordering based upon imposed rules and materialism. What Kipling appears to say, is that after the discontinuity and suffering of World War 1, life has been irrevocably altered and somehow must be reconsidered. He is not advocating wholesale abandonment of society's moral codes, but perhaps a more humane interpretation and a recognition of the naturalness of life, where 'We was in an' out of her house

like rabbits' (*Debts* 211). There is a dilemma, which to Kipling appears irresolvable, between modern, disciplined urbanised society with its codes of behaviour and economic flows and a natural life that allows human beings to love whom they wish. Strangwick is presented with a choice: to conform and marry in a loveless marriage and live a life of petty bourgeois respectability supported by material consumption, or to rebel. Strangwick chooses to rebel, and in a line that could apply both to material objects or to women he cries: 'No, I tell you! I'll 'ave 'em when I want 'em, an' be done with 'em; but not till I see that look on a face . . . that look. . . .' (*Debts* 220). Immediately before this passage, Strangwick recites a line from Swinburne's 'Les Noyades' (1866), 'Not Twice in the world shall the gods do thus' (64), mistakenly given to Godsoe by Tompkins (Tompkins 223). It is worth noting the first stanza of 'Les Noyades':

Whatever a man of the sons of men
 Shall say to his heart of the Lords above,
 They have shown man verily, once and again,
 Marvellous mercies and infinite love.

(Swinburne 41)

Swinburne's 'Les Noyades' is about a love so intense that it transcends the explicit material form in which it is expressed, and so ultimately is Kipling's tale. J.M.S. Tompkins identifies this tale as a healing story, one where Strangwick is cured of the trauma that the revelation of the love between Bella Armine and John Godsoe produces (Tompkins 174). But that process of healing, while resulting in possible freedom, also separates, because Strangwick makes the choice and opts for a life outside of the system. Modernity for Strangwick is a time of self-discovery and rejection of the bourgeois model, at least until he finds a love as deep as that between Godsoe and Aunty Armie.

Mary Postgate

The last two stories considered are examples of the final development of incongruity and the emergence of individualism investigated in this thesis. These two stories, 'Mary Postgate' and 'The Gardener', are, like 'A Madonna of the

Trenches,' focused on isolated women, brought from convenient obscurity into uncomfortable significance by chaos arising from World War 1. The women in these stories are no longer figures of whom Jan Montefiore speaks regarding Kipling's earlier women in 'Mrs Bathurst', 'They' and 'Wireless', women 'who without being exactly to blame for the terror or power or grief invoked, [are] somehow implicated in it' (Montefiore, *Kipling*, 133), but are the central characters around whom everything else revolves. Unlike Auntie Armine, they have a direct voice, albeit not wholly free speech, as in 'The Wish House' (which I think is unique in Kipling's work in presenting an interior view of a woman's love and sacrifice), but enough of a voice to fracture Kipling's Woman stereotype. The central characters in the two stories are isolated single women, estranged from the greater society by convention and from their beloved children by violent death. These are stories in which Kipling's mirthful jest has been suppressed by the rigidity of English society, and in which the cruel incongruity is the unmarried and isolated woman. Both stories criticise middle-class English society, with its conventions and hypocritical moral code, and concern themselves with the ideas of imprisonment within rules of behaviour that ultimately operate against an open and natural society.

Mary Postgate is a rather pitiful creature, unmarried and with no money or history, save that of a reference from her previous employer. She was 'thoroughly conscientious, tidy, companionable, and ladylike' (*Diversity* 419) and as paid companion to Miss Fowler was 'equally respected by all the cliques' (*Diversity* 420). Kipling uses the term 'cliques,' implying a number of closed groups acting in their own interests and hostile to each other. The society so formed is fragmented and insular, unable or unwilling to form new connections, unwilling to adapt and grow, and Mary – a poor spinster – is an object manufactured by it. Rashna B. Singh writes:

In this amazing story, Mary transforms from object to subject, from oppressed to oppressor and from powerless to empowered. She seizes agency and assumes control of the situation. That much is clear on the level of narrative. On a metonymic level the allusions to empire suggest that empire is the concealed subject of the story. (Singh 111)

Kipling does indeed move relentlessly from an exterior view of Mary into a deeply interior and personal rendering of the character. I query, however, as Singh suggests, that empire is the concealed subject of the story. Empire certainly contributed to the material wealth of certain sections of English society, wealth that has apparently escaped Mary, and it most certainly contributed to the outbreak of World War 1 and Mary's loss of Wynn. Rather than empire, I suggest it is the hierarchical structure and stratification of English civil society that is under scrutiny; however, I acknowledge the influences of colonial power and control that seemingly flowed between the colonial arena and English civil society.

Mary seemingly is a sterile creature, having no past, no future and no love, that is until Miss Fowler's eleven year old nephew, young Wyndham Fowler appears. Mary becomes Wyndham's 'butt and his slave' (*Diversity* 421) and a surrogate, but unacknowledged mother. Wyndham grows and is 'very early indeed' taken by the War, along with many other men of the village. Wynn becomes an aviator and, on demanding an increase in his allowance, is rapidly granted it, for as Miss Fowler, 'who always looked facts in the face, said, 'He must have it. The chances are he won't live long to draw it, and if three hundred makes him happy –' (*Diversity* 422).

Wyndham displays a degree of arrogance and superiority over Mary, which given Kipling's tendency to disguise true affection by the camouflage of insult, is possibly an indication of an unacknowledged bond between them. When visiting Mary and Miss Fowler he berates Mary:

'You *look* more or less like a human being' he said in his new Service voice. 'You must have had a brain at some time in your past. What have you done with it? Where d'you keep it? A sheep would know more than you do, Postey, You're lamentable. You are less use than an empty tin can, you dowey old cassowary.'

'I suppose that's how your superior officer talks to you?' said Miss Fowler from her chair.

'But Postey doesn't mind,' Wynn replied. 'Do you, Packthread?'

‘Why? Was Wynn saying anything? I shall get this right next time you come,’ she muttered, and knitted her pale brows again over the diagrams of Taubes, Farmans, and Zeppelins. (*Diversity* 422-3)

There is here the image of Wynn bullying the wounded Mary, who desperate for love and affection feigns deafness and indifference. Mary is used to hiding her feelings, of covering over her connections to others, of assuming the anonymous cloak of a hired companion:

Miss Fowler, moving stiffly from the hip, stamped her rubber-tipped stick on the tiled hall floor. ‘Mary, aren't you *anything* except a companion? Would you *ever* have been anything except a companion?’

Mary hung up the garden hat on its proper peg. ‘No,’ she said after consideration. ‘I don't imagine I ever should. But I've no imagination, I'm afraid.’ (*Diversity* 425)

Imagination, the ability to think beyond the present, beyond the dreary material, is the energy that connects isolated individuals and ideas, and is the property that Mary refuses to acknowledge in herself. In the same way as she hangs her hat on the ‘proper peg’, she has been conditioned by birth and circumstances to remain within herself, to be always the isolated barren individual.

Mary has some similarities to Virginia Woolf's character Rachel Vinrace in the novel *The Voyage Out* (1915). Both are repressed women and both journey into a state of deferred maturity. As Jed Esty in his essay ‘Virginia Woolf's Colony and the Adolescence of Modernist Fiction’ writes of Rachel:

More to the point, Woolf sets this story of fits and starts, of beckoned and deferred maturity, in an unevenly developed coastal enclave, Santa Marina, a somewhat misbegotten tourist colony that seems to have deferred its own modernity only to have it arrive belatedly. (Esty 78)

Rachel is never able to complete her natural development and she dies in a minor undeveloped space of empire. Mary is also an undeveloped character with no imagination, but she does undergo a final traumatic development. Most certainly that

development is not into the idealised figure of a woman fulfilled in her domesticity, but into something which brutally challenges that construct.

Wynn is duly killed, not in a glorious duel with the enemy high in the sky but in a nondescript training accident, crashing from four thousand feet to a suitably sanitised ‘instantaneous’ death (*Diversity* 425).⁸⁹ As death separates people, so Mary and Miss Fowler prepare all of Wynn’s possessions signifying personal attachment for destruction by fire. Wynn’s lifeless body is ritually buried, and his material possessions, devoid of Wynn’s life-giving spirit, must also be ritually destroyed and sent to the spirit world. While collecting fuel to ignite the pyre, Mary is drawn into the sudden and meaningless death of a girl child, Edna Gerritt. Edna is killed by a random bomb dropped by a German aircraft, which ‘ripped and shredded [her] body’ (*Diversity* 433). There is no obvious reason why a bomb should have been dropped, only a chaotic random happening resulting in the loss of an innocent life and a deliberate lie instigated by the local doctor (*Diversity* 434-5). This event, like the identity of the ‘enemy’ aviator at the end of the story is irresolvable, and is one instance of Kipling’s late technique of hidden narrative described by J.M.S. Tompkins (Tompkins 112-3).

The story moves onto the pyre of burning possessions, and Kipling produces an astonishing sentence that occupies a whole page of text itemising these:

Next, journey by journey, passing Miss Fowler's white face at the morning-room window each time, she brought down in the towel-covered clothes-basket, on the wheelbarrow, thumbed and used Hentys, Marryats, Levers, Stevensons, Baroness Orczys, Garvices, schoolbooks, and atlases, unrelated piles of the *Motor Cyclist*, the *Light Car*, and catalogues of Olympia Exhibitions; the remnants of a fleet of sailing-ships from nine-penny cutters to a three-guinea yacht; a prep-school dressing-gown; bats from three-and-

⁸⁹ During the period August 1914 to December 1915, approximately 42 per cent of British military flier deaths occurred during training or because of operational mishaps. See Jones, D.R. ‘Flying and Dying in WWI: British Aircrew Losses and the Origins of U.S. Military Aviation medicine’. *Aviat Space Environ Med.* 79.2 (2008): 139-46.

sixpence to twenty-four shillings; cricket and tennis balls; disintegrated steam and clockwork locomotives with their twisted rails; a grey and red tin model of a submarine; a dumb gramophone and cracked records; golf-clubs that had to be broken across the knee, like his walking-sticks, and an assegai; photographs of private and public school cricket and football elevens, and his O.T.C. on the line of march; kodaks, and film-rolls; some pewters, and one real silver cup, for boxing competitions and Junior Hurdles; sheaves of school photographs; Miss Fowler's photograph; her own which he had borne off in fun and (good care she took not to ask!) had never returned; a play box with a secret drawer; a load of flannels, belts, and jerseys, and a pair of spiked shoes unearthed in the attic; a packet of all the letters that Miss Fowler and she had ever written to him, kept for some absurd reason through all these years; a five-day attempt at a diary; framed pictures of racing motors in full Brooklands career, and of tool-boxes, rabbit-hutches, electric batteries, tin soldiers, fret-saw outfits, and jig-saw puzzles. (*Diversity* 430-1)

The sentence is a list of all the material things that made Wynn a complete individual, his material history and his life with the two women, a wholeness that emphasises the relationship of these material objects to him. To fragment this text into self-contained sentences is to fragment Wynn, and that is not possible. Wynn and the chaotic jumble of items create completeness. Without Wynn, the material artefacts are meaningless, and, without these artefacts, Wynn would not have been Wynn. The list, like the description of traffic in 'The Vortex', appears to be chaotic, but it is not disorderly. Beneath the surface jumble there is a carefully ordered list of material objects, including literature, motor cycles, toys, sports kit, photographs and letters. It produces a vivid image of the influences that acted upon and shaped the growing Wynn, from a young child to a young adult. It is almost a list of material connections in the rhizomatic map of Wynn Fowler, and this is the map that Mary consigns to the funeral pyre, replacing the material body with the material objects

that surrounded and defined it. I read the pyre as a symbolic destruction of young life, the failure of Wynn (and possibly Kipling's own son) to complete his development and reach maturity. Quite possibly the symbolism can be carried further in that it shows the failure of all the items on that pyre – the machines, the expensive schooling, the edited achievements of modern Western development – to develop into maturity.

Magically, the pyre illuminates an injured pilot, obviously fallen from his aircraft and whose identity is uncertain, possibly French and an ally, but usually assumed to be German and an enemy. He (and it is defiantly male) is assumed to be the one involved in the death of the little girl, but Kipling does not make it clear, and the reader has to form their own conclusions. The narrative at this point is never fully developed and uncertainty surrounds the event, but it is clear that the aviator has fallen through a tree. Although Wynn had told Mary that trees can save pilots by cushioning the fall, this pilot is terribly injured and is dying. The boy's uniform is similar to Wynn's, but is recognisably different, and his hair is not the sleek black hair of the British pilots, but has been harshly cropped showing 'disgusting pinky skin beneath' and it overwhelms Mary with revulsion (*Diversity* 436). This creature is a human being, injured, and suffering a painful death, but, despite his requests for help, Mary regards him with loathing and hatred, and waits 'with increasing rapture' for him to die (*Diversity* 440).

Rather like the figure of 'The Female of the Species', there is no mercy, no acknowledgement of the masculine code of the conduct of war, only a devotion to a lost child-like figure that obliterates all else:

Now Wynn was dead, and everything connected with him was lumping and rustling and tinkling under her busy poker into red black dust and grey leaves of ash. The thing beneath the oak would die too. Mary had seen death more than once. She came of a family that had a knack of dying under, as she told Miss Fowler, 'most distressing circumstances.' She would stay where she was till she was entirely satisfied that It was dead—dead as dear papa in the late 'eighties; aunt Mary in 'eighty-nine; mamma in 'ninety-one; cousin Dick in 'ninety-five; Lady McCausland's housemaid in 'ninety-nine;

Wynn buried five days ago; and Edna Gerritt still waiting for decent earth to hide her. (*Diversity* 439)

This scene is one of darkness, lit by the fading flames of Wynn's material life. It is a darkness that is similar to that identified by Michael Valdez Moses. He writes that 'the experience of darkness, of racial alienation, of psychological vertigo and emotional disorientation becomes a topos of modernistic narrative' (Moses 44), and this is pretty much what this scene is.

Mary's closed life has been one of loss – loss of dear family, dear friends, an adopted son and finally an innocent child – and she has no new connections or loves to make up those losses. Hers is a world of sterility, death and decay, but she could make one final gift to Wynn, for it was a 'great pity he didn't die in action after he had killed somebody' (*Diversity* 426). Rashna Singh argues that the identity of the aviator is not Kipling's real point, rather it is Mary dehumanising the dying aviator by repeatedly referring to him as 'It' (Singh 110). I argue that this is a direct result of Mary's own experience of society. As Mary has been effectively dehumanised by English society and contained within a sterile compartment, so she in turn dehumanises the dying aviator, collecting all the tragedy and grief in her closed life and making 'It' responsible:

She ceased to think. She gave herself up to feel. Her long pleasure was broken by a sound that she had waited for in agony several times in her life. She leaned forward and listened, smiling. There could be no mistake. She closed her eyes and drank it in. Once it ceased abruptly.

'Go on,' she murmured, half aloud. 'That isn't the end.'

Then the end came very distinctly in a lull between two rain-gusts. Mary Postgate drew her breath short between her teeth and shivered from head to foot. 'That's all right,' said she contentedly, and went up to the house, where she scandalised the whole routine by taking a luxurious hot bath before tea, and came down looking, as Miss Fowler said when she saw her lying all relaxed on the other sofa, 'quite handsome!' (*Diversity* 441)

This nightmarish end to the story is the jolt, the slap in the face, that destroys the safe, controlled Victorian woman of Kipling's earlier stories and turns her into something else, modern and indeterminate. Mary has changed, no longer does she passively accept a prescribed path of stunted development, but she has changed into an individual who seizes control. As Rashna Singh writes:

It is a scene of sexual gratification and release, accentuated by the fact that Mary leans on the phallic poker while she waits for the airman to die and a growing rapture comes upon her until she experiences an orgasm. (Singh 109)

At the end of the story, Mary is no longer a symbolic sterile virgin. She has finally come to terms with her hatred for a society that has commoditised her and of a war that has deprived her of an adopted child and, at long last, a fellow human being to love and care for. She has finally had revenge of some kind for her forced underdevelopment as a human being, and as Singh says, 'Mary Postgate', on the other hand, solicits revulsion but also a strange sort of sympathy for the protagonist' (Singh 108).

Mary is an incongruity, a deviation from the norm of what a woman (in Kipling's view) ought to be, and effectively a murderer; she is still an incongruity, but there has been a change. In her former state, Mary existed as a victim of Jameson's disjuncture, a product of the modern system but not connected to it, a figure of loss and a symbol of the unevenness of the modern. Wynn was the only connection that she made to the outside world, and letting the airman die was the only way Mary could reconnect to Wynn and the greater world. Kipling makes that connection not by laughter, but by sympathy and it reveals the ugliness of Mary's life. Letting the enemy aviator die is the only way that Mary can give Wynn's life and death a meaning. Giving one final present to Wynn made sense of his existence and is both an expression of hatred of the enemy and of the brutal mechanised random destruction that war has brought, while paradoxically an expression of love. Mary's love for Wynn is so narrow, so closed and concentrated upon him, that it is ultimately destructive and imprisons Mary even closer within herself. The 'dreadful' 'Mary Postgate' (Tompkins 130), has been described by Randall Jarrell, as a story that is a 'nightmarish, most human and most real daydream of personal revenge' (Jarrell 54), and by Hugh Brogan, as a 'great, appalling story' (Brogan 86). It can

easily be interpreted as a story of hate, but what or who is the target? Well, quite plausibly Germany, quite plausibly men in general, but equally plausibly English society that treats human beings as commodities and condemns them to a sterile compartmentalised existence.

Speaking the unspeakable – The Gardener

In ‘Mary Postgate’, frustration, despair and hate are internalised by Mary and only find release through a sexual-like experience with which Kipling must have intended to shock. The final story I consider, ‘The Gardener’, first published in 1925 and collected in *Debits and Credits*, is a similar tale of isolation and a society that imposes a great burden on the central protagonist. Unlike ‘Mary Postgate’, however, this tale does ultimately produce a spiritual resolution, one that was intended to comfort the readers, rather than disturb them. ‘The Gardener’, like ‘Mary Postgate’, is an enigmatic story, one where the reader is left to make their own connections and conclusions. The Kipling Society, for example, hosts a web page in which ten or so critics present different interpretations of this work.⁹⁰ ‘The Gardener’ is a story about illegitimacy, a natural act of birth that violated the social code of the respectable classes of the time. Illegitimacy was a deviation from the supposed norm of behaviour, not a deviation that produced fertile incongruity, but something to be hidden and of which to be ashamed. The illegitimacy concerns Helen Turrell and her supposed nephew Michael. Kipling throughout the story is evasive, only finally resolving it in the final few lines when Michael is revealed to be Helen’s natural son.⁹¹

The story revolves around Helen Turrell who has supposedly adopted an orphan, the illegitimate son of her brother and the product of an illicit relationship between an inspector of police in India and the ‘daughter of a retired non-commissioned officer’ (*Debits* 339). In a passage of free indirect narration, Helen cleverly uses class stereotypes to support the tale of Michael’s origins:

⁹⁰ See Lewis, Lisa. “The Gardener.” <http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/rg_gardener1.htm>. Accessed 26 Jan. 2016.

⁹¹ This is disputed; see Dillingham, William B. *Rudyard Kipling Hell and Heroism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 147-155.

Luckily it seemed that people of that class would do almost anything for money, and, as George had always turned to her in his scrapes, she felt herself justified — her friends agreed with her — in cutting the whole non-commissioned officer connection, and giving the child every advantage. (*Debits* 340)

This is at odds with the empathy Kipling shows in the depiction of lower-class life in ‘The Madonna of the Trenches’ and indeed in Kipling’s soldiers’ stories. Tellingly, its class snobbery does present an unforgiving illustration of the society in which Helen Turrell existed.

In my reading, the child Michael was Helen’s son, a bastard born out of wedlock, which violated the rigidly enforced social norms of the time. Kipling safely places Helen in the south of France convalescing when Michael is born, only to bring the boy openly to her Hampshire home late in the autumn. Helen was ‘as open as the day’ (*Debits* 340) (like Auntie Armine perhaps), and no one in the village saw fit to question the story. The relationship between Helen and Michael was perhaps rather closer than Aunt and nephew, but that was private:

In a few years Michael took his place, as accepted as Helen had always been—fearless, philosophical, and fairly good-looking. At six, he wished to know why he could not call her ‘Mummy,’ as other boys called their mothers. She explained that she was only his auntie, and that aunties were not quite the same as mummies, but that, if it gave him pleasure, he might call her ‘Mummy’ at bedtime, for a pet-name between themselves. (*Debits* 340-1)

Throughout the story the pretence is maintained and the conventions of respectability meticulously observed, even if those conventions flew in the face of English history, for as Michael observed when he sensed his own illegitimacy:

‘Don’t believe a word of it,’ he said, cheerily, at the end. ‘People wouldn’t have talked like they did if my people had been married. But don’t you bother, Auntie. I’ve found out all about my sort in English Hist’ry and the Shakespeare bits. There was William the Conqueror to begin with, and—oh,

heaps more, and they all got on first-rate. 'Twon't make any difference to you, my being *that*—will it'. (*Debits* 342)

Illegitimacy, the siring of bastards, is, it appears, a continuity of English life, albeit one that was rigorously suppressed in polite society.

Michael was no fool, and despite his illegitimacy he received a privileged education. Kipling writes that:

He was to have gone up to Oxford, with a scholarship in October. At the end of August he was on the edge of joining the first holocaust of public-school boys who threw themselves into the Line. (*Debits* 343)

Kipling follows the class convention of the time by ignoring the poorly-educated majority and privileging the public-school elite in sacrificing themselves for the notion of country and presumably empire. It is worth noting J. C. Dunn's comments that on July 20 1916 his battalion lost 2 officers and 29 other ranks killed, 9 officers and 180 other ranks injured and 29 other ranks missing in action (Dunn 243).

Despite Kipling's bias, the majority of war casualties were of a rather more humble background than the fictional Michael. To be fair to Kipling, he also criticises poor army management of the ordinary soldiers, where half of them were 'breeding meningitis through living over-crowdedly in damp tents' (*Debits* 343). Michael was spared the immediate carnage, instead, he joined a new battalion in the process of being raised, and therefore lived a few more months, until he, in turn, was 'hurled out to help make good the wastage of Loos' (*Debits* 343). War, as the desperate phrase, 'hurled out' implies, is violent, and Kipling modulates that violence into a particularly industrial kind, by writing that Michael's battalion was held in reserve 'while [the battle of] the Somme was being manufactured' (*Debits* 344). Predictably, Michael is killed, but Kipling kindly lets him die cleanly:

A month later, and just after Michael had written Helen that there was nothing special doing and therefore no need to worry, a shell-splinter dropping out of a wet dawn killed him at once. The next shell uprooted and laid down over the body what had been the foundation of a barn wall, so neatly that none but an expert would have guessed that anything unpleasant had happened. (*Debits* 344)

Michael's death is pointless, just another casualty caused by random shell fire, another product of soulless mechanised killing. Modern mechanised war is ruthless: the killing is either done at range through shelling, gas or rifle-fire, or at extreme closeness with a bayonet and all human emotion, except hate, is removed.

Death is followed by bereavement with a path already prepared for the bereaved to follow, but before the official processing of bereavement commences, a more natural process occurs, that of ritual. Kipling produces a ritual in which the message of death is delivered by an innocent child, perhaps a token of renewal amidst devastating loss:

By this time the village was old in experience of war, and, English fashion, had evolved a ritual to meet it. When the postmistress handed her seven-year-old daughter the official telegram to take to Miss Turrell, she observed to the Rector's gardener: 'It's Miss Helen's turn now.' He replied, thinking of his own son: 'Well, he's lasted longer than some.' The child herself came to the front-door weeping aloud, because Master Michael had often given her sweets.

Helen, presently, found herself pulling down the house-blinds one after one with great care, and saying earnestly to each: 'Missing *always* means dead.' Then she took her place in the dreary proseries of unprofitable emotions. (*Debits* 344)

This is a war of the material: just as shells and munitions are manufactured in a strict industrial process in order to kill as efficiently as possible, acceptable bereavement is also manufactured. The process starts as Helen subsequently realised early, imperceptibly consuming the soon-to-be-killed and their families in a soulless mechanistic system:

Once, on one of Michael's leaves, he had taken her over a munition factory, where she saw the progress of a shell from blank-iron to the all but finished article. It struck her at the time that the wretched thing was never left alone for a single second; and 'I'm being manufactured into a bereaved next-of-kin,' she told herself, as she prepared her documents. (*Debits* 345)

Michael's death isolates Helen even further. The Armistice is unheeded and:

At the end of another year she had overcome her physical loathing of the living and returned young, so that she could take them by the hand and almost sincerely wish them well. She had no interest in any aftermath, national or personal, of the War, but, moving at an immense distance, she sat on various relief committees and held strong views — she heard herself delivering them — about the site of the proposed village War Memorial. (*Debits* 345-6)

Helen has abstracted herself from the material world. She existed within it — indeed 'she sat on various relief committees and held strong views — she heard herself delivering them' — but her life force, Bergson's 'vital spirit', had departed. In her sense of loss and despair, Helen had effectively ceased to live: she was reduced to a physical shell, to the extent that she could observe that shell's behaviour quite dispassionately. In that state of nonexistence, she found herself 'moved on to another process of the manufacture [of bereavement] — to a world full of exultant or broken relatives, now strong in the certainty that there was an altar upon earth where they might lay their love' (*Debits* 346).

Modernity has produced an easy path for the manufactured bereaved to follow, for she found that a 'comfortable hotel' was near, and railways and boats running to timetabled precision showed 'how easy it was and how little it interfered with life's affairs to go and see one's grave' (*Debits* 346). Comfortable, choking modernity, powered by unseen and unrecognised economic activities, tidies up, and normalizes the specified and approved bereavement process. Death is an inconvenience to capitalism and modernity with its ceaseless development, but it does not stop it, for the individual is merely a replaceable component of the machine.

The respectable life that Kipling fictionalises in 'A Madonna of the Trenches', 'Mary Postgate' and 'The Gardener' is characterized by a tangle of love, lies and repression, all bearing upon the individual. It produces a type of a split personality in which the public face is one of respectable conformity and acceptance of the social order, while the other, a private and emotional personality, is caught in a desire for freedom and a love that cannot and dare not be recognised. The result is a breakdown of order in one form or another. Strangwick collapses under the truth of

Godsoe's and Auntie Armine's relationship. Mary Postgate experiences an orgasmic-type catharsis that perhaps releases her from her anguish. In 'The Gardener', Helen is more fortunate, but not the 'large Lancashire woman' she encounters in the war graves office and who collapses into hysterical sobbing and uncontrolled grief (*Debits* 347). Equally the 'stolid, plain featured Englishwoman', Mrs Scarsworth, executing her 'commissions' (*Debits* 347-8) as an excuse to visit the grave of her secret lover, has to finally give vent to her true feelings:

'But why do you tell me?' Helen asked desperately. 'Because I'm so tired of lying. Tired of lying—always lying—year in and year out. When I don't tell lies I've got to act 'em and I've got to think 'em, always. You don't know what that means. He was everything to me that he oughtn't to have been—the one real thing—the only thing that ever happened to me in all my life; and I've had to pretend he wasn't. I've had to watch every word I said, and think out what lie I'd tell next, for years!' (*Debits* 350)

Life in Kipling's stories can be chaotic, but there are two kinds of chaos: one is regenerative, the other degenerative. Chaos produced by humour is positive, renewing the self through a process of productive fragmentation. Chaos produced by grief, guilt or desperation, as depicted in Helen's unwanted encounter with Mrs Scarsworth, produces mental stress and threatens destruction.

Kipling produces a tableau in which Helen offers Mrs Scarsworth a form of absolution, but it is rejected:

She lifted her joined hands almost to the level of her mouth, and brought them down sharply, still joined, to full arms' length below her waist. Helen reached forward, caught them, bowed her head over them, and murmured: 'Oh, my dear! My dear!' Mrs. Scarsworth stepped back, her face all mottled.

'My God!' said she. 'Is *that* how you take it?'

Helen could not speak, the woman went out; but it was a long time before Helen was able to sleep. (*Debits* 350)

Mrs Scarsworth's trauma has at last been brought to the surface, perhaps gifted to Helen to add to her own troubled state. Helen Turrell, however, does not suffer a mental collapse, and is saved, but only just, by divine intervention. Helen enters the graveyard overwhelmed with the scale of the place and with an inconsolable feeling of detachment and isolation, and the impossibility of understanding the scale of loss and suffering:

She did not know that Hagenzeele Third counted twenty-one thousand dead already. All she saw was a merciless sea of black crosses, bearing little strips of stamped tin at all angles across their faces. She could distinguish no order or arrangement in their mass; nothing but a waist-high wilderness as of weeds stricken dead, rushing at her. She went forward, moved to the left and the right hopelessly, wondering by what guidance she should ever come to her own. A great distance away there was a line of whiteness. It proved to be a block of some two or three hundred graves whose headstones had already been set, whose flowers were planted out, and whose new-sown grass showed green. Here she could see clear-cut letters at the ends of the rows, and, referring to her slip, realised that it was not here she must look. (*Debits* 351)

The chaos, the mud, filth and death of Strangwick's war has been organised into another abyss, a place of bleakness and order so extreme that it entangles and overpowers the individual. To reuse Kipling's observation of the Japanese field systems in letter XIV of 'From Sea to Sea', the cemetery is an example of a 'wantonness of neatness' (*StS* 1: 350), except this is a barren neatness, not a place of fertility but a sterile rectilinear wasteland of the manufactured dead. There are no familiar signs of the humans that lie under the soil, and no pathetic bunches of decaying flowers left by grieving relatives, only impersonal numbers. The dead, like the shells that killed them, have been neatly catalogued into an order that deprives them of their individuality, and the cemetery of its humaneness.

The cemetery is not only a repository for the physically dead. It, like the world of the A.B.C., is a spiritually dead place, a wasteland produced by sterile

reasoned order. Kipling relents in this harsh tale by suggesting that a spiritual closure is ultimately possible, when Helen meets a man that she supposes ‘to be a gardener’ (*Debts* 352), echoing the encounter between Mary and Jesus outside of the empty sepulchre in John 20.14. This anonymous humble figure, often taken to be Jesus, speaks the real truth and removes the stigma of illegitimacy to finally connect Helen with Michael. ‘Come with me,’ he said, ‘and I will show you where your son lies’ (*Debts* 352). The ‘gardener’, divine angel or not, has the role of the archangels in ‘The Legend of Mirth’, and the simple act of understanding restores the severed connections between Helen, Michael and the wider society, connecting her once again into the chaotic and indeterminate world that Deleuze signifies with the rhizome. Helen has been conditioned by the war machine to become The Bereaved, a mother who has to hide her guilt about her illegitimate son and his death. The machine manufactured Michael’s death, as it manufactured the cemetery, the railway journey and the hotel, turning human tragedy into a nice tidy commodity to be reprocessed and re-consumed. The gardener’s simple words that acknowledge the mother and child relationship, releases Helen from the machine, if only for a short time, and through a spiritual gift of power, returns agency to her. ‘The Gardener’, J.M.S. Tompkins argued, is a story of ‘the alleviation that was permitted or was possible,’ where ‘for one hour of one day of all her years, the stone was rolled away’ (Tompkins 181).

Kipling’s Modernity

Resolution and the healing of schism, Kipling says, or rather allows the reader to make the connection, lies not in the material everyday world determined by social codes and modes of behaviour, but in something else: an intangible world that lies beyond the everyday world, invoked in ‘They’, of ‘the more than inherited (since it is also carefully taught) brutality of the Christian peoples’ (*They* 34). That something else, Kipling implies, (for the reader has to work it out for themselves) is in the spiritual, a timeless place of origin and ultimate rest, the alternative to the daylight world of the material and the reasonable. For Helen Turrell, it is the simple act of compassion and an uncritical acknowledgement of the world as it really is, and always has been, that heals the wounds of modern civilised life.

All the stories in this final section have ambiguous endings. In ‘A Madonna of the Trenches’, the choice lies between becoming a free individual outside of the system or in succumbing to that system. In ‘Mary Postgate’, Mary achieves the chance of attaining freedom through a terrifying orgasmic experience that perhaps sets her free of a sterile isolated existence. In ‘The Gardener’, the liberation comes from the hand of God, a spiritual absolution of Helen’s unsanctioned love. Kipling leaves the choice of a future path to the reader – to continue as they were, silent and contained within the system, or to grasp the gift of agency to become free individuals. In each case, the potential for freedom is there, and in my reading, Kipling wants the reader to have the courage to will the character to take agency, to rediscover their own *élan vital* and rediscover the spirit of the jest.

In my interpretation the Kipling material discussed in this chapter does not suggest, that in returning agency to the individual, he is following the ‘heroic [transformational] cultural project’ of Pound, Lewis and Eliot (Shiach, *Companion* 5). Rather Kipling is arguing that the world system with which he engaged should be repaired. In a private letter to Sydney Cockerell of 5 Jan 1934, Kipling writes ‘Our game is the continuity of the land and the institutions for which we work’ (*Letters* 6: 235). This suggests that the stories that I discuss in this chapter are not simply stories of hatred or grief or meaningless farce, but expressions of something else that lies partly hidden behind those surface narratives. Kipling’s ‘continuity’ is significant; perhaps it is the ability of ordinary people the world over, to muddle along together in harmony with the minimum of interference from the governing elite. In the works considered here Kipling writes of the ordinary people: truth dressed up as fable in ‘The Legend of Mirth’, interdependence as farce in ‘Aunt Ellen’, catastrophe in ‘The Vortex’, forbidden love in ‘A Madonna of the Trenches’, isolation in ‘Mary Postgate’ and, above all else, compassion in ‘The Gardener’. Compassion in fact is the unbroken strand that links all of these stories, compassion for ordinary people living out their short lives in a world which is changing rapidly and under great threat. Love appearing as compassion in ‘The Gardener’, in ‘Madonna of the Trenches’, even in ‘Mary Postgate’, accompanies Kipling’s brutality and violence. Kipling’s love is partially obscured by a violent and unfeeling world but it is there: compassion for the unvoiced characters of the period, isolated women and lower middle-class men, all caught within a sterile rule-bound society over which they have no control. Healing was long ago identified by J.M.S. Tompkins as

characteristic of Kipling's late works, and healing can be thought of as a product of love or compassion.

In these stories, there is the threat from war and its aftermath, but also a threat of losing a chaotic, yet a strangely coherent human culture, under the increasing pressure of expanding commercialism and manufactured mass culture. Continuity implies memory, and perhaps it is this that Kipling is thinking about, memory of what has been and how it relates to the present and the future. Of particular interest are Cairns Craig's comments on James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, published between 1890 and 1915, with revisions and expansions. Frazer produced a later work *Folk-lore and the Old Testament* of which there is a copy in Bateman's library:

What *The Golden Bough* provided for its readers was a model of the human mind bound together by associations and rooted in prehistory, and a demonstration of how the fragmentary remains of ancient rites and myths could be reconstructed by retracing their (possible) associative interconnections. And what it suggested, was the power of those ancient associations – the 'engrams' of prehistory – to resist the progressive development of civilization: on the tabula of the mind later writing does not obscure or obliterate earlier texts – rather, it is the later writing that fades rapidly to leave only the outlines of an almost forgotten script. (Craig 193)

In this view, human memory resembles a kind of palimpsest, an overwritten manuscript in which traces of the earlier persist among a continuous overwriting by the present. Kipling's observations on the England that he returned to in the 1890s and later toured in his motor cars have something of this quality, an England incidentally that he unintentionally helped to destroy with his enthusiasm for the motor car. In the story 'They', Kipling produces an image, viewed from the motor car, of a chaotic lost world, a palimpsest of chaotic layers of the past that trigger memory traces:

Beyond that precise hamlet which stands godmother to the capital of the United States, I found hidden villages where bees, the only things awake, boomed in eighty-foot lindens that overhung Norman churches; miraculous brooks diving under stone bridges built for heavier traffic than would ever vex them again; tithe-barns larger than their churches, and an old smithy that cried out aloud how it had once been a hall of the Knights of the Temple. Gipsies I met on a common where the gorse, brackens, and heath fought it out together up a mile of Roman road; and a little farther on I disturbed a red fox rolling dog-fashion in the naked sunlight. (*They* 12)

Strangely the chaotic assortment does form a kind of coherency and continuity, not of a superior modern culture but of a continuing loss with cycles of rise and decay. Remnants of conquest, of power structures based upon religion, of lost warriors and of nomadic peoples outside of society, all appearing in an untroubled recreation of a living experience. As T.S. Eliot expressed it, when talking of the mind of a poet's own culture, it 'is a mind which changes, and that change is a development that abandons nothing en route' (Eliot 16). Both Eliot's and Kipling's ideas of memory seem to exclude the grimness of the havoc that industrialisation wreaked upon the idealised worlds they invoke. However, for Eliot, and I suggest for Kipling, the same inspirations and creative energies (the continuities perhaps) that drove the people of prehistory, the ancient civilisations, and the English writers, will always be present.

Benita Parry writes of the Jew as a figure of disturbance and instability in Kipling's and his contemporaries' work, and she cites the anti-Semitism of Kipling, Lewis, Eliot and Pound. She argues that, for these writers, the Jew symbolised hidden capitalist manipulation and a secretive movement that undermined stability (Parry, 'Kipling's Unloved Race', 21-4), a stability that is presumably the continuity that Kipling and T. S. Eliot write about. Ricketts cites from Kipling's letter of 1919 to André Chrevrillon, where the German, Swiss, Jewish, English liberals and the Bolsheviks are moulded into a 'composite enemy wax-doll' (Ricketts, *Minute*, 350). Kipling completes his tirade with a comment on Einstein's recent theory of relativity: 'Einstein's pronouncement is only another little contribution to assisting the world towards flux and disintegration' (Ricketts, *Minute*, 350-1). Vitriolic

distrust of the chaotic and of the malleability of time, however, did not stop these characteristics entering his fictional work. ‘Mrs Bathurst’ and the later work considered in Chapter Six are fairly obvious examples. Despite what one side of Kipling’s brain pronounced, the other surreptitiously seized upon and inserted characteristics of modernity into his fiction.

Benita Parry, citing from Eliot’s essay on Kipling, comments upon Kipling’s vision which changes from the imperial to the historical writing that: ‘the simplest summary of the change in Kipling, in his middle years, is the development of the ‘imperial imagination’ into the ‘historical imagination’” (Parry, ‘Kipling’s Unloved Race’, 28). W.B. Yeats was another that had a fear of losing an intangible continuity in the face of modernity. Cairns Craig writes that Yeats had a ‘profound fear’ of the loss of memory ‘and the loss of those associations that can connect our passing, individual experiences with the contents of the ‘Great Memory’ and the significance of the ‘engram’ (Craig 197).

In these interpretations, memory is the storage place of the ‘laws’ that are the hidden key to life’s chaotic behaviour. For Eliot, for Yeats and, I conclude, for Kipling, it is the preservation and recovery of memory that is the key to survival. If memory is lost, then life becomes meaningless and, if the mysterious vital spirit is lost, as in ‘As Easy as A.B.C.’, then extinction will follow. What Kipling is describing as continuity is really the result of succeeding events of discontinuity, the end of the Roman Empire and the impending end of the British, and a continuous change which partially overwrites that which has been. T. J. Clark’s modernity stands in contrast to Frazer’s engram, for Clark writes that:

As for the word ‘modernity,’ it too will be used in a free and easy way, in the hopes that most readers know it when they see it. ‘Modernity’ means contingency. It points to a social order which has turned from the worship of ancestors and past authorities to the pursuit of a projected future – of goods, pleasures, freedoms, forms of control over nature, or infinities of information. This process goes along with a great emptying and sanitizing of the imagination. (T. J. Clark 7)

Modernity destroys: it destroys the past and, as poor Mary Postgate found, it destroys the imagination. This is the schism in Kipling’s works: on one side there is

a desire for progress and speed, for the valorisation of machines linked to the colonial desire to create new productivity and wealth by bringing empty land into productive use; on the other side, there is a reaction against this modernity which revolves around loss, loss of memory and loss of a knowable society and identity. Perhaps for Kipling, modernity meant the end of change, no more empires, no more competing cultures, no more difference and no place for the jest; only continuous, ceaseless consumption.

Thesis Conclusions and Recommendations

This thesis has shown that Kipling was not a writer whose world was confined to a narrow slice of time and space, labelled colonial India; equally, he did not present the world as an idyllic pastoral scene. Rather, for a period of fifty years, he continuously engaged with a world system that became increasingly complex, a complexity that was mirrored in his texts, and he continually critiqued that world. Kipling's critique is by no means linear and transparent; often it is located in the aesthetic region which I have mapped as the area of the jest, a place of incongruity, humour and spirit.

Chapters One and Two have demonstrated that using incongruity as an investigative strand is a productive technique to examine Kipling's material. It has complemented existing scholarly material and contributed fresh insights into Kipling's work. Equally, Kipling's jest is important. The jest is a persistent aesthetic quality in his work and this investigation has made a significant contribution to its recognition. The theme of incongruity has also brought into focus Kipling's recognition of the heterogeneous nature of the world, in particular India, Japan and the USA, showing his awareness of the unevenness of capitalist-driven modernisation as it propagated through the region. It has brought into prominence Kipling's engagement with the world system, not just through the British colonialism of his time, but with countries outside of that particular mode of colonisation developing along different paths.

Chapter Three, in discussing Kipling's engagement with the machine, has highlighted a tension in his writing between material development, symbolised by

the modern machine as a product of reason, and a deeply personal spiritual dimension to human life. Kipling's machine itself becomes a site for this contestation, where, on one side, the machine is merely a logical set of components organised to perform a set task, and, on the other, it is a site for indefinable spiritual energies. This conflict remains throughout his work, effectively a continuing dialectic between reason and emotion, an aesthetic quality that is related to the jest and a continuing source of creative energy. That Kipling was fascinated by modern machines is an accepted truism, and this fascination is generally attributed to the potential that they represented for colonial expansion, but what is generally missing is an appreciation of his Carlyle-like concerns for a systemised society, a concern that often appears through a spiritual and aesthetic dimension, that opposes the growth of a homogenous world society organised exclusively for economic flow.

Chapters Four and Five have introduced the idea of the colonial stereotype as a Bergsonian incongruity and a commodity produced by the Marxian machine of capitalism. This approach challenges Bhabha's theory that the stereotype was exclusively a product of ambivalence and difference. As capitalist expansion in the form of globalisation has by no means ceased, it also raise the question of whether there is a similar process operating at present and, therefore, the study of the stereotype should not be confined merely to the colonial period. Both aggressive and non-aggressive humour and incongruity have been located in relation to the construction of the stereotype and in its dissolution. I argue that Kipling, in some way, recognised the process of the fragmentation of the Babu stereotype and produced a witnessing of it in the character of Hurree Chunder Mookerjee in *Kim*. Significantly this witnessing of the emergence of a new, but not yet definable 'modern Indian' occurred twenty years or so before Forster's Dr Aziz.

In Chapter Six, I demonstrate Kipling's continuing use of the jest and the search for incongruity in the rapidly changing world meta-system represented by modernity. Kipling shows two sides to this modernity, one is a positive vibrant world where free individuals are able to engage in the jest and rebuild society by capitalist economic activity; The other is a society that isolates the individual within a determined and sterile environment, from which the only escape can be an extraordinary experience that gifts a form of agency to that individual. The material demonstrates that, as a writer, Kipling was by no means fossilised in the past, if ever he had been such a writer, but had moved beyond simple colonialism. Kipling was a

writer who drew inspiration from complexity, and his work reflected that complexity and repeatedly emphasised the non-material dimensions of human existence. Rather than a modernist writer (or not), Kipling was in my view, a writer *of* modernity.

Further Opportunities for Work

There are a number of areas that I feel this thesis has opened up that can be productively investigated. The first is the role of humour and incongruity in colonial and postcolonial material as a creative energy and not simply as a means of asserting superiority or of releasing aggression. I feel that there is a linkage in this respect between the work that I have followed and Salman Rushdie's material. Sara Suleri (Suleri 174-206) concludes her study with a discussion of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, *Shame*, and *The Satanic Verses*, and I feel that it would be useful to examine the creative role of humour and incongruity in these texts, especially in the context of an environment that is chaotic but is somehow productive. In this context, this thesis has illustrated humour and laughter arising from incongruity as forms of non-aggressive resistance from within the commoditised human subject. The examples taken could be productively used along with contemporary postcolonial material to investigate this mode of resistance in current confrontational situations.

Secondly, I feel that the materialist slant from which I have viewed the stereotype could be usefully followed with a further and more detailed study of stereotypes as they emerged during the period of between 1880 and 1910. This should not be restricted to colonial stereotyping but extended to instances that can be found within the urban and industrialised areas of the world. Integrating this with Bhabha's theory could contribute to a greater understanding of human commoditisation and resistance to it.

Thirdly, I feel that it would be productive to examine Kipling and other writers of the period when the influence of capitalism was so obvious in the context of world writers engaged with the totality of the world system. Such an approach would have the potential to advance and contribute to postcolonial theory and practice.

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