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THE IMPERIAL IDEA IN SOME MODERN FICTION

Aspects of the Treatment of Imperialism in
Selected Literature between 1888 and 1939.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of the M.A. degree in English Literature
at Durham University

by

B. J. Moore-Gilbert.

1978.

Supervisor: P.E. Lewis, esq.

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to examine certain aspects of selected authors' responses to the phenomenon of Imperialism within the period 1888 to 1939. Chapter One argues that the writers' responses should not be considered as an escape from the cultural anxieties of Britain, but rather that the exotic context they assume is used as a vehicle through which to discuss many of those anxieties. It suggests, therefore, that there exists in their writing a self-conscious reference to the larger literary culture of the day, even when the focus is apparently wholly upon the practical manifestations of the Imperial ideology. Chapter Two analyses the attitudes of the selected writers towards Christianity in the Empire, arguing that the skepticism over the role of the missionary is symptomatic of a wider doubt concerning the authenticity of the traditional faith, which is increasingly operative from the 1850's onwards. The next chapter proceeds to examine these authors' responses towards the presence of commercial interests in the Empire, suggesting, in a similar way to Chapter Two, that the mistrust with which they view such interests may be related to the larger ambivalence towards industrialism and material progress which is expressed in the literary culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Chapter Three concentrates in depth upon Kipling, a writer who, despite the findings of a considerable degree of recent scholarship, continues to be seen, even, or perhaps especially, by the educated mind, as an vulgarly jingoistic propagandist. The interpretation concentrates upon the element of deep disillusion and defensiveness in his Indian stories and upon the metaphorical nature of his general construct. The conclusion discusses the work of Joyce Cary, in whom may be seen the final demise of the Imperial ideology.

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Foreword

The first problem that is encountered in discussing Imperialism in a literary context is the inevitable one of definitions. "Imperialism" is a word which, like "Marxism", or "democracy", or "middle class", is felt to be immediately familiar, and one even finds such words indispensable, perhaps, in everyday discourse. But one begins to see what a vague construct Imperialism is, in realising the vast variety of phenomena it is supposed to describe. The range referred to in Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" alone - Roman, Elizabethan and late Victorian - presupposes utterly disparate historical, social and economic impetuses. When the word is extended to British intervention against Dutch-stock colonists in South Africa, to the Turkish presence in Cyprus, to the American involvement in Vietnam, the limitations of the word became immediately apparent. This impression is confirmed by looking the term up in a book of reference such as Koebner's Imperialism, or in a work specialising in definitions, such as Raymond Williams's Keywords.² The issue is complicated by the shifting historical connotations of the term, and recourse to a word such as colonialism adds little clarity to the discussion. Thus Marx's letters collected together as On Colonialism, address themselves to the question of India, which was never seen as a prospective colony in the generally accepted sense that Canada and Australia were. If one asked an informed Victorian in the latter half of the nineteenth century what Imperialism meant to him; he would probably associate it, well into the 1870's, with questions relating to territories such as these. In fact, almost every book which is concerned with Imperialism begins with an apology and ends, like George Lichtheim's Imperialism, with a sense of desperation over the fluid mobility with which the concept has changed its connotations:

No adequate historical or theoretical arguments can be assigned for limiting the terms "empire" and "imperialism" to one particular form of domination over conquered peoples, let alone to overseas colonization prompted by mercantile interests.³

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1. Richard Koebner & H.H. Schmidt : Imperialism : The Story and Significance of a Political Word. Cambridge. 1964.
 2. Raymond Williams : Keywords : a Vocabulary of Culture and Society. 1976.
 3. George Lichtheim : Imperialism. (1971) 1974. p.45

In this thesis, then, I have had to be arbitrary in my assumptions. I have limited myself to considering some aspects of the literature produced between 1888 and 1939 in response to manifestations of Britain's political and economic hegemony in what is now described as the third world. That such discrete figures as Kipling, Conrad and Cary have been compared may seem as risky as a comparison of the very different manifestations of Imperialism characterising Britain's relationship in these years with, for instance, India, Nigeria and Argentina. But, as Chapter One contends, these writers must be placed in a cultural context highly conscious of its Imperial mission and responding to and assuming certain common imperatives within the culture, which admit of the writers being studied together. I am aware that the level of generality at which Chapter One discusses this common ground is at times open to censure, but hope that the eclectic and synthetic method it makes use of does finally lead to a cogent interpretation of the literature considered.

A Note on Editions.

The edition for Joyce Cary is The Carfax Edition (Michael Joseph), with the exception of Cock Jarvis, as yet unissued in this edition.

The edition for Rudyard Kipling is The Centenary Edition (MacMillan), with the exception of A Book of Words, as yet unissued in this edition.

The edition for Joseph Conrad is The (New) Uniform Edition (J.M. Dent and Sons).

CHAPTER ONE

THE CULTURAL CONTEXT.

In literature the island has proved itself a particularly congenial location for the mythopoeic imagination. The tradition includes such varied disquisitions upon the condition of man, actual and possible, as Utopia, The Anatomy of Melancholy, The Tempest, Robinson Crusoe, Victory, Island and Lord of the Flies. So conducive is the island to archetypal statement of this kind, that a progressive historical tendency towards realism does not vitiate what has become an almost innate tendency to interpret the choice of an island for dramatic context as a desire to establish a symbolic microcosm.

The contention of this introduction is that Victory, despite its date of publication, 1915, constitutes a generalised interpretation of late Victorian civilisation with particular reference to the Imperial ideology. Quite apart from the fact that Conrad is, typically, drawing upon his own experience of the East, and from events in the 1870's and 1880's,¹ internal evidence points to this. In the last chapter of the novel, Davidson recounts the tragic events:

"Yes, Excellency," said Davidson in his placid voice; "there are more dead in this affair - more white people, I mean - than have been killed in many of the battles of the last Achin War."²

The use of the past continuous suggests the immediate contemporaneity of the events of Victory with the last Achin War. There were three

1. c.f. Author's Note, in which Conrad admits to drawing upon memories from as early as 1875. Joseph Conrad: Victory. (1915) 1967. p.xii
2. *ibid* : p.408

Achin Wars, between the Dutch and the Achin, all in the nineteenth century, 1873-4, 1874-81 and 1896-99.¹ Assuming even that Davidson's use of "last" means "terminal" rather than "latest" - by no means certain - the events of Victory would fall at the end of the century, and the concerns of the book suggest that it is no more set in 1915 than The Rescue is set in 1920. If such is the case, the novel may serve to introduce the concerns of this thesis, which is primarily a study of the Imperial idea and its practice in some fiction between 1888 and 1939. Evidence will be adduced to argue that, in the important writers of this period, the ethos of Imperialism was essentially defensive rather than self-confident and that the authors to be studied are pre-occupied with the tensions and stresses which such a posture engenders upon Imperial man, both as an individual and in his social and political contexts. If one argues that Imperialism is as characteristic of the latter half of the Victorian age as Evangelical religion or Benthamite philosophy is of the former,² then it seems reasonable to argue that the disillusion with Empire felt by Kipling and Conrad, for instance, may be explained in terms of a more general temper of doubt and self-criticism which brought into question most of the essential manifestations of mid-Victorian culture. In Chapters Two and Three, in fact, the disillusion will

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1. Source: C. Snouk Hurgronje: The Achehnese. Trans. A.W.S. O'Sullivan. 2 vols. London and Leyden. 1906. passim.
 2. The vagueness of these terms is notorious but acknowledged and accepted by scholars to whom I am indebted, for instance, W.E. Houghton: The Victorian Frame of Mind. (1957) 1975. pp.228, 267-9 and J.H. Buckley, in ed. Austin Wright: Victorian Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism. New York. (1961) 1962. p.10

be directly related to a dissatisfaction with the persisting influence of both Evangelicalism and the ethical beliefs of Utilitarianism, the two Victorian traits which J.H. Buckley has singled out as persisting "throughout the nineteenth century"¹ and which W.E. Houghton has in mind in attempting to analyse what is characteristic of the culture as a whole.²

Victory, then, would seem highly appropriate at the outset of this inquiry since it examines the Imperial idea in the context of a wider cultural critique. Heyst is a representative of a more general lost or doubtful sense of purpose which is sounded with increasing consistency and frequency from *Teufelsdröck* to *Dorian Gray*. The choice of an island apart, several factors encourage one to interpret Heyst as symbolic of his culture, and to note the various devices by which Conrad establishes his protagonist as an archetype. For instance, Heyst says this of himself:

"I date later— much later. I can't call myself a child, but I am so recent that I may call myself a man of the last hour— or is it the hour before last?"³

Heyst evinces a sensibility which W.E. Houghton argues is characteristic of the Victorian temper.⁴ But one's feeling that Heyst may be identified, with Kurtz, as a paradigm of his culture, somehow

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1. J.H. Buckley, in ed. Austin Wright: Victorian Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism. New York. (1961) 1962. p.10
 2. W.E. Houghton: The Victorian Frame of Mind. (1957) 1975. p.xv and passim.
 3. Joseph Conrad: Victory. (1915) 1967. p.359
 4. W.E. Houghton: op. cit. pp.3-5

typical, though not comprehensively so, begins with the explicit suggestions that one should see him thus, made by Conrad himself in the "Author's Note":

It is only when the catastrophe matches the natural obscurity of our fate that even the best representative of the race is liable to lose his detachment.¹

And even within the novel, Conrad's anxiety to stress the symbolic nature of his protagonist is evident in the somewhat laboured explicitness of the identification of Heyst with "the original Adam":

There was in the son a lot of that first ancestor who, as soon as he could uplift his muddy frame from the celestial mould, started inspecting and naming the animals of that paradise which he was so soon to lose.²

One also notices the main literary technique by which Heyst assumes his prominence in the book. As with Macbeth, for instance, the subsidiary characters are deliberately flattened in an attempt to ensure the pre-eminence of the central figure, a technique which is not apparent in other of Conrad's best works such as The Secret Agent, "Heart of Darkness", or Nostramo. Lena, as much as the villains, is almost pastiche romanticism in comparison with the extensive solidity of the realisation of Heyst. The result, as F.R. Leavis has suggested, is that the protagonist comes to represent something quintessential:

1. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915) 1967. p.x (my italics)

2. *ibid* :pp.173-4

Heyst is studied at length; yet it may be argued that, convincing as he is, the extreme case that he is offered as being really amounts to a kind of Morality representation of the human potentialities he embodies [.]

One of these potentialities is undoubtedly that of Imperial man. Heyst is attracted to Samburan by the possibilities for its economic exploitation. He is drawn to "coal, the supreme commodity of the age in which we are camped like bewildered travellers in a garish, unrestful hotel."² Equally, his belief in a "great stride forward" for the area³ establishes him, as Chapters Two and Three will argue further, as typically Imperialist in his outlook. And that he is drawn to Samburan almost by default and remains in disillusion,⁴ is illustration of Conrad's conception of the diminishing of a sense of Imperial mission and his intuitive relation of that specific expression of self-doubt to a larger cultural condition.

Before a more detailed discussion of Victory is embarked upon, it is necessary to state one's assumptions about such cultural history as may influence this interpretation of this novel. Insofar as the impulses of Victorian civilisation, including the impulse towards economic and political expansionism, had both coherence and confidence, they were, arguably, dependent upon the vigour and energy

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1. F.R. Leavis: The Great Tradition. (1948) 1973. p.208
 2. Joseph Conrad: Victory. (1915) 1967. p.3. W.E. Houghton (The Victorian Frame of Mind. (1957) 1975. p.1) argues that the notion of the Victorian age as one of transition is "peculiarly Victorian".
 3. Joseph Conrad: op. cit. p.6
 4. This temper is described as characteristic of the manner in which Britain's African territories were acquired by two eminent historians and underlies the argument of this entire book. See R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, with Alice Denny: Africa and the Victorians : The Official Mind of Imperialism. 1961.

of the Puritan ethic. The increasing tendency to paradox and contradiction in the Victorian temper may in part be ascribed to the decreasingly dynamic role of this ethic. As the ethic proved itself less and less able to provide a total structure of values and meaning, contradictory currents and directions came into being and late Victorian culture generates a strong impression of fragmentation and loss of a sense of coherence.

Much of what one understands as the Puritan ethic of the Victorian age is reflected in a relatively unconscious way in the literature of the previous century. Thus, if one chooses to compare another work which uses the island archetype, Robinson Crusoe, with Victory, a great many points of analogy and contrast, which are relevant as background to the main chapters of the thesis, begin to be seen. For Robinson Crusoe is as confident an expression of the Puritan ethic as Victory is its opposite. What impresses one immediately in the comparison, perhaps, is the unity of the ethic in the former novel, its capacity to guide and interpret in every aspect of life. Moreover, Robinson Crusoe would seem to locate the drive towards expansionism very much within the inherent dynamics of the Puritan ethic. Victory, by contrast, would seem to associate Heyst's failure to exploit his island with a concomitant contraction and retrenchment of this ethic.

Calvin, according to R.H. Tawney, postulated to his contemporaries something revolutionary:

[This] new conception of religion, taught them to regard the pursuit of wealth as, not merely an advantage, but as a duty [.] The force which produced it was the creed associated with the name of Calvin. Capitalism, was the social counterpart of Calvinist Theology.

It is a common-place of Marxist critiques of Imperialism in particular, that such expansionism is a necessary and logical by-product of Capitalism.² Max Weber himself argued thus:

[Capitalism] is identical with the pursuit of profit, and forever renewed profit, by means of continuous, rational, capitalistic enterprise.³

And an empire, of course, must represent, in part at least, an opportunity for "renewed profit", both as a source of raw materials for the metropolitan economy and as a market for its finished products. But one may well feel that Marxist critiques of Imperialism are ultimately reductive in their rejection of any other motive than the economic in such expansionism. Thus in 1967, Jean-Paul Sartre castigated the idea of an ethical imperative in Imperialism as utter hypocrisy:

It was nothing but an ideology of lies, a perfect justification for pillage; its honeyed words, its affectation of sensibility were only alibis for our aggressions.⁴

Such a generalisation does little justice to historical and cultural complexities. The Victorian missionary may represent the most obvious expression of an ethical imperative, but as Tawney and Weber show,

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1. R.H. Tawney in The Foreword to Max Weber : The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. trans Talcott Parsons. (1930) 1971. p.2 (my ellipsis)
 2. Discussed further in Chapter Three.
 3. Max Weber : op. cit. p.17
 4. J-P. Sartre in Preface to Frantz Fanon : The Wretched of the Earth. trans. C. Farrington. 1963. p.21

the Puritan ethic makes the very drive towards profit itself, and therefore Empire, an explicitly ethical activity. Empire may be an opportunity merely for a quick profit, but it is a God-given one:

For if that God, whose hand the Puritan sees in all the occurrences of life, shows one of His elect a chance of profit, He must do it with a purpose. Hence the faithful Christian must follow the call by taking advantage of the opportunity.¹

As the fiction of Defoe suggests, the plantation colonies and virgin territories of the new world constituted a possibility for the individual to become a self-made man through hard work and ingenuity, simultaneous with his spiritual redemption. As a context for such a process, the drive towards Empire assumes distinctively ethical overtones:

For to the Puritan, a contemner of the vain shows of sacramentalism, mundane toil becomes itself a kind of sacrament. Like a man who strives by unresting activity to exorcise a haunting demon, the Puritan, in the effort to save his own soul, sets in motion every force in heaven above or in the earth beneath.²

Robinson Crusoe, therefore, may be used to illuminate the concerns of Victory. It dramatises a dynamic expansionism guaranteed by an ethic in full and vigorous flower. Crusoe, it may be argued, is often at variance with the religious precepts of the novel, but he triumphs insofar as he represents the revolutionary and expansionary tendencies of the ethic. Crusoe, one remembers, at first relates his misfortunes to his filial disobedience:

1. Max Weber : The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism. (1930) 1971. p.162
2. R.H. Tawney : Religion and The Rise of Capitalism. (1926) 1975. pp.199-200

I began now seriously to reflect upon what I had done, and how justly I was overtaken by the Judgement of Heaven for my wicked leaving¹ my Father's House, and abandoning my Duty []

But the hero comes to see himself ultimately more in terms of the finally prosperous Job² than the Prodigal Son. Indeed, Crusoe's island, along with the increasingly profitable Brazilian plantation which matures in his absence, may be said to represent the profit from the risks that he undertakes and a vindication of his choice of his own calling as against that determined for him by his father. In this sense at least, the novel is Calvinist myth.

To the Calvinist, argues Weber, vocation is crucial:

[The] calling is not a condition in which the individual is born, but a strenuous and exacting enterprise to be chosen by himself.³

Several elements in Robinson Crusoe tend to undercut the importance which one might otherwise attach to Crusoe's sense of guilt at leaving home. His father's recommendation of the 'middle state' is in distinct discord with the course of his own career. In one way, Crusoe's restlessness is an organic extension of his father's sensibility. Crusoe's father was a trader from Bremen who settled at Hull, prospered, and was able to designate for his son the vocation of law, a sign, surely,

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1. Daniel Defoe : Robinson Crusoe. (1719) 1972. p.8. Defoe, of course, exercised a profound influence on Kipling's imagination. See Something of Myself. (1937) 1964. p.9 and p.18
 2. Daniel Defoe : op. cit. p.284
 3. R.H. Tawney in The Foreword to Max Weber : The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism. (1930) 1971. p.2. See, too, Crusoe's increasing sense of righteousness in the decision to find his own calling as his island prospers. Daniel Defoe : Robinson Crusoe. Op. cit: p.132

of movement up the social scale. Crusoe thus only extends the scope of a drive manifest in his parent and while Crusoe disobeys the letter of his father he remains loyal to a deeper spirit. The rebellion may also be seen symbolically as the conflict of emergent capitalism with a socially and economically conservative mercantilism. M.E. Novak argues as follows:

[Mercantilism] conceived of society in terms of fixed degrees in wealth and position. Change, whether in the universe, in the social structure, or in economic processes, was suspect.¹

In conclusion, then, one may well agree with Ian Watt:

Crusoe's "original sin" is really the dynamic tendency of capitalism itself, whose aim is never merely to maintain the status quo but to transform it incessantly.²

If "profit is Crusoe's only vocation, and the whole world is his territory",³ it is inevitable that he should turn Imperialist. First a trader, then a slaver, then plantation-owner, Crusoe evinces an organically progressive urge towards complete independence and the economic opportunity which Empire represents in its mythic formulation:

I was Lord of the whole Mannor; or if I pleas'd, I might call myself King, or Emperor over the whole Country which I had Possession of. There were no Rivals; I had no Competitor, none to dispute Sovereignty or Command with me.⁴

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1. M.E. Novak : Economics and The Fiction of Daniel Defoe. Berkeley & Los Angeles. U.S.A. 1962. p.6
 2. Ian Watt : The Rise of the Novel. (1957) 1970. p.68
 3. *ibid* : p.69
 4. Daniel Defoe : Robinson Crusoe. (1719) 1972. p.128

Crusoe embarks upon an energetic exploitation and transformation of his island, hindered only by the absence of appropriate tools and labour force. The need for labour is quite as much a motive as pity, or the desire for companionship, in Crusoe's liberation of Friday:

It came now very warmly upon my Thoughts, and indeed irresistibly, that now was my Time to get me a Seryant, and perhaps a Companion or Assistant []

In keeping with the mythic structure, Friday subjects himself voluntarily to facilitate the utilisation of the island, capitalism being distinctively dependent upon a "free" labour force. Crusoe remarks that "I was very seldom idle"² and both Friday and the Spaniards are kept hard at work. The stock of goats increases by three and a half in six months,³ and so successful is this exploratory exploitation that the Spaniards rescued from the mainland require little persuasion to remain as colonists. By virtue of patience and hard work, Crusoe's island is transformed from the "Island of Despair"⁴ to a Protestant Eden:

[We] liv'd there together perfectly and compleatly happy, if any such Thing as compleat Happiness can be form'd in a sublunary State.⁵

Crusoe's adventures are highly successful—on his reappearance in England he is an immensely wealthy man:

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1. Daniel Defoe : Robinson Crusoe. (1719) 1972. p.202
 2. ibid : p.114
 3. ibid : p.147
 4. ibid : p.70
 5. ibid : p.220

I was now Master, all on a Sudden, of above, 5000£ Sterling in Money, and had an Estate, as I might well call it, in the Brasils, of above a thousand Pounds a Year, as sure as an Estate of Lands in England [.]

If Robinson Crusoe is accepted as a representative, mythopoeic vision of the Puritan ethic, one can associate the Imperial imperative with its most fundamental mechanics. Interpreting Defoe's novel in the tradition of Faust, Don Juan and Don Quixote, Ian Watt concludes:

Crusoe's island gives him the complete laissez-faire which economic man needs to realize his aims. At home, market conditions, taxation, and problems of the labour supply make it impossible for the individual to control every aspect of production, distribution, and exchange. The conclusion is obvious. Follow the call of the wide open places, discover an island that is desert only because it is barren of owners or competitors, and there build your personal Empire with the help of a Man Friday who needs no wages and makes it much easier to support the white man's burden [.] Crusoe [is] an inspiration to economists and educators, and a symbol both for the displaced persons of urban capitalism, such as Rousseau, and for its more practical heroes, the empire builders.²

M.E. Novak reaches a similar conclusion, affirming that Defoe's fiction is to be seen as follows:

[Not] only as economic criticism of the society of his time, but also as economic propaganda for the planting of new English colonies and the continued development of those already established in North America and the West Indies.³

Insofar as Puritanism remained a dynamic force in Victorian England, the ideology of Imperial expansion, particularly in an economic

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1. Daniel Defoe : Robinson Crusoe. (1719) 1972. p.285.
 2. Ian Watt : The Rise of The Novel. (1957) 1970. p.90
 3. M.E. Novak : Economics and the Fiction of Daniel Defoe. Berkeley and Los Angeles. U.S.A. 1962. p.140

sense, met with little opposition. One can see this unity of attitude quite clearly in the Carlyle of 1831-49. His justification of expansionism is intimately associated with his rhapsodic conception of the divine mission of labour. Carlyle's influence in this context should not be underestimated. David Thompson has argued that "the vogue for his writings increased after his death in 1881".¹ A new edition of his works in 1902 was hailed with fervour by The Times Literary Supplement as a reminder of "the genius and clear vision of its author"² and he is referred to by name in the fiction of his successors such as Kipling,³ Conrad,⁴ and Wells.⁵ One famous example of this attitude in Carlyle occurs in 1831:

"Produce! Produce! Were it but the pitifullest, infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it, in God's name! 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee: out with it, then. Up, Up! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called Today; for the Night cometh, wherein no man can work."⁶

This attitude establishes the logic of his essay "The Nigger Question" (1849), which discusses the labour problems experienced in this era in the West Indies:

The ultimate "propriatorship" of them, - why, I suppose, it will vest in him who can the best educe from them whatever of noble produce they were created fit for yielding. He, I compute, is the

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1. David Thompson : Europe Since Napoleon. (1957) 1970. p.437
 2. The Times Literary Supplement. Oct 31. 1902. p.323
 3. The Definitive Edition of Rudyard Kipling's Verse. (1940) 1977. p.351
 4. Joseph Conrad : Youth, Heart of Darkness, The End of the Tether. (1902) 1967. p.7
 5. H.G. Wells : Selected Short Stories. 1977. p.352
 6. Thomas Carlyle : Sartor Resartus. (1831) 1896. p.157. It is interesting to note that the last line was the inscription upon Kipling's fireplace at Bateman's in Sussex.

real "Viceregent of the Maker" there; in him, better and better chosen, and not in another, is the "property" vested by decree of Heaven's chancery itself!¹

It is but a small step to the formulation of an imperative to exploit new lands in the tropics, if one accepts Carlyle's premise:

[No] Black man who will not work according to what ability the gods have given him for working, has the smallest right to eat pumpkin, or to any fraction of land that will grow pumpkin, however plentiful such land may be; but has an indisputable and perpetual right to be compelled, by the real proprietors of said land, to do competent work for his living [.] every unprohibited man, whatsoever wiser, more industrious person may be passing that way, shall endeavour to "emancipate" him from his indolence, and by some wise means, as I said, compel him, since inducing will not serve, to do the work he is fit for.²

Carlyle's argument is reinforced by what may now be seen as a racist chauvinism, which one may well feel is more representative of his era than the humanitarianism of the Clapham Sect, and which suggests that this essential element of the Imperial ideology precedes the supposed influence of Darwin upon this idea. He thus addresses the Blacks as members of the "lower races":

[You] have to be servants to those that are born wiser than you, that are born lords of you; servants to the Whites, if they are (as what mortal can doubt they are?) born wiser than you. That, you may depend on it, my obscure Black friends, is and was always the Law of the World, for you and for all men [.]³

This attitude is complemented by a further attitude which is far from being specific to Carlyle alone:

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1. Thomas Carlyle : Critical and Miscellaneous Essays. Vol. 4. 1899 pp. 373-4
 2. *ibid* : p.355
 3. *ibid* : p.379

In all battles, if you await the issue, each fighter has prospered according to his right. His right and his might, at the close of the account, were one and the same. He has fought with all his might, and in exact proportion to all his right he has prevailed.¹

The drive towards expansion has another ethical justification more recognisable to the contemporary reader, that of being a principle of order:

Wheresoever thou findest Disorder, there is thy eternal enemy; attack him swiftly, subdue him; make Order of him, the subject not of Chaos, but of intelligence, Divinity and thee!²

Carlyle is thus able to justify Russian Imperialism expanding into central Asia on the grounds that the Tsar was engaged in a process of "drilling all wild Asia and wild Europe into military rank and file, a terrible yet hitherto a prospering enterprise []"³

Increasingly operative from Carlyle's birth onwards is the belief that trade, free trade in particular, is one instrument for the ordering of Chaos. This idea of trade came to enjoy the same quasi-mystical sanction as work and those who opposed it to be interpreted as the instruments of darkness. Thus Carlyle is in full support of the Opium Wars of the early 1840's, being conducted in an era of an extension of British dominion in the Indian sub-continent:

Our friends of China, who guiltily refused to trade, in these circumstances, - had we not to argue with them, in cannon-shot at last, and convince them that they ought to trade!⁴

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1. Thomas Carlyle : Past and Present. (1843) 1897. p.12
 2. *ibid* : p.250
 3. *ibid* : p.160
 4. *ibid* : p.247 (my italics)

Such an attitude is extremely important to establish, given the kind of criticism that one has seen made by Sartre and it is given expression much later by Charles Dilke as the European powers gathered for the scramble for Africa:

[Were] we to leave India or Ceylon, they would have no customers at all; for falling into anarchy, they would cease at once to export their goods to us and to consume our manufactures.

At many points in the culture of Imperial ideology the ethical interests of Evangelicalism and Utilitarianism, two of the most obvious expressions of the Puritan ethic in Victorian England, become virtually identical,² which once more suggests its lack of homogeneity in the last two decades of the century. An example, in 1849, is Palmerston's agreement to sanction a British naval presence in African waters "to encourage and extend British commerce and thereby to displace the Slave Trade."³ But perhaps the most dramatic example of the equation of the commercial and ethical imperatives is in the attitudes of the missionaries themselves. Speaking in Cambridge in 1857, prior to the second Zambezi expedition, Livingstone declared: "I go back to Africa to make an open path for commerce and Christianity"⁴ A letter to Sedgwick confirms his intention and amplifies the balance of the equation:

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1. cited in C.A. Bodelson : Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism. (1924) 1960. p.67
 2. See also Eric Stokes : The English Utilitarians and India. 1959. pp. 30ff., for further evidence.
 3. cited in R. Robinson, J. Gallagher with A. Denny : Africa and The Victorians; The Official Mind of Imperialism. 1961. p.35. This attitude is duplicated by the Prime Minister in 1895, interestingly. See page 54
 4. cited in Geoffrey Moorhouse : The Missionaries. 1973. p.19

I go with the intention of benefiting both the African and my own countrymen. I take a practical mining geologist to tell us of the mineral resources of the country, an economic botanist to give a full report of the vegetable productions, an artist to give the scenery, a naval officer to tell of the capacity of river communications, and a moral agent to lay a Christian foundation for anything that may follow. All this machinery has for its ostensible object the development of African trade and the promotion of civilisation...I hope it may result in an English colony in the healthy high lands of Central Africa.

This kind of opinion persisted at least until the last decade of the century, as the writing of the Ugandan missionary Mackay attests:

Where we do not already find a way by which to enter unknown lands, we make a way ourselves. In doing so we make a way for others to follow after; a way for the trader to enter with his wares, and to return a richer man.²

This ethical imperative is operative from a political context as well. The increasing tendency towards formal political presence rather than "moral suasion" is at least partly explicable in terms of a profound belief in British institutions. Gladstone in 1853 typifies an attitude to be found in Charles Grant or James Mill³ much earlier, and which was sufficiently widespread to be considered as representing a school within Imperial thinking:

It is because we feel convinced that our Constitution is a blessing to us, and will be a blessing to our posterity...that we are desirous of extending its influence, and that it should not be confined within the borders of this little island; but that if it

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1. cited in Geoffrey Moorhouse : The Missionaries. 1973. p.134-5 (my ellipsis)
 2. cited in *ibid* : p.185
 3. See Eric Stokes : The English Utilitarians and India. 1959. p.34 ff.

please Providence to create openings for us in the broad fields of distant continents, we shall avail ourselves in reason and moderation of those openings to reproduce the copy of those laws and institutions, those habits and national characteristics, which have made England so famous as she is.¹

Beginning from the premise that "The map of the world will show that freedom exists only in the homes of the English race",² Charles Dilke argued thus:

The only justification for our presence in India is the education for the freedom of the Indian races, ...to plant free institutions among a darkskinned race.³

Since the establishment of such free institutions in Britain herself was largely the result of the increasing political domination of the Puritans from the sixteenth century onwards, such arguments confirm that at this stage in the Victorian era the expansionist sensibility was still intimately connected in this respect, too, with the continuing vigour and coherence of the Puritan ethic. As late as 1888, J.A. Froude, Carlyle's disciple and biographer, was justifying Imperialism in terms of this aspect of his culture:

We have another function, such as the Romans had. The sections of men on this globe are unequally gifted. Some are strong and can govern themselves; some are weak and are the prey of foreign invaders or internal anarchy; and freedom, which all desire, is only attainable by weak nations when they are subject to the rule of others who are at once powerful and just.⁴

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1. cited in ed. Anthony Symondson : The Victorian Crisis of Faith. 1970. p.60
 2. cited in C.A. Bodelson : Mid-Victorian Imperialism. (1924) 1960. p.70
 3. ibid : p.62 (my ellipsis)
 4. ibid : p.195

It was suggested earlier that the "new" Imperialism of the 1880's onwards, characterised by formal political control over the subject territory, rather than by economic hegemony or "moral suasion" alone, was a psychologically defensive rather than aggressive phenomenon, though at first the latter may be the more obvious interpretation. Since it has also been asserted that the Imperialism of mid-Victorian England was an innately organic outcome of the Puritan ethic, it may be argued that the qualitative change in the Imperialism of the last quarter of a century of the Victorian era can in part be ascribed to the general loss of cultural confidence from the 1860's onwards. One may begin with the evidence of contradiction and fragmentation generated by the Victorian crisis of faith. And here a distinction must be drawn between the literary culture which is drawn upon heavily to support this argument and "popular culture". Figures such as Arnold and Carlyle are interpreted as seers, prophetic voices whose sensibility is only gradually absorbed into a more general awareness.¹ Thus the intellectuals' self-questioning upon religious matters in the 1850's, for instance, took place against a background of more general life in which religion retained its traditional importance. According to Owen Chadwick, the period of the Evangelicals' greatest strength in both High Church and Low was the period 1850-1860,² the same decade in which the popular imagination was, perhaps, most fired

1. Or for that matter Schopenhauer in the context of whose work Victory has been often discussed. David Thompson in Europe Since Napoleon. (1957) 1970, suggests that "although Arthur Schopenhauer had died in 1860, it was only later in the century that he acquired fame." (p.436)

2. Owen Chadwick : The Victorian Church. Part One. 1966. p.440 ff

by the symbol of the missionary. Indeed, Stephen Cotgrove argues that Church attendance continued to rise into the 1880's.¹ The distinction is important to keep in mind since Conrad and Kipling are essentially being discussed in the context of the literary culture. This would hope to explain their antagonism towards both the missionary and commercial interest in the Empire, which may be interpreted in part as the persistence of the Puritan ethic in "popular" culture.

In 1831 Carlyle had noticed a general loss of potency with respect to the Churches as a whole:

Church-clothes have gone sorrowfully out-at-elbows: nay, far worse, many of them have become mere hollow Shapes, or Masks, under which no living Figure or Spirit any longer dwells; but only spiders and unclean beetles, in horrid accumulation, drive their trade [.]²

It is significant that his attention was concentrated more specifically upon Puritan expressions of the traditional faith. Thus he attacks the low Church in particular:

Methodism with its eye forever turned on its own navel; asking itself with torturing anxiety of Hope and Fear, "Am I right? Am I wrong? Shall I be saved? Shall I not be damned?"—What is this, at bottom, but a new phasis of Egoism, stretched out into the Infinite [.]³

The examination of the Puritan ethic in its specifically religious form continued through the next decades and in 1859, Charles Kingsley, for

1. S.L. Cotgrove : The Science of Society. (1967) 1976. p.196. The furore caused by the publication of Mrs Humphrey Ward's Robert Elsmere (1888), is further evidence of the continued public subscription to Christianity.
2. Thomas Carlyle : Sartor Resartus. (1831) 1896. p.172
3. Thomas Carlyle : Past and Present. (1843) 1897. p.117

all his indebtedness to the evangelical temper, criticised what he saw as a fundamental failure in Calvinism, too:

Calvinism has become so unreal—so afraid of itself—so apologetic about its own peculiar doctrines, on which alone it stands, that revivals must now be windy flashings up in the socket of the dying candle.¹

Concomitant with this internal sense of retrenchment came attacks upon the authenticity of religion from the outside. Despite denials of competence to judge the authority of the scriptures from scientists such as Charles Lyell or Charles Darwin, their published research undoubtedly contributed greatly to the gathering crisis of faith. German Higher Criticism and the more specifically historical analyses of the Bible from Renan to Colenso hastened the crisis. Despite vigorous counter-attacks in the form of the Oxford movement, for instance, the mid-Victorian temper, amongst the intellectuals at least, was radically modified. Increasingly, argues W.E. Houghton, "the tremendous optimism of outward success was...checked or even nullified by an inward sense of moral failure".² Arnold's "Dover Beach" is paradigmatic of a crucial sense of loss and dispossession which was to become widespread:

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,

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1. Charles Kingsley : His Letters and Memories of His Life. ed. Mrs. Kingsley. Vol. Two. 1877. p.93. See too: ibid : Vol. One. p.471. See, too, the criticism levelled at fundamentalism in George Eliot's Silas Marner. (1861).
 2. W.E. Houghton : The Victorian Frame of Mind. (1957) 1975. p.62 (my ellipsis)

Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.¹

Given the determinism of the Puritan ethic, a direct result of this sense of disinheritance is a feeling of nostalgia, easily metamorphosised into an intense pessimism, governed above all by the awareness that traditional goals and purposes were at root in question. This sensibility is evident in "Stanzas in Memory of the Author of 'Obermann'":

We, in some unknown Power's employ,
Move on a rigorous line;
Can neither, when we will, enjoy,
Nor, when we will, resign.²

The inevitable result of this feeling of deprivation is an aimless, paralysed response to life for those like Heyst:

Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born [.]³

W.E. Houghton adduces a wealth of evidence in support of his assertion that this mood of doubt "to some extent was felt by nearly all educated Victorians".⁴ And it seems important to notice that this sensibility is a central characteristic of Axel Heyst, the hero of Victory: "'I am a transplanted being. Transplanted! I ought to call myself uprooted—an unnatural state of existence [.]'"⁵

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1. Matthew Arnold : Poetical Works. eds. C.B. Tinker and H.F. Lowry. (1942) 1969. p.211
 2. *ibid* : p.310
 3. *ibid* : p.302
 4. W.E. Houghton : The Victorian Frame of Mind. (1957) 1975. p.64 ff
 5. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915) 1967. p.217

Carlyle recurs continually to the importance of Christian faith in the individual's and society's attempt to provide a coherent, total interpretation of purpose:

[For] 'without it, Worldlings puke-up their sick existence, by suicide,'...it will be clear that, for a pure moral nature, the loss of his religious Belief was the loss of everything.¹

If one accepts this, it is unsurprising to find many a mid-Victorian thinker questioning the practical manifestations of an ethos whose spiritual foundations had been so severely eroded, one aspect of which was an increasing skepticism with regard to the gospel of work. While the Puritan ethic was vigorous, this gospel was secure:

[The] industrial conception of work included the idea of a mission. Manufacturers and workers, it was often said, were engaged in a vast crusade to subdue nature for the benefit of man and thus to strengthen England and further the progress of civilisation.²

But once the ethical associations of work had been brought into question, one notes an increasingly intense tendency to criticise its cost upon the individual and society in the demonic terms anticipated by Carlyle:

And now the Genius of Mechanism smothers him worse than any Nightmare did; till the Soul is nigh choked out of him, and only a kind of Digestive, Mechanic life remains.³

Conditions were becoming increasingly appropriate for the great novels of social protest against the stresses consequent upon industrialism, such as Alton Locke or Hard Times.

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1. Thomas Carlyle : Sartor Resartus. (1831) 1896. p.129 (my ellipsis)
 2. W.E. Houghton : The Victorian Frame of Mind. (1957) 1975. p.250
 3. Thomas Carlyle : Op. cit: p.176

The note of disgust and disillusion is evident pervasively through the poetry too:

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.¹

Hopkins's concern with the industrialisation of Britain has, as its counterpart, Arthur Hugh Clough's criticism of its effect upon men's moral environment and his despair is recorded in "The Latest Decalogue":

No graven images may be
Worshipped, except the currency: ...
Thou shalt not steal - an empty feat,
When it's so lucrative to cheat: ...
Thou shalt not covet; but tradition
Approves all form of competition.²

Furthermore, the emphatic individualism of the Puritan ethic had dangerous and destructive implications after the crisis of faith, as R.H. Tawney suggests:

To insist that the individual is responsible, that no man can save his brother, that the essence of religion is the contact of the soul with its Maker—how true and indispensable! But how easy to slip from that truth into the suggestion that society is without responsibility, that no man can help his brother, that the social order and its consequences are not even the scaffolding by which men may climb to greater heights, but something external, alien and irrelevant []³

Carlyle himself had noted with horror this tendency even in the first decades of the nineteenth century:

"Call ye that a Society...where there is no longer any Social Idea extant - not so much as the Idea

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1. ed. W.H. Gardner : Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins. (1948) 1956. p.70
 2. ed. A.L.P. Norrington : The Poems of Arthur Hugh Clough. 1968. pp. 60-61
 3. R.H. Tawney : Religion and The Rise of Capitalism. (1926) 1975. p.252 (my ellipsis)

of a common Home, but only of a common over-crowded Lodging House?"¹ ... "enlightened Egoism," never so luminous, is not the rule by which man's life can be lead... "Laissez-faire", "Supply-and-demand", "cash-payment for the sole nexus", and so forth, were not, are not and never will be, a practicable Law of Union for a Society of Men.²

The increasing attention paid to alienation in the nineteenth century is a measure of the breakdown of trust in the capacity of traditional forms of thought to provide social coherence. Even human love itself was often felt to be impotent in solving the problems of isolation, as is suggested by Matthew Arnold's "Buried Life":

But there's a something in this breast,
To which thy light words bring no rest,
And thy gay smiles no anodyne.³

This kind of feeling is a crucial component in the character of Axel Heyst, constituting in large measure the "secret reserve of his soul".⁴ Although the protagonist never quite comes to terms with his loneliness—he is anxious for his correspondence, for example—the feeling that isolation is an objective condition of being, prevents him from making any expression of deep feeling for Lena:

Heyst seemed to see the illusion of human fellowship on earth vanish before the naked truth of her existence, and leave them both face to face in a moral desert as arid as the sands of Sahara, without restful shade, without refreshing water.⁵

To the literary culture of late Victorian England, Carlyle's prophecy that English civilisation might increasingly resemble a "vast,

1. Thomas Carlyle : Sartor Resartus. (1831) 1896. p.185 (my ellipsis)
2. Thomas Carlyle : Past and Present. (1843) 1897. p.33 (my ellipsis)
3. Matthew Arnold : Poetical Works. eds. C.B. Tinker and H.F. Lowry. (1942) 1969. p.245
4. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915) 1967. p.245
5. *ibid* : p.80

gloomy, solitary Golgotha, and Mill of Death!"¹ may well have seemed realised.. Conrad's animus against "material progress" as a virtue for its own sake, and Kipling's rejection of the place of the evangelist in the Empire link them to this literary culture deeply antagonised by the persistence of these legacies of the Puritan ethic. The words of A.E. Houseman, spoken in 1892, seem to represent the pessimism of the literary culture:

It may be urged that man stands today in the position of one who has been reared from his cradle as the child of a noble race and the heir to great possessions, and who finds at his coming of age that he has been deceived alike as to his origin and his expectations [.]²

It seems important to establish such a cultural background before discussing the work of Kipling and Conrad, since the response of Imperial man to his environment and duties in their work can only be fully understood as the response of individuals created by writers owing allegiance to the literary culture before a more general one. Their work should be seen as an organic part of this late Victorian temper and a response to the problems which created it, rather than being seen, as Oscar Wilde saw Kipling, as valuable insofar as they revealed some new, exotic environment.

From the 1860's onwards, the presuppositions guiding Imperial ideology were rapidly modified, largely, it may be argued, as the result of a loss of confidence in various aspects of British life.

1. Thomas Carlyle : Sartor Resartus. (1831) 1896. p.133

2. cited in David Daiches : Some Late Victorian Attitudes. 1969. p.13

The tendency for more formal, political control over dependencies and the penetration of new lands may be interpreted as a symptom of Britain's loss of economic advantage over her rivals. In the first half of the century, the predominance and success of Free Trade theory was so marked that the idea of dividing up the tropics would have been intrinsically opposed to the prevalent dogma. J.A. Hobson in 1902 pointed out the influence of Britain's initial lead in the Industrial Revolution:

So long as England held a virtual monopoly of the world markets for certain important classes of manufactured goods, Imperialism was unnecessary.

Indeed so powerful was the belief in Free Trade that even what were later known as the Dominions were consistently the targets of the Manchester School and its followers until the 1870's. Thus in the early 1840's Cobden had thundered: "The colonies, army, navy, and church are, with the Corn Laws, merely accessories to our aristocratic government"², a belief which puts one in mind of J.S. Mill's image of the colonies as a vast system of relief for the upper classes. In 1840 James Stephen spoke illuminatingly on Africa: "If we could acquire the Dominion of the whole of that Continent it would be but a worthless possession."³ Robinson and Gallagher argue, in their

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1. J.A. Hobson : Imperialism. 1902. p.77
 2. cited in C.A. Bodelson : Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism. (1924) 1960. p.33
 3. cited in R. Robinson, J. Gallagher with Alice Denny : Africa and the Victorians. 1961. p.16

influential work Africa and the Victorians, that Britain's interest in tropical Africa remained determined, until around 1870, primarily by a desire to finally eradicate slaving and then secondly by a desire to trade only insofar as this would provide an alternative economic infrastructure to slaving on the continent.¹ As long as Britain retained her place as the world's leading economic power, with a handy lead in the industrial revolution, and with the world's most powerful fleet to safeguard her trading routes, there was little reason for an extension of her rule in the tropics to a more formal, political nature.

Liberal political historians such as Robinson and Gallagher, John Bowles in The Imperial Achievement, Gann and Duignan in The Burden of Empire, and C.J.Lowe in The Reluctant Imperialists, all stress the decline of Britain's political influence as the main factor in the scramble for the tropics. Britain, runs this argument, occupied Egypt in order to secure the Suez Canal route to India. A land intervention was necessary, first because Britain's naval presence was insufficient to control the South-East Mediterranean, and secondly because Russian influence in the Ottoman Empire, of which Egypt was still a part, threatened to penetrate right through to the Khedivate. A domino situation then developed. As a result of the Mahdi's rising in the Sudan, Britain had to intervene there to protect its Egyptian borders. To counter French pressure from the west and Italian from

1. see in this context Kipling's story "A Deal in Cotton" (1926).

the east upon the Sudan, Britain had to secure Uganda. To secure Uganda, she had to secure Kenya, and so forth. Furthermore, these political historians emphasize, above all, the strategic importance of Africa, which became merely an insurance policy to the countries jockeying for control of sea-routes to the East. This school of thought stresses, too, the continuity of Britain's foreign policy from the mid-Victorian period onwards, so that Britain's intervention in Egypt is seen to be conditioned by decades of fear of an Ottoman collapse and Russian hegemony in the near East. They adduce quite convincing evidence that the interest in Africa was essentially political rather than economic. Gann and Duignan point out that return on investment in tropical Africa between 1890 and 1910, even in the Rand gold fields, only averaged 4.1%.¹ Expressed as a percentage of Britain's total exports, exports to Africa in 1877-1879 constituted 0.64%. In 1899-1900, they had risen to only 1.19%. Expressed in the same way, imports from tropical Africa in 1877-1879 were a mere 0.48% of Britain's total volume of imports. By 1899-1900 they had risen only 0.03%.²

One can see in these interpretations a recognition of a loss of confidence in Britain's ability to maintain the political predominance in Europe that she had enjoyed from 1815 to the 1860's. But other factors must be taken into account in an attempt to explain the volte-face described by C.A. Bodelson as occurring in the 1870's:

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1. L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan : Burden of Empire. 1968. p.43
 2. R. Robinson, J. Gallagher with Alice Denny : Africa and the Victorians. 1961. p.51

With a rapidity and completeness which seem almost incredible...the Pessimists dwindled into an insignificant minority. Nobody, except one or two die-hard Manchester men, dreamed of maintaining that the colonies ought to be got rid of. Protestations of belief in the future of the Empire became part of the stock-in-trade of most politicians, and expressions of pride in the extent and greatness of the Empire a common-place.

Firstly, the separatist prophecies of a bloody termination to Britain's relations with the white-settled dominions, as had happened with the U.S.A., had not been fulfilled. Rather, there were signs of an increased loyalty on the part of a territory such as Canada, vexed by the increasing pre-eminence of her neighbour. A gradual reduction of the metropolitan presence in these territories, as they moved towards self-government, greatly eased the burden on Britain's defence exchequer. More sophisticated communications systems such as the telegraph and steam-ship brought these countries much closer together. The unification of Germany, Italy and the United States suggested the wisdom of aggregation and consolidation rather than disintegration and isolation. Alarm that Britain might decline to the position of a second Holland became quite common in the 1860's and 1870's, as Germany seized the initiative on the Continent. To all this must be added the influence of an increasing number of intellectual ginger-groups such as The Royal Colonial Institute, founded in 1868, and numbering amongst its members J.A. Froude, W.E. Forster and Charles Dilke. The increasing power of the Imperial Federation Movement from 1871 onwards attests to a climate conducive to formal inter-

1. C.A. Bodelson : Mid-Victorian Imperialism. (1924) 1960.
p.79 (my ellipsis)

vention in tropical lands; a climate by now sufficiently important, politically, for Disraeli to add his flamboyant support in his famous Crystal Palace speech of 1872. Disraeli's speech underlines a steady intensification in the formulation of Imperial ideology, signalled in such works as Dilke's Greater Britain (1868), Froude's Oceana (1871) and J.H. Seeley's The Expansion of England (1883).

In the course of his speech, Disraeli attacked the pessimists:

[They were] viewing everything in a financial aspect and totally passing by those moral and political considerations which make nations great and by the influence of which alone men are distinguished from animals.¹

But the erosion of Britain's economic supremacy undoubtedly helped to change attitudes towards Imperialism.² In 1870, J.A. Froude articulated the mood of anxiety after a difficult economic period:

[There] are symptoms which suggest, if not fear, yet at least misgiving as to the permanency of English industrial supremacy.³

These misgivings had been anticipated in Carlyle as early as 1849, an illustration again of the prophetic nature of his voice:

Up to this time it is the Saxon British mainly; they hitherto have cultivated with some manfulness: and when a manfuler class of cultivators, stronger, worthier to have such land, abler to bring fruit from it, shall make their appearance, - they, doubt it not, by fortune of war, and other confused negotiation and vicissitude, will be declared by Nature and Fact to be the worthier, and will become proprietors, - perhaps also only

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1. cited in C.A. Bodelson : Aspects of Mid-Victorian Imperialism. (1924) 1960. p.121
 2. For a more detailed analysis of the economic factor in Imperialism, see ch. 3
 3. cited in C.A. Bodelson : op. cit. p. 82

for a time. That is the law, I take it; ultimate, supreme, for all lands in all countries under this sky.

The realisation of this prediction could only have hastened the movement towards closed markets and sources of raw materials free from international competitors, so that in economic as well as political terms, an explanation for the Imperialism of the last two decades could lie in a failure of confidence in traditional social forms, in this case those of competition and production. Even the essentially political model of Robinson and Gallagher assumes the importance of a widely held belief that Imperial expansion was a necessity "without which industrial growth might cease."²

There is evident a trend of thinking in the late Victorian period which would suggest that the increased interest in Empire was growing in proportion to a disillusion with the social consequences of economic contradiction and stagnation at home. Raymond Chapman has argued that the "Empire provided the image of unity which was being vainly sought in society at home."³ To some extent the Victorian imagination is thus still in key with the mythopoeic possibilities of Crusoe's island, seeing the Empire as an alternative to the absence of economic, social or political opportunity in Britain. In 1843, Carlyle represented this perspective in his declaration that "Our little Isle is grown too narrow for us; but the world is wide enough

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1. Thomas Carlyle : Critical and Miscellaneous Essays. Vol. 4. 1899. p.374
 2. R. Robinson and J. Gallagher : Africa and the Victorians. 1961. p.2
 3. Raymond Chapman : The Victorian Debate. 1968. p.35

yet for another Six Thousand Years."¹ The Empire comes increasingly to represent the opportunity for an alternative society based on less complex and juster foundations than those operating in the industrial civilisation of the mother country. Thus there was a great deal of sympathy, during the 1880's and 1890's, for the essentially simple, pastoral culture of the Boers, typified in such thinkers as Froude. C.A. Bodelson has followed the development of this vision of the Empire from the 1870's onwards and demonstrates its impact on J.A. Froude, one of the most significant propagandists of Imperialism at the time of the scramble for Africa, concluding thus:

He wished to retain the colonies because he thought it possible to reproduce in them a simpler state of society and a nobler way of life than were possible in industrial England.²

Finally, it may seem paradoxical that Tennyson's poem "The Jubilee of Queen Victoria" and Kipling's response to the next jubilee, "Recessional", written in 1887 and 1897 respectively, and expressing grave doubts about the future of English civilisation, should co-incide with the outbursts of jingoism characteristically associated with the last two decades of the century. But the contradiction is only an apparent one; as Alan Sandison suggests, "a wide indulgence in frenetic jingoism is not the symbol of an unworried nation."³ At such points as these the literary mind and popular imagination would appear to concur.

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1. Thomas Carlyle : Past and Present. (1843) 1897. p.267. This conviction was not novel to Carlyle, of course, but is concurrent with the whole nineteenth century. c.f. Malthus's Essay on the Principle of Population. (1798), revised 1824 & 1830.
 2. C.A. Bodelson : Mid-Victorian Imperialism. (1924) 1960. p.199
 3. Alan Sandison : The Wheel of Empire. 1967 p.19

This body of material has been gathered in support of the argument that the Empire in which the characters of Kipling or Conrad find themselves is essentially a defensive phenomenon and that interpretations of their art which fail to relate this sense of pressure and strain to its metropolitan origins incur limitations which do not do justice to the total conception of their work. While Axel Heyst may not seem even a representative hero of Conrad's, it is arguable that he dramatises an ethos against which Imperial man had to defend himself in order to maintain any faith in the idea of Empire. And one is persistently reminded, throughout Victory, of Conrad's perception of the organic relationship of Heyst's metropolitan cultural heritage to his behaviour in the East, which suggests that a strong parallel with Robinson Crusoe exists. Neither can be seen as escapist literature, but each chooses an exotic, remote, dramatic context in which to realise some of the essential pressures of the culture of their day in a manner which is common to much mythopoeic literature.

In his biography of Conrad, Jocelyn Baines argues that Conrad deliberately changed the christian name of his hero and concludes:

There can be little doubt that in choosing the name of Axel for the hero of Victory, Conrad had consciously in mind Villiers de l'Isle Adam's Axel [.] How far Conrad intended the parallel to go is a moot point [.]¹

It would seem, given the weight of much of the rest of the novel, that Conrad intended the parallel to go a long way. Paralysis of

1. Jocelyn Baines : Joseph Conrad : A Critical Biography. (1960) 1971. p.479

will is a quality that one associates with many of the fictional protagonists of the aesthetes. Conrad is at pains in his 'Author's Note' to point out that 'Heyst in his fine detachment had lost the habit of asserting himself.'¹ A constantly reiterated motif is Heyst's inability to escape the 'enchantment' of the islands. He is unable to assert himself against Wang over the business of the missing revolver. He is incapable of surmounting his skepticism in order to affirm his love for Lena as she dies. Indeed Heyst has all too little of that 'assertion' defined in the 'Author's Note' thus:

[It is] the readiness of mind and the turn of the hand that come without reflection and lead the man to excellence in life, in art, in crime, in virtue[.]²

This is one crucial point of divergence from that earlier empire-builder Crusoe and a measure of the steady decline of the latter's whole outlook on life as the nineteenth century progressed. Defoe's novel exemplifies a characteristic which R.H. Tawney has emphasised as being the cornerstone of the Puritan ethic:

For it is will - will organised and disciplined and inspired, will quiescent in rapt adoration or straining in violent energy, but always will - which is the essence of Puritanism, and for the intensification and organisation of will every instrument in that tremendous arsenal of religious fervour is mobilized. The Puritan is like a steel spring compressed by an inner force, which shatters every obstacle by its rebound.³

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1. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915) 1967. p.x
 2. *ibid* : p.x
 3. R.H. Tawney : Religion and the Rise of Capitalism. (1926) 1975. p.201

Heyst, by comparison with Crusoe, is excessively intellectual, unable to transcend his father's philosophic legacy. Conrad dramatises in his protagonist the limitations of an idealism which is devoid of commitment and consequence in action:

Thinking is the great enemy of perfection. The habit of profound reflection, I am compelled to say, is the most pernicious of all the habits formed by the civilized man.

What meditation does for Heyst is, precisely, to interpose between "readiness of mind and the turn of the hand." Crusoe, by contrast, is almost a creature of reflex and it is this immediate responsiveness which causes the disparities between his sense of guilt and his actual course of action. It results in many situations which are strikingly incongruous. Thus even in his desperate escape from the Turks, Crusoe is unable to repress his Puritan urges; he sees possible profit even in the attack of wild animals:

I bethought my self, however, that perhaps the Skin of him might one way or other be of some Value to us; and I resolved to take off his Skin if I could.²

So deep-rooted and unselfconscious is Crusoe's allegiance to his cultural moulding, that he is unable to identify precisely the forces which drive him on to pursue his path as an empire-builder:

There seem'd to be something fatal in that Propension of Nature³...my ill Fate⁴...the same Influence, whatever it was,⁵...I know not what to call this, nor will I urge, that it is a secret overruling Decree that hurries us on...but some

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1. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915) 1967. pp.x-xi
 2. Daniel Defoe : Robinson Crusoe. (1719) 1972, p.28
 3. *ibid* : p.3
 4. *ibid* : p.14
 5. *ibid* : p.16

such decreed unavoidable misery...which it was impossible for me to escape, could have pushed me forward¹...I was hurried on, and obey'd blindly the² Dictates of my Fancy rather than my Reason [.]

While Crusoe at times regards himself as the object of a guiding Providence, the plans of a transcendent reality will allow him no complacent attitudes, and this is expressed in his continual exercise of his conscious will. As Tawney comments in another context: "Overwhelmed by a sense of his 'Ultimate End', the Puritan cannot rest, nevertheless, in reflection upon it."³

Heyst, by contrast, is unable to come to terms with a sense of determinism which has no origin in divine decree, expressing, indeed, a form of nostalgia for this loss of purposiveness which he sees realised in his servant:

Heyst envied the Chinaman's obedience to his instincts, the powerful simplicity of purpose which made his existence appear almost automatic⁴ in the mysterious precision of its facts.

Life for Heyst is a matter of passive endurance, to be survived in the face of doubt which makes expressions of the will irrelevant until the moment that external events force action upon him:

Heyst, the man of universal detachment, loses his mental self-possession, that fine attitude before the universally irremediable which wears the name of stoicism. It is all a matter of proportion. There should have been a remedy for that sort of thing. And yet there is no remedy.

1. Daniel Defoe : Robinson Crusoe. (1719) 1972, p.14
2. *ibid* : p.60 (all my ellipses)
3. R.H. Tawney : Religion and the Rise of Capitalism. (1926) 1975. p.200
4. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915) 1967. p.181

Behind this minute instance of life's hazards
Heyst sees the power of blind destiny.¹

The influence of Heyst's father is paramount in this respect.

Possessing "the most weary, the most uneasy soul that civilisation had ever fashioned to its ends of disillusion and regret",² Heyst's father becomes Axel's obsession. From the former the protagonist obtains a powerful moulding:

The young man learned to reflect, which is a destructive process, a reckoning of the cost. It is not the clear-sighted who lead the world. Great achievements are accomplished in a blessed, warm mental fog, which the pitiless cold blasts of the father's analysis had blown away from the son.³

Heyst's propensity to introspection is perhaps a symbolic expression of Conrad's perception of the increasingly self-reflexive tendencies of Victorian culture, a theme one finds, too, in Hardy. In Heyst, the tendency towards doubt is logically taken to extreme lengths. Even Lena is unable to fully convince him of the solidity of ordinary, everyday reality, an incapacity which Heyst himself fully acknowledges:

"Here I am on a Shadow inhabited by Shades. How helpless a man is against the Shades! How is one to intimidate, persuade, resist, assert oneself against them? I have lost all belief in realities []"⁴

One notices too that whereas the dynamic of Crusoe's will is expressed partly in terms of rebellion against his father, Heyst's filial loyalty is fatally fixed and retains its allegiance to his parent's Schopenhauerian pessimism and disillusion:

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1. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915) 1967. p.x
 2. *ibid* : p.91
 3. *ibid* : p.91-2
 4. *ibid* : p.350

"Is there no guidance?"

His father was in an unexpectedly soft mood on that night, when the moon swam in a cloudless sky over the begrimed shadows of the town.

"You still believe in something, then?" he said in a clear voice, which had been growing feeble of late. "You believe in flesh and blood, perhaps? A full and equable contempt would soon do away with that, too. But since you have not attained to it, I advise you to cultivate that form of contempt which is called pity [.]"

"What is one to do, then?" sighed the young man, regarding his father, rigid in the high-backed chair.

"Look on - make no sound [.]"¹

Heyst's father closely follows the German philosopher Schopenhauer in stressing disengagement and contempt for action, each constituting a denial of the Puritan insistence upon will. Schopenhauer's strong debt to Eastern thought is evident throughout his ethic. His ethic, he describes thus:

[t] candidly confesses the reprehensible nature of the world and points to the denial² of the will as the road to redemption from it... Will, which is the prime sin and thus the source of all wickedness and evil [.]³

Thus Heyst's wanderings are, unlike Crusoe's, essentially without purpose, the expression of a sense of disinheritance which may be noted with deepening insistence in the literature of the second half of the nineteenth century:

Perhaps he was a bird that had never had a nest⁴
...the veriest tramp on this earth, an indifferent⁵
stroller going through the world's bustle...

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1. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915) 1967. pp. 174-5
 2. Arthur Schopenhauer : Essays and Aphorisms. (1851). trans. R.J. Hollingdale. 1970. p.63
 3. *ibid* : p.64
 4. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915) 1967. p.32
 5. *ibid* : p.199

...his rather aimless wanderings¹ ...drifting
 in the wind-currents...² ...unattached, floating
 existence[]³

Wandering is thus, to Heyst, a defence against reflection and a guard against committing himself to any consistent pattern of action, which in the absence of any higher purpose, would be irrelevant and meaningless. There is also an implicit movement towards solipsism, albeit of a special kind:

It was the very essence of his life to be a solitary achievement, accomplished not by hermit-like withdrawal with its silence and immobility, but by a system of restless wandering, by the detachment of an impermanent dweller amongst changing scenes. In this scheme he had perceived the means of passing through life without suffering and almost without a single care in the world - invulnerable because elusive.⁴

The Empire provides, for Heyst, an opportunity to escape the civilisation of London and all that the city represents as the decaying expression of industrial culture. It is an anodyne, vitiating the sense of despair attendant upon his vision of "the fatuously jostling, nodding, spinning figures hurried irresistibly along"⁵ in the metropolis.

A second and related distinction of great importance between Crusoe and Heyst is the absence in the latter of any sense of "calling", a consequence of Heyst's doubt and despairing perception of the blind workings of "the Great Joke".⁶ And, in terms of Heyst as a symbol of a culture, this has crucial bearings upon the relationship of Imperial

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1. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915) 1967. p.6
 2. *ibid* : p.92
 3. *ibid* : p.18 (all my ellipses)
 4. *ibid* : p.90
 5. *ibid* : p.175
 6. *ibid* : p.198

man to the subordinate Empire. For the Puritan, the conception of the "mission" was inextricably linked to the social context of his activity, as Max Weber suggests:

But at least one thing was unquestionably new: the valuation of the fulfilment of duty in worldly affairs as the highest form which the moral activity of the individual could assume...The only way of living acceptably to God was not to surpass worldly morality in monastic asceticism, but solely through the fulfilment of the obligations imposed upon the individual by his position in the world.¹

By contrast, Axel Heyst is the representative of an age becoming accustomed only with desperate difficulty to the loss of its faith:

[He] was a spirit which had renounced all outside nourishment, and was sustaining itself proudly on its own contempt of the usual coarse ailments which life offers to the common appetites of men.²

The logical outcome of such an attitude is retreat and renunciation. Thus Samburan is referred to as a "hermitage"³ and the hotelier Schomberg describes Heyst as "a hermit in the wilderness now."⁴ One can thus see that the protagonist's self-identification with the Imperial idea has been highly artificial and that, in more general terms, the external confidence in the Empire, is at odds with the deeper energies of Victorian culture, seen in the literary mind at least:

"Even the wilds hold prizes which tempt some people; but I had no schemes, no plans - and not even great firmness of mind to make me unduly obstinate. I was simply moving on, while the others, perhaps, were going somewhere."⁵

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1. Max Weber : The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. (1930) 1971. p.80 (my ellipsis)
 2. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915) 1967. p.177
 3. *ibid* : p.34
 4. *ibid* : p.30-1
 5. *ibid* : p.211-2

Heyst attaches himself initially to Morrison's plans because he is unable to assert his will against the weight of the captain's gratitude. But once attached, however, Heyst naively and wholeheartedly enters the circle of the Imperial ideology, the abuse of which is so starkly exposed in Conrad's earlier work such as Nostramo (1904), or "Heart of Darkness" (1899):

What he seemed mostly concerned for was the "stride forward," as he expressed it, in the general organisation of the universe, apparently. He was heard by more than a hundred persons in the islands talking of "a great stride forward for these regions".¹

The ironic descriptive tone is an illustration in itself of the suspicion in which such an ideology had come to be held even by the more down-to-earth empire-builder such as the narrator of Victory. For a while Heyst's venture promises to issue in success and the Tropical Belt Coal Company assumes the figure of a threat to the small trader represented by the narrator:

Oh, yes; it had come, and anybody could see what would be the consequences - the end of the individual trader, smothered under a great invasion of steamers.²

But Heyst's one significant burst of energy on behalf of the Imperial mission is only a measure of his general inability to assert himself, an indication of his more natural inertia and incapacity to commit himself to action:

Those dreamy spectators of the world's agitation are terrible once the desire to act gets hold of

1. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915) 1967. p.6
2. *ibid* : p.24

them. They lower their heads and charge a wall with an amazing serenity which nothing but an undisciplined imagination can give.

The venture destroys once and for all the lingering propensity for this form of action in Heyst:

His scornful temperament, beguiled into action, suffered from failure in a subtle way unknown to men accustomed to grapple with the realities of common human enterprise. It was like the gnawing pain of useless apostasy,² a sort of shame before his own betrayed nature [.]

As for the narrator, such action, whether or not channelled into the Imperial enterprise, becomes to Heyst a mirage of futility. For both, finally, it is in itself a fraud:

The barbed hook, baited with the illusion of progress, to bring out of the lightless void the shoals of unnumbered generations!³

And once the company collapses, Heyst makes no effort in his capacity as an individual to bring the Alfuros within the pale of progress. He is entirely sympathetic towards their suspicions over the presence of the white men on Samburan:

"This," Heyst explained in his urbane tone, "is a barrier against the march of civilisation. The poor folk over there did not like it, as it appeared to them in the shape of my company - a great step forward, as some people used to call it with mistaken confidence. The advanced foot,⁴ has been drawn back, but the barricade remains."

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1. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915) 1967. p.77
 2. ibid : p.65
 3. ibid : p.174
 4. ibid : p.344

All sense of the Imperial mission disintegrates under the force of this disillusion, its solidity disappearing alongside Heyst's simultaneous disenchantment with the supposedly objective "hard facts"¹ of his larger metropolitan culture. He symbolically disengages himself from the ethical Utilitarianism which underlies much Victorian optimism and some of its rationale for expansionism.

Impressed with senses of futility and doubt, Heyst becomes that Puritan monster, the idle man. For Carlyle as for Crusoe, in Weber's words, Heyst has failed:

Waste of time is thus the first and in principle the deadliest of sins. The span of human life is infinitely short and precious to make sure of one's own election.²

Crusoe transforms his Island of Despair into a land of plenty, until it assumes the aspect of "a planted Garden".³ It is a fitting image of what, in part, Empire represented, throughout the nineteenth century, in non-literary life at least. Heyst's island, by comparison, seems jaded and exhausted, the Imperial adventure a failure and unselfconfident. It seems highly significant that the seed-planter on Samburan is not Heyst but Wang.⁴ At many points in Victory the naturalistic description of the collapse of the coal company assumes a more general symbolic character. The protagonist remains frozen and immobile before what faces him:

[The] aspect of an abandoned settlement invaded by the jungle: vague roofs above low vegetation, broken shadows of bamboo fences in the sheen of long grass, something like an overgrown bit of

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1. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915). 1967. p.7
 2. Max Weber : The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. (1930) 1971. p.157
 3. Daniel Defoe : Robinson Crusoe. (1719) 1972. p.113
 4. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915) 1967. p.181

road slanting among ragged thickets towards the shore only a couple of hundred yards away, with a black jetty and a mound of some sort, quite inky on its unlighted side. But the most conspicuous object was a gigantic blackboard raised on two posts and presenting to Heyst, when the moon got over that side, the white letters "T.B.C.Co." in a row at least two feet high.¹

It may be said that the ethos dramatised in Heyst is the central threat to the prosecution of the Imperial idea in the fiction which is to be discussed. The symbolic connotations of Heyst's self-destruction, in the context of the possibilities facing the Imperial mission, provide a framework from which to begin a more detailed analysis of the Imperial ideology in fiction in the late nineteenth century. And the introduction must terminate in a re-iteration of the argument that the lack of confidence shown by the writers central to the thesis in that ideology must be related to a more general cultural condition which marks the difference in broader terms between Defoe's hero and the lack of a transcending vision experienced by a later adventurer and wanderer such as Heyst or H.G. Wells's Baxter, in his short story "Aepyornis Island" (1894). The loss of that all-important vision is largely what separates Baxter from his original predecessor, both as an individual and as a representative explorer of the earth:

"When I was a kid I thought nothing could be finer or more adventurous than the Robinson Crusoe business, but that place was as monotonous as a book of sermons."²

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1. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915) 1967. p.5
 2. H.G. Wells : Selected Short Stories. 1977. p.168

CHAPTER TWO

CHRISTIANITY AND THE EMPIRE

"Blessed be the English and all their ways and works.
Cursed be the Infidels, Hereticks and Turks!"

"Amen," quo' Jobson, "but where I used to lie
Was neither Candle, Bell nor Book to curse my brethren by:..."

"Blessed be the English and everything they own.
Cursed be the Infidels that bow to wood and stone!"

"Amen," quo' Jobson, "but where I used to lie
Was neither pew nor Gospeller to save my brethren by:"

Rudyard Kipling : "Jobson's Amen"

It is possible to argue that by the 1890's, the Imperial mission was held to be the expression of a Christian civilisation and, as such, guaranteed and given value by that assumption. This view is represented at the highest level in the official mind by a speech of Lord Rosebery's at the Albert Hall in 1895:

"Liberal imperialism implies, first, the maintenance of the Empire; secondly, the opening of new areas for our surplus population; thirdly, the suppression of the slave-trade; fourthly, the development of missionary enterprise, and fifthly, the development of our commerce, which so often needs it."¹

It can also be traced in the attitudes of those actually involved, in the field, with the process of Empire-building. Typical is Sir Harry Johnston, who, with the possible exceptions of Lugard and Rhodes, was the most distinguished pioneer Imperialist in Africa. In a speech to the Basoga people of Uganda in 1900, he specifically relates Britain's greatness as a nation to its religion:

"We were like you long years ago, going about naked... with our war paint on, but when we learnt Christianity from the Romans we changed to become great. We want you to learn Christianity and follow our steps and you too will be great."²

Moreover if, during this period, missionary biographies were constant best-sellers, as Geoffrey Moorhouse suggests,³ then it seems reasonable to assume that the home population in general accepted and identified with the task of disseminating Christianity as an integral part of the expansionist movement. The preoccupation of the popular imagination

1. cited in ed. Anthony Symondson : The Victorian Crisis of Faith, 1970. p.66
2. cited in *ibid* : p.67 (my ellipsis)
3. Geoffrey Moorhouse : The Missionaries. 1973. p.163 ff

with the missionary figure suggests that he had become the most striking expression of the ethical element of Imperialism. This image was probably first identified in Livingstone as early as 1856, although it was perhaps implicit in popular sympathy with the suppression of the slave-trade previously. The reaction to his return from Africa indicates the tremendous power this symbol was capable of generating and the interest in the missionary movement which he possibly initiated:

Early in the New Year he was made a Freeman of the City of London. Glasgow gave him its own Freedom and £2000 into the bargain. The Royal Society elected him a Fellow. The Universities of Oxford and Glasgow awarded him honorary degrees. He was received first by Prince Albert, later by the Queen...By the time Missionary Travels and Researches appeared in November 1857, it was certain to be the biggest best-seller within living memory...Within a few weeks of publication, Missionary Travels and Researches had sold 30,000 copies at one guinea a time [1]

Perhaps the most vulgar and jingoistic rationalisation of the missionary enterprise is represented by the opinions against which Jobson reacts in the epigraph² to this chapter, and was sufficiently prevalent for Kipling to feel it necessary to identify it and condemn it.

But if public opinion between 1850 and 1900 was in general confident in its support of the specifically religious manifestation of the ethical aspect of Imperialism, it was not entirely free of doubts. This uneasiness had various origins. For a thinker such as Adam Sedgwick, it was related to his perception of an increasing questioning

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1. Geoffrey Moorhouse : The Missionaries. 1973. p.128 (my ellipsis)
 2. Rudyard Kipling : A Diversity of Creatures. (1917) 1966. pp.237-8 (my ellipsis)

of the authenticity of religion itself. Symptomatic of this pressure was the publication of such books as The Origin of Species.

He wrote of it to Charles Lyell thus:

If the book be true, the labours of sober induction are in vain; religion is a lie; human law is a mass of folly, and a base injustice; morality is moonshine; our labours for the black people of Africa were the works of madmen [1]

In Bleak House, Dickens establishes a critical comparison between the money and energy expended upon extending the benefits of a Christian civilisation to Borrioboola-Gha and the neglect of more immediate social problems in the domestic sphere, symbolised in the affairs of Mrs. Jellyby's household. It is Esther who recognises the contradiction:

"My love," said I, "it quite confuses me. I want to understand it, and I can't understand it at all."
 "What?" asked Ada, with her pretty smile.
 "All this, my dear," said I. "It must be very good of Mrs. Jellyby to take such pains about a scheme for the benefit of Natives-and yet - Peepy and the housekeeping!"²

For an administrator such as Sir Gerald Portal, Governor of Zanzibar, this doubt is the result of his awareness of the potential for civil conflict which the missionary in Africa represented. His fears proved founded in the events culminating in the Battle of Mengo in Uganda in 1888, the result of a power-struggle between Protestant and Catholic missionaries for influence over the Kabaka. He concluded that a missionary presence had problematic implications:

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1. cited in ed. Anthony Symondson : The Victorian Crisis of Faith. 1970. pp.17-18 (my italics)
 2. Charles Dickens : Bleak House. (1853) 1972. p.90
 Compare, too, similar criticism by Carlyle in Past and Present. 1843. Book 4. ch.3. passim.

[The] race for converts, now being carried on by the Romish and Protestant Missionaries in Uganda,¹ is synonymous with a race for political power [.]

Moreover, both public and official concern in the 1880's over reports of atrocities committed by the Church of Scotland mission at Blantyre and allegations that C.M.S. agents owned slaves in the Niger Delta,² demonstrate that enthusiasm for missionary work was not wholly uncritical. Possibly most surprising is the element of doubt which the missionary himself supplied, concerning the identification of his work with the larger Imperial impulse. Such a feeling is present, in outspoken terms, in the warning by Krapf, the pioneer missionary in East Africa. The Missionaries, he asserted should act thus:

[We] banish the thought that Europe must spread her protecting wings over Eastern Africa, if missionary work is to prosper in that land of outer darkness. Europe would, no doubt, remove much that is mischievous and obstructive out of the way of missionary work, but she would probably set in its way as many and, perhaps, still greater checks.³

The corollary to such an attitude is J.A. Hobson's fear that Europe could use the missionary to disguise its own less altruistic aims. In 1901 he argued that the continent was using missions "in order to float foreign trade"⁴ and concluded in 1902:

All the purer and more elevated adjuncts of Imperialism are kept to the fore by religious and philanthropic agencies....⁵
It is the homage which Imperialism pays to humanity.⁶

Hobson made more detailed allegations of the manner in which missionaries were used as economic and political agents of their respective countries.⁷

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1. Geoffrey Moorhouse : The Missionaries. 1973. p.253
 2. *ibid* : p.258 ff
 3. cited in *ibid* : p.60
 4. J.A. Hobson : The Psychology of Jingoism. 1901.p.55
 5. J.A. Hobson : Imperialism. 1902.p.209 (my ellipsis)
 6. *ibid* : p.212
 7. *ibid* : pp.208-228

The writer also complained, as Forster similarly implies in A Passage to India, that Imperial powers had "no psychical roots"¹ in the countries which they occupied - a factor which contributed greatly to the artificiality of the contacts made with much subsequent misunderstanding.

It is of the greatest significance that the writers with whom this thesis is concerned, should, for a variety of reasons, align themselves with those who doubted the validity of an association of the Imperial and religious missions. Conrad, Kipling and Cary share the conviction that the Empire has no absolute moral validity or guarantee for its existence. Consequently, the individual finds his sense of value either from within a relativistic conception of Empire or establishes a critical relationship to this idea based upon assumptions implicitly or directly antagonistic to it. It is probably true that not a single piece of their fiction endorses a specifically religious interpretation of the Imperial impulse.

The introduction suggested that Robinson Crusoe could be interpreted as a prototype Imperialist despite the dating of Defoe's novel. To some extent, Crusoe accepts as one of his duties the function of a missionary, a consequence of his submission to his religious convictions. Crusoe sees himself thus:

[I was] made an Instrument under Providence to save the Life, and, for ought I knew, the Soul of a poor Savage, and bring him to the true Knowledge of Religion, and of the Christian Doctrine, that he might know Christ Jesus, to know whom is life eternal.²

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1. J.A. Hobson : Imperialism. 1902. p.320
 2. Daniel Defoe : Robinson Crusoe. (1719) 1972. p.220

Crusoe's missionary instinct is highly specialised; Christianity to him means Puritanism and it is from this viewpoint that he discusses Friday's God Benamuckee and dismisses him as "a fraud":

By this I observ'd, that there is Priestcraft, even amongst the most blinded ignorant Pagans in the World; and the Policy of making a secret Religion, in order to preserve the Veneration of the People to the Clergy, is not only to be found in the Roman, but perhaps among all Religions in the World, even among the most brutish and barbarous Savages.

But even Crusoe's conception of his duty is strictly limited. The phrase "for ought I knew" suggests an instinctual sense of obligation rather than a rationally or polemically formulated one. Moreover, Friday is delivered into his hands by accident and Crusoe feels no evangelical urge to spread the Word. He shrinks in horror from the butchery committed in the name of religion by the Spanish in South America² and his sense of this injustice results in a reluctance even to make value-judgements upon the conduct of the cannibals:

While I was making this March...it occur'd to my Thoughts, What Call? What Occasion? much less, What Necessity I was in to go and dip my Hands in Blood, to attack People, who had neither done, or intended me any Wrong? Who as to me were innocent, and whose barbarous Customs were their own Disaster, being in them a Token indeed of God's having left them, with the other Nations of that Part of the World, to such Stupidity, and to such inhumane Course; but did not call me to take upon me to be a Judge of their Actions, much less an Executioner of his Justice; that whenever he thought fit, he would take the Cause into his own Hands, and by national Vengeance punish them as a People, for national Crimes; but that in the mean time, it was none of my Business [.]

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1. Daniel Defoe : Robinson Crusoe. (1719) 1972. p.217
 2. *ibid* : p.171-2
 3. *ibid* : pp.232 (my ellipsis)

This tentative and cautious approach to the values of Native peoples has continuity in the work of Kipling, Cary, Forster and Conrad. For the first three, the caution may be directly attributed in part to a rejection of the absolute validity of Christian standards and Conrad's treatment of ethnocentricity implicitly assumes a context in which no faith has exclusive claims to Truth. Kipling was born in 1865 and was thus a member of the first generation fully susceptible to the consequences of the Victorian crisis of faith, given prophetic formulation in such figures as Arnold and Tennyson. Such very late stories of Kipling as "The Gardener" (1926), and "The Church That Was At Antioch" (1932), and his many anthems do indicate a mind sympathetic to Christianity. The frequent use of Biblical language, quotation, and allusion in his fiction demonstrates a thorough intimacy with religion. But, in general, Kipling's work is antipathetic to the claims of Christianity. In "They" (1904) he attacks

the more than inherited (since it is also carefully taught) brutality of the Christian peoples, beside which the mere heathendom of the West Coast Nigger is clean and restrained.

In "With The Night Mail" (1909), the narrator watches a stricken airship and meditates with some distress:

What if that wavering carcass had been filled with the men of the old days, each one of them taught (that is the horror of it!) that after death he would very possibly go for ever to unspeakable torment?²

Kipling's attitude to religion must be understood in terms of

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Traffics and Discoveries. (1904) 1973. p.316
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Actions and Reactions. (1909) 1968. p.129

his reaction to the terror with which he associated it in childhood. In his autobiography, he recalls the Southsea boardinghouse to which his parents sent him:

It was an establishment run with the full vigour of the Evangelical as revealed to the Woman. I had never heard of Hell, so I was introduced to it in all its terrors [1]

Kipling makes powerful imaginative use of this experience in "Baa Baa Black Sheep" (1895) and, less effectively, in The Light That Failed (1890). In the latter work, the young Dick bears many affinities with Kipling's own childhood relationship with his foster-mother:

Where he had looked for love, she gave him first aversion and then hate. Where he growing older had sought a little sympathy, she gave him ridicule... she left him to understand that he had a heavy account to settle with his Creator; wherefore Dick learned to loathe his God as intensely as he loathed Mrs. Jennett [1]

While courting Caroline Taylor, whose father was a Presbyterian minister, Kipling made his most explicitly assenting statement on theism. Carrington suggests that this may have been in an attempt to satisfy the Taylors of his suitability as a suitor for Caroline.³

A letter to Professor Hill, however indicates the looseness of Kipling's commitment:

I believe in the existence of a personal God to whom we are personally responsible for wrong-doing - that it is our duty to follow and our peril to disobey the ten ethical laws laid down for us by Him and His prophets. I disbelieve directly in eternal punishment, for reasons that would take too

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Something of Myself. (1937) 1964. p.6
 2. Rudyard Kipling : The Light That Failed. (1890) 1965. pp2-3 (my ellipsis)
 3. cited in C.A. Carrington : Rudyard Kipling : His Life and Work. 1970. pp. 181 ff.

long to put down on paper. On the same grounds I disbelieve in an eternal reward. As regards the mystery of the Trinity and the Doctrine of Redemption, I regard them reverently but I cannot give them implicit belief.¹

Equally relevant to Kipling's attitude towards the role of religion in the Empire is his experience as a child prior to being sent home to England. It is perhaps in this period of his life that Kipling conceived the sympathy of imagination which made possible the later treatment of Indian religion in Kim:

Our ayah was a Portuguese Roman Catholic who would pray - I beside her - at a wayside Cross. Meeta, my Hindu bearer, would sometimes go into little Hindu temples where, being below the age of caste, I held his hand and looked at the dimly-seen, friendly Gods.²

This early tendency to synthesis remains constant in his fiction. The protagonist of "His Majesty The King" (1890) expanded his "simple theology and welded it to the legends of Gods and Devils that he learned in the servants' quarters".³ Of great importance also to Kipling's eclectic vision is the influence of freemasonry, under the rituals of which all creeds and castes had equality. In 1885 he was admitted to a Bombay Lodge:

Here I met Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, members of the Arya and Brahma Samaj, and a Jew tyler, who was priest and butcher to his little community in the city. So yet another world opened to me which I needed.⁴

In 1895 Kipling most clearly demonstrated that experiences such as

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1. cited in C.A. Carrington : Rudyard Kipling : His Life and Work. 1970. p.182 (my italics)
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Something of Myself. (1937) 1964. pp.1-2
 3. Rudyard Kipling : Wee Willie Winkle. (1890) 1969. p.315
 4. Rudyard Kipling : Something of Myself. (1937) 1964. p.52-3

these had prepared him to be extremely skeptical about the role of Empire as an instrument of Christian civilisation. Despite having Wesleyan ministers for both grand-parents, Kipling's attitude towards the missionary is patently disapproving:

[It] seems to me cruel that white men, whose governments are armed with the most murderous weapons known to science, should amaze and confound their fellow creatures with a doctrine of salvation imperfectly understood by themselves and a code of ethics foreign to the climate and instincts of those races whose most cherished customs they outrage and whose gods they insult.¹

One of Kipling's earliest stories, "Lispeth" (1888), introduces his attitude towards the missionary in his fiction. The story argues the essentially provisional success of the missionaries' penetration into India. Lispeth is brought into the station only as a result of crop-failure and the consequent impoverishment of her parents. Lispeth remains faithful and, indeed, becomes an exemplary mission girl. Having rescued and nursed a passing Englishman injured in a riding accident, she obtains a promise from him to return. The chaplain's wife sustains her illusions until Lispeth recognises the deception. She returns to the hills, to the wife's consternation, to reappear in Kim. The conclusion to the story is perhaps overstated, but it makes clear Kipling's animus against the missionaries:

"There is no law whereby you can account for the vagaries of the heathen," said the Chaplain's wife, "and I believe that Lispeth was always at heart an infidel." Seeing that she had been taken into the

1. cited in C.A. Carrington : Rudyard Kipling : His Life and Work. 1970. p.426

Church of England at the mature age of five weeks, this statement does not do credit to the Chaplain's wife. ¹

Even such a slight tale as this, then, demonstrates Kipling's concern with a sensitive white presence in India, responsible even at the level of the apparently least significant kind of interaction with the Indians. Consequently, the greater social upheaval engendered by Krenk in "The Judgement of Dungara" (1890), results in a proportionately greater personal disaster. Kipling is more convincing in this story since he has some sympathy for Krenk, recognising in his work certain affinities with the isolated role of the I.C.S. officer:

[Krenk works] upon a stipend more modest even than that of an English lay-reader... [in] isolation what weighs upon the waking eyelids and drives you by force headlong into the labours of the day. ²

Krenk, however, has stronger resemblances to another figure familiar in Kipling's Indian stories, that of the man so wholly committed to the assumptions and beliefs of another continent that he happily ignores the accumulated wisdom and practical experience of those with local knowledge - in this case, Gallio. To this, Krenk adds a refusal to assimilate the disastrous experiences of his predecessor. Gallio clearly warns Krenk of the dangers which a rigid set of values may incur: "'When you have been some years in the country ...you get to find one creed as good as another.'" ³ Significantly, Dungara is the "God of Things as They Are", perhaps Kipling's most

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Plain Tales from The Hills. (1888) 1965. pp.7-8
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Soldiers Three. (1890) 1965. p.246 (my ellipsis)
 3. *ibid* : p.248 (my ellipsis)

honoured deity. Krenk's dogma flounders upon actuality and he leaves in humiliation as Dungara assumes his customary pre-eminence. Local custom prevails and "the chapel and school have long since fallen back into the jungle".¹ Kipling's defence of local values against the spiritual arrogance of the invader is corroborated in stories such as "The Mark Of The Beast" (1891).

The Naulahka (1892), is Kipling's most extended treatment of the missionary instinct. Kate clearly identifies her expedition with the commitment of Lucien Estes:

"Think of me as a nun. Think of me as having renounced all such happiness, and all other kinds of happiness by my work."²

Kipling makes it clear that but for Nick's resourcefulness, there is always the danger that Kate will join the band of women whose useless self-sacrifice is discussed in "The Judgement of Dungara":

English maidens who have gone forth and died in the fever-stricken jungle of the Panth Hills, knowing from the first that death was almost a certainty.³

Her attempts to impose the standards of the American Mid-West upon Rhatore continually risk fatality. (In this respect her programme bears comparison with the disruptive potential of Marie Hasluck's idealism in Joyce Cary's An American Visitor (1933) - though Marie, of course, is thoroughly determined to preserve the native way of life against what Kate intends to bring to Rhatore.) In the last

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Soldiers Three. (1890) 1965. p.257
 2. Rudyard Kipling : The Naulahka. (1892) 1950. p.107
 3. Rudyard Kipling : Soldiers Three. (1890) 1965. pp.247-8

analysis, moreover, it is Nick's social reform which succeeds in helping to transform the Rajah's rule. Continually in the background is Lucien Estes, a commentary upon the misplaced idealism which Kate represents. He is a symbol of futility and failure with his "high hopes and strenuous endeavours, long since subdued into a mild apathy".¹

Kipling's attitude must be seen in the wider perspective propounded by Kim, which argues a fundamental equality of creed. As such it holds an important place in the evidence against an interpretation of Kipling as a narrow-minded jingo. The synthetic breadth of Kipling's vision in Kim challenges Forster's assumption, in A Passage to India, that the Raj depends upon the principle of exclusiveness to give it coherence, and is apparent from the earliest introduction to Kim himself:

As he reached the years of indiscretion, he learned to avoid missionaries and white men of serious aspect who asked who he was, and what he did.²

Given the Rev. Bennett's (there is an interesting echo of the name of Mrs. Jennett in The Light That Failed), initial reaction to him, Kim's suspicions seem well-grounded. While Father Victor approximates to the Lama's depth of compassion at times, the Protestant Bennett exemplifies all the narrowness of his creed, which is lamented by Private Learoyd in "On Greenhow Hill" (1891). Thus, while the Lama "saluted the Churches as a Churchman" upon entering the chaplain's tent, his gesture is rejected:

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1. Rudyard Kipling : The Naulahka. (1892) 1950. p.126
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Kim. (1901) 1966. p.3

Bennett looked at him with all the triple-ringed uninterest of the creed that lumps nine-tenths of the world under the title of 'heathen'.¹

Whereas Father Victor can appreciate the symbolic significance of the Lama's healing river, Bennett, ever the literalist, can only pronounce it a "gross blasphemy".² But although one feels a good deal happier that Kim is sent to St. Xavier's rather than being left to Bennett, even Father Victor's social attitude to the Lama's religion is rather limited:

'All that troubles me is what'll happen if the old beggar-man -'

'Lama, lama, my dear sir; and some of them are gentlemen in their own country.'

'The lama, then, fails to pay next year...An' takin' a heathen's money³ to give a child a Christian education [.]'

In contrast to such narrow outlooks as these are the visions of Kim, the Lama and Mahbub Ali. Kim is able to respond to the Lama precisely because of his synthetic experience of different creeds: 'Kim accepted this new God without emotion. He knew already a few score.'⁴ Kim is, significantly, at times Jain, Buddhist and Hindu even before any professional interest encourages such multiplicity. The Lama, who seems to be the centre of spiritual authority in the book, has an equally catholic sympathy for creed: "'To those who follow the Way there is neither black nor white, Hind nor Bhotiyal. We be all souls seeking escape'''.⁵ The Lama allows considerable latitude in his interpretation of the Way, in contrast to the sec-

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Kim. (1901) 1966. p.124
 2. *ibid* : p.126
 3. *ibid* : pp.158-9 (my ellipsis)
 4. *ibid* : p.18
 5. *ibid* : p.303

tarian limitations of Bennett and Father Victor. The events of the book endorse the Lama's modest suggestion that the "'Sahibs have not all this world's wisdom'"¹ and Kim is happy to acknowledge this:

"I was made wise by thee, Holy One," said Kim, forgetting the little play just ended; forgetting St. Xavier's; forgetting his white blood; forgetting even the Great Game as he stopped, Mohammedan-fashion, to touch his₂ master's feet in the dust of the Jain temple.

Faith in the Way, a Way, is essential to Kipling's conception of the Empire, which provided both a starting point and a goal for his system. Thus while he recognises the virtues of religious faith in such figures as the Lama, he is unable to acquiesce in the claim to priority or exclusive potency in any one religion. This essentially liberal and generous vision is best expressed through Mahbub Ali in Kim:

"This matter of creeds is like horseflesh. The wise man knows horses are good - that there is profit to be made from all; and for myself - but that I am a good Sunni and hate the men of Tirah - I could believe the same of all the Faiths. Now manifestly a Kathiawar mare taken from the sands of her birthplace and removed to the west of Bengal founders - nor is even a Balkh stallion (and there are no better horses than those of Balkh, were they not so heavy in the shoulder) of any account in the great Northern deserts beside the snowcamels I have seen. Therefore I say in my heart the Faiths are like the horses. Each has merit in its own country."³

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Kim. (1901) 1966. p.274
 2. *ibid* : p.271
 3. *ibid* : p.204

Not even Hurree Babu's Spencerianism is allowed to divert the force of these insights. He himself acknowledges "a wisdom behind earthly wisdom - the high and lonely lore of meditation",¹ a wisdom which is not exclusively religious, let alone the property of one particular creed. In conclusion, then C.S. Lewis's comment upon Kipling's skepticism would seem confirmed: "He has a reverent Pagan agnosticism about all ultimates...He has the pagan tolerance, too []"²

Drawing upon the Nigeria in which he served between 1913 and 1919, Joyce Cary's novels bear many points of comparison with Kipling's fiction, in particular with the latter's attitude towards religion and Empire. Like Kipling, his personal experience made him deeply suspicious of the Church, as Malcolm Foster relates:

Too often the Church, as part of the established order, stood in the way of progress. Too often it brought bloodshed, as in Uganda, rather than peace and prosperity. Too often it spent its time arguing 'what's to be done with the bread left after communion' rather than working to put bread in the bellies of the starving.

So in trying to find what the world was all about, Joyce did not think in terms of faith and certainly did not intend to look for his particular truth in any church. Instead he sought it in philosophy, in systems of ethics, and in art, particularly in the work of³ such writers as Conrad, Hardy and William Blake.

The personal philosophy which Cary evolved placed heavy emphasis upon rationalism and self-reliance. Religious faith he interpreted as necessitating a surrender of the will and in his African novels his

1. Rudyard Kipling : Kim. (1901) 1966. p.323

2. ed. Elliot Gilbert : Kipling and the Critics. 1966. p.116 (my ellipsis)

3. Malcolm Foster : Joyce Cary : A Biography. Boston. 1968. p.261

satire plays most directly upon such characters as submit themselves to the anti-rational forces of religion. More specifically, he identifies the religious stress upon the concept of self-sacrifice as the essential element involved in self-surrender. M.M. Mahood quotes Cary's Notebooks and Letters to illustrate Cary's attention to what he saw as the crucial issue:

Self-sacrifice...as an ideal (for its own sake) is moral defeatism or sensual indulgence. It is probably pathological either in origin or manifestation, and belongs to all primitive religion ... where it is performed as a surrender of the will, as an escape, a suicide, a piece of self-indulgence, it must be called wrong because it is a surrender of the personal responsibility which is the right and glory of mankind.²

These theoretical formulations of his philosophy were reinforced by the practical considerations of Cary's service. Lugard's concept of Indirect Rule laid stress upon the maintenance of native social institutions with its implicit corollary that the integrity of the values upon which those institutions were raised should not be subverted. During his duel with Thomson, Cock Jarvis gives expression to Lugard's outlook:

"No, our business is to meddle with the private affairs of the natives as little as we need. We don't understand 'em, and so we don't help much. But I can't deliver a lecture out of Political Memoranda at this time. I can only say that you're supposed to have read it, and to know something about your job. Perhaps you never heard of indirect rule."³

This results logically in Jarvis' defence of pagan religions:

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1. M.M. Mahood : Joyce Cary's Africa. 1964. p.116 (my ellipsis)
 2. *ibid* : p.121
 3. Joyce Cary : Cock Jarvis : An Unfinished Novel. ed. A.G. Bishop 1974. p.122

"Be damned to Barton. He doesn't know anything except the place to tickle a Governor. I was in Laka before Daji was thought of, or Barton. And that juju place is like Westminster Abbey to the island pagans. It's got to be left alone".¹

Cock Jarvis, despite Cary's often sympathetic portrayal of him, does not, however, wholly represent his creator's perspective. He stands for an outlook adequate to a stage in the history of Nigeria which had already passed by the time Cary began his service. Cary wrote of him, later on, "that though Jarvis was right in principle he was wrong in fact because the Empire couldn't last []"²

Conditions of service in Cary's Nigeria were complicated by an increasing debate over the efficiency and value of Indirect Rule. Missionaries had always been seen to some extent as a progressive element in the fields of education and health. And despite a strong element of fidelity to Lugard's original conceptions, Cary had to accept the presence of missionaries as given. But since he felt that Nigeria could be made self-sufficient by the rational application of methods to eliminate poverty and ignorance, the chief obstacles to self-reliance, Cary was suspicious of missionary penetration, with its foundation in what he saw as anti-rational energy. To this extent, Cary felt that the influence of the missions could be directly contrary to the aims of the administration. He wrote of these fears to his wife:

There are good and bad - but many of them seem to look upon the Service as their natural enemies - and many more are completely ignorant of our

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1. Joyce Cary : Cock Jarvis : An Unfinished Novel, ed. A.G. Bishop. 1974. p.258
 2. M.M. Mahood : Joyce Cary's Africa. 1964. p.99

principles of government, which they do not understand and try to thwart.

The sense of mutual distrust between the two forces is vividly portrayed in Aissa Saved, where the Carrs embody the hostility which Cary describes:

Mrs. Carr had a strong suspicion of all persons in authority because it seemed to her unChristian for one person to be able to command others...Carr was also annoyed...because he considered that a missionary who accepted or seemed to accept protection from the state was in a false position and could not hope to obtain the people's confidence. ²

A particular experience of contact with missionaries in 1919 seems to have confirmed Cary's own hostility towards their activities within Nigeria. Cary was furious with what he felt to be underhand reconnaissance of his own district, Kaiama. As M.M. Mahood concludes:

There was in fact some cause for Cary's anxiety. The sect in question was so bigoted that, in his own words, "the Wee Frees are Catholic to them". Cary feared for the peace of the division if ultra-Protestant enthusiasm was kindled among the Borgawa: "I have no intention of getting scuppered in a religious war" (24 April 1919). ³

Given all this evidence, Cary's introduction to the Carfax Edition of Aissa Saved, written in 1949, makes curious reading:

Some correspondents took the book for an attack on the Missions. It is not so. African missions have done good work in bringing to Africa a far better faith than any native construction. But it does try to show what can happen to the religious ideas of one region when they are imported into another. ⁴

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1. Malcolm Foster : Joyce Cary : A Biography. Boston. 1968. p.194
 2. Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. p.44 (my ellipsis)
 3. M.M. Mahood : Joyce Cary's Africa. 1964. p.52
 4. Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. p.8

The book itself flatly contradicts the first three sentences, as will be shown. Perhaps one may accept Malcolm Foster's interpretation of this contradiction, which he explains as an attempt by the author to focus upon the novel as a total artistic creation.¹

Cary's ethic of self-reliance is given illumination essentially through a series of comparisons of the anti-rational foundations of both imported and native religion and the possible social consequences of both in practice. Whereas Cock Jarvis does not much concern himself with such consequences, and as a result displays a tendency to idealise native religion, Cary suggests that the destruction which may follow self-surrender is excited by the appeal of both forms of religion. The cannon ju-ju in The African Witch is encrusted with human blood which Judy Coote initially believes to be rust. In the histories of Ibu, and above all, of Osi, Cary dramatises the forces in native religion which militate against the evolution of a stable and self-sufficient society. In Cary's novels, ju-ju is often manipulated for the personal political ends of the hierarchy which serves it. Osi's beauty, for instance, excites the jealousy of many around her and her punishment serves to reinforce Elizabeth's supremacy. Cary gives a convincing portrayal of the torture and degradation which Osi undergoes, in such a manner that she comes to exist as a symbol of wasted possibilities:

1. Malcolm Foster : Joyce Cary : A Biography. Boston. 1968. p.291

In this way Africa has destroyed, every year for some millions of years, a large proportion of its more intelligent and handsome children.

Thus the destruction of Osi, and of Numi in Aissa Saved, represents Cary's concern at what he felt to be an unacceptable stress in native religion upon sacrifice and self-sacrifice. Under the influence of communal hysteria, Numi is surrendered to the god Oke by her mother Ishe, who is in turn destroyed to satisfy the rituals.

It is quickly apparent, however, that Cary is not propagandizing on behalf of the missionaries and that he sees many analogies of emphasis in Christianity which have equally serious implications for social stability. Cary concentrates his argument of a fundamental similarity between the two religions by emphasizing the common importance of blood as a symbol to each faith. Cary does not necessarily suggest that this insistence is an intrinsic part of Christianity in the present century, but rather than the transplantation of a religion may involve a literalistic appeal to its central symbols. In the context with which Cary is involved, this issues in a distortion of emphasis:

But the trouble is that converts are obliged to accept the letter. They start, so to speak, several hundred years behind the old believers, in an age of absolutism and intolerance. There is quite a large danger that the religious wars of the fifteenth and sixteenth² centuries in Europe should be imported to Africa.

Most of the anthems which the converts sing in Aissa Saved are concerned with blood and sacrifice. In the last part of the novel,

1. Joyce Cary : The African Witch. (1936) 1951. p.88
2. Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. p.9

Aissa identifies the two with increasing insistence so that the emotional force of the connection eventually persuades her to offer up Abba and herself to Jesus on a mud-altar indistinguishable from the ju-ju mound upon which Ishe dies. Throughout the book she reiterates a couplet:

'Al de tings I lak de mos
I sacrifice dem to His blood.'

She is reinforced in her convictions by the sermons of Ojo, whose diatribe in Kolu is a distressingly exaggerated reconstruction of the exact degree of Christ's sufferings. In this respect one remembers Coker in The African Witch, all of whose rhetoric returns to this central collocation:

His key word was blood, but it appeared in different connections: blood of Jesus - blood of sacrifice - blood of the wicked man, - blood of the sinner - the baptism of blood.

The effect of this emphasis upon the converts' minds is to redouble the similar tendencies in their lapsed paganism and encourages much of the fanaticism in the novels' world. Cary does not doubt the depth of all the converts' faith; often the very strength of their fidelity is seen precisely as the efficient cause of much of the social dislocation. But in recognising the courage which such faith may give rise to, Cary's critical perspective is not abandoned, as in his account of Ojo:

Only a week before he had interrupted a pagan dance in Shibi, and received a beating which had covered

1. Joyce Cary : The African Witch. (1936) 1951. p.50

him with bruises and nearly knocked out one eye. He would have been killed if a wandering policeman from Berua had not happened to come by and drive off the angry women in the name of the Emir.

The Reverend Coker represents another of Cary's perceptions in his analysis of the disruptive effects of an imported faith. In their intrinsically admirable efforts to give succour to the afflicted, the missions often take on more than they are fully aware of. Coker's uncertain social status is typical of many of Cary's converts. The son of "a Syrian and a Yoruba, and brought up by a local American mission",² this hybrid has no certain niche in Rimi. This is a characteristic, too, of the Carrs' congregation, composed thus:

Nagulo, a highway robber and murderer, Sale, an old soldier from the Cameroons, Frederick, the small boy, from a mission school on the coast, Shangoedi, an epileptic woman from Kolu and Aditutu, lately a drunken midwife [.]³

Cary is thoroughly aware that for such social misfits, the missions provide a platform from which the outcasts can organise their programmes of revenge against the societies which exclude them. This argument is dramatised especially in the figure of Uli in An American Visitor. Uli flees to the mission after outraging his village's women and, ironically, the price of re-integration into the village is that he must lead an attack upon the mission. But perhaps it is Coker who embodies the most cynical exploitation of this possibility. He uses his acquired religion, constantly, to

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1. Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. pp.15-16
 2. Joyce Cary : The African Witch. (1936) 1951. p.49
 3. Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. p.16

mask his engagement in the power-struggle for control of Rimi. Like Uli, he turns upon those who have aided him. He hates all whites, for a mixture of personal and political motives:

[But], above all, he hated the white missionaries of every sect, because even if they claimed no superiority over him, he felt it.

Given the power of Coker's oratory, the attacks upon Schlemm become inevitable. He probably remains the supreme example of the possibility for the destruction of the principles of rationalism and self-reliance, essential to a progressive Nigeria, which an ill-digested mission legacy may provide.

The end of The African Witch is somewhat problematic. One remembers that even the Oxford-educated Louis Aladai succumbs to Coker's rhetoric and throws himself to the crocodile in a gesture of misplaced idealism. The failure of even the best-equipped African to resist a reversion to the persuasions of ju-ju, to which Coker is, ironically, appealing, would seem to suggest that such a submission to the forces of antirationalism is intrinsic to the African mind. Perhaps one can conclude that this is Cary's belief in this particular novel - at least it is not contradicted. But at the same time, the perspective of his work as a whole points out the powerful residual survival of such an appeal even in the European mind. So anxious is Cary to emphasize this, that its statement occasionally mars the artistic self-sufficiency of his work. For example:

1. Joyce Cary : The African Witch. (1936) 1951. p.133

Perhaps some ju-ju priests act solely on deduction, but it is not the usual thing, for it would mean that the priest did not believe in his own magical powers; and not only priests, but almost every human being, black and white, believe that they have such powers. In Europe a woman talks of her intuition, a man of his luck; gardeners have a growing hand, and salesmen personality.¹

More subtle and aesthetically satisfying is Cary's characteristic use of parallel to argue this point. Thus, in the context of Aissa's sacrifice of her child Abba to the totem-Christ at the end of Aissa Saved, one cannot regard Mrs. Carr's apparent heroism earlier on with much admiration:

[She] had sacrificed one child's life and she was risking another's and her own, in order, as she would put it, to bring the truth to these people, for the love of Jesus.²

Cary suggests the unacceptable qualities of such self-sacrifice in an earlier passage recounting Mrs. Carr's disenchantment at one of Aissa's periodic reversions:

Aissa's bad conduct, her ingratitude so unexpected, enraged her like a piece of treachery aimed at the heart of her faith, and she was quite ready to be martyred on the spot as a kind of protest against it or, as some might put it, in revenge.³

Similarly, a parallel exists between the social consequence of Mrs. Carr's militancy and that of the Reverend Coker's. Their attitudes have much in common:

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1. Joyce Cary : The African Witch. (1936) 1951. p.33
 2. Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. p.140
 3. *ibid* : p.53

Mrs. Carr had always had a feeling, as she said, that the mission party ought to go to Kolu direct, in order to strike a powerful blow at paganism in one of its most important centres [.]¹

Another comparison which argues the depth of this appeal to the irrational is that between Aladai's self-surrender to Coker and the Reverend Carr's to his wife at the beginning of Aissa Saved. He participates in the expedition to Kolu despite his awareness that this short-term opportunism risks "the total prohibition of Christian work in Yanrin by provoking the Kolua during a feast."² Even more damaging, however, is his knowledge that Mrs. Carr's enthusiasm involves a degree of fanaticism at which he has baulked in the past:

Your religious woman was worse even than the rest because she had an excuse for not thinking. They were all anti-rational in spirit, gamblers, sentimentalists, seeking every chance to escape from the trouble of planning and deciding, into some excitement or other.³

In The African Witch, too, Cary posits interesting analogies between the missionary Schlemm and the Reverend Coker, although Schlemm is perhaps the most sympathetic of all Cary's missionary figures. Coker's faith has much of a "personal creed", which he systemises into his "own church".⁴ Similarly, Schlemm is unorthodox:

His English services were a mixture of the Anglican prayer-book and his own, composed by himself, or perhaps translated from the Danish.⁵

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1. Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. p.20
 2. *ibid* : p.20
 3. *ibid* : p.25
 4. Joyce Cary : The African Witch. (1936) 1951. p.50
 5. *ibid* : p.128

The myopic vision of Coker has its analogue in Schlemm's reaction to the preliminary attack upon him in Rimi. One of his attackers, who beats him with a cane, is a student from the mission, but Schlemm refuses to admit this painful truth to himself. Moreover his short-sighted attack, despite its altruistic intentions, upon Elizabeth's ju-ju house, is of the same quality of impetuous violence as Coker's attack upon his own mission; equally, in Aissa Saved, the Carrs' invasion of Kolu has its equivalence in the earlier persecution of the Christians by Masholo's faction.

To Cary, then, the missionary presence was essentially a contradiction. The successful transplantation of Christianity, he felt, depended upon its identity with the fundamentals of Pagan religion, each presenting similar obstacles to Cary's conception of a rational and self-sufficient society. This process of fusion is given an interesting historical perspective by Bewsher in An American Visitor:

"[Keep] all that's local and active and full of juice, just as we did in Christianity when we collared all the pagan gods and turned them into saints." 1

The recognition of this identity led to a paradox which seemed inevitably at odds with social stability. On the one hand, the symptoms of progress, such as education, which the missionaries encouraged, fed the self-interested ambitions of converts like

1 Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.124

Coker. At the same time their religion appealed to the conservative emotional presupposition upon which the hierarchy of ju-ju depended, by encouraging collective self-submission and personal irresponsibility. Cary's novels treat the missionaries as a threat and often argue that the central contradiction invalidates much of the benefit which they bring. This is given expression through Marie Hasluck, for instance:

That was why the Dobsons were so stupid...They were disapproving of the very thing which they themselves were trying to bring about...quality of life had nothing to do with any special kind of lawfulness or dress or religion. ¹

Consequently, for all of Cary's recognition of the positive value of the missions,² the missionary in his fiction remains a figure of suspicion, with questionable powers of self-assimilation within the Nigerian social structure. This attitude would seem to inform the deliberately gothic description of the Reverend Dobson's wife:

Mrs. Dobson, on the other hand, tall and beautiful, dressed in real Chinese embroidery, seemed like a Valkyrie, rather a sleepy and languid small Valkyrie but completely pagan. ³

Given this evidence, then, one may agree with M.M. Mahood's conclusions:

Cary had felt ever since his first weeks in Nigeria ...that this freedom of self-reliance was the best thing Europe had to give Africa. The administrator's job was to impart the basic knowledge - sanitation, irrigation, bridge-building - which could set people free from fear and want. Missionaries of the crankier sort only sabotaged this effort when they introduced a new ju-ju which, like the old, represented bondage to the irrational, a failure in self-reliance. ⁴

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1. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.115 (my ellipsis)
 2. See Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. p.20 and The African Witch. (1936) 1951. p.134
 3. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.109
 4. M.M. Mahood : Joyce Cary's Africa. 1964. p.190 (my ellipsis)

E.M. Forster's A Passage to India provides an interesting perspective on the attitudes of Cary and Kipling to the missionary. As with Kipling, Forster is aware that the Indian missionary has no defined role in the socio-political hierarchy of the Raj, as in his description:

[old] Mr Graysford and young Mr Sorley, the devoted missionaries ... lived out beyond the slaughter-houses, always travelled third on the railways, and never came up to the club. ¹

As in Cary, the missionary is seen by the administrator as being aligned with forces antipathetic to the Imperial system. This is indicated in Ronny Heaslop's self-defence: "'I'm not a missionary or a Labour Member or a vague sentimental sympathetic literary man'".² As a result there is a sharp divergence of emphasis between missionary religion and that especially adapted to reinforce the ethos of the civil station:

Ronny approved of religion as long as it endorsed the National Anthem, but he objected when it attempted to influence his life. ³

In Aziz's view, neither has much impact upon or relevance to the rest of India, but it is clear that the missionary motivation is the less comprehensible to him. This is dramatised in his Sunday morning meditations:

He could hear church bells as he drowsed, both from the civil station and from the missionaries out beyond the slaughterhouse - different bells and

1. E.M. Forster : A Passage to India. (1924) 1970. p.38 (my ellipsis)
 2. *ibid* : p.50
 3. *ibid* : p.51

rung with different intent, for one set was calling firmly to Anglo-India, and the other feebly to mankind. He did not object to the first set; the other he ignored, knowing their inefficiency. Old Mr Graysford and young Mr Sorley made converts during a famine, because they distributed food; but when times improved they were naturally left alone again, and though surprised and aggrieved each time this happened, they never learnt wisdom. ¹

Aziz can understand the decisively exclusive call to Anglo-India, for his own religion is that of a previous wave of conquerors, equally discouraging of a fertilising synthesis with the rest of India. Thus, however aware one is of the purpose and sense of meaning which Islam gives Aziz, his cherished cultural exclusiveness results in what Forster considers to be limitations:

The temple of another creed, Hindu, Christian, or Greek, would have bored him and failed to awaken his sense of beauty. ²

His attitude to the celebrations in Mau identifies him to some extent with the unimaginative Anglo-Indians, in contrast to Mrs. Moore and her children.

E.M. Forster would seem to suggest a fundamental relationship between the socio-political assumptions of Anglo-India and a conception of "the suburban Jehovah who sanctified them".³ There is a confirmed emphasis upon the exclusiveness and worship of hierarchy which he sees as characteristic of, perhaps the definition of Anglo-India. Thus at the top of the pyramid, the Turtons become "little gods"⁴ in such a society and oversee a series of ritualistic mechanisms

1. E.M. Forster : A Passage to India. (1924) 1970. p.98
2. *ibid* : p.20
3. *ibid* : p.212
4. *ibid* : p.29

which define the degree of the individual's participation in that hierarchy. But having noted that civil station religion is adapted to buttress such a system, Forster's description of the missionaries' sermon argues that this principle of exclusiveness inheres even in less politically polemical forms of Protestant Christianity. The wider appeal of the missionaries' religion is still too limited. Though at some ideological distance from the central manifestation of the British presence, the missionaries' religion is not inclusive enough, too anthropocentric for Forster's approval. During their sermon, argues Andrew Rutherford, Graysford and Sorley are "immortalized in ridicule, like flies in amber, by a single paragraph":¹

In our Father's house are many mansions, they taught, and there alone will the incompatible multitudes of mankind be welcomed and soothed. Not one shall be turned away by the servants on that veranda, be he black or white, not one shall be kept standing who approaches with a loving heart. And why should the divine hospitality cease here? Consider, with all reverence, the monkeys. May there not be a mansion for the monkeys also? Old Mr Graysford said No, but young Mr Sorley, who was advanced, said Yes; he saw no reason why monkeys should not have their collateral share of bliss, and he had sympathetic discussions about them with his Hindu friends. And the jackals? Jackals were indeed less to Mr Sorley's mind, but he admitted that the mercy of God, being infinite, may well embrace all mammals. And the wasps? He became uneasy during the descent to wasps, and was apt to change the conversation. And oranges, cactuses, crystals, and mud? and the bacteria inside Mr Sorley? No, no, this is going too far. We must exclude someone from our gathering, or we shall be left with nothing.²

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1. ed. Andrew Rutherford : 20th Century Interpretations of A Passage to India. Englewood Cliffs . U.S.A. 1970. p.10
 2. E.M. Forster : A Passage to India. (1924) 1970. p.38 (my italics)

Thus, the prevalent logic of exclusiveness in Anglo-India, which results in such grievous and embarrassing failures of "connection" as the Collector's Bridge Party, is seen to be merely an extension, or focusing, of a tendency implicit in Protestant religion as E.M. Forster interprets it.

The political and social criticism of the Imperial presence, then, is seen in terms of an analysis of the spiritual vision which gives it coherence. A Passage to India is not primarily concerned with realpolitik but is rather related to the concerns of Forster's earlier novels with the spiritual impoverishment of a Protestant culture. The failure of Anglo-India to connect with the sub-continent is of the same origin as many of the failures of connection between Englishman and Italian. The reader is invited to see a limited analogy between Italy and India:

To regard an Indian as if he were an Italian is not, for instance, a common error, nor perhaps a fatal one, and Fielding often attempted analogies between this peninsular and that other, smaller and more exquisitely shaped, that stretches into the classic waters of the Mediterranean.

But whereas "The Mediterranean is the human norm", the passage to India "leads to the strangest experience of all".² Consequently, India demands far greater powers of synthesis than Italy.

However, while Forster's negative criticism of Anglo-India has power, the constructive creation of alternatives is suspect. On the English side, Fielding is the figure most willing and able to break down artificial barriers between the various communities.

1. E.M. Forster : A Passage to India. (1924) 1970. p.61
 2. *ibid* : p.275

His valuation of personal relationships and individual integrity clearly earns Forster's approval. But his spiritual vision is as limited as Aziz's. He ponders regretfully upon the echo:

It belonged to the universe that he had missed or rejected. And the mosque missed it too. Like himself, those shallow arcades provided but a limited asylum.¹

Fielding is not much interested in the spiritual, and it is perhaps this deficiency which precludes his smooth integration in Mau. He represents a secular liberal humanism, valid perhaps for England but inadequate to India, where faith remains vital:

"The truth is that the West doesn't bother much over belief and disbelief in these days. Fifty years ago, or even when you and I were young, much more fuss was made."²

Mrs Moore initially promises the most fruitful advance towards a synthesis which is beyond Fielding's powers. Her sympathetic interest in Aziz and his mosque derives from the vitality of her own religion:

"God...is...love." She hesitated, seeing how much he disliked the argument, but something made her go on. "God has put us on earth to love our neighbours and to show it, and He is omnipresent, even in India, to see how we are succeeding."³

That "God is love"⁴ may well be the final message of India establishes Mrs Moore's claim to spiritual authority in the novel. But this is modified, in comparison to Professor Godbole's, by her reaction to the echo in the Marabar Caves.

1. E.M. Forster : A Passage to India. (1924) 1970. p.269
2. *ibid* : p.108
3. *ibid* : p.51
4. *ibid* : p.281

What her positive vision seems to lack is a complementary vision of evil, or non-being, which the Caves seem to represent. The shock of this recognition reduces Mrs Moore to a cynical, apathetic detachment and disinterest; its pre-religious potency shatters her attachment to her faith:

But suddenly, at the edge of her mind, Religion appeared, poor little talkative Christianity, and she knew that all its divine words from "Let there be Light" to "It is finished" only amounted to "boum". Then she was terrified over an area larger than usual; the universe, never comprehensible to her intellect, offered no repose to her soul, the mood of the last two months took definite form at last, and she realized that she didn't want to write to her children, didn't want to communicate with anyone, not even with God.

Professor Godbole, (the vessel of God, as his name implies,) effects a more complete synthesis than any other character in A Passage to India. He is able to recognise that the knowledge of the "undying worm", which characterises the experience of the caves, is quite as much a manifestation of Krishna's essence as Love:

"Good and evil are different as their names imply. But, in my own humble opinion, they are both of them aspects of my Lord. He is present in the one, absent in the other, and the difference between presence and absence is great, as great as my feeble mind can grasp. Yet absence implies presence, absence is not non-existence[.]"²

Godbole's metaphysic is more comprehensive, even, than Mrs Moore's and it gives him an equanimity which nothing can disturb. His mind is sufficiently flexible to allow him to pass beyond a

1. E.M. Forster : A Passage to India. (1924) 1970. p.148

2. *ibid* : p.175

conception of religion as a system of ethics to encompass the limits of the conceivable:

God is not born yet - that will occur at midnight - but He has also been born centuries ago, nor can He ever be born, because He is the Lord of the Universe, who transcends human processes. ¹

Godbole's totality of vision enables him to see the fundamental kinship of mankind and in that recognition seems to be Forster's alternative to the artificial self-division of the Imperial presence:

"All perform a good action, when one is performed, and when an evil action is performed, all perform it."² Godbole thus smiles upon all the characters and their predicaments equally, unconcerned, detached and impartial towards all creation: "He loved the wasp equally...he was imitating God."³

As an individual, however, Godbole convinces more than as a principle of synthesis. The description which introduces him suggests artificial grafting rather than genuine reconciliation of opposites:

He wore a turban that looked like pale purple macaroni; coat, waistcoat, dhoti, socks with clocks. The clocks matched the turban, and his whole appearance suggested harmony - as if he had reconciled the products of East and West, mental as well as physical, and could never be discomposed. ⁴

The idea of a Hindu wearing distinctively Moslem head-dress stretches one's credulity. Moreover, Godbole's comprehensive vision is earned at the price of non-involvement in individuals and practical action.

1. E.M. Forster : A Passage to India. (1924) 1970. p.279
2. *ibid* : p.174
3. *ibid* : p.282 (my ellipsis)
4. *ibid* : p.71

He takes no interest in Aziz's trial at all, which suggests an almost callous composedness. Moreover, Forster's attempt to make Godbole a symbol involves a level of generalisation which seems at odds with the observed facts of the novel. Godbole is a Hindu and Hinduism is seen, in the "Temple" section, as being capable of harmonious fullness denied to both Islam and Christianity. And yet, one is informed:

Hinduism, so solid from a distance, is run into sects and clans, which radiate and join, and change their names according to the aspect from which they are approached.

Forster does not explore the implications of this in Godbole, allowing him to transcend the limitations of locality and historical perspective which do much, in the novel, to relativise the claims of Islam and Christianity.

Forster was aware that the mystical tendencies of Hinduism could lead to a philosophy of inaction. In comparing it with Protestantism, he wrote: "Left to itself each lapses - the one into mysticism, the other into ethics".² It might be possible to argue, therefore, that Forster's ultimate synthesis lies in an amalgamation of the energy and personal involvement of Fielding with Godbole's over-all vision. It is significant that Godbole should open a High School in Mau, "as like Government College as possible".³ But this would seem an impossibility. Fielding's activism depends upon ignorance of the kind of experience which

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1. E.M. Forster : A Passage to India. (1924) 1970. p.288
 2. Cited in Wilfred Stone : The Cave and the Mountain : A Study of E.M. Forster. 1966. p.304
 3. E.M. Forster: A Passage to India. (1924) 1970. p.173

the Carrs represent - in this he is like the other Anglo-Indians. Similarly, Godbole's vision of universal sympathy is dependent upon an immense distance from the specific and particular. Metaphysically there may be no difference between Men, but Aziz is well able to detect even the "cleavage...between Brahman and non-Brahman"¹ in Hindu Man. Similarly Godbole's identification with Aziz does not overcome the social context which divides them:

[Aziz] averted his eyes, for he never knew how much he was supposed to see, and nearly collided with the Minister of Education. "Ah, you might make me late" - meaning that the touch of a non-Hindu would necessitate another bath; the words were spoken without moral heat.²

Since it is primarily a socio-political context with which Imperialism is concerned, Godbole's metaphysic seems to be as dubiously valuable as the civil station religion, which at least has the virtue of making comprehensible the attitudes which underpin the Anglo-Indian presence. Forster's criticism of the relationship between Imperialism and religion is often convincing and his analysis of the shortcomings of Anglo-India often pertinent, but in the last analysis no meaningful solution is offered for the realities of the predicament in which his characters find themselves. "Connection" between India and its rulers, symbolised in the expression of Adela's debt to India during her letter to Fielding, in the significance of Mrs Moore's death in Asiatic waters, in Mrs Moore's "re-incarnation" in her children, who evince a similarly sympathetic sensibility, remains fitful, fragile and indeterminate.

1. E.M. Forster : A Passage to India. (1924) 1970. p.287 (my ellipsis)
 2. *ibid* : p.300

In conclusion, then, one can see that none of these writers endorsed the conception of Empire as the expression of a specifically Christian culture. Whereas Cary concentrates his vision upon the practical consequences of the transplantation of Christianity in the tropics, Kipling and Forster extend this discussion to questions of the authenticity of faiths and their comparative value. The Empire itself is made meaningful to Cary and Kipling in terms of a different conceptual system to be discussed in the following pages.

CHAPTER THREE

ECONOMICS AND THE EMPIRE

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

Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness"

The precise importance of the economic element in Imperialism has aroused considerable controversy. Socialist and Marxist commentators have linked the phenomenon of political expansionism from 1870 onwards to the inner logic of the capitalist economic system, albeit with a considerable variety of emphasis within that analysis. Marx himself wrote little directly on the economics of Imperialism, but parts of Capital suggest that expansionism was inevitable given the character of Victorian industrialism:

The expansion of foreign trade which is the basis of the capitalist mode of production in its stages of infancy, has become its own product in the further progress of capitalist development through its innate necessities, through its need for an ever expanding market...

On the other hand, capital invested in colonies etc. may yield a higher rate of profit for the simple reason that the rate of profit is higher there on account of the backward development, and for the added reason that slaves, coolies etc. permit a better exploitation of labour[.]¹

From such relatively generalised comments as these, Marxist theories of Imperialism have developed formidable analytic models. Bukharin agreed with Marx on the importance of cheap labour to metropolitan capitalism² but concentrated his critique upon what he saw as the logical consequence of capitalism's increasing historical movement towards monopoly and cartelisation. The protectionist implications of Imperialism encouraged the monopolies "to suppress foreign competition"³ and thus cement the increasing concentration of profits

1. Karl Marx : Capital. cited in M. Barratt Brown : Essays on Imperialism. Nottingham. 1972. p.24 (my ellipsis). (For a repudiation of this on economic grounds see E.M. Winslow in ed. D.K. Fieldhouse : The Theory of Capitalist Imperialism. 1967. pp.112 ff.)
2. Rosa Luxemburg and Nikolai Bukharin : Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capital. ed. K.J. Tarbuck. trans. R. Wichman. 1972. p.249. (For a similar repudiation of this by J.A. Schumpeter see Fieldhouse : op. cit. p.137 ff.)
3. N. Bukharin : Imperialism and World Economy. (1917) 1930 p.107

within individual economies, and by extension, individual cartels:

[The] "system" as a whole facilitates the increase of the rate of profit for the monopoly organisations. This policy of finance capital is imperialism.¹

Influenced by Bukharin, Lenin stressed another historical condition which he believed to necessitate Imperialism. As Europe and America caught up with Britain's industrial lead, eroding her position as "the workshop of the world", competition for sources of raw materials sharpened. Lenin concluded thus:

The more capitalism is developed, the more the need for raw materials is felt, the more bitter competition becomes, and the more feverishly the hunt for raw materials proceeds throughout the whole world, the more desperate becomes the struggle for the acquisition of colonies [.]²

Lenin and Bukharin were both influenced by the English socialist J.A. Hobson, whose contribution to the debate is twofold. Firstly he believed the acquisition of Empire to be related to what he saw as an increasing tendency, in Britain especially, towards over-production and under-consumption:

The power of production has far outstripped the actual rate of consumption, and contrary to the older economic theory, has been unable to force a corresponding increase of consumption by lowering prices.³

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1. N. Bukharin : Imperialism and World Economy. (1917) 1930. p.107
 2. V.I. Lenin : Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism. (1916). cited in ed. D.K. Fieldhouse : The Theory of Capitalism Imperialism. 1967. p.107
 3. J.A. Hobson : Imperialism. 1902. p.80. (Compare Jules Ferry's firm support for this argument. Ferry was Prime Minister of the French Third Republic 1879-81 and 1883-85. See ed. D.K. Fieldhouse : The Theory of Capitalism Imperialism. 1967. p.53)

Thus Imperialism was in part determined by the need to find what Bukharin called dumping grounds and Hobson fresh opportunities for home producers:

These new markets must lie in hitherto undeveloped countries, chiefly in the tropics, where vast populations live capable of growing economic needs, which our manufacturers and merchants can supply. ¹

More important, however, in Hobson's view, was the decreasing opportunity for investment capital in a depressed economy. As capital sought possibilities for profitable returns abroad with increasing energy, argued Hobson, so pressure for political guarantees over the return of profits increased. Since free capital was concentrated in the hands of a small minority, Imperialism could be interpreted as the work of an economic oligarchy:

It is not too much to say that the modern foreign policy of Great Britain is primarily a struggle for profitable markets of investment. To a larger extent every year Great Britain is becoming a nation living upon tribute from abroad, and the classes who enjoy this tribute have an ever-increasing incentive to employ the public policy, the public purse, and the public force to extend the field of their private investments, and to safeguard and improve their existing investments. ²

Curiously, however, Hobson ends by countenancing certain forms of Imperialism, on the grounds that formal political control of an underdeveloped area may be necessary to protect the natives against excessively individualistic economic interests:

1. J.A. Hobson : Imperialism. 1902. p.77

2. *ibid* : p.60. (see also J.M. Robertson writing in 1899; ed. D.K. Fieldhouse : The Theory of Capitalist Imperialism. 1967. pp.62-4)

If organised Governments of civilised Powers refused the task, they would let loose a horde of private adventurers, slavers, piratical traders, treasure hunters, concession mongers, who, animated by mere greed of gold or power, would set about the work of exploitation under no public control and with no regard to the future [.]

In the last analysis, however, Hobson argued that the protestations of an ethical imperative in Imperialism had to be put to the test by the economic behaviour of the Imperial powers in question:

[Openly] discouraging any premature private attempts of exploiting companies to work mines, or secure concessions, or otherwise to impair our disinterested conduct, we should endeavour to assume the position of advisers. ²

Many interpretations of Imperialism, however, stress the narrowness of such economic analysis. The influential critique by J.A. Schumpeter, Imperialism And Social Classes (1919), emphasized the sociological factors which contributed towards expansionism. Attempting to relate widely disparate historical manifestations of Imperialism from ancient history to the nineteenth century, he concluded that "in its innermost nature the imperialism of Louis XIV, for instance, ranks beside that of the Assyrians".³ What admitted such a collocation in Schumpeter's argument was his appeal to such notions as Man's supposedly "instinctive urge to domination".⁴ More specific and more convincing is Schumpeter's argument that late nineteenth century Imperialism was stimulated by habits of

1. J.A. Hobson : Imperialism. 1902. p.242

2. *ibid* : p.256

3. J.A. Schumpeter : Imperialism and Social Classes. trans. Heinz Norden. ed. P.M. Sweezy. Oxford. 1951. p.44

4. *ibid* : p.15

mind which the bourgeoisie had inherited from the old autocracy.¹
 It was thus fallacious for Bukharin and Lenin to talk of Imperialism as being a logical and necessary development of capitalism:²

Imperialism thus is atavistic in character...In other words, it is an element that stems from the living conditions, not of the present, but of the past - or, put in terms of the economic interpretation of history, from past rather than present relations of production.³

Political historians also contribute a perspective which is radically at odds with the economic models touched upon above. Arguing that late Victorian Imperialism was, in Africa at least, a response to fears for the safety of the Suez Canal,⁴ Robinson and Gallagher concentrate upon the continuity of British foreign policy within the fifty years leading up to the annexation of Egypt. Imperialism, they argue, was "inspired by concepts peculiar to the official mind"⁵ and the authors deny the importance of economic necessities:

There seems to have been no purely commercial necessity for the extensions of rule in the Eighteen sixties and seventies, such as the theory of economic imperialism would suggest.⁶

It was in response to European jealousy of England's intervention in Egypt, their work suggests, that the partition of Africa was decided and agreed upon.⁷ The kind of approach taken by Robinson

1. J.A. Schumpeter : Imperialism and Social Classes. trans. Heinz Norden. ed. P.M. Sweezy. Oxford. 1951. p.124 and 128 esp.
2. *ibid* : p.108 esp.
3. *ibid* : p.84 (my ellipsis)
4. R. Robinson and J. Gallagher : Africa and the Victorians : The Official Mind of Imperialism. 1961. p.81 ff.
5. *ibid* : p.73
6. *ibid* : p.61. See, also, p.163
7. *ibid* : p.174

and Gallagher, which is essentially a political model, is supported by other historians such as A.P. Thornton in The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies (1959), C.J. Lowe in The Reluctant Imperialists (1967), and L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan in their book Burden of Empire (1968).

The atmosphere of political chauvinism was both all-pervasive and profound in this period. To illuminate its extent, one might look at the first year's issue of the T.L.S. covering the year 1902, the year of the publication of "Heart of Darkness" in book form. Even this literary journal is infected with the nationalism of the time and its leading articles take a sternly anti-German stance. Looking back over European literary output at the end of the nineteenth century, one reviewer argues that "A review of German literature in 1901 can only lead us to deplore the mediocrity of its output."¹ This comments upon a decade whose output included work by Nietzsche, Rilke, Thomas Mann, Hauptmann, Hofmannstahl and Wassermann. Reviewers of historical research were not exempt from such judgements either. In March 1902, another leading article fulminates thus:

It is a pleasure as real as at present it is rare to meet with a German book, or at least a book in German, on a burning question of international politics, written with the single-minded devotion to truth which was once the proudest boast of German historians.²

These impressions are confirmed by the predominance of notices under General Literature of books received on the following topics;

1. The Times Literary Supplement. Feb. 7. 1902. p.28
 2. ibid : March 14. 1902. p.66

spy stories, invasion alarms, war alarms, napoleonic romances - recalling a similar period of isolation and triumph in Britain's history. These four subgenres probably constitute, with novels about the South African Campaign, quite literally two fifths, or even one half, of all "literature" given notice of publication. Large reviews were devoted in the year to the publications by Alfred Austin and two anthologies of poems entitled "Patriotic Songs" and "Songs of England's Glory". One is also impressed by the fact that the section in Publications Received for naval and military history is quite as large as that for literature and by the large variety of technical military publications for the general public. These include books on outpost duty, tactical problems, squad-drilling and setting up military camps. An author such as the Hon. George Peel sees fit to reply to his reviewer not in defence of accuracy primarily, but "as the matter involves to some extent the credit of this country."¹ If this is the atmosphere of the educated mind in the 1890's and 1900's, then the political interpretation of Imperialism must clearly not be ignored.

Nonetheless, dogmatism characterises the political theorists quite as much as the economic analysts. Thus Robinson and Gallagher conclude one section of their book by arguing thus:

As an explanation of European rule in tropical Africa, the theory of economic imperialism puts the trade before the flag, the capital before the conquest, the cart before the horse.²

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1. The Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 14. 1902. p.340
 2. R. Robinson and J. Gallagher : Africa and the Victorians : The Official Mind of Imperialism. 1961. p.409

Yet the administration of Nigeria evolved through the structure of Goldie's Royal Niger Company¹ in the same way that British political influence in Southern Africa outside the Dominion was increased by - or even created - by the energies of Rhodes' British South Africa Company.² Moreover the political explanation of the partition of Africa begs the larger question of the importance of the Suez Canal. As a route to India it was of critical importance, of course, and it is surely of the deepest significance that India in the 1880's was taking "12 percent of British exports of goods and 11 percent of capital exports with full government guarantees".³ By 1901, India was taking 14 percent of British exports and contributing 7 percent of her imports.⁴ And although British investment in her African territories may have been minute on the whole, in 1911 Belgium had investments in the Congo which exceeded those in Germany, and those in France, by well over two hundred percent.⁵ The political origins of British involvement in Africa seem dependent upon the economic importance of India, as Charles Dilke suggested after Tel-el-Kebir:

"England has a double interest; it has a predominant commercial interest, because 82 percent of the trade passing through the Canal is British trade, and it has a predominant political interest caused by the fact that the Canal is the principal highway to India, Ceylon, The Straits, and British Burmah, where 250,000,000 people live under our rule; and

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1. R. Robinson and J. Gallagher : Africa and the Victorians : The Official Mind of Imperialism. 1961. Chapter XIII. *passim*.
 2. *ibid* : Chapter XIV. *passim*.
 3. M. Barratt Brown : The Economics of Imperialism. 1974. p.195
 4. J.A. Hobson : Imperialism. 1902. p.38
 5. N. Bukharin : Imperialism and World Economy. (1917) 1930. p.45

also to China, where we have vast interests and 84 percent of the external trade of that still more enormous Empire." ¹

It would be dangerous, then, to suggest that late nineteenth century Imperialism can be explained solely in terms of nationalist rivalries between the Great Powers, or in relation to a self-imposed, ethically deduced duty to reclaim the dark places of the earth. This social and economic background provides a perspective upon the arguments concerning the importance of the economic imperative in the fiction to be discussed and while one is not looking for "proof" of any particular model of analysis, in fact many aspects of the various theories find their way into the writers concerned.

In the last chapter it was argued that the writers with whom this thesis is centrally concerned disassociated themselves from one prevalent conception of Imperialism, that of Empire as an expression and instrument of a specifically Christian civilisation. Equally, their recognition of the importance of the economic element in Imperialism is accompanied by an awareness that, as a force for progressive and constructive development, it was accompanied by unacceptable propensities for dislocation and destruction of subject peoples. The moral and economic justifications of Imperialism are treated with particular caution at the point at which they coincide, as will be shown. This coincidence, which has been traced in the Introduction from the eighteenth century through to Carlyle's justification of the Opium Wars and the identification, even by

1. cited in R. Robinson and J. Gallagher : African and the Victorians. 1961. p.117

missionaries, of commerce and Christianity, was still vigorous enough at the end of the nineteenth century to guide the assumptions behind the Company's rhetoric in "Heart of Darkness" and Gould's attitude towards the San Tome mine in Nostramo. This identification is generally treated within a wider debate questioning the cultural subscription to a belief in the certain morality of material progress, an equation criticised with increasing energy towards the close of the nineteenth century.

Defoe's fiction has often been used as a reference point for many of the issues discussed in this thesis. Once more his work proves useful in that it states problems and contradictions in expansionism which pre-occupy the writers upon whom this dissertation centres. As a propagandist of economic growth, his work is representative, perhaps, of assumptions which guided the increasingly formal European penetration into the Americas, Asia and Africa. Thus Captain Singleton, for instance, presents an image of Africa which is still operative in Conrad's fiction and indeed shapes Cary's An American Visitor to some degree. The moral issues which Defoe's novel raises remain constant and compelling in this later fiction.

Africa, for Captain Bob, as in historical reality, represents the opportunity for quick and easy profits. This hope dominates Singleton's motivations and erodes the unease of his crew at Africa's known dangers:

These Men too had all along had a great Mind to a Voyage for the main Land of Africk, where they said we should have a fair Cast for our Lives, and might be sure to make our selves rich which Way soever we went, if we were but able to make our Way through, whether by Sea or by Land.

This anticipation sustains the adventurers through every vicissitude and neither human nor natural hostilities are capable of undermining their fundamental self-assurance. In this novel, at least, Africa yields its treasures in prolific quantities. Unable to take advantage of the elephants' graveyard, the mutineers have better fortune on the goldfield. Their first day's prospecting yields them ninety-one pounds of gold.¹ So burdened down with their easily won wealth are they, that the abandoned Englishman is scarcely able to persuade them to visit the even richer deposits in his locality. Singleton returns to London with enough loot for two years of extravagant living, a sum with which a more prudent investor might have secured against the necessity for a renewed career in piracy.

Given this mythopoeic realisation of Africa, it is perhaps surprising that the novel should so emphatically and consciously describe the social destruction consequent upon even such easy exploitation. The toll upon local life necessitated by the requirements of survival are perhaps understandable, but there is evidence of the kind of human exploitation which Conrad strongly condemns almost two centuries later. An example is Singleton's early plan:

[He plots] to quarrel with some of the Negro Natives, take ten or twelve of them Prisoners, and binding them as Slaves, cause them to travel with us, and make them carry our Baggage[.]²

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1. Daniel Defoe : Captain Singleton. (1720) 1969. p.93 ff.
 2. *ibid* : p.52

That both Defoe and Singleton recognise that moral limits must be imposed to guide the economic exploitation of undeveloped lands may be seen in the crew's reluctance to aim towards Guinea on their journey home, as in Singleton's expression of fear:

[He suspects] that when we came among the Negroes in the North Part of Africa, next the Sea, especially those who had seen and trafficked with the Europeans, such as Dutch, English, Portuguese, Spaniards, etc. that they had most of them been so ill used at some time or other, that they would certainly put all the Spight they could upon us in meer Revenge.

As human and economic exploitation converge, to become identical in the trading of slaves, the novel's tone becomes increasingly critical. Thus, although Walters eventually sells the slaves from the French slave-ship, his initial indignation against the French not only stays Singleton's intended scheme of massacre but also evinces an attitude which came to circumscribe severely Europe's relationship with Africa. Will Walters identifies with the slaves' misfortune, arguing as follows:

Negroes had really the highest injustice done them, to be sold for Slaves without their Consent; and that the law of Nature dictated it to them; that they [Singleton's crew] ought not to kill² them, and that it would be wilful Murder to do it.

The narrower moral limits which Kipling sets for economic exploitation are partly defined by the particular circumstances of his experience and schooling. As political control over India had become more accountable to Westminster, so the opportunity for

1. Daniel Defoe : Captain Singleton. (1720) 1969. p.108
2. *ibid* : p.191

piratical private enterprise decreased. Indeed the whole conception of a public administration such as the I.C.S. was in radical tension with what Hobson called "an injurious assertion of individuality".¹ The ethos of the I.C.S. was inculcated in the public schools, such as the United Services College which Kipling attended. Here, significantly, "eighty percent of the boys has been born abroad - in camp, cantonment, or upon the high seas"² and the introit to Stalky and Co. suggests the ideals which would shape those who returned to the Empire:

Some beneath the further stars
 Bear the greater burden:
 Set to serve the lands they rule,
 (Save he serve no man may rule,)
 Serve and love the lands they rule;
 Seeking praise nor guerdon.³

So powerful is this socialisation that the old boys of U.S.C. who pursue a career in business are "in no way made too much of".⁴ And so widespread are the doleful comments on the inadequacy of service pay in Kipling's fiction that the discernible bias toward the administration as against the "box-Wallah" must be considered as an expression of integrity with respect to an ideal, rather than mere professional prejudice. As his most direct treatment of the economic impulse in Imperialism, "The Man Who Would Be King" (1890), makes clear, Kipling is concerned with the benefit of the Empire rather than the advantage to the private interest.

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1. J.A. Hobson : Imperialism. 1902. p.244
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Stalky and Co. (1899) 1967. p.210
 3. *ibid* : pp.viii-ix
 4. *ibid* : p.170

'The Man Who Would Be King' provides, then, further evidence against the conception of Kipling as a vulgar jingoist. Rather than identifying with the expansionist aims of Carnehan and Dravot, the narrator, who seems closely modelled on Kipling's own experience as a journalist, consistently views their energies as destructive and illegitimate. The story attains its special force through an objective presentation of Dravot and Carnehan. They demonstrate admirable qualities of ingenuity and courage, particularised in the circumstances of Dravot's death and Carnehan's escape. Moreover their arguments have a degree of apparent logic and plausibility with which the unwary reader may identify. Carnehan argues this, for instance:

"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 [.]¹

But Carnehan's complaints against the administration establishes the void which exists between the priorities of the I.C.S. and the would-be privateer:

"The country isn't half worked out because they that governs it won't let you touch it. They spend all their blessed time in governing it, and you can't lift a spade, nor chip a rock, nor look for oil, nor anything like that, without all the Government saying, 'Leave it alone, and let us govern.' Therefore, such as it is, we will let it alone, and go away to some other place where a man isn't crowded and can come to his own. We are not little men, and there is

1. Rudyard Kipling : Wee Willie Winkie. (1890) 1969. p.203

nothing that we are afraid of except Drink, and we have signed a Contract on that. Therefore, we are going away to be Kings."

The politics of Loaferdom, then, are in no way to be confused with the attitudes of the Indian government. By their rejection of the conditions of economic existence within India, an attitude emphasized by their refusal of the narrator's help towards jobs,² Carnehan and Dravot step outside Kipling's Law. Kafiristan represents an opportunity to evade its moral restraints and, like Kurtz in the Outer Station, they deny the standards of a more formal Imperial presence. The implication of the tale, then, is that Empire holds no place for such desperadoes.

Kipling's criticism of their enterprise involves a continual challenge to the reader's scale of values, since the social infrastructure which Dravot and Carnehan establish resembles in many respects that engendered by the British presence in India. Bridges are raised, roads are built, peace is established with the support of raised levies, and labour is mobilised towards a more rational development of the country. Furthermore, Dravot distinctly sees himself as a pioneer of the Empire and hopes, in claim at least, to bring Kafiristan under the aegis of London - thus helping to strengthen India's borders against possible Russian aggression. Dravot suggests this at the outset:

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Wee Willie Winkie. (1890) 1969. p.214
 2. Compare, too, the conditions and hardships of the narrator's work with the shiftlessness of the two adventurers.

'When everything was shipshape, I'd hand over the crown - this crown I'm wearing now - to Queen Victoria on my knees, and she'd say: 'Rise up, Sir Daniel Dravot'." 1

However it is apparent that such affirmations are lip-service in the context of their practical politics. The initial success enjoyed by the pair as a consequence of their superior technology is marred by occasions of gratuitous violence. The employment of force is not aimed ultimately at the good of Kafiristan, but rather to rationalise the piratical exploitation of a land in which, as Carnehan related, treasure abounds:

"[The] gold lies in the rock like suet in mutton. Gold I've seen, and turquoise I've kicked out of the cliffs, and there's garnets in the sands of the river [.]" 2

Dravot's pietistic consignment of the future of Kafiristan to the guidance of Britain is undercut by an attitude which one feels is more characteristic of his real ambitions:

"[We] shall be Emperors - Emperors of the Earth! Rajah Brooke will be a suckling to us. I'll treat with the Viceroy on equal terms!" 3

The greed of the two men is single-minded and extensive, progressing logically to drink and women. Inevitably, their appetites expose them as men rather than Gods and they are fittingly destroyed by their exclusive preoccupations with the short-term and material aspects of their hegemony. The resistance of the young girl is described with sympathy, even by Carnehan, and the disastrous

1. Rudyard Kipling : Wee Willie Winkie. (1890) 1969. p.239
2. *ibid* : p.232
3. *ibid* : p.239

consequences of Dravot's desire may be seen as a parable of the consequences of an Imperialism devoid of any genuinely altruistic motivation. That this kind of Imperialism is seen as a kind of blasphemy against the ideals of the I.C.S. may be inferred from the desperadoes' behaviour in two instances. Firstly, they smuggle guns across the border in the disguise of Buddhist priests and they compound this by their usurpation of the offices of masonry, which attains the moral colouring of an act of sacrilege. Kipling, therefore, joins J.A. Hobson in supporting the idea that a public Imperial service is necessary in order to discourage unbridled expressions of the profit motive, which tend towards the "setting up [of] private despotisms sustained by organised armed forces".¹ Nor is Kipling's criticism limited to "the offscourings of civilised nations",² such as Carnehan and Dravot, with their long histories of fraud and extortion. Zigler, the American business man in "The Captive" (1904), appears to have the weight of respectability behind his complaint at the slow rate of development in South Africa: "'But if you want to realise your assets, you should lease the whole proposition to America for ninety-nine years'".³ Concluding a story which stresses the belief in a moral justification for Britain's role in the Boer War, this comment illustrates the narrator's distance from Zigler and emphasizes the assumptions which preclude the speedy robbery which Zigler appears to propose.

1. J.A. Hobson : Imperialism. 1902. p.243

2. *ibid* : p.244

3. Rudyard Kipling : Traffics And Discoveries. (1904) 1973. p.36

At the same time, Kipling's fiction demonstrates that he is not sentimentally conservative when the economic imperative promises an unselfish development of native lands. By the same principle of decorum through which the names of Carnehan and Dravot suggest their non-Britishness, Kipling chooses a native state, Rhatore, as an example of the social injustice which may derive from material backwardness. Thus Nick Tarvin's critique of Rhatore in The Naulahka (1892), centres on an awareness of the disjunction between the Maharajah's preoccupation with making war and maintaining the paraphernalia of a splendid past on credit, and the poverty of his people, the archaic system of public health and the total absence of educational opportunity. Nick deems the remedy to such conditions to lie in the rational exploitation of Rhatore's economic potential, a belief which survives his initial sense of disillusion:

It made him tired to see the fixedness, the apathy, and lifelessness of this rich and populous world, which should be up and stirring by rights - trading, organising, inventing, building new towns, making the old ones keep up with the procession, laying new railroads, going in for fresh enterprises, and keeping things humming.

"They've got resources enough," he said. "It isn't as if they had the excuse that the country's poor. It's a good country."¹

Under Nick's consistent pressure, the Maharajah institutes a basic programme to develop Rhatore, sanctioning, for instance, the building of a dam for irrigation purposes. Although many of Nick's proposals are stonewalled by Sitabhai, the accession of the Maharaj Kunwar

1. Rudyard Kipling and W. Balestier : The Naulahka, (1892) 1950. p.106-7. (c.f. The authorial sympathy for Strickland junior's programme of cotton-plantation to destroy the slaving hegemony in his African district in 'A Deal in Cotton' from Actions and Reactions (1909).)

promises a speedier and more consistent material development with its consequent social benefits.

Despite sharing many of Kipling's general attitudes, Cary differs from him in a more specific attention to the effect of the economic element in Imperialism upon the integrity of local life. The preservation of local institutions, wherever compatible with the ideal of a rational and self-sufficient Nigeria, was central to the conception of Indirect Rule. (See last Chapter pp.69 ff.) Cary's extreme intimacy with the circumstances of tribal life results in a sensitivity towards native attitudes which one might expect from an anthropologist. Given a bias against the private merchant, which, like Kipling's, is almost innate in the ethos of his service, Cary's fiction often sympathetically identifies with the local outrage against economic penetration of Nigeria.

Thus, well aware of the disruption which results from economic exploitation, Cary often in part endorses the kind of views represented by the conservative pagan Yerima in Aissa Saved (1932), views shaped by a desire to preserve local value structures which ensure the homogeneity of his people:

"Look at Berua, how it has been ruined by the traders. A decent man or woman cannot go there for fear of being swindled or insulted by some dog from the white man's towns. And now they want to spoil Yanrin too."

1. Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. p.76

To a certain extent, given the unbridled individualism which has been acquired by such examples as Henry in An American Visitor (1933), Yerima's anxiety is clearly understandable. His attitudes are to a large degree supported by the administrators. Sangster, in The African Witch (1936), prefers his pagans primitive and Blore, in Mister Johnson (1939), deprecates the progress of an infrastructure to facilitate economic growth:

[He considers] motor roads to be the ruin of Africa, bringing swindlers, thieves and whores, disease, vice and corruption, and the vulgarities of trade, among decent, unspoilt tribesmen.

Given the vast increase in crime as a result of the completion of Rudbeck's road,² Blore's attitude to it seems partially vindicated.

As with Kipling's treatment in "The Man Who Would Be King", Cary is concerned with making his thesis objective and impartial. Thus the private economic interest never represents a wholly villainous enterprise. Although Prince and Honeywood in The African Witch are caricatured to the point of becoming grotesques, the prospectors in An American Visitor are much more fully realised and claim a more complex response from the reader. Jukes, for instance, is hardly a pirate:

Jukes was in a panic about his whole expedition. It was known that he had children at school and it was said that he was on the edge of bankruptcy, so that he could not well avoid being worried. He had committed himself.³

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1. Joyce Cary : Mister Johnson. (1939) 1961. p.46.
 2. Ibid : p.165
 3. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.16

Possibly, too, the extreme sentimentality of Marie Hasluck's attitude towards the Birri¹ encourages a reactive sympathy towards the miners. One's identification is further engaged by the manner in which Bewsher treats the prospectors' claims, which have been sanctioned by the government gazette in consultation with the maps of the D.O. himself. His initial steps are, therefore, not merely high-handed but illegal, in accordance with the critical description of him as "one of the queerest of the old gang who had ruled Nigeria like independent despots".² One is equally unimpressed, despite its comic elements, with Bewsher's consequent escape into the bush to avoid the repercussions of Cottee's complaint to the Resident after the prohibition of the prospectors. Most damaging of all, perhaps, against Bewsher, is one's awareness of his partisanship, which although quite explicable in terms of the particularities of his service, can hardly be held to constitute a generally acceptable principle:

"There's tin for everybody in Pahang, let alone the plateau...All I say is that they could do it just as well in Kamchatka or South America. There's no reason on earth why they should come to Birri and smash up my whole show."³

More problematic is the question of Cottee's subscription to ideas which make Bewsher's attitude to the Birri smack of a reactionary conservatism. Cottee persistently professes devotion to the advantages which the exploitation of Nok implies for the

1. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor, (1933) 1976. p.66
2. *ibid* : p.41
3. *ibid* : p.42 (my italics and ellipsis)

tribesmen. As a result, Bewsher often seems accused of double standards. Thus Cottee subverts the D.O.'s arguments with considerable plausibility:

"Don't let 'em have any money to play with in case they buy the same sort of things that we find indispensable - clothes and metal pots and hats and so on" [.]¹ "Why, we don't even teach them English. We behave exactly as if English books and English ideas would poison them."²

Cary was aware, as was argued in the last chapter, that the principles of Indirect Rule, for all its virtues, were possibly incapable of responding to a larger historical dialectic. In Gore's reluctant admissions towards the end of the novel, one senses a determinism which makes resistance to economic development futile:

For even if civilization meant for the Birri a meaner, shallower kind of life, how could any man hope to fight against it when it came with the whole drive of the world behind it, bringing every kind of gaudy toy and easy satisfaction.³

Cary's wider vision suggests that the implicit conservatism of Indirect Rule may at times actively support the continuation of the tyrannies of poverty and ignorance which were at odds with his goal of a rational and self-subsistent Nigerian society. The Fada of Mister Johnson has many affinities with the Rhatore of Kipling's The Naulahka:

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1. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.94
 2. *ibid* : p.97
 3. *ibid* : p.234

Poverty and ignorance, the absolute government of jealous savages, conservative as only the savage can be, have kept it at the first frontier of civilization. Its people would not know the change if time jumped back fifty thousand years.

Rudbeck's road, then, down which the trader will travel, represents an antidote to poverty and an increased contact with the outside world to militate against the narrow-mindedness of isolation. The road becomes a symbol of genuine progress which provides "the first essential step out of the world of the tribe into the world of men".² The road in Aissa Saved represents quite literally the chance of salvation for Yanrin, the possibility of a definitive liberation from its oppressions. This, Bradgate is at pains to point out:

"Yanrin is poor though the woods are full of shea nuts that anybody can pick up, you know that in every bad year people are short of food, you know that the only thing that keeps out the trader is the want of a safe road with bridges, and now when there is a good chance of one you throw it away."³

Such evidence, then, indicates the limitations of the conservatives, both native, like Yerima, and white, like Blöre. But although, as Judy Coote suggests, the isolated D.O. may often seem to be attempting to "keep this country in the Middle Ages, as a kind of museum for anthropologists",⁴ the traders' presence and values are treated critically. Cary seems to conclude that private economic interests are not perhaps the best agency for the development of the country, since the beginning and end of such enterprise is

1. Joyce Cary : Mister Johnson. (1939) 1961. p.99

2. *ibid* : p.160

3. Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. p.74

4. Joyce Cary : The African Witch. (1936) 1951. p.56

personal gain. Thus Cottee's attacks upon Bewsher are weakened by their theoretical and abstract nature; at times his ideals seem as much pure lip-service as Dravot's:

Cottee had been thinking like a very rich man, not in terms of a big car and a month's razzle-dazzle, but deer forests, yachts, a cut-away with the Pytchley. ¹

One loses all sympathy with Cottee at the point at which he enthusiastically joins Stoker's punitive expedition against Obai and Fish. Here he exemplifies Cary's fears that economic penetration always carried with it the potential for "anarchy, a mess, a muddle":²

He was going to enjoy this show, and it might easily make him a rich man. All Birri would be opened up, including Pare. Also it would be in a highly favourable state for development; the people submissive and ruined; the government ready to welcome anyone bringing money and work. ³

The disastrous results of the Birri war complete a cycle of upheavals caused wholly by the prospectors' arrival. In this conflict one's sympathies are entirely with the tribesmen. Not only are the Birri well aware that insofar as the tin belongs to anybody, it is their property, but the tribe's sense of outrage is compounded by the fact that the execution of the prospectors' claims involves the alienation of valuable farmland.

In addition one is aware that, for all Bewsher's conservatism, he really has the Birri's interests at heart - in contrast to Cottee.

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1. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.139
 2. *ibid* : p.95
 3. *ibid* : p.177

In the end Bewsher pays the price for his tribe's anger against the exploiters, something which seems likely from the early description of him as being "prepared to ruin himself to prevent the Birri being degraded and exploited".¹ One's awareness of his sacrifice reinforces the energy of his rejoinders to Cottee since there is no taint of personal interest involved:

"Why, damn it," said Bewsher, suddenly angry, "how the hell would you like a lot of Birri apes digging in your back garden and telling you to take compensation or leave it?"²

Nor, one feels, is Bewsher's conservatism quite as dogmatic and anti-progressive as Cottee would have his audience believe. His attempts to introduce the Hausa latrine, comical in itself perhaps, are part of the programme aimed at encouraging the development of the Birri; the programme also includes the establishment of agricultural co-operatives and the scheme of political unification aimed at obviating the debilitating inter-clan fights which are one cause of the Birri's backwardness. Indeed, Bewsher's antagonism towards the prospectors seems to depend upon these circumstances and are far from absolute:

And with federation accomplished he could afford to let the traders in. In fact, he would want them, for he would need money to build the courthouses and markets and to make the roads [.]³

Joyce Cary's fiction shows some evidence of a concern to relate the case of Nigeria to the wider world economy to which it is made subject by the economic penetrations represented in

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1. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.95
 2. *ibid* : p.62. c.f. Marlow's similar comment in Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" in Youth, Heart of Darkness, The End of the Tether. (1902) 1967. p.70 (This volume is hereafter referred to as "Heart of Darkness". (1899/1902) 1967.
 3. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.220

Cottee's prospectors and their colleagues. This is perhaps most explicit in Mister Johnson:

The season is bad. Prices are low because in Europe and America, the office men, buyers and sellers of paper, have first bought too much and then tried to sell it again, all at once. Children are starving in Fada, bush villages and the slums of London and New York for exactly the same reasons.

But in general, Cary's concentration upon the immediate effects of economic exploitation lacks this wider perspective. And the sense of a constant relationship of a specifically localised economic interaction to the wider needs and professions of Europe contributes to the sense of a more total discussion which one finds in Conrad's work.

The intention now is to change the focus of this inquiry into a much more minute concentration on Central Africa with specific reference to "Heart of Darkness". The history of the area now known as Zaire is worth bearing in mind when dealing with Marlow's narrative. Even before Leopold II came to the Belgian throne, while he was still Duke of Brabant, he was deeply interested in the conception of overseas dependencies. His writings of 1863 demonstrate his principal concerns:

Overseas provinces have brought back to the mother country far more in hard cash than they have cost, and...such possessions are excellent fields for the investment of capital for such states. Despite free trade, and the opening of all the colonies belonging to different peoples to the trade of all,

1. Joyce Cary : Mister Johnson. (1939) 1961. p.146

it remains more advantageous to possess one's external dependencies [.] In such places we see a way to increase our importance in the world, new careers open to our citizens, a new source of revenue to use, which, as in Java, would constitute a free gift, a field for investing our capital, under the rule of our own laws, far more profitably than in the metal industry or even railways which give only 3 or 3½%.

When Leopold acceded to the throne, he was drawn, like his sister powers, into the intensifying exploration of the Congo basin. British penetration into the south Sudan, French interests on the north bank of the Congo river under de Brazza, and a German presence in the Camerouns encouraged Leopold, too, to strike his claim for an African empire. Accordingly, he invited H.M. Stanley, the friend of Livingstone and an international philanthropic figure, to set up an agency to explore one of the last blank places on the map with a view to its exploitation. Stanley formed the Association Internationale du Congo with the backing of France and the United States. At this stage, Britain was hostile to Leopold's intentions, fearing an increase in French influence down to Angola. As a result, she initially favoured an extension of Portuguese pretensions into the Congo from Angola. But at the 1884-5 Berlin Africa Conference, Leopold's claim was ratified by all the European powers, Britain by this time being more worried by a German-Portuguese rapprochement which threatened her position in East Africa. The area was constituted as a free-trade zone and as the private possession of Leopold rather than as a dependency of Belgium. Leopold was thus

1. ed. D.K. Fieldhouse : The Theory of Capitalist Imperialism. 1967. p.48. See also the similarity of attitude in French Prime Minister Jules Ferry. *ibid* : pp.51-53

the sole owner of a private estate 80 times the size of Belgium. Exploitation proceeded apace, especially in the 1890's, as the result of the world upsurge in demand for rubber which had been successfully cultivated in the Congo.

Into this situation came Joseph Conrad in 1890, like Marlow, an out-of-work skipper who had been roaming and working in the Eastern seas for several years, sent out to run a company steamship. His Congo diary, published in Tales of Hearsay and Last Essays attests to the autobiographical content of "Heart of Darkness". At Matadi, Conrad ran into a young Irishman, later to attain the stature of a martyred patriot, by the name of Roger Casement, who was acting as British consul in the Congo. Casement's indignation at the exploitation of the Congo is as strong and as bitter as that of Conrad who, one remembers, in Last Essays called the Congo enterprise "the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience and geographical exploration".¹ Casement's letters from the Congo, a selection of which can be found in H.O. Mackey's The Life and Times of Roger Casement, indicates the grounds for the sense of outrage these two men shared. One letter reads:

I think it must have been my insight into human suffering and into the ways of the spoiler and ruffian who takes "civilisation" for his watchword when his object is the appropriation of the land and labour of others for his personal profit, and which the tale of English occupation in Ireland so continually illustrates, that gives me the deep interest I felt in the lot of the Congo natives.²

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1. Joseph Conrad : Tales of Hearsay and Last Essays. (1928) 1955. p.17
 2. H.O. Mackey : The Life and Times of Roger Casement. Dublin. 1954. pp.3-4

At times, Casement's language itself seems to resonate with Marlow's:

The dastardly cowardice of the whole vile business out there would make you burn with the resentment I felt in the lot of the Congo natives.¹

Casement cites some grotesque examples of this spoilage. The population of the Bolobo tribe, for instance, was over 5,000 in 1887 and was down to 500 in 1903. No wonder so many of the villages in "Heart of Darkness", then, are deserted. On the Lalango river, punitive expeditions were sent out against natives who did not produce their rubber quotas. Native soldiers employed by the Company had to produce one right hand for every bullet expended on pain of punishment. Casement was so incensed by such instances that he compiled a report on the Company activities which, in his capacity as consul, he handed to Lord Lansdowne, the Conservative Foreign Secretary, on his return to London in 1903. Lansdowne refused to believe the report at first but was eventually persuaded as to its authenticity. On publication, the report became, quite appropriately, an international scandal. The Congo Reform Association was established with Casement on the executive and in 1904 Leopold was forced to concede his private lands to his country's government. For the first time, then, in 1904, the Congo became a dependency of Belgium in the same sense that Kenya was conceded to Britain, or Tanganyika to Germany.

Lansdowne's initial reaction to Casement's report, his disbelief that a sister Imperial power was capable of committing such excesses is eloquent testimony to the general European sense of

1. H.O. Mackey : The Life and Times of Roger Casement. Dublin. 1954. p.5

complacency and moral justice in its Imperial undertaking. Despite all the international rivalries and jealousies, it obviously seemed inconceivable that white men and Europeans could perpetrate such barbarities. This mood of disbelief was so all-pervasive at the time that it can even be found in the T.L.S. reviews of December 1902, when by a fine stroke of publishing irony, Conrad's "Youth" volume, incorporating "Heart of Darkness", appeared together with J.A. Hobson's Imperialism and another critique of Imperialism by E.D. Morel called Affairs of West Africa. Hobson's reviewer conducts his analysis in a variety of tones ranging from disbelief to ridicule of a somewhat undignified nature. He clearly demonstrates the assumptions of his audience in the course of his attack. Hobson, he asserts, "on the strength of materials hardly sufficient for a speech at the Oxford Union has formed the theory...that the British Empire is a huge mistake".¹ Hobson's book is well over 300 pages long and confines its attention essentially to a period of 20 years. Whether one agrees with his analysis or not, it is quite evident that Hobson has been painstakingly thorough in his critique, supporting his argument with the minutest attention to government statistics and the opinions of his opponents, to whom he is often generous. More open-minded and perhaps therefore more poignant, is the review of Morel's study, which anticipated to some extent Casement's report, in his attention to the exploitation of the Congo. The reviewer accepts Morel's

1. The Times Literary Supplement. Dec 5. 1902. p.364 (my ellipsis)

initial suggestion that French rule in West Africa may be more humanitarian and farsighted than that of Britain. But the reviewer's rejection of Morel's case for reform of practices in the Congo is clear-cut. He cites Morel's conclusion which is as follows:

[The] question is one which calls for the immediate and very firm intervention of the Powers by whose action the Congo Free State was called into being and by whose virtual sanction it continues to exist. ¹

The reviewer is clearly impressed by the urgency of Morel's tone:

If Mr. Morel is accurately informed, there is hardly a condition of its charter of existence which it has not broken, nor a law of common humanity which it has not flouted. ²

But he concludes, "we hesitate, without independent investigation, to give further currency to his assertions". Ironically, one "independent investigation" - "Heart of Darkness" - had been reviewed just one week previous to Morel's book. Conrad's reviewer described it as "quite extravagant according to the canons of art"³ and regretted the possibility that the reader, discouraged by "Heart of Darkness", might not struggle on to the last and best of the three tales, "The End of the Tether". The reviewer had obviously not grasped the implications of the original publishing context of "Heart of Darkness".

The tale first appeared in February 1899 in the 1000th issue of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, a bastion of conservative thought which evinced a deep interest in the Empire. Sharing the millenary

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1. The Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 19. 1902. p.378
 2. ibid : Dec. 19. 1902. p.378
 3. ibid : Dec. 12. 1902. p.372

number are tales of prospecting, exploration and so forth, all apolitical in attitude and in general, bland, anodyne and sanguine in their treatment of penetration in the rest of the world. The ethos of Blackwood's is aptly described by W.E. Houghton in The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals. He cites the opinion of the The Review of Reviews issue of June 1891, which had this to say about its sister periodical:

With a rare consistency it has contrived to appear for over threescore years and ten as the spirited and defiant advocate of all those who are at least five years behind their time. Sometimes Blackwood is fifty years in the rear, but that is a detail of circumstance. ¹

Thus the act of publication in such a context would seem to constitute the first highly dramatic attack upon complacency with Imperialism which characterizes the pages of the narrative as a whole.

In the preface to "The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'", published in 1897, Conrad defines one of the goals of his art as being the evocation of a "latent feeling of fellowship with all creation".² In "Heart of Darkness", one feels the uncomfortable implications of this conviction. Insofar as one identifies with Marlow and Kurtz, and such is the nature of the narrative technique that it is difficult not to do so, one is involved in their predicament. Consequently, any sense of moral superiority, of the possibility of making clear-cut judgements on Imperialism, is, like Marlow's, severely shaken. "Heart of Darkness" is full of techniques of moral involvement, a characteristic which is easy to see in comparison with the earlier

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1. W.E. Houghton : The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals. 1824-1900. Vol. 1. 1966. p.9
 2. Joseph Conrad : The Nigger of the 'Narcissus', Typhoon, Falk and other stories. (1897) 1964. p.viii

tale "An Outpost of Progress", which also draws on Conrad's experience of the Congo. In "An Outpost of Progress", there is an omniscient narrator whose satiric voice manipulates the reader into an acquiescence in the moral presuppositions which shape that voice. The tale's tendency towards polemic and overstatement holds the reader at a distance from the action which does not compromise him. There is, throughout the narrative, a reliance upon shared assumptions between author and reader which contrasts unfavourably in artistic terms with the dramatic, self-subsistent nature of "Heart of Darkness". The ending, for instance, is contrived to the point of melodramatic absurdity. And the tale as a whole does not disturb deeply the complacency of Conrad's English audience. Kayerts and Carlier are patently not British and their activities end in self-defeat and self-destruction, satisfying a naive belief, perhaps, that justice will out. But despite the general feeling of caricature and manipulation, "An Outpost" contains one detail which looks forward to the theme upon which this paper wishes to concentrate in "Heart of Darkness". The agent's African servant Gobila, who sells his fellow-porters for ivory and in the process completely compromises his masters Kayerts and Carlier, has an alias of significant resonance. It is Henry Price; immediately one has a sense of British involvement somewhere, and as the word "price" suggests, an involvement of a nature which is not particularly honourable. This kind of symbolism is commonplace in "Heart of Darkness", which seeks to stress much more emphatically Britain's involvement in Africa.

The techniques which argue this theme are apparent from the outset of the narrative. The milieu of the tale, set on the yawl, seems innocuous enough, imitating to a large degree the comfortable and comforting conventions of clubland literature which characterize so many of the tales which Blackwoods published. It is easy to see it at first, as it obviously was seen at the time, as one of those pleasant after-dinner yarns in which the magazine specialized. One notices, to begin with, all the effects which induce the feeling of complacent ease like the homely name of the yawl itself - "Nellie". It is a cruising yawl, a vehicle of pleasure and not of work. It is at anchor, at rest, almost becalmed. But two details in this first paragraph belie the impression of security. First of all the sense of waiting resonates throughout the story, involving Marlow's audience and the reader in his wait for rivets, in the Harlequin's wait for the steamboat, in the brickmaker's wait for his straw, in the expectation of everybody in Africa; "they were all waiting - all the sixteen or twenty pilgrims of them ; for something"¹ Marlow informs his audience. Secondly, Conrad is always discriminating in his distinction between pleasure craft and working craft, almost always attaching a bad odour to the former - as is evident in The Rescue, begun in 1898. In that book, the dissociation is marked in Lingard's conversation with Travers:

"When I was a boy in a trawler, and looked at you yacht people in the Channel ports, you were as strange to me as the Malays here are strange to you."²

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1. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness". (1899/1902) 1967. p.77
 2. Joseph Conrad : The Rescue. (1920) 1949. p.158

The "Nellie", then, does not enjoy the favour which one is accustomed to find bestowed on schooners and barques in Conrad's fiction; the suggestion attached to the "Nellie" is from the outset one of self-indulgence, an impression confirmed by the manner in which she is set off from the busy activity on the Thames.

The clientele of clubland, to which magazines such as Blackwood's addressed themselves, constituted in effect the political and economic elite of the country. Appropriately, therefore, in this tale one finds representatives of that elite in the Director of Companies, the Lawyer, the Accountant and the sea-captain Marlow, who embodies in part the widely-held belief, which Conrad re-affirms in "Confidence" (1919), that "The seamen held up the Edifice...the British Empire rests on transportation".¹ There is also the unnamed narrator, who in contemporary fictional conventions represents the favoured mystery figure such as the Very Silent Man at dinner in Wells's "The Time Machine". These features and the surface tone of paragraphs two, three and four would seem to confirm the audience's sense of familiarity and ease. There is the feeling of comradeship developed over many years which reminds one of the audience's involvement in Marlow's experience. And once more the apparently harmless detail disturbs this equanimity in which the reader has participated. One notices the 'interminable waterway' - a phrase which occurs to Marlow on his trip upstream to Kurtz. There is a haze developing, which looks forward to the mist which encompasses Marlow's steamship. The motifs of darkness embroil London and England in the events of the Congo.

1. Joseph Conrad : Notes on Life and Letters. (1921) 1949. p.202 (my ellipsis)

The Director and Accountant have their insidious counterparts later in the tale. The dominoes, described as bones, and presumably made of ivory, anticipate the discovery of Fresleven's skeleton immediately afterwards. Marlow is identified as an idol, which links him to Kurtz. These details, then, involve the ethos which the "Nellie" represents in the main action of the story, a feeling which is reinforced by one's awareness of the busy traffic on the river, a fact which reminds one that Britain was pre-eminently a trading nation, dependent for its raw materials upon hegemony overseas. Not to notice such details is to align oneself with the Director, who clearly feels himself detached from the meaning of Marlow's narrative. His reaction to Marlow's catalogue of horrors, one remembers, is one of self-revealing complacency: "We have lost the first of the ebb."¹

This point, it seems, develops into one which is crucial for an interpretation of Marlow. As an authority upon the pilgrims, Marlow is unimpeachable, one feels. But he rigorously and persistently excludes the British from his accusation. One remembers that Morel's book indicted not just Leopold but all the international powers by whose sanction the Congo had come into being, one signatory, of course, being Britain. When Marlow gets into the Continental Director's office, he comments thus upon the large map:

There was a vast amount of red - good to see at any time, because one knows that some real work is done in there [.]²

1. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness". (1899/1902) 1967. p.162
 2. ibid : p.55

But at various points in the book, Marlow's simple and self-assured distinction seems to collapse. For Conrad stresses the international rather than the national dimensions of the pillage and critics talk far too glibly about Belgium, Brussels and the Belgian Congo when interpreting 'Heart of Darkness'. It is surely of significance that the names Brussels and the Congo do not figure once in the tale - indeed Belgium is the only North European country which is not specifically mentioned. The polarity is not between Belgium and the Congo but between Europe, including Britain, and Africa. This argument may be confirmed in other ways. Fresleven, who provides Marlow with his chance by dying in Africa, is a Dane. The captain of the steamship which takes Marlow up to the central station is a Swede and he refers to another Swede who committed suicide. The man who provides the Harlequin with his shoes is a Dutchman called Van Shuyten. Marlow passes a French gunboat on his way south to Africa. The Harlequin is a Russian, which reminds one that Russia's imperial policy in the century was the most aggressive and expansionary of all. Marlow, the Englishman, abets the Company's exploitation in full awareness of its economic basis, overcoming many moments of disillusion in the faithful fulfilment of his function. But it is Kurtz, above all, who stresses the internationalism of the venture in Africa. Like the Harlequin, he addresses Marlow in English, an act which prompts the following description:

The original Kurtz had been educated partly in England, and - as he was good enough to say himself - his sympathies were in the right place. His mother was half-English, his father was half-French. All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz[.]¹

1. Joseph Conrad : 'Heart of Darkness'. (1899/1902) 1967. p.117

The Harlequin has red twill fluttering in his station and the medley of colours in his apparel, which reminds one of those on the Director's map, re-inforces one's feeling that no country is entitled to a sense of superiority and complacency in its Imperial adventures. One notices too that the Company administration is referred to as "the Council in Europe"¹ which has resonances with the international alliances expressed by the Council of Europe and the Concert of Europe. Kurtz represents, one recalls, the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs. This argument is re-inforced also in the material supplied by the narrator before Marlow commences. He contributes an extra perspective which again diminishes the confident distinction which Marlow has drawn, by bringing in the Elizabethan chapter of Britain's history. The narrator reverses, then, Marlow's consequent identification of Britain and Africa as the objects of Imperial aggression by reminding one of Britain's historical role as an aggressor. This counterbalances Marlow's insistence upon the image of the "invasion" of Africa, which perhaps seeks an appeal to the sympathy of a culture itself increasingly terrified by the prospect of an invasion. The description of these adventurers, "all the men of whom the nation is proud",² as the narrator tells us, also implicates Britain in the plunder of Africa. The narrator expresses an ambivalence which one feels to be beyond the powers of Marlow's perception; "from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin,

1. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness". (1899/1902) 1967. p.70

2. *ibid* : p.47

knights all, titled and untitled - the great knights-errant of the sea".¹ This ingenuous chauvinism is undercut by the word "knights-errant" which links these heroes to the theme of night and darkness, the word errant taking on an ambiguity one might not be sensible of to begin with. Is there, one wonders, much real distinction between the return of the Golden Hind, "with her round flanks full of treasure"² and the return of Marlow's boat bulging with ivory from Kurtz's station? There is, surely, deep irony in the mention of Franklin, whose expedition lost its way and never returned. The names of the ships, "Terror" and "Erebus" - which, of course, means "place of darkness" - serve to undercut the apparent complacency of tone. Finally, "a spark from the sacred fire"³ really seems an ill-balanced compensation to the conqueror's sword and pillager's torch which, like their latter-day counterparts in Africa, characterise these Englishmen's forays.

All this material prepares for Marlow's lie to Kurtz's Intended, which action constitutes the final point of his unselfconscious compromise in the ideology of Imperialism. He acquiesces in an ethos which he not only knows to be false, but has experienced as one of the efficient causes of the phenomenon he is so critical of. If one returns for a moment to Marlow's discussion of the Romans, one remembers that he generalised from their "squeeze" to the following conclusion:

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1. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness". (1899/1902). 1967. p.47
 2. ibid : p.47
 3. ibid : p.47

The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea¹

The idea as sentimental, though perhaps not as pretence, is what sustains the enthusiasm not only of Kurtz's Intended and Marlow's aunt but constitutes one stimulus for Kurtz's departure to Africa. At the beginning of his narration, before leaving for Africa, Marlow dissociates himself in the strongest terms from his relative's rhetoric:

There had been a lot of such rot let loose in print and talk just about that time, and the excellent woman, living right in the rush of all that humbug, got carried off her feet. She talked about "weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways", till, upon my word, she made me quite uncomfortable. I ventured to hint that the Company was run for profit.²

The idea as pretence is what Marlow meets in Africa and many of the tale's satiric effects depend upon his ironic application of the rhetoric of the idea to describe the actual practices he encounters. In his interview with Kurtz's Intended, Marlow's position is indeed complicated by the human situation in which he is involved, though for the reader this is distanced by the lack of particularity given to her. Nevertheless, by bowing before that "great and saving illusion",³ which is in essence the Intended's conception of Kurtz's identity, Marlow worships a false god and re-inforces the ideology so important in the phenomenon of Imperialism. He disavows his

1. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness". (1899/1902). 1967. p.50-1

2. ibid : p.59

3. ibid : p.159

knowledge of the immense shadow which falls between the idea and the practice, which remains, when all is said and done, "the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves".¹

What, too, does one make of Marlow's attitude towards the especially Anglo-Saxon virtue of efficiency? Efficiency would seem to represent Marlow's own "deliberate belief", which he argues is vital to ward off the contamination of the metaphorical rotten hippo meat. One can accept that Marlow's attention to leaky pipes and so forth prevents the horrors of the journey on the river from destroying his sanity. But Marlow's valuation of efficiency as a means of focusing the mind wholly upon the surface and upon externals clearly delimits the penetration of his vision and leads him to two important lapses in humanity. Firstly, the valuation of efficiency draws Marlow into an identification with the Accountant:

I respected the fellow. Yes; I respected his collars, his vast cuffs. His brushed hair. His appearance was certainly that of a hairdresser's dummy; but in the great demoralization of the land he kept up his appearance.²

So impressed is Marlow with the Accountant's externality that he passes without comment the Accountant's annoyance with the dying agent's groans, which are interfering with his book-keeping. The limits of Marlow's insight in this case seem implied by his initial description of the Accountant as a "vision",³ a word which suggests

1. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness" (1899/1902). 1967. p.50
 2. *ibid* : p.68
 3. *ibid* : p.67

the abolition of an awareness of the surroundings within which the vision occurs. The second occasion is the death of the helmsman. Standing over his dying subordinate, Marlow makes no gesture of comfort or succour, but is rather preoccupied by his own damp feet: "To tell you the truth, I was morbidly anxious to change my shoes and socks".¹ This act surely reverberates with Pilate's intended dissociation of himself from any responsibility in the death of Christ, an echo which redoubles the irony of Marlow's earlier deflation of arguments made for Rome's claim as a power compassionate to its subject peoples. Marlow's attitude to the book by Towson seems naive, though understandable to some degree, and one cannot help feeling that a disproportionate amount of his criticism of the Company's methods refers not to humanitarian assumptions, but is rather a response to his outraged awareness of the inefficiency of it all.

But Marlow is compromised above all by his relationship with Kurtz. Douglas Hewitt and others have commented extensively upon the importance, both as theme and as structural principle, of the concept of partnership in Conrad's fiction.² This bonding can be seen at its most explicit in "The Secret Sharer", but it is also articulated in the identity of Decoud with Nostromo, of Lord Jim with Gentleman Brown and so on. At certain points in "Heart of Darkness", Marlow expresses an utter dissociation from Kurtz, and assumes a competency to judge him objectively. Thus he says of the

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1. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness". (1899/1902). 1967. p.113
 2. See, for instance, Douglas Hewitt : Conrad : A Reassessment. Cambridge. 1952. p.9 ff and A.J. Guerard : Conrad the Novelist. 1958. p.26 ff.

Harlequin: "I did not envy him his devotion to Kurtz, though",¹ and of Kurtz, "He had been absent for several months - getting himself adored, I suppose...Mr. Kurtz was no idol of mine".² Speaking in context of the helmsman's death, Marlow asserts: "I am not prepared to affirm the fellow [i.e. Kurtz] was exactly worth the life we lost in getting to him".³ Nonetheless, a fundamental identity remains. Both Marlow and Kurtz are described as untypical and not representative of their class. Poverty drives both of them into the Company's employment. Marlow's behaviour towards his friends on returning from the East, "as though I had got a heavenly mission to civilize you",⁴ echoes ironically one of Kurtz's motivations in Africa. Like Kurtz, Marlow is sent out through the mediation of influential friends and is believed by the brickmaker to enjoy, like Kurtz, a special voice within the governing bodies. Marlow is represented by his aunt as "an exceptional and gifted creature... Something like an emissary of light, something like a lower sort of apostle."⁵ This resonates with the description of Kurtz as "a universal genius"⁶ and the brickmaker's evocation of Kurtz as "an emissary of pity, and science, and progress [.]"⁷ Marlow's travels all over the far East reverberate with the connotations of internationalism in Kurtz's background. Both are equally isolated amongst

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1. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness".. (1899/1902). 1967. p.127
 2. *ibid* : pp.129-30 (my ellipsis)
 3. *ibid* : p.119
 4. *ibid* : p.52
 5. *ibid* : p.59 (my ellipsis)
 6. *ibid* : p.83
 7. *ibid* : p.79

the pilgrims and Marlow finds himself, inevitably, "lumped along with Kurtz as a partisan of methods for which the time was not ripe [1]"¹ Each responds deeply to the appeal of the primitive, though Kurtz obviously to a greater degree. Marlow feels this from his first contact with Africa, as in his response to the natives in the canoe:

[They have] wild vitality, an intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast. They wanted no excuse for being there. They were a great comfort to look at.²

Marlow responds favourably to the noises he hears on the journey to Kurtz and also to the cannibals on his boat. His initial image of Kurtz is virtually self-identification: "Perhaps he was just simply a fine fellow who stuck to his work for its own sake."³ Marlow's immediate attraction to Kurtz soon becomes compulsive. Despite the odour of mortality attached to the lie, Marlow deceives the brickmaker about his influence in Europe, to protect a man he has never even met. He says of the river: "For me it crawled towards Kurtz - exclusively [1]"⁴ The thought of failing to meet Kurtz elicits despair:

I couldn't have felt more of a lonely desolation somehow, had I been robbed of a belief or had missed my destiny in life...⁵

There are many professions of loyalty, even devotion, to Kurtz:

"I am Mr. Kurtz's friend", he declares to the Harlequin, "Mr. Kurtz's

1. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness". (1899/1902). 1967. p.138
2. ibid : p.61
3. ibid : p.81
4. ibid : p.95
5. ibid : p.114

reputation is safe with me".¹ Marlow declares himself to be "jealous" of sharing his relationship with Kurtz. The religious imagery expressing this loyalty becomes so explicit towards the end of the narrative that one questions the distinction Marlow draws between his own devotion and the Harlequin's: "I had, even like the niggers, to invoke him - himself - his own exalted and incredible degradation".² Marlow accepts his "unforeseen partnership"³ with Kurtz to such an extent that Kurtz's pronouncement is invested with the authority of a divine fiat. It is "wide enough to embrace the whole universe, piercing enough to penetrate all the hearts that beat in the darkness."⁴ By bowing before the Intended's conception of Kurtz, Marlow confirms his status as acolyte and disciple. One should notice too the contribution of the narrator, who, as has been suggested, embodies a wider vision than that of Marlow. It is the narrator who describes Marlow as an idol, linking him to Kurtz. For the narrator, Marlow becomes "no more to us than a voice"⁵ in the darkness, which reminds one that this is precisely what Kurtz is to Marlow for much of his narrative - he always imagines Kurtz as discoursing rather than doing.

There are other elements, too, which diminish the dissociation which Marlow feels from the enterprise as a whole. From the outset Marlow the Englishman seems compromised, worrying his relative to get him a job against his customary ethic of self-reliance: "I felt somehow I must get there by hook or by crook".⁶ He recognises

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1. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness". (1899/1902). 1967. pp.138-9
 2. *ibid* : p.144
 3. *ibid* : p.147
 4. *ibid* : p.151
 5. *ibid* : p.83
 6. *ibid* : p.53

himself to be an "imposter"¹ in terms of his female relative's description of him, since he recognises from the outset the material motives of the Company. On the yawl, he expresses a loyalty to his contract, which although ironically expressed, is complicated by Marlow's attitude to lying, and reminds the reader of his links with the pilgrims: "I believe I undertook amongst other things not to disclose any trade secrets. Well, I am not going to."² This sense of obligation recalls the Eldorado Exploration Society who, too, "were sworn to secrecy."³ His defence of Kurtz to the brickmaker reduces him once more: "I became in an instant as much of a pretence as the rest of the bewitched pilgrims."⁴ It seems significant that the African in charge of the convicts, whom Marlow contemplates at the river-port, is unable to distinguish him from the rest of his employers. "After all," comments Marlow, "I also was a part of the great cause of these high and just proceedings."⁵ And even the slightest comic touch, such as Marlow's hope that he appears appetizing to his cannibal crew links him, in his little touch of vanity, to the Accountant with his attention to personal grooming and the brickmaker with his silver-topped dressing table.

Marlow himself admits the limitations of his judgement, and the motive for his preoccupation with laggings and rivets comes to seem a quality of inadequacy:

There was surface-truth enough in these things
to save a wiser man.⁶
The essentials of this affair lay deep under the
surface, beyond my reach, and beyond my power
of meddling.⁷

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1. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness". (1899/1902). 1967. p.60
 2. *ibid* : p.56
 3. *ibid* : p.87
 4. *ibid* : p.82
 5. *ibid* : p.65
 6. *ibid* : p.97
 7. *ibid* : p.100

Marlow is, significantly, incapable of a general conclusion such as Kurtz's, which reminds one of the narrator's comment upon Marlow's history of "inconclusive"¹ yarns. Even his vision of Kurtz remains opaque, as is implicit in his comment:

I looked at him as you peer down at a man who is lying at the bottom of a precipice where the sun never shines.²

Marlow's confusion has its source in an inability to see all the ramifications of his relationship with Kurtz, which has, as part of its meaning, a tension between his nation's sense of moral superiority in Imperial practice and the reality of its implication in "the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience,"³ to use Conrad's own words. Marlow remains in the "pose"⁴ of a preaching Buddha, the incompleteness of his authority and the disturbance of his mind indicated by the absence of the lotus leaf. This Marlow does not represent the Conrad whose 1898 review of Hugh Clifford's Studies in Brown Humanity, collected under the title of "An Observer in Malaya", expresses deep disquiet and skepticism at the philanthropic manifestations of British Imperialism, or the Conrad who, in an 1899 letter cited by Eloise Hay, dissociates himself from Kipling's confidence in the justice of the Boer War.⁵

All this evidence does not abolish Marlow's acuteness as a critic of Imperialism in its results. By reminding his listeners that "this also has been one of the dark places of the earth", Marlow

1. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness". (1899/1902). 1967. p.51
2. *ibid* : p.149
3. Joseph Conrad : Tales of Hearsay and Last Essays. (1928) 1955. p.17
4. *ibid* : p.99
5. E.K. Hay : The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad. 1963. pp.121-2
6. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness". (1899/1902). 1967. p.48

undermines the pretensions of an absolute cultural superiority which underlay many of his contemporaries' confidence in the Imperial Mission. This effect is confirmed by his assertion that the noises heard from the steamboat may be as meaningful as any church bells. Interestingly, Marlow's description of the journey upstream would seem to hint that Imperialism is symptomatic of degeneration. The pilgrims who are "at the end of countless ages"¹ involve themselves not only in a passage into darkness but a journey of regression: "We were travelling in the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone [.]"² This sense of decay is emphasized by the narrator's description of the Thames prior to Marlow's tale:

The old river in its broad reach rested unruffled at the decline of day, after ages of good service [.] We looked at the venerable stream not in the vivid flush of a short day that comes and departs for ever, but in the august light of abiding memories.³

There are also elements of the 1890's apocalyptic anxiety in the creation of Kurtz. This "universal genius" whose talents in oratory, painting and music mark him as a flower of civilisation collapses⁴ into utter barbarism once the sanctions of society are withdrawn. His summarising comment on the human condition is of a tone with the outlook of much literature produced in the 90's. Marlow perceptively points to the disjunction between Kurtz's role as agent for the International Society and the atrocities he commits. Faced with these abominations, Marlow's reaction is that "uncomplicated savagery

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1. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness". (1899/1902). 1967. p.103
 2. *ibid* : p.96
 3. *ibid* : p.46-7
 4. One wonders how much Conrad was suggesting a parallel between the case of Kurtz and the myth of Orpheus.

was a positive relief, being something that had a right to exist - obviously - in the sunshine".¹ Motifs of degeneration are common in the book. The "convicts" are quite obviously slaves, which suggests the undoing of a hundred years of abolitionist endeavour. The sepulchral city represents a monument of decay and decline. By rejecting any positive value in the analogy with the Roman Empire, Marlow undercuts one of the main sources of energy in the mythology of Imperialism. Marlow gains particularly in stature by his attitude towards the native peoples. From the moment he gives his sea-biscuit to the dying convict, to the recognition of a "subtle bond"² with his detribalised helmsman, Marlow is revolted by the dehumanisation of the blacks. He feels sympathy for the cannibals, refuses to adopt the grotesque language which categorises the natives and prevents a massacre of Kurtz's followers by screeching his steam-whistle. Marlow also notices the unequal economic exchange between Europe and Africa. He sees that the brass wire given to the cannibals is quite literally useless as wages, and contrasts the value of the ivory with what is exported in exchange:

[Ghastly] glazed calico that made you shudder only to look at it, glass beads value about a penny a quart, confounded spotted cotton handkerchiefs.³

Above all, Marlow convinces through his use of the rhetoric of "the idea" to describe the activities he sees. The quasi-religious imagery he consistently employs points continually to the abyss between idea and actuality. This tone is complemented by a strain

1. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness". (1899/1902). 1967. p.132
2. ibid : p.119
3. ibid : p.84

of black comedy which reinforces rather than vitiates the force of his criticisms. One remembers the French gunboat pumping lead into a continent whilst its crew dies like flies and the attempt to build the railway, an image of special poignance, perhaps, to the Victorians:

A heavy and dull detonation shook the ground,
a puff of smoke came out of the cliff, and that
was all. No change appeared on the face of the
rock.

All this perception emphasizes Marlow's acuteness and if one has dwelled upon the limits of his vision, it is to suggest that Conrad does not, in 1898 and 1899, seem to be excluding Britain from his criticism of Imperialism. One remembers that when J.J. O'Molloy mentions the Casement report to the Citizen in the Cyclops episode of Ulysses,² the Citizen pauses in his denigration of Britain. The contention of this thesis is then, that had he read "Heart of Darkness" thoroughly enough, he could have, God forbid, gone on without that pause.

With Nostramo one has the impression of a complexity which goes well beyond "Heart of Darkness". By the side of the San Tome mine, the operations of Marlow's company seem trivial and archaic, despite his claim that it is a European venture and dominates the whole life of the sepulchral city. The moral matrix of the novel is more problematic too. Costaguana is politically autonomous, inherits a considerable legacy of European influence, with well-developed if

1. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness" (1899/1902). 1967. p.64
2. James Joyce : Ulysses. (1922) 1964. pp.434-5

unstable social institutions. Moreover, in contrast to the two short stories, Conrad's discussion of the economic problem is less polemical than one might expect. Thus the Goulds' interest in Costaguana is not initially exclusively selfish and material. Charles Gould is motivated at the outset by a desire to vindicate and redeem his father's disastrous involvement in San Tome, a concession which was forced upon him by Guzman Bento; this interest, then, is in marked contrast to the voluntary creation of the economic connection in "Heart of Darkness". Indeed, Charles becomes involved against the express behests of his father. There is no cause to disbelieve the manager's avowals: "'After all his misery I simply could not have touched it for money alone . . .'"¹ In this aspect of the enterprise, Charles Gould's most important partner is not Holroyd, but his wife Emilia in whom "even the most legitimate touch of materialism was wanting".²

In its practical manifestations, too, the economic presence seems less morally reprehensible than that depicted in Africa. Conrad in Nostromo recognises, like Cary, that an infrastructure devolved from economic development may contribute to social and material progress in the country involved. The narrator attests to "the steadying effect of the San Tome mine upon the life of that remote province"³ and for the old Spanish families, the mine is "the most stable, the most effective force they had ever known to exist in their province".⁴ Monygham's position as Inspector of State Hospitals

1. Joseph Conrad : Nostromo (1904) 1960. p.74

2. *ibid* : p.75

3. *ibid* : p.95

4. *ibid* : p.358

after the defeat of Montero and Emilia's concern with social amelioration attests to the benefits which issue as side-effects from the successful working of the mine. And insofar as these are dependent upon the continued exploitation of silver, one may sympathise with Charles Gould's Carlylean belief in the moral right of his enterprise:

"What is wanted here is law, good faith, order, security. Anyone can declaim about these things, but I pin my faith to material interests. Only let the material interests once get a firm footing, and they are bound to impose the conditions on which alone they can continue to exist. That's how your money-making is justified here in the face of lawlessness and disorder. It is justified because the security which it demands must be shared with an oppressed people."¹

The intentions governing Gould's work gain further in moral status by reference to the social conditions historically prevalent in Costaguana, particularly under the governments of Guzman Bento and the Monteros:

After one Montero there would be another, the lawlessness of a populace of all colours and races, barbarism, irremediable tyranny.²

The Monteros posture behind a pseudo-patriotism, a false populism and a sham liberalism which totally fail to disguise their essentially selfish and irresponsible conceptions of power. The mine, to these buccaneers, is a quick and easy bonanza, not an instrument with which to benefit their people. The promise of liberation from such tyranny, which the English-managed mine represents, gains substance too, from

1. Joseph Conrad : Nostomo. (1904) 1960. p.84
 2. *ibid* : p.186

the historical dimension to the English presence in South America, which has been generally associated with the cause of freedom. Gould's grandfather fought under Bolivar at Carabobo and the memory of Giorgio Viola generalises from such specific instances: "And everywhere he had seen Englishmen in the front rank of the army of freedom".¹

Rather than describing the absolute disjunction between Imperial profession and actuality, as "Heart of Darkness" tends to, Nostromo concentrates upon the erosion of Gould's idealistic programme by the actuality within which it must operate; this gives the impression of a somewhat more objective and less polemical creation. But this does not reduce the sense of disillusion which both works share in creating. Charles Gould's enterprise is compromised by association with the symbol of the Azueras. Throughout the novel the violation of the Azueras anticipates the character that the exploitation of San Tome may assume. The treasure of the Azueras is sacred. The explorers who die in quest of the "forbidden wealth"² are, significantly, gringos, who are merely the latest in an established pattern: "Tradition has it that many adventurers of olden time had perished in the search".³ The word "adventurer" establishes the connection with Charles Gould - "he perceived he was an adventurer in Costaguana...he had something of an adventurer's easy morality[.]"⁴ Similarly, his "spirit of a buccaneer",⁵ and the involvement in silver, suggest affinities with more directly oppressive phases of

1 Joseph Conrad : Nostromo. (1904) 1960. p.31

2. *ibid* : p.5

3. *ibid* : p.4

4. *ibid* : p.365 (my ellipsis)

5. *ibid* : p.366

Europe's relationship with Costaguana, a technique which recalls the narrator's references to Drake and Franklin in "Heart of Darkness".

Furthermore, in order to effect his idealistic hopes of vindicating his father's sacrifice, Gould is committed to two damaging compromises, allying himself with forces whose interest in ideals is a long way subsidiary to the progression of material advantages. Through the connection with Holroyd, Gould's attempt to stabilise Costaguana is controlled by a prior commitment to "giving a return to men - to strangers, comparative strangers - who invest money in it".¹ Holroyd's professed philanthropy is in itself shaped by a conception which Emilia Gould finds perverse:

"But it seemed to me that he looked upon his own God as a sort of influential partner, who gets his share of profits in the endowment of churches. That's a sort of idolatry."²

Emilia's identification of Holroyd's worship as the "religion of silver and iron"³ links Holroyd's habits of mind to the residual superstitions of the Indians who regard the Concession as a "fetish".⁴ Moreover, although Holroyd's interest in Costaguana is intertwined with his desire to disseminate his Protestant creed, his continued involvement depends primarily upon the profitability of San Tome, as Decoud points out:

"And as long as the treasure flowed north, without a break, that utter sentimentalist, Holroyd, would not drop his idea of introducing, not only justice, industry, peace, to the benighted continents, but

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1. Joseph Conrad : Nostromo. (1904) 1960. p.72
 2. *ibid* : p.71
 3. *ibid* : p.71
 4. *ibid* : p.398

also that pet dream of his of a purer form of Christianity." ¹

Tension between Holroyd's philanthropy and a second, political interest in Costaguana, is indicated from the moment of his description as having "the profile of a Caesar's head upon an old Roman coin".² This second interest is again at odds with Gould's central concern. Holroyd desires to establish a political sphere of interest favourable to the United States:

"Europe must be kept out of this continent, and for proper interference on our part the time is not yet ripe, I dare say."³

Equally, Gould's relationship with Sir John acquiesces in a programme of development which contradicts his initial ideals. To Sir John, principles of social justice are no more than an expedient means to a more efficient exploitation of Costaguana: "Good faith, order, honesty, peace, were badly wanted for this great development of material interests."⁴ The mine represents for him the capacity to generate "a power for the world's service...the force would be almost as strong as a faith. Not quite however."⁵ The disclaimer illustrates the conflict between the goals of the speculator and the abstract, impersonal quality of a faith for its own sake. As a result, the future of Costaguana becomes increasingly dependent upon the priorities of foreign investors, as is implicit in such compromises. Ribiera's visit to Sulaco is dominated by representatives of foreign powers coming "to countenance by their presence

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1. Joseph Conrad : *Nostramo*. (1904) 1960. p.240 (my italics)
 2. *ibid* : p.76 (n.b. the implied analogy between Roman and contemporary Imperialism, as in "Heart of Darkness.")
 3. *ibid* : p.78
 4. *ibid* : p.117
 5. *ibid* : p.41 (my ellipsis)

the enterprise in which the capital of their countries was engaged".¹ Equally, the secession of Sulaco is concluded by "an international naval demonstration".² Decoud, increasingly disquieted by Gould's entente with foreign capital, comes to see that such an alliance, far from underpinning the hope of liberation, continues the historical trend of South America's bondage to Europe. His critique emphasizes the outflow of wealth from the dependent territory:

"In those days this town was full of wealth. Those men came to take it. Now the whole land is like a treasure-house, and all these people are breaking into it, whilst we are cutting each other's throats. The only thing that keeps them out is mutual jealousy. But they'll come to an agreement some day - and by the time we've settled our quarrels and become decent and honourable, there'll be nothing left for us. It has always been the same. We are a wonderful people, but it has always been our fate to be" - he did not say "robbed," but added, after a pause - "exploited!"³

Even before Decoud's death, Danish, German and French interests⁴ have been added to English and American economic penetration. Decoud is critical of the more specific compromises which such an accommodation necessitates. The use of the newspaper, significantly entitled Porvenir, as a propaganda weapon, falsifying news coverage to reassure the foreign commercial interests,⁵ reduces Decoud's Press to the moral status of Montero's own newspaper.

Equally damaging to Gould's initially elevated hopes is the compromise forced upon him by local political conditions. The constant threat to the stable exploitation of San Tome involves

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1. Joseph Conrad : Nostramo. (1904) 1960. p.34 c.f. Bukharin's comments on "ultra-Imperialism" in Imperialism and World Economy. (1917) 1930. p.130 ff.
 2. Joseph Conrad : op. cit. p.487
 3. *ibid* : p.174
 4. *ibid* : p.192
 5. *ibid* : p.175

Gould in an ever-widening nexus of unconstitutional acts and alliances, as a result of which his means constantly make his ends both dubious and provisional, as greed inspires greater greed. There is more than a suggestion that

the San Tome Administration had, in part, at least, financed the last revolution, which had brought into a five-year dictatorship Don Vicente Ribiera [.]¹

As a result, Ribiera has no autonomy and Sir John can remark with candid satisfaction that "he was their own creature - that Don Vicente".² With Holroyd's money, Gould buys the non-interference of the provincial government, establishing an "unofficial pay-list"³ in the local government, which justifies Santa Marta's identification of that government with the mine administration in Sulaco. Thus, more than once, Gould is referred to as the King of Sulaco, and as has been noted, the King's cabinet rules from abroad. Gould's participation in existing conditions of corruption elicits an attitude from the narrator in which criticism seems to outweigh sympathy.⁴ And it is in reference to this compromise that the novel assumes its tone of prophetic pessimism:

More dangerous to the wielder, too, this weapon of wealth, double-edged with the cupidity and misery of mankind, steeped in all the voices of self-indulgence as in a concoction of poisonous roots, tainting the very cause for which it is drawn, always ready to turn awkwardly in the hand.⁵

The dissolution of moral categories, in language at least, is confirmed in that the "bandit" Hernandez refuses an entente with the local politicians for a long while, and once he joins Gould's

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1. Joseph Conrad : Nostramo. (1904) 1960. p.117
 2. *ibid* : p.38
 3. *ibid* : p.116
 4. *ibid* : p.85
 5. *ibid* : p.365

service they are "equals before the lawlessness of the land".¹

One is also aware that the social benefits which material interests bring are at least balanced by the dislocation they cause. Alienation of land for the railway takes place amid an atmosphere of violence and tension.² Nor is compensation necessarily satisfactory to those whose land is expropriated:

A commission had been nominated to fix the values, and the difficulty resolved itself into the judicious influencing of the Commissioners.³

Material development threatens the integrity of Costaguanan life at grass-roots level - something which disturbs Emilia Gould:

"The future means change - an utter change. And yet here there are simple and picturesque things that one would like to preserve."⁴

At the end of Nostrómo, Holroyd's Protestant missionaries are well entrenched in the battle against Costaguana's traditional faiths, although the value - assumptions of Holroyd and Sir John⁵ are shown to be crudely insensitive to local conditions. Moreover the increasing prosperity of Sulaco attracts crime for precisely the same reasons as Cary's Yanrin and Fada: "Nowadays it was not so easy to govern Sulaco. Bad characters flocked into it, attracted by the money in the pockets of the railway workmen."⁶ Neither are the traditional social demands of San Tome wholly transcended. Indians are "caught"⁷ from the hills to supplement Barrios's regular

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1. Joseph Conrad : Nostrómo. (1904) 1960. p.360
 2. *ibid* : p.37
 3. *ibid* : p.37
 4. *ibid* : p.120
 5. *ibid* : pp.37-8 esp.
 6. *ibid* : p.196
 7. *ibid* : p.167

army and presumably suffer a fate similar to the tribes of their ancestors who perished in the mine's service. It is the common people, one feels, who benefit least from the sectional quality of the connection between San Tome and the outside world, a fact not diminished by one's apprehension of their suffering at the hands of Dictators such as Bento and Montero. Ribiera is a Blanco of the Blancos, the aristocracy's choice for President-Dictator. The civil war disguises a deeper conflict of interests, as Giorgio Viola argues in response to Decoud:

"We are all for the people - in the end."
 "Yes," muttered old Viola, savagely. "And
 meantime they fight for you. Blind. Esclavos!"¹

Giorgio Viola's selfless involvement in wars of democratic liberation in both Europe and South America controls one's attitude to this war of secession and its deeper motives. His perspective is given additional authority by his clear vision of the sham democracy which Montero pretends to: "These were not a people striving for justice, but thieves."² Viola's ethos sharpens the moral contradictions of the war, since he has always acted as if "the world were a battlefield where men had to fight for the sake of universal love and brotherhood, instead of a more or less large share of booty."³ The effect of an extensively ambiguous ascription of the title of "patriot" to Charles Gould takes its meaning from one's being assured that only the best motives are at work in Viola's

1. Joseph Conrad : Nostramo. (1904) 1960. p.168
 2. *ibid* : p.20
 3. *ibid* : p.313

nationalism. Throughout the book he remains a pertinent standard by which to measure Charles Gould.

The ramifications of one aspect of Viola's socialism are crucial to the interpretation of Nostromo. To the ageing revolutionary, politics involve a simple opposition:

Kings, ministers, aristocrats, the rich in general, kept the people in poverty and subjection; they kept them as they kept dogs, to fight and hunt for their service.

It is extremely important to try and establish how far Conrad intends the case of Nostromo to vindicate this belief, since it bears upon one's final account of his conception of the economic element not only in Sulaco but in Imperialism. It is possible that the example of Nostromo represents the manner in which local labour is alienated and exploited, continuing a theme from "Heart of Darkness". Despite his Italian origin, Nostromo seems quite as much a part of Costaguana's racial mixture as the aristocratic hegemony, or the Monteros. The description of Nostromo in the Author's Note, coupled with Nostromo's somewhat sketchily realised psychology, would seem to indicate that Conrad saw Nostromo as representative of a class as well as an individual:

He is a man with the weight of countless generations behind him and no parentage to boast of...Like the People...he is a Man of the People, their very own unenvious force, disdaining to lead but ruling from within...he is still of the People, their undoubted Great Man - with a private history of his own.²

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1. Joseph Conrad : Nostromo. (1904) 1960. p.415
 2. *ibid* : pp.xx-xxi (my ellipsis)

Nostromo himself, certainly, feels betrayed and exploited by his employers, as he avers to Monygham:

"All you are fit for is to betray men of the people into undertaking deadly risks for objects that you are not even sure about. If it comes off you get the benefit. If not, then it does not matter. He is only a dog." ¹

It is significant that Nostromo should feel this sense of betrayal before he makes contact with the secessionists upon his return from the Isabels where he left Decoud.² Nor is Nostromo alone in his conviction that the Concession has exploited him. The final betrayal, if it is one, is perhaps the logical sequel to terms of employment which Teresa and Giorgio have mistrusted all along. Monygham, too, emphasizes this prior exploitation of Nostromo and since he is detached from the goals of the Concession, his opinion carries particular weight. As he argues to Emilia Gould:

"[He's] not grown rich by his fidelity to you good people of the railway and the harbour. I suppose he obtains some - how do you say that? - some spiritual value for his labours, or else I don't know why the devil he should be faithful to you, Gould, Mitchell, or anybody else." ³

Nostromo anticipates a special bonus for risking his life as well as his reputation: "'I shall get something great for it some day'" And in so far as he feels himself paid by public recognition of his importance to the Concession, he considers himself further disappointed.⁴ There is some reason, therefore, to see the betrayal of Nostromo - the representative of the People - as one

1. Joseph Conrad : Nostromo. (1904) 1960. p.459

2. *ibid* : pp.415-25

3. *ibid* : p.321

4. This conception of Nostromo's wages is formulated by Monygham; *ibid* : p.213; and by Teresa; *ibid* : p.256

more compromise, like the sacrifice of the Indians, which the sectional interest of the San Tome mine is prepared to make in order to ensure its own survival. Significantly, by the end of the novel *Monygham* intimates that the people would no longer march to the aid of the Concession.¹

Nevertheless, Nostromo's case as an individual is more complex than this. His egoism is emphasized from the moment that he appears. His liberality with the lower classes is at times ostentatiously displayed. Thus the Capataz's infuriated bitterness with the lack of concern shown to him upon his return from the Isabels may be seen as the final expression of a self-absorption which has always been remarkable and is particularly criticised by Decoud. The central significance of Nostromo's egoism is in fact confirmed by the comparison with Decoud, whose self-destructive ethic of detachment seems to originate in "the fatal touch of contempt for himself to which his complex nature was subject".² So Nostromo's "betrayal" may equally be seen as the sequel to a concept of personal prestige which Teresa condemns before Nostromo's final attempt to enlarge his reputation: "'Your folly shall betray you into poverty, misery, starvation. The very leperos shall laugh at you - the great Capataz.'"³ The issue is complicated further by a simple irony which is a common element of tragedy. Nostromo's initial sense of disillusion is confirmed

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1. Joseph Conrad : Nostromo. (1904) 1960. pp.510-11
 2. *ibid* : p.300
 3. *ibid* : p.257

by his meeting with Monygham after his swim back to Sulaco; but he is mistaken in believing Monygham to have the authority of an official spokesman for the Concession:

To Nostromo the doctor represented all these people...And he had never even asked after it. Not a word of inquiry about the most desperate undertaking of his life.

Yet the reader understands Monygham to be anything but typical of the associates of the Concession. Indeed the doctor's reaction to Nostromo is mediated through the narrator by a considerably critical tone which stresses the want of sympathy in this idiosyncratic personality. Thus to Monygham, "Nostromo's return was providential. He did not think of him humanely, as of a fellow-creature just escaped from the jaws of death".² Since his speculations over Gould's attitude towards any putative surrender of the cargo to Sotillo have no special authority, and remain unconfirmed, the fact that Nostromo fails to appreciate this may constitute the irony which gives his "tragic flaw" the vital impulse towards revenge.

As an individual then, Nostromo joins the group which has become enslaved by the enchantment³ of the mine; Holroyd, for whom San Tome "had become necessary to his existence"⁴; Sotillo, Montero and Charles Gould, whose initial idealism becomes so thoroughly compromised that, in the last analysis, he seems susceptible to association with the Company's servants in "Heart of Darkness":

1. Joseph Conrad : Nostromo. (1904) 1960. p.426

2. *ibid* : p.431

3. The chain of language involving material interests with "magic", "spell" "enchantment" and "idolatry" is common to both Nostromo and "Heart of Darkness."

4. Joseph Conrad : *op. cit.* p.378

"The mine had got hold of Charles Gould with a grip as deadly as ever it had laid upon his father",¹ recalls the manner in which the jungle embraces Kurtz. In the mine's gorge, significantly called the "Paradise of Snakes", the manager becomes "a sort of heretic pilgrim".² And in the end, the mining enterprise, which essentially involves the "tearing of the raw material of treasure from the earth",³ becomes associated through this almost exact verbal echo with the dishonourable activity of the Eldorado Exploring Company.⁴ Yet Nostromo seems to enjoy affinities, absent in these figures, with a definite victim of the mine, Emilia Gould. Both are bitterly disillusioned with the direction that their ventures take, believing themselves sacrificed to the exigencies of the mine.⁵ It is perhaps in Emilia's case that the subtlest forms of outrage committed by the mine are to be seen, as her vision is increasingly disturbed and disillusioned by the practical environment within which San Tome operates. Her alienation is particularised in her sense of distance from Charles, but her despair transcends the purely personal at the end of Nostromo, in her prophetic vision of the future of the mine:

She saw the San Tome mountain hanging over the Campo; over the whole land, feared, hated, wealthy; more soulless than any tyrant, more pitiless and autocratic than the worst Government; ready to crush innumerable lives in the expansion of its greatness.⁶

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1. Joseph Conrad : Nostromo. (1904) 1960. p.400
 2. *ibid* : p.47
 3. *ibid* : p.60
 4. Joseph Conrad : "Heart of Darkness". (1899/1902). 1967. p.87
 5. For Emilia's case see Joseph Conrad : Nostromo. (1904) 1960. p.512
 6. *ibid* : p.521

Nostromo may well be the first significant sacrifice in this process, in its present phase.

The final vision of the economic element in Imperialism, which Conrad defines as its more powerful characteristic, is extremely pessimistic. The ethical superstructure which accompanies the exploitation of the Empire, both formal and informal, is seen as at best ineffectual and at worst the hypocritical tool of economic interests. In Conrad's fiction the ethical and economic aspects of Imperialism cannot be mutually accommodated in practice. Monygham's discussion with Emilia Gould at the end of Nostromo argues this contradiction and may be taken to summarise the conclusion to Conrad's larger analyses of the economics of Imperialism:

"There is no peace and no rest in the development of material interests. They have their law and their justice. But it is founded on expediency, and is inhuman; it is without rectitude, without the continuity and the force that can be found only in a moral principle."¹

And to a large extent, Conrad seems to speak for the other writers with whom this thesis is concerned.

1. Joseph Conrad : Nostromo. (1904) 1960. p.511

CHAPTER FOUR

KIPLING : A RAGE FOR ORDER

Having discussed the centrality of two prevalent conceptions of Imperialism in the work of the writers with whom this thesis is concerned and suggested that neither constitutes the final meaning of their image of Empire as a literary symbol, one may now proceed to identify the dominant meaning of their interpretation of the Imperial mission. It will be argued in this chapter that Kipling's vision of India may well be an existential one, an attempt to provide a coherent philosophy of life which, while always concretised in the specific environment of the sub-continent, nevertheless transcends those limits to acquire a more general value. By comparing Kipling's symbols of India with those of Joyce Cary's Africa, it is hoped that a mutual illumination will develop as to the coherence and comprehensiveness of their respective constructs.

The environment within which Kipling's cast of characters¹ act is susceptible to analysis in terms of a symbol which connotes chaos, alienⁿness and hostility; it is a context which necessitates the conscious and active creation of patterns of order, harmony and meaningfulness. In Kim, the benevolent ethos of romance mitigates the oppressions of "great, grey formless India",² but elsewhere the pressures which to a large extent constitute Kipling's image of Empire, are realised without the

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1. For reasons of length I have confined myself largely to Kipling's prose fiction.
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Kim. (1901) 1966. p.134

mediation of such conventions. From his Indian stories as a whole, one derives the impression of a society operating under conditions of exceptional stress. Anglo-India seems essentially purgatorial, as the metaphor of "A Wayside Comedy" (1890)¹ or "The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes" (1890)² suggests. Various factors contribute towards this purgatorial atmosphere. In straightforward physical terms, the fragility of Anglo-India is emphasized firstly by the heat, which is a defining symbol in such varied stories as "'City of Dreadful Night'" (1891), "In the Matter of a Private" (1890) and "With the Main Guard" (1890). The claustrophobic intensity of Indian heat is dramatically evident in "At the End of the Passage" (1891) and leads, as is not uncommon in Kipling, to insanity and suicide:

Every door and window was shut, for the outside air was that of an oven. The atmosphere within was only 104°⁰, as the thermometer bore witness, and heavy with the foul smell of badly trimmed kerosene lamps; and this stench, combined with that of native tobacco, baked brick, and dried earth, sends the heart of many a strong man down to his boots, for it is the smell of the Great Indian Empire when she turns herself for six months into a house of torment.³

Adding to the sense of defensiveness which such a passage provides is the acknowledgement in Kipling's work of the omnipresence of disease, exacerbating the impression of a physically hostile environment. Destruction by fever or cholera is a dominant motif in tales such as "Without Benefit of Clergy" (1891),

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Wee Willie Winkie. (1890) 1969. p.43
 2. *ibid* : p.174 ff.
 3. Rudyard Kipling : Life's Handicap. (1891) 1964. p.198

"Only a Subaltern" (1890) and "The Head of the District" (1891), where the dying Yardley-Orde suggests the extent of the toll taken from Anglo-India:

"Morten's dead - he was of my year. Shaughnessy is dead, and he had children; I remember he used to read us their school-letters; what a bore we thought him! Evans is dead - Kot - Kumharsen killed him! Ricketts of Myndonie is dead and I'm going too."

Kipling's Anglo-India, then, is a society in which a salient characteristic is impermanence. The sense of transience relativises many of the aspirations upon which it bases its existence. Consequently - just as several of Kipling's children's stories discuss the Roman empire at the moment of breakdown and retreat - Kipling's Anglo-India is often treated elegiacally, a factor which must modify George Orwell's assertion of Kipling's self-confidence: "Kipling is a jingo imperialist [.]² He was the prophet of British Imperialism in its expansionist phase [.]"³ Perhaps the threnodic tone of Mrs. Mallowe, in "The Education of Otis Yeere" (1890), is the most poignant articulation of the sense of transience:

"Surely twelve Simla seasons ought to have taught you that you can't focus anything in India: and a salon, to be any good at all, must be permanent. In two seasons your roomful would be scattered all over Asia. We are only little bits of dirt on the hillsides - here one day and blown down the khud the next."⁴

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Life's Handicap. (1891) 1964. pp.119-20
 2. cited in ed. A. Rutherford : Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. p.70
 3. *ibid* : p.72
 4. Rudyard Kipling : Wee Willie Winkie. (1890) 1969. p.9

For those who survive such demands, much remains to challenge self-confidence and aspiration. For the Empire-builder in the field, there is often the desperate pressure of loneliness, such as that which undermines Hummil and gnaws at Mottram in "At the End of the Passage" (1891). This sense of alienation is reinforced by the feeling of a remoteness from the given context of the Indian milieu - feelings which oblige the most rigorous exercises in self-preservation for such individuals:

There is no post, there is no one of your own colour to speak to, there are no roads: there is, indeed, food to keep you alive, but it is not pleasant to eat; and whatever of good or beauty or interest there is in your life, must come from yourself and the grace that may be planted in you.

Furthermore, the most obvious means to the preservation of morale, namely work, is never a final guarantee of continued spiritual health. It is not just that the individual may fail to retain a proper perspective upon his obligations to duty, as is Hummil's case in "At the End of the Passage" (1891). The propensity to overwork is implicit in the very structure of the Administration. "The Phantom Rickshaw" (1890), presents the destruction of Pansay, a sequence of events upon which Dr. Heatherlegh comments thus:

"Overwork started his illness, kept it alight, and killed him, poor devil. Write him off to the System that uses one man to do the work of two and a half men." 2

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Soldiers Three. (1890) 1965. p.246
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Wee Willie Winkie. (1890) 1969. p.127

Moreover, in a situation where the higher echelons of the hierarchy are at some distance, both physically and temperamentally, from the viewpoint of the individual working in the field, the individual may see himself, not as part of a coherent structure, but as a victim of the desk-bound administrator's peculiar angle of vision. "Thrown Away" (1888) evinces a pessimism which is not confined to this story:

Good work does not matter, because a man is judged by his worst output, and another man takes all the credit of his best as a rule. Bad work does not matter, because other men do worse, and incompetents hang on longer in India than anywhere else. ¹

For the Anglo-Indian who is not plagued by loneliness, the pressures upon privacy are often scarcely more tolerable than those engendered by isolation. As the drummer-boy who polices Kim complains, "'in this bloomin' Injia you're only a prisoner at large'"²—and Kipling's own contact with administrative society lead him to believe that India was "a land where every circumstance and relation of a man's life is public property".³ Occasionally this intrusiveness and the difficulty of escaping it results in disaster - a fate which overtakes Simmons in "In the Matter of a Private" (1890). Furthermore, intimacy with the mores and rituals of Anglo-Indian social life does not always imply a comprehension of it. The narrator of "The Education of Otis Yeere" (1890) refers to "this bewildering whirl of Simla"⁴

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Plain Tales from the Hills. (1888) 1965. p.17
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Kim. (1901) 1966. p.145.
 3. Rudyard Kipling : Something of Myself. (1937) 1964. p.52
 4. Rudyard Kipling : Wee Willie Winkie. (1890) 1969. p.22

and concludes: "Curious and impenetrable are the mazes of Simla life ."¹

Other factors, too, contribute to the strain upon Anglo-India. Compounding the sense of contradiction which exists between the decisions of the Administrative hierarchy and the local official - a theme of "The Head of the District" (1891) and "The Bridge Builders" (1898) - is a large sense of a lack of support and understanding from the Mother Country. "A Conference of the Powers" (1893), "At the End of the Passage" (1891) and "Little Foxes" (1909), which is set in Africa, all express an attitude of disillusion towards the lack of empathy for the Imperial Mission on the part of Government and public alike in England. But what perhaps completes the provisionality of Kipling's realisation of the relationship between Anglo-India and the sub-continent is his pessimistic awareness of the disjunction between the large goals of the administration and the limited achievements actually effected. "On the City Wall" (1890), is a masterly allegory of the limitations of British control over India. The somewhat self-satisfied narrator is not only deceived by Lalun and Wali Dad but actually becomes an unknowing accessory in the escape of the nationalist leader Khem Singh from his imprisonment. This pessimism, which is also evident in "The Bisara of Pooree" (1888) and "A Germ-Destroyer" (1888), is perhaps most forcefully expressed in "The Man Who Was" (1891):

1. Rudyard Kipling : Wee Willie Winkie. (1890) 1969. p.27

Asia is not going to be civilised after the methods of the West. There is too much Asia and she is too old. You cannot reform a lady of many lovers, and Asia has been insatiable in her flirtations aforetime. She will never attend Sunday School or learn to vote save with swords for tickets. ¹

Kipling's conviction that an articulate and purposeful pattern of order could be imposed upon such a hostile and volatile environment must be interpreted within the context of his religious skepticism which was discussed in Chapter One. As he suggested in A Book of Words: "There seems to be an unscientific objection on the part of First Cause against being inquired of".² The extent and permanence of Kipling's teleological anxieties are indicated in "Hymn to Physical Pain", in Limits and Renewals (1932), which would otherwise be a poem of interest only to psycho-analytic students of Kipling. Devoid of any absolute sanctions for the Imperial presence, Kipling's primal doubts are never far away in his Indian stories. The degree of these doubts is in no way diminished by the half-comic tone of the description of the hierarchy in "The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin" (1888), and the confidence of its conclusion is evidently not to be taken at face value:

The Deputy is above the Assistant, the Commissioner above the Deputy, the Lieutenant-Governor above the Commissioner, and the Viceroy above all four, under the orders of the Secretary of State, who is responsible to the Empress. If the Empress be not responsible to her Maker - if there is no Maker for her to be responsible to - the entire system of Our administration must be wrong; which is manifestly impossible.³

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Life's Handicap. (1891) 1964. p.99
 2. Rudyard Kipling : A Book of Words. 1928. p.239
 3. Rudyard Kipling : Plain Tales From the Hills. (1888) 1965. pp.109-10

It is in response to such doubts, as well as the problems of the working environment in India, that Kipling's conceptions of the Law and the Game are developed. As a mediator of metaphysical anxiety, service to the Law and participation in the Game are Kipling's resolutions of the urgent stresses of existence. And in this respect, any System which offers relief and reveals a meaningful pattern of order is worthy of homage. Thus Puran Bhagat bows to the policeman and Saint Paul in "The Manner of Men" (1932), recognises that an obligation to a provisional Law is better than the metaphysical fright which threatens Sulinor's morale:

"Serve Caesar. You are not canvas I can cut to advantage at present. But if you serve Caesar you will be obeying at least some sort of law...What concerns you now is that, by taking service, you will be free from the fear that has ridden you all your life." ¹

Kipling's attitude towards Imperialism seems analogous in many ways to Saint Paul's conception of Caesar's Law. Both are man-made, impermanent and by no means the final System. Founded upon assumptions which are ultimately arbitrary, both nonetheless are governed by the "best self" of their respective cultures, rather than by sectional or material interests. Each suggests itself as a partial substitute for a religious faith which in Sulinor's case was to come, and in Kipling's had gone. Thus, although for Kipling, the succour and strength of religion was a thing of the past, the Imperial System was to set itself the

1. Rudyard Kipling : Limits and Renewals. (1932) 1968. p.248
(my ellipsis)

same standards of unselfish service and even self-sacrifice:

"For it may be, if still we sing
And tend the Shrine,
Some Deity on wandering wing
May there incline:
And, finding all in order meet
Stay while we worship at Her feet."¹

To talk of Kipling's vision of Imperialism as a Law or a system presupposes a thorough, even philosophical attempt to give logic and consistency to that pattern. As an artist, Kipling's system is essentially intuitive and imaginative rather than abstract but this does not detract from the rigour with which his construct is shaped. In this respect, *Kim* seems to provide essential primary materials. Edmund Wilson implies that Kipling has shirked his responsibilities as a thinker and as an artist in this novel, while recognising its formal advances over Stalky and Co. as a bildungsroman:

Yet the conflict from which the interest arises, though it is very much better presented, here almost comes to nothing: The two forces never really engage²...the adventures of the Lama and of Kim simply arrive at different consummations, without any final victory or synthesis ever being allowed to take place.³

While no "final victory" does take place, one must be aware that it is the author's intention to be comprehensive and inclusive towards the many faiths which go to make up Indian spiritual life, rather than to make ethnocentric value-judgements about

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1. The Definitive Edition of Rudyard Kipling's Verse. (1940) 1977. p.82
 2. cited in ed. Andrew Rutherford : Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. p.29 (my ellipsis)
 3. *ibid* : p.30

their relative worths. A synthesis, in fact, does seem to develop quite consistently, since Kipling's eclectic collocation of the structures of the Way and the Great Game draws its strength from the analogies which make Kim's apprenticeship to the Lama a process parallel, and often identical, to that demanded by Lurgan and Creighton. The functions of chela and chain-man both demand the virtues of patience, humility and tenacity as well as endurance, a quick mind and fortitude. And far from Kim's membership of the Secret Service constituting a betrayal of his spiritual master, as Wilson suggests,¹ the circumstances of the confrontation with the foreign spies reminds the reader once more of Kim's devoted affection to the Lama. In his secular role he is protecting a helpless India from the threat of invasion from the North, the final conclusion to a process during which Kim has protected his vulnerable spiritual guide from other predators such as the railway booking-clerk.

The synthesis is, however, limited. For all the analogies which are drawn, Kim supports philosophical assumptions which are alien to the Lama's Buddhism. While the Lama's spiritual authority is acknowledged in such episodes as when Kim kneels to him in the dust of the Jain temple, and no attempt is made to impugn his integrity or assert that his vision is fallacious, there is a crucial divergence between Kim and the Lama. The Buddhist insists that the Russian's blow is in itself an illusion, a logical conclusion given his own assumption:

1. ed. Andrew Rutherford : Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. p.31

"It is all illusion. Ay, maya, illusion!"¹
 "Having found the Way, seest thou, that shall
 free me from the Wheel, need I trouble to find
 a way about the mere fields of the earth -
 which are illusion?"²

But for Kim, a recognition of his own identity depends partly upon the assumption that material creation is real, for his identity devolves through an authentic relationship with that world. This affirmation is expressed in his moment of vision towards the end of the novel:

Things that rode meaningless on the eyeball
 an instant before slid into proper proportion.
 Roads were meant to be walked upon, houses to
 be lived in, cattle to be driven, fields to
 be tilled, and men and women to be talked to.
 They were all real and true - solidly planted
 upon the feet - perfectly comprehensible
 clay of his clay, neither more nor less.³

While this assumption of the reality of the material world in no way vitiates Kipling's respect for the Lama's transcendentalism, it may be taken as the first premise of the system which he creates through his vision of Imperialism.

The second article derives from Kipling's acceptance of the conflict between good and evil and may be stated as the imperative to action. At its most fundamental level, Kipling's emphasis upon action is linked to his conviction of the aggressive propensities of evil, both spiritual and material. As C.S. Lewis has written, this element of Kipling's vision "amounts to something like a doctrine of original sin, and it is antipathetic to

1. Rudyard Kipling : Kim. (1901) 1966. p.13
 2. *ibid* : p.327
 3. *ibid* : p.403

many modern modes of thought".¹ Thus the benevolence of the Lama is in no way a practical or adequate defence against the predatory evil represented by the spies, and throughout his work Kipling evinces a deep skepticism about the plausibility of moral and physical pacifism. In the context of the circumstances symbolised in Kim, there can be little effective rejoinder to the Ressaïdar's assertion that "if evil men were not now and then slain it would not be a good world for weaponless dreamers".²

But Kipling's philosophy of action is not merely an apparently reflex response to the realities which he acknowledged. It is also the positive and conscious means to achieve virtue. Purun Bhagat leaves his life of isolation and contemplation in order to save the villagers from destruction and the Lama himself by no means emulates the passivity of the Jains. To the Lama, an escape from the wheel depends upon an active and purposeful search, despite his fears that action may involve repercussions beyond the individual's powers of prediction and control:

"Then all Doing is evil?" Kim replied, lying out under a big tree at the fork of the Doon road, watching the little ants run over his hand.

"To abstain from action is well - except to acquire merit."³

It seems implied that what distinguishes Kim and the Lama from the ants is precisely their capacity for exercising a morally conscious and active influence upon their environment.

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1. cited in ed. Elliot Gilbert : Kipling and the Critics. 1966. p.106
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Kim. (1901) 1966. pp.73-74
 3. *ibid* : p.303

The secondary connotations of Kipling's activism are varied. Whilst well aware of the extremes to which the philosophy of work could be taken, as has been noted, work remains, in Kipling's system, as the prime instrument with which to mediate the sense of meaninglessness which constantly threatens to undermine the individual - a point which is made with particular force in the early fable "The Children of the Zodiac" (1893). Leo's scorn for the Bull is met with a reciprocal derision:

"You cannot pull a plough," said the Bull, with a little touch of contempt. "I can, and that prevents me from thinking of the Scorpion." ¹

Holden, the protagonist of "Without Benefit of Clergy" (1891) retains his sanity largely through an intense devotion to his papers after the losses of Tota and Ameera - and Kipling would seem to conclude that Holden's anodyne has important merits:

If men had not this delusion as to the ultra-importance of their own particular employments, I suppose that they would sit down and kill themselves. ²

The use of the word "delusion" inescapably reminds one of Marlow's insistence upon the value, indeed necessity, of "a great and saving illusion" in "Heart of Darkness", and to some extent Kipling's commitment, with open eyes, to this "delusion" may be seen as the counterpart of Marlow's dedication to the virtues of efficiency, as a means of mitigating the incomprehensibility of his environment.

1. Rudyard Kipling : Many Inventions. (1893) 1949. p.374

2. Rudyard Kipling : Plain Tales from the Hills. (1888) 1965. p.31

Equally, Marlow's conviction that work may serve as a means towards establishing one's individuality and personal identity is analogous to the more positive aspects of Kipling's vision of labour. In Kipling's work, the individual, whatever his calling, has the opportunity to define and know himself in terms of his relationship to the appointed duty with the exigencies that involves. In this respect one may defend Kipling from Noel Annan's criticism:

The weakness in Kipling's notion of morality does not lie in his assertion that society is as it is. It lies in the connexion which he makes between society and the individual, and in his assumption that morality is an entirely social product.¹

It must also modify C.S. Lewis's analogous criticism that Kipling was "the slave of the Inner Ring."² In stories such as "The Bridge Builders" (1898), or "Judson and the Empire" (1893), the successful completion of the enterprises undertaken depends in the last analysis upon the protagonists' strict fidelity to their own standards and it is clear that however much these have a social origin, both Findlayson and Judson transcend the obligations which those origins demand. The ingenuity and energy which enables them both to triumph is derived from a loyalty to themselves which lacks any nourishing reinforcement from a familiar social context. Findlayson is a Sysiphean figure, struggling to erect what is in effect an

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1. cited in ed. Andrew Rutherford : Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. p.123
 2. cited in ed. Elliot Gilbert : Kipling and the Critics. 1966. p.116

image of himself - one notices that both the design and the trusses are the engineer's own - in the teeth of obstacles which threaten continually to frustrate him:

[Storm] sudden freshets, death in every manner and shape, violent and awful rage against red tape half frenzied a mind that knows it should be busy on other things; drought, sanitation, finance; birth, wedding, burial, and riot in the village of twenty warring castes; argument, expostulation, persuasion, and the blank despair that a man goes to bed upon, thankful that his rifle is all in pieces in the gun-case.

What impresses one especially about Findlayson's tenacity is that his awareness of the innate provisionality of his undertaking in no way diminishes his attempt to create the meaningful and enduring. Moreover there is no attempt to lionize Findlayson - he is one of hundreds turned out by the schools which Westward Ho! represents in Stalky and Co. Louis Cornell has aptly remarked that Kipling's vision of Anglo-India is "basically anti-heroic"² and this effect is achieved in part by Kipling's insistence upon the individual's attempt initially to define a meaning in life which is particular to himself rather than his claim to represent humanity.

Kipling's conception of work is strongly influenced by an idea of craft which links him to such important Victorians as George Eliot and William Morris. Kipling, of course, did have pre-Raphaelite ties - his uncle was Sir Edward Burne-Jones and during his school vacations, Kipling spent considerable time

1. Rudyard Kipling : The Day's Work. (1898). 1968. pp.5-6
 2. Louis Cornell : Kipling in India. 1967. p.160

at his uncle's home in Fulham where he met many of the pre-Raphaelite circle, including Morris. It is possibly here that Kipling's belief in labour as a spiritually fulfilling force was created, or confirmed, although J.L. Kipling, the writer's father, was, of course, an accomplished minor artist in his own right. In many stories his love of detailed descriptions of various trades, their techniques and tools, is evident and perhaps much of the recent criticism of this aspect of Kipling fails to take sufficiently into account the cultural context within which Kipling was writing. Kipling's heroes, whatever their calling, are always craftsmen and his respect increases in proportion to the degree to which the craftsman's proper care and attention to his tools enables him to transcend their limitations. An example is the case of Lieutenant Judson in "Judson and the Empire" (1893) who triumphs over the superior Portuguese forces by ingenious exploitation of a steamer which appears absurd:

[It] looked exactly like a flat-iron with a match stuck up in the middle; it drew five feet of water or less; carried a four-inch gun forward, which was trained by the ship; and, on account of its persistent rolling, was, to live in, three degrees worse than a torpedo boat.²

In his skirmish with the Portuguese, the young sailor serves what is quite literally a trade-apprenticeship, and is ready to be acknowledged as a craftsman, which in Kipling's work is

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1. Louis Cornell : Kipling in India. 1967. p.160
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Many Inventions. (1893) 1949. p.330

the highest praise.¹ One may conclude that Kipling's conception of work and craft involves an attitude which derives to some extent from the religious connotations of an appointed task. In the sense of being chosen or called to their vocations, Judson and Findlayson evince a response in terms of devotion and self-sacrifice both personal and financial, which is perhaps more commonly associated with the ministry.

These quasi-religious connotations in Kipling's theory of work are emphasized, in the Indian stories, by his attitude towards the role of women in this essentially masculine world. A tale such as "His Chance in Life" (1888) concludes (- and even here, it seems, ironically -):

[When] a man does good work out of all proportion to his pay, in seven cases out of nine there is a woman at the back of the virtue.²

The stories as a whole suggest that attachment to the opposite sex often impairs a man's achievement of his duties. Thus Gadsby, in "The Swelling of Jordan" (1890), laments as follows:

["Marriage] - even as good a marriage as mine has been - hampers a man's work, it cripples his sword-arm, and oh, it plays Hell with his notions of duty!"³

This argument is given its strongest religious colouring in *Kim* through the fundamental analogy between the Way and the Great Game. The Lama suggests that "those who follow the Way must permit not the fire of any desire or attachment, for

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1. c.f. the mutual recognition of the Lama and museum-keeper in *Kim*. (1901) 1966. p.16
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Plain Tales from the Hills. (1888) 1965. p.84
 3. Rudyard Kipling : Soldiers Three. (1890) 1965. p.224

that is all illusion"¹ - a judgement with which Mahbub Ali concurs:

"Most true is it in the Great Game, for it is by means of women that all plans come to ruin and we lie out in the dawning with our throats cut."²

In conclusion, then, figures such as William and Mrs. Jim in 'William the Conqueror' (1898) are exceptional and Kipling's male characters often assume an attitude towards their work by which it provides an emotional compensation for the sexual segregation it often demands. Judson is a "ship's-husband"³ and Bobby Wick's regiment is his "indissolubly wedded wife".⁴

The primal importance of Kipling's idea of work is intimated by the title of the volume The Day's Work (1898). Kipling's deep admiration for the craftsman and the technicalities of his craft has been much criticised⁵, but as C.S. Lewis suggests: "It was Kipling who first reclaimed for literature this enormous territory".⁶ Given the intense pressures of the Indian environment, Kipling's philosophy of work does have the status of a philosophic system in which by action alone, man can silence his deepest doubts.

A corollary of this conception of work is Kipling's antipathy to talkers and theorists. Kipling has been criticised by Lionel Trilling for creating an artificial antagonism between the virtues

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Kim. (1901) 1966. p.131
 2. ibid : p.252
 3. Rudyard Kipling : Many Inventions. (1893) 1949. p.332. c.f. too, p.331
 4. Rudyard Kipling : Wee Willie Winkie. (1890) 1969. p.104
 5. c.f. Henry James in ed. R.L. Green : Kipling: The Critical Heritage. 1971. p.69, Boris Ford in ed. Elliot Gilbert : Kipling and the Critics. 1966. p.64, Edmund Wilson in ed. Andrew Rutherford : Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. pp.50-1
 6. ed. Elliot Gilbert : Kipling and the Critics. 1966. p.102

he proposes and intellectuality¹ but the force of such an assertion is modified by wider considerations. Firstly, there is an insistence that one's work is only finally successful provided that its achievement is accompanied by a lack of self-advertisement - the proper modesty of a craftsman, in effect. Thus it is with extreme reluctance that the Infant in "A Conference of the Powers" (1893) or Crandall in Stalky and Co. (1899) can be prevailed upon to discuss their exploits. Similarly, Kim is taught this essential humility by the Lama, who reprimands the chela when the latter begins to exult over the healing of the Jat child. Added to this is Kipling's endorsement of the popular image of the silent but active Anglo-Saxon, comically treated in the poem "The Puzzler"² and more seriously in a tale like "Judson and the Empire" (1893). Furthermore, Kipling's disjunction of work and talk is by no means absolute. Mulvaney's eloquence is notorious, but amply licensed by one's recognition of his excellent qualities as a soldier. Kipling's criticism of theory centres upon those who use it in a rhetorical, self-referential manner, which does not find issue in action - Aurelian McGoggin, the Yellow Horse of "A Walking Delegate" (1898), the mob in "As Easy as A.B.C." (1917), or the Wax-Moth in "The Mother Hive" (1909).

Kipling's mistrust of thinking which is not geared directly to action is not particular to him - there is strong evidence of it in Hardy and Conrad as well. As with Conrad, Kipling distrusts it as an impediment to action, preventing the execution of

1. See ed. Andrew Rutherford : Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. p.92
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Actions and Reactions. (1909) 1965. p.108

necessary labours. As "The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin" (1888) suggests: "Life, in India, is not long enough to waste in proving that there is no one in particular at the head of affairs".¹ Secondly, the intensely naturalistic narratives of "At the End of the Passage" (1891) and "In the Matter of a Private" (1895), make plausible the suggestion that the introspective brooding of Hummil and Simmons contributes directly to their undoing. And Kipling's preference of practical over academic intelligence is conditioned by the actual demands of the alien Indian environment. Thus the contempt with which Stalky's trio treat the Natural History Society in Stalky and Co. must be related to the pragmatic study of nature required to build a secret lair; given their future careers, this practical intelligence is more suited to their real needs. Similarly, the trio's raid upon the preroom requires only an increased sophistication of technique to be adequate for the defeat of the rebellious tribes in "Slaves of the Lamp" (Part II). One is reminded, too, of Hicksey's adaptation of dormitory warfare to capture the Dacoit leader in "A Conference of the Powers" (1893).² Thus, while the intellectual such as King is given respect when in his proper sphere - as in "Regulus" (1917) - Kipling's Indian stories would seem justifiably to emphasize the role of the man of action.

Kipling's more forceful expressions of his antipathy to theory occur in his treatments of ideologies - whether religious or political - which, conceived in a social context far removed

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Plain Tales from the Hills. (1888) 1965. p.108
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Many Inventions. (1893) 1949. p.37

from the specific conditions of India, seemed by their inflexibility to threaten the patient and labrrious efforts of an experienced Administration. Time and again his stories dramatise the conflict between an alien theory and the accumulated intimate knowledge of local affairs. The need to adapt to changing local factors informs the assertion of the Viceroy in "A Germ-Destroyer" (1888) that "'No wise man has a Policy [] A Policy is the blackmail levied on the Fool by the Unforeseen'".¹ Kipling insists upon the damaging effects of rigid principles of government in his non-fictional writing as well.² It is this tension, rather than any facile racialism which would seem to be at the centre of "The Head of the District" (1891) for, after all, in "The Miracle of Purun Bhagat" (1895), Kipling acknowledges the merits of native rulers. The high-handed appointment of Grish Chunder De, a Bengali, is anathema to the Moslem hillmen on racial and religious grounds; in effect the policy is dangerously simple-minded:

What looks so feasible in Calcutta, so right in Bombay, so unassailable in Madras, is misunderstood by the North, and entirely changes its complexion on the banks of the Indus.³

The criticism increases in intensity when the policies are conceived at even greater distances. There is little mercy for the Member for Lower Tooting in "Without Benefit of Clergy" (1891), whose programme for the future of India is made ridiculous by his ignorance of local conditions. This is symbolised in his

1. Rudyard Kipling : Plain Tales from the Hills. (1888) 1965. p.12
2. Rudyard Kipling : A Book of Words. 1928. p.251 and Something of Myself. (1937) 1964. pp.49-50
3. Rudyard Kipling : Life's Handicap. (1891) 1964. p.132

admiration of the dhak-tree blossoms, which in fact prefigure the onset of the cholera season. The ideology of the newspaper report, in "At the End of the Passage" (1891), is at a great distance from the actual circumstances of Hummil's service. A similar point is made in "Little Foxes" (1909), but perhaps most forcefully in "The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin" (1888). McGoggin's theoretical brilliance is amply acknowledged but demonstrably unreal in terms of the actual demands that his service makes upon him. This is apparent in his refusal to heed the doctor's warnings - his collapse into aphasia is an appropriate, if over-zeal, result. (Kipling does acknowledge the tale as a Tract.) McGoggin's "thirty page judgements on fifty-rupee cases - both sides perjured to the gullet",¹ far from advancing the cause of the Indians, are in fact irrelevant to that "humanity - raw, brown, naked humanity - with nothing between it and the blazing sky, and only the used-up, over-handled earth underfoot"² Nevertheless Kipling's sensitivity to radical ideologies by no means implies a blindly uncritical attitude towards the Imperial hierarchy, as will be discussed in following pages. His emphasis is essentially that a reformation of government should be accomplished from within, by those whose experience validates the impulse to modification and adaptation.

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Plain Tales from the Hills. (1888) 1965. p.110
 2. *ibid* : p.108

In Kipling's work, the capacity for the individual's relationship to his duties to provide a personal value and meaning is complemented by an awareness that the individual's final identity is shaped by the social purpose of his function. Thus, in "The Bridge-Builders" (1898), Findlayson's attitude to Lockhart is conditioned by an anterior recognition of the power of "the dearly prized, because unpurchasable, acknowledgment of one's fellow craftsmen".¹ For Kipling, as for Kim, the approval of the particular group with which the individual has strongest ties adds a terminal authority and sanction to the activity in which he participates. When Kim first feels the "clean" pride of Departmental praise, the narrator adds: "Earth has nothing on the same plane to compare with it".² Kipling's preoccupation with this function of group dynamics has provoked sensitive analysis from Noel Annan:

He is indeed the sole analogue in England to those continental sociologists - Durkheim, Weber, and Pareto - who revolutionised the study of society at the beginning of this century. They saw society as a nexus of groups; and the patterns of behaviour which these groups unwittingly established, rather than men's wills or anything so vague as a class, cultural, or national tradition, primarily determined men's actions.³

In Annan's view, then, Kipling is heir to the continental tradition in the social sciences, attempting to find within society a solution to the problem of authority and meaning in a cultural context where the idea of God had become largely redundant.

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1. Rudyard Kipling : A Book of Words. 1928. p.227
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Kim. (1901) 1966. p.314
 3. cited in ed. Andrew Rutherford : Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. p.100. c.f. Eric Stokes's comments on Kipling's affinities with Durkheim in ed. John Gross : Rudyard Kipling : The Man, His Work and His World. 1972. p.96

Kipling's sociological kind of analysis of Anglo-India, however, owes little to the established methodologists of sociology.

"The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin" (1888) evinces little sympathy for Comte and Spencer, and Hurree Churider's allegiance to these writers is ironised in Kim, albeit rather more gently.

Kipling's conviction of the final authority of the group is founded upon his perception of the fragility of the isolated individual in India, subject to a degree of stress well beyond the ordinary, and thus requiring a more definite exposition of his role within the Anglo-Indian society. The conclusions of such stories as "Thrown Away" (1888), "In Error" (1888) and "At the End of the Passage" (1891), is this:

Few people can afford to play Robinson Crusoe anywhere - least of all in India, where we are few in the land and very much dependent on each other's kind offices.

Kipling's attitude is further shaped by his acknowledgement that the individual in India has obligations in terms of his service which preclude the expression of an individualism which may prejudice not only himself, but the larger purposes of the Administration. This is suggested in such stories as "Georgie Porgie" (1891), "The Education of Otis Yeere" (1890) and "The Man Who Would be King" (1890):

When a man is absolutely alone in a Station he runs a certain risk of falling into evil ways. This risk is multiplied by every addition

1. Rudyard Kipling : Plain Tales from the Hills. (1888) 1965. p.319

to the population up to twelve - the Jury-number. After that, fear and consequent restraint begin,¹ and human action becomes less grotesquely jerky.

It is intrinsic to the definition of a group that it should exclude quite as much as include and it is in terms of the former tendency that Kipling's social analysis has been most criticised. There is first of all the problem of ethnocentricity and the apparently rigid, chauvinistic distinctions which Kipling draws between white and non-white. One might perhaps be led to believe that inter-action between the two groups is commendable only in a professional sense, and that the intimacies which may develop between ruler and ruled as children are never allowed to flower into a more fulfilling intercourse. There can be little doubt that Kipling supported Lurgan's injunction to Kim: "One must never forget that one is a Sahib, and that some day, when examinations are passed, one will command natives."² A story like "Beyond the Pale" (1888), indicates the disasters which may attend too close an intimacy between the two groups. And Kipling's insistence upon the distinctions between them is equally evident in tales concerning relations between half-white and white, such as "Kidnapped" (1888).

Kipling is prone at times to rather crude racial viewpoints, it is true. Examples of this are the depictions of the Russian Dirkovitch in "The Man Who Was" (1891) and the Portuguese in "Judson and the Empire" (1893).³ But this is never the final

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Wee Willie Winkie. (1890) 1969. p.44
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Kim. (1901) 1966. p.177
 3. But see the antipathy to jingoism evinced in "The Flag of Their Country" in Stalky and Co. and "The Vortex" (1917).

tool of his social analysis. Thus the treatment of Holden's love for Ameera in "Without Benefit of Clergy" (1891), is rendered with extreme sympathy - there is no mockery or criticism of Holden's choice from the narrator. And "His Chance in Life" (1888) pays ample respect to the courage and integrity of its half-caste protagonist. Kipling's emphasis upon this distinction, which creates an initial grouping in India, seems determined by his assumption of the role of the Englishman in the sub-continent. Since India was not a colony, but a context for an impartial administration in what was felt to be the best interest of its people, the necessity was paramount for a strict and easy identification of the ruling class as having no partisan relationship with any race or caste. It is precisely this obvious non-partisanship which allows Yardley-Orde and Tallantire to govern Kot-Khumarsen in "The Head of the District" (1891). By comparison Grish Chunder De stands for nepotism and personal interest - symbolised in the appearance of his brother when he begins his term of duty. Similarly, in "A Sahib's War" (1904), it is the white Kurban who is able to secure peace and eventually mutual respect between his servants of antagonistic ethnic and religious backgrounds. Social hybridisation through inter-marriage, then, represents a possible impediment to good government, and it is this assertion which underlies the treatment of Phil Garron in "'Yoked with an Unbeliever'" (1888). Garron loses his sense of obligation to the service and begins "more and more to look upon India as his home. Some men fall

this way, and they are of use afterwards".¹ Finally, one cannot escape feeling that given the rigid definition of caste, race and religion within the Indians themselves, as Kim or "In Flood Time" (1890) indicate, the distinction of the ruling class which Kipling insists upon has the force and propriety of a natural order.

It is also apparent that such a definition by no means implies a deprecation of the beliefs and mores of the Indians themselves. The ethos of Kim, or "The Mark of the Beast" (1891) and "The Judgement of Dungara" (1890), indicates a deep respect for the integrity of Indian culture - a respect directly articulated by Kim's superior and mentor Lurgan:

"Therefore, do not at any time be led to contemn the black men. I have known boys newly entered into the service of the Government who feigned not to understand the talk or the customs of black men. Their pay was cut for ignorance."²

The Lama and Puran Bhagat, moreover, are figures of a moral authority who have few parallels amongst Kipling's Anglo-Indians. And this respect is complemented by a very real sense that those who participate in the service of the Empire, whether black or white, are admitted to a spiritual equality which Kipling clearly values more highly than a political one. Thus Hurree Babu and Mahbub Ali in Kim are quite as crucial to the success of the counter-espionage as Lurgan or Creighton, as is implied in the image of "chainmen", with its connotations of mutual interdependence

1. Rudyard Kipling : Plain Tales from the Hills: (1888) 1965. p.39. c.f. Kim. (1901) 1966. p.177
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Kim. (1901) 1966. p.169

and loyalty. This is also apparent in "A Sahib's War" (1904), where Umr Singh's contribution is no less dedicated than Kurban's. When the chosen task is the Great Game, each is equal under God to the appointed task, as Shafiz Ullah Khan asserts in "One View of the Question" (1893).

The second problem arising from the definition of the group in terms of those who are excluded is the question of revenge. It is certainly true that some stories are centred upon the punishment of those who either fail to adapt to the rituals of the group or those who, subsequent to their admission, flout those conventions. This occurs in "The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin" (1888) and "The Honours of War" (1917). Kipling's plots can be extremely perfunctory in their treatment of those who choose not to participate in these pre-established customs, something which has earned critical comments from many of Kipling's readers.¹ Thus Dick Four in Stalky and Co. describes how his under-officer refuses the symbolic affirmation of group communality by not singing with the men: "'My pup...was a pious little beast.. He didn't like the sing-songs, and so he went down with pneumonia'".² It is also difficult to empathise with the public humiliation of Elliot-Hacker in "Kidnapped" (1888) for ignoring the proprieties and the tales such as "A Friend's Friend" (1888) and "The Tie" (1932) seem saved from viciousness only by being rather silly.

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1. c.f. Andrew Rutherford and Edmund Wilson in ed. Andrew Rutherford : Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. p.183 and p.32 respectively. Also Boris Ford in ed. Elliot Gilbert : Kipling and the Critics. 1966. p.68 and Louis Cornell : Kipling in India. 1967. p.157
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Stalky and Co. (1899) 1967. p.252 (my ellipsis)

But to suggest as Edmund Wilson does, that Kipling's work is "shot through with hatred"¹ seems an over-reaction. The outsider is often allowed back into the group and its judgements are rarely inflexible. Thus Wontner is accepted back by the mess after reversing the rag which so nearly threatens disaster in "The Honours of War" (1917); and the Worm in "His Wedded Wife" (1888) vindicates his interest in drama by amply repaying the Senior Subaltern, who has encouraged the ostracism of the new officer. Moreover, in this story, as in "Thrown Away" (1888), Kipling quite obviously recognises the limits to which any excluding sanctions should be taken. It is only fair to Kipling to refer these tales of revenge to the essentially defensive social contexts out of which they derive, a context which necessitates a more emphatic loyalty to the customary morality which is established. Just as Kipling's symbolic use of women dramatically changes in his later stories, so his later interest in revenge is largely in the psycho-analytic aspects of its motivation - as, for instance, in "Mary Postgate" (1917) or "Dayspring Mishandled" (1932). J.M.S. Tompkins has argued convincingly that Kipling's interest in revenge and sensation arises from points of sympathy with Jacobean drama,² although it may equally have been emphasized by the spirit of decadence in the 1890's. Whatever one finally concludes, a consideration of such stories as "On the Gate - A Tale of '16" (1926) undermines Wilson's argument and rather supports T.R. Henn's recognition

1. ed. Andrew Rutherford : Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. p.21

2. J.M.S. Tompkins : The Art of Rudyard Kipling. 1959. p.120 and p.257

of a change of emphasis in Kipling's subsequent career: "In the last three collections there is an increase in interest in specifically New Testament themes: grace, mercy, forgiveness".¹

Kipling's insistence upon the value of sanctions provided by the group has been further criticised in terms of what several readers, including Edmund Wilson, have considered Kipling's "fundamental submissiveness to authority".² Such passages in Kipling as the introit to Stalky and Co.³ might confirm Wilson's point and Kipling was certainly aware of the discomfort which attended the position of the outsider. In Something of Myself (1937), he recalls the acute personal embarrassment which his newspaper's support of the Ilbert Bill - which proposed to grant native judges the powers to try Anglo-Indians - caused him in his Club: "It is not pleasant to sit still when one is twenty while all your universe hisses you."⁴ Not even the dignity of an editorship provided protection against "visible and often brutally voluble critics at the Club".⁵ Although Kipling may have been sensitive to his lack of a clearly defined niche in Anglo-India, and to his detachment from the practicalities of administration, to accuse him of a propensity to bow down to the Professional⁶ seems well wide of the mark. Kipling was quite proud of his craft as a writer, as he demonstrates in A Book of Words: "I am, by calling, a dealer in words;

1. T.R. Henn : Kipling. 1967. p.14

2. cited in ed. Andrew Rutherford : Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. p.28

3. Rudyard Kipling : Stalky and Co. (1899) 1967. p.viii. esp. verse

4. Rudyard Kipling : Something of Myself. (1937) 1964. p.51

5. *ibid* : p.205

6. c.f. Edmund Wilson and Lionel Trilling in ed. Andrew Rutherford: Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. p.49 and p.86 respectively. Also Boris Ford in ed. Elliot Gilbert : Kipling and the Critics. 1966 pp.63-4

and words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind."¹ In many respects, Kipling's strong independence of mind seems to make him, as George Orwell has noted, one of English culture's strongest critics.

Kipling's propensity for critical analysis may be related to his teleological doubts concerning the Empire and his strong desire to ensure that the business of Imperialism was conducted with the responsibility proper to its aspirations. While Kipling often seems a propagandist, attempting to explain his conception of the Empire to those at home and in the dominions, one notices that his propaganda seems conceived defensively rather than aggressively:

I have, I confess it now, done my best for about twenty years to make all the men of the sister nations within the Empire interested in each other. Because...when all is said and done, we have only each other to rely upon.²

Almost every structural link in the total edifice of Kipling's Empire comes in for criticism at one stage or another. Thus the notion of the supposed cultural superiority of England over her subject peoples is by no means supported in such frankly naturalistic visions of London as "One View of the Question" (1893), where the Indian narrator Shafiz Ullah Khan comments with disgust upon the godlessness, self-division and appalling urban problems of late Victorian England. In "The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot" (1893), there is further evidence of Kipling's

1. Rudyard Kipling : A Book of Words. 1928. p.223
 2. ibid : p.51 (my ellipsis)

strong awareness that the Mother Country had social difficulties scarcely less pressing than those, say of "'City of Dreadful Night'" (1891), set in Northern India. Similarly, Kipling often bitterly attacks the English social status quo. The fables "Below the Mill Dam" (1904) and "The Mother Hive" (1909), represent a frontal assault upon a decaying aristocracy which had abandoned its responsibilities, a theme also dominating the poem "The Islanders". The independence of Kipling's viewpoint is confirmed by events in his own life. He refused Knighthoods on three occasions, in 1899, 1917 and 1924. In 1904 he refused the Conservative party's offer of a parliamentary candidature in Edinburgh, rejected an O.M. in 1921 and made no efforts to advance his nomination for a poet laureateship, although he was the obvious choice on two occasions. Perhaps most significant was that Kipling even turned down a request to write propaganda for the relevant authorities in the First World War. Thus to insist upon Kipling's identification with reactionary and authoritarian ideologies seems misguided. He was undeniably a conservative in many respects, but this in no degree implies a blind devotion to the establishment. Indeed one may well agree with George Orwell's verdict: "Few people who have criticised England from the inside have said bitterer things about her than this gutter patriot".¹

1. cited in ed. Andrew Rutherford : Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. p.75

It is also evident that Kipling retained a similar critical edge in his writing which directly concerns the Empire. The objectivity of the journalist in "The Man Who Would Be King" (1890) is clearly derived from Kipling's own experience. He wrote in his autobiography that as a newspaper man in India, "one saw and heard the machinery of administration stripped bare".¹ And there is little censorship in Kipling's fiction of his perceptions of inadequacy and limitation in the Imperial administration. Kipling is especially severe when the upper echelons lose sight of the particularities of which the junior in the field is aware, as has been noted in "The Head of the District" (1891). At times, as in "Wressley of the Foreign Office" (1888), the machinations of the higher authorities are ludicrous, even vicious to some extent:

Even the Secretariat believes that it does good when it asks an over-driven Executive officer to take a census of wheat-weevils through a district of five thousand square miles.²

Positively dangerous misjudgements by the Upper Administration occur in "The Head of the District" (1891) and Kim (1901), where the lax treatment of Hilar and Bunar encourages dissension on the Northern frontier. The hierarchy is also capable of obtuse arbitrariness in its dealings with subordinates, such as Findlayson in "The Bridge-Builders" (1898). The engineer reflects with some rancour:

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Something of Myself. (1937) 1964. p.57
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Plain Tales from the Hills. (1888) 1965. p.31
 3. Rudyard Kipling : The Day's Work. (1898) 1968. pp.4-5

[Months] of office work [were] destroyed at a blow when the Government of India, at the last moment, added two feet to the width of the bridge, under the impression that bridges were cut out of paper, and so brought to ruin at least half an acre of calculations [.]

Antipathy towards self-referring red-tape government is also expressed in "Little Foxes" (1909), "At the End of the Passage" (1891) and "In the Rukh" (1893). But perhaps the most memorable example comes in "Tod's Amendment" (1888), in which a small boy's intimacy with the customs of native life prevents a grossly insensitive restructuring of traditional land ownership patterns from being passed through the legislature. Elsewhere, too, the highest offices in the Administration come in for censure. The Viceroy in "A Germ-Destroyer" (1888), "possessed no name - nothing but a string of counties and two-thirds of the alphabet after them".² And the Commissioner in "Cupid's Arrows" (1888) is deflated by the description of the "open-work jam-tart jewels in gold and enamel on his clothes".³ In conclusion, then, one would have to modify the force of Louis Cornell's criticism of Kipling:

In fact, once he had adapted himself to the fundamental axioms of Anglo-Indian society, Kipling never seriously questioned them.⁴

Unlike Cornell, Edmund Wilson centres his conviction of Kipling's submissiveness to authority not upon the Indian stories but upon those concerned with the South African war.

1. Rudyard Kipling : The Days Work. (1898) 1968. pp.4-5

2. Rudyard Kipling : Plain Tales from the Hills. (1888) 1965. p.122

3. *ibid* : p.62

4. Louis Cornell : Kipling in India. 1967. p.46

It is worthwhile reconsidering his criticism, which suggests that Kipling's polemical stance mars the artistic merit of those stories:

He has resisted his own sense of life and discarded his own moral intelligence in favour of the point of view of a dominant political party. To Lord Roberts and Joseph Chamberlain he has sacrificed the living world of his own earlier artistic creations and of the heterogeneous human beings for whom they were offered as symbols.¹

But his general support for the war does not prevent the operation of Kipling's critical capacities. He was far from impressed by the conduct of the British authorities. He felt thus: "Our own utter carelessness, officialdom and ignorance were responsible for much of the death rate".² Zigler, the American narrator of "The Captive" (1904), suggests the difference between the two sides. The Boers, he asserts, "'fought to kill, and, by what I could make out, the British fought to be killed'".³ Such inadequacies are further emphasized in other tales of the conflict, such as "A Sahib's War" (1904) and "The Comprehension of Private Copper" (1904). Wilson becomes ludicrously wrong when he suggests the following:

Though the Dutch are unquestionably white men, Kipling manages somehow to imply that they have proved renegades to white solidarity by allying themselves with the black natives.⁴

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1. cited in ed. Andrew Rutherford : Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. p.48
 2. Rudyard Kipling : Something of Myself. (1937) 1964. p.155
 3. Rudyard Kipling : Traffics and Discoveries. (1904) 1973. p.9
 4. cited in ed. Andrew Rutherford : Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. p.47

There are no grounds at all for such a suggestion, which completely contradicts Kipling's disappointment at the generous terms of settlement offered to the Boers:

We put them in a position to uphold and expand their primitive lust for racial domination, and thanked God we were "rid of a knave".¹

Moreover such natives as do appear in the tales, such as Umr Singh, are clearly allies of the British, and moreover, honourable and sympathetic figures.

One should also notice, in dealing with this problem, how often Kipling takes the part of those who are not representative of the status quo. A tale such as "Lispeth" (1888) reminds one that Kipling's loyalty to the Anglo-Indians does not imply that that is his final moral touchstone. Equally, the sympathetic portrait of Badalia Herodsfoot reflects Kipling's capacity to transcend the kind of class prejudice which Orwell has noted in him.² He usually concentrates his attention on the junior members of any given group - the subaltern is a far more common figure than the colonel in his fiction. Indeed a collection such as Soldiers Three (1890), suggests that Kipling's deepest devotion is to the other ranks, on whose behalf he was a tireless fighter and apologist. That Henry James should think this group Kipling's finest artistic achievement³ suggests the kind of care with which Kipling was anxious to evoke the rigours and pressures of the ordinary soldier's life, on whose good services

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1. Rudyard Kipling : Something of Myself. (1937) 1964. p.166
 2. ed. Andrew Rutherford : Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. p.73
 3. ed. Elliot Gilbert : Kipling and the Critics. 1966. p.16

depended the leisure of his critics at home.

Having, it is hoped, answered such criticism of Kipling's supposed identification with dominant power groups, one may now proceed to establish Kipling's definition of the internal structure of a given group. The individual patterns of such groups are enclosed by the conception of an Empire consisting of peoples with a common purpose. Within this group are divisions between sister states and subject nations, such as India. Within India are further sub-divisions, between soldier and civilian, between the services and between higher and lower centres of authority. Though all these sub-groups attain unity within the larger context of the ideal of the Empire, they retain a strong and specific identity in terms of the particular purposes for which, and rituals by which, they are constituted. While Kipling has been severely censured for this disposition to define groups in such terms,¹ it is the method of the sociologist and the logical outcome both of Kipling's masonic sensibility and the self-conscious nature of the Imperial presence in India, with its attempt to provide a defined structure of government for the sub-continent.

Kipling seems well aware that the constitution of any given group is often ultimately arbitrary, however much a customary morality or common purpose is developed. Thus the rituals of the mess for instance, are founded upon an attitude which is not susceptible to rational analysis, a factor which contributes directly to their quasi-religious centres of power

1. c.f. W.L. Renwick and Lionel Trilling in ed. Andrew Rutherford : Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. p.9 and p.86 respectively. For a defence see C.S. Lewis in ed. Elliot Gilbert : Kipling and the Critics. 1966. pp 115-116.

and authority. And it is perhaps once again evident that Kipling's teleological doubts underlie his leap of faith to an assent to such symbols. There is an essential element of mystery to these fortifying conventions, a mystery which reinforces their capacity to focus men's energies and organise their lives. This is apparent in the description of the Queen's Toast in "The Man Who Was" (1891):

That Sacrament of the Mess never grows old,
and never ceases to bring a lump into the
throat of the listener wherever he be by
sea or by land [.] No one but an officer can
tell what the toast means; and the bulk have
more sentiment than comprehension.

The religious force of such a ritual, emphatically explicit in the language, is also evident in the description of the candelabrum - a substitute for an icon, perhaps - and in the focus which the emblem of the Mavericks provides for that regiment. In "The Mutiny of the Mavericks" (1891), one is referred to "the Red Bull, the totem of the Mavericks...whose price is human life"²; and Kim, significantly, interprets the same emblem as a God to whom the Mess pays homage in Kim.³ Conventions of precedence, dress and so forth are tokens of a respect for ritual which operate alike in civilian and military circles, as "The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin" (1888) and Kipling's own experience⁴ make clear. Acknowledgement of and participation in such conventions are the price of one's membership of the

1. Rudyard Kipling : Life's Handicap. (1891) 1964. p.103

2. *ibid* : p.223 (my ellipsis)

3. Rudyard Kipling : Kim. (1901) 1966. p.118

4. Rudyard Kipling : Something of Myself. (1937) 1964. p.63

given group and acts which enable the individual to achieve an identity stronger than that which he can provide in his own right, a sense of secure community with fellow-professionals. This is symbolised in the case of Limmason in "The Man Who Was" (1891), who quite literally regains his individuality upon his return to and recognition of the rituals of the Hussars. It is equally implicit in the experience of Lockhart in "The Bridge-Builders" (1898), who ceases to exist once the respect of his fellow-craftsmen is withdrawn. Kipling's stress upon the importance of ritual is stated most simply, perhaps, by Burges in "'In the Interests of the Brethren'" (1926), who avers: "'All Ritual is fortifying. Ritual's a natural necessity for mankind. The more things are upset, the more they fly to it'".¹ And in the especially stressful environment of India it becomes clearer why Kipling's commitment to ritual is so pronounced.

In many respects, Kipling's conception of ritual is analogous to Marlow's insistence upon a "deliberate belief" in Conrad's work, which enables one to act on in the face of all the pressures of a relativistic universe. Kipling asserted that the purpose of ritual had historically been to improve the morale of the individual and this is its authentic function in much of his fiction. But Kipling, it should be noted, has no sympathy for ritual for its own sake - abstracted from the

1. Rudyard Kipling : Debits and Credits. (1926) 1965. p.61

social context which sanctions it and makes it both necessary and meaningful. Thus the humiliation of the protagonist in "The Arrest of Lieutenant Golightly" (1888) depends for its effect upon one's perception that his punctilious attention to his appearance originates in "side", rather than in a purer pride in the identity which devolves from the shared conventions of a regiment. Equally, the abuse of the rituals of masonry in "The Man Who Would Be King" (1890), by Dravot and Carnehan, is seen to be an almost blasphemous exploitation of conventions which assert the equality of those who observe them rather than the hierarchic political distinctions which the pair convert the rituals to support. Elliot Gilbert has made a sensitive analysis, in this respect, of "Without Benefit of Clergy" (1891), suggesting that Ameera's rejection of the comforting rituals of her religion in order to affirm as fully as possible her passion for Holden, constitutes an awareness on Kipling's part that ritual may inhibit an authentic response to life.¹

In order to enjoy the benefits which membership of the group confers, the individual must pass through rituals of initiation which, again, emphasize the quasi-religious overtones of Kipling's construct. It is highly significant that such a large proportion of his writing should be involved with the socialisation of children and young men into various roles

1. Elliot Gilbert : The Good Kipling. Manchester. 1972. pp.34 ff.

within the groups they are to join. There is a sense in which the individual is re-made, or even re-born, as a result of this process of entry, something which is subtly different to the apparently brutal dehumanisation suggested by the opening of "His Private Honour" (1893):

A recruit must learn first that he is not a man but a thing, which in time, and by the mercy of Heaven, may develop into a soldier of the Queen if it takes care and attends to good advice. ¹

The particular exigencies of army life in a constant state of anticipation of trouble from Russia on the northern borders perhaps explains the severity of such a judgement, reinforcing the emphasis upon a surrender of the individual's potentially anarchic energies - a theme which is also implicit in "Only a Subaltern" (1890). And it is in context of the social purpose of *Westward Ho!* that one must read Stalky and Co., a context which perhaps illustrates Edmund Wilson's a priori assumptions about the philosophy of education which he uses to castigate this work. He wrote thus:

The book itself, of course, presents a hair-raising picture of the sadism of the English public-school system ²...in the nature of an hysterical outpouring of emotions kept over from school-days. ³

Although some of Stalky and Co. is bound to make the modern reader uncomfortable, there is little doubt that Kipling condemns

1. Rudyard Kipling : Many Inventions. (1893) 1949. p.137
2. cited in ed. Andrew Rutherford : Kipling's Mind and Art. 1964. p.21 (my ellipsis)
3. *ibid* : p.23

the bullying in the system - as "The Moral Reformers" episode makes clear. But there is a sense in which the ragging - as distinct from the bullying - is necessary in order to weed out those who would be temperamentally unsuited to the far greater pressures of an Army command in the Empire. The ragging, perhaps, constitutes an ordeal through which the initiate must pass in order to satisfy his equals of his worthiness to join their fellowship. "Thrown Away" (1888) convincingly realises the disastrous consequences which may befall the beneficiary of an education which fails to properly prepare him for his appointed task. The education at Westward Ho! is geared to the pupil's future careers - by far the largest proportion enter the Imperial services:

Far and Sure our bands have gone -
 Hy-Brasil or Babylon,
 Islands of the Southern Run,
 And cities of Cathaia! ¹

Thus the practical education by example of Crandall and the headmaster, while not perhaps developing the boys' finer sensibilities, at least promises well for their future survival.

For the initiate who completes the ordeal of his apprenticeship, and whose service is characterised by a loyalty and dedication to the aspirations of the group, the rewards are substantial. There is a sense of security, of belonging, of mutual support, which strengthens the individual in times of loneliness, such as Mottram's in "At the End of the Passage" (1891), or

1. Rudyard Kipling : Stalky and Co. (1899) 1967. p.viii

despair such as Findlayson's in *The Bridge-Builders*" (1898). It identifies him with a sense of purpose which Kipling feels essential to create in a universe which is fundamentally godless, meaningless and hostile. The group always looks after its own in Kipling's work, whether it is the Lodge, as in "In the Interests of the Brethren" (1926), or the club as in "At the End of the Passage" (1891), or the mess as in "The Man Who Was" (1891). One remembers the Mavericks' loyalty to the memory of Kim's father which informs their decision to "adopt" him, and the efforts of Mulvaney to secure Slane as a husband for the similarly orphaned Miss McKenna in "The Daughter of the Regiment" (1888). It is in such acts as these that Kipling's conception of the importance of the group is especially vindicated.

Bonamy Dobree has made interesting conclusions from his study of Kipling's writings on the Empire:

Britannia is for him a goddess...the Empire then is to be cherished, not so much because it is in itself an achievement, but because, like old Rome, it is the most superb instrument to cause man to out-face the universe, assert himself against vacancy. Since it unifies the impulses needed to do this, it is Mr. Kipling's Catholic Church.

One may agree with this in part, since Kipling's gigantic ritual of Imperialism represents a manifestation of that rage for order and value celebrated in a poem like "The Idea of Order at Key West". But Dobree's images of "goddess" and "Catholic Church"

1. cited in ed. Elliot Gilbert : Kipling and the Critics. 1966. p.43 (my ellipsis)

to describe Kipling's symbol seem ultimately exaggerated. "In the Interests of the Brethren" (1926) suggests why. In that story, the power of ritual, while deeply admired, is suggested finally thus: "As an aid - as an aid - not as a substitute for Religion", directed towards producing "an average plan of life",¹ without claiming the sanctions of an absolute knowledge. A more appropriate image would be Kipling's own image of The Great Game. The analogies with his construct of the Empire are pregnant. Each is governed by an accepted set of rules, which by virtue of their ability to guide the energies of the participants may be seen as equivalent to values. It also suggests the importance, in both activities, of following a code in order to give consistency and coherence to one's actions. It connotes mutual co-operation and loyalty, and the possibility, as Dobree suggests, to mediate the metaphysical doubts and strains which are never far beneath the surface in Kipling's work. That these doubts remain, as C.S. Lewis has noted,² without ever being wholly abolished, implies a provisionality in Kipling's vision which never allows his system to attain the solidity and certainty of a Church. In Cary's work, by comparison, there is such a persistent pursuit of this sense of doubt and self-questioning, that the ritual itself is undermined and the ideals of Imperialism celebrated by Kipling are so modified as to become untenable.

1. Rudyard Kipling : Debits and Credits. (1926) 1965. pp.76-77

2. ed. Elliot Gilbert : Kipling and the Critics. 1966. p.110

CONCLUSION

CARY : THE DEMISE OF THE IMPERIAL IDEA

"No long views - the age for long
views ended twenty years ago -
and above all, not too much zeal."

Joyce Cary : Mr Johnson

To the reader familiar with Kipling's India, Joyce Cary's literary symbol of Africa provides fertile grounds for comparison. As with India, Nigeria connotes various images of threat, stress and disorder which must be dealt with in terms which transcend the manifestly important material practicalities of Imperial administration. While the natural conditions of Nigeria never impress one as evincing quite the same dramatic degree of hostility with which one associates them in Kipling's fiction, other factors induce a sense of vulnerability within the Imperial presence such as Kipling, too, lays emphasis upon. The junior ranks in the hierarchy, engaged with practical problems of administration must contend with the ever-present pressures of isolation in an alien culture with which they are on uneasy terms. Cock Jarvis's sense of loneliness becomes sufficiently acute at times to resemble paranoia¹ and Bewsher's superior, Alabaster, ascribes the quirky unpredictability of his subordinate's behaviour to the inordinate length of his service in the "back bush".² Having read Kipling, one is also familiar with Cary's insistence upon the intractability of the social environment which the officer is attempting to influence, an intractability which defines itself in terms of symbols which suggest a large degree of impotence in the exercise of Imperial power. The most striking and dramatic illustration

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1. Joyce Cary : Cock Jarvis : An Unfinished Novel. ed. A.G. Bishop. 1975. pp.172-173
 2. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.39

of this is, perhaps, the death of Bewsher at the hands of the Birri in An American Visitor (1933). The continual emphasis upon Bewsher's commitment to the best interests of the Birri¹ makes his death an image of enduring mutual incomprehensibility between ruler and ruled. The limitations of Imperial control are further suggested by the ironic disjunction between Burwash's strong assurance to Schlemm that there is no power to ju-ju in Rimi and the reader's knowledge of Elizabeth's torture of Ibu and Osi, which is being conducted simultaneously; on a more comic level, but equally significant in its implications, by Mr. Johnson's outwitting Rudbeck in such matters as reading his employer's private mail, drawing loans from the native treasury, stealing confidential reports for the Emir, burgling Rudbeck, and extracting toll on Rudbeck's newly completed highway into North Fada. It is suggested also by an explicit stance in the descriptive narrative, too, as in the evocation of Rudbeck's fort:

The barracks, across the parade ground from the fort, are four rows of neat huts, like nursery counters arranged for a game.²

These factors tend to merely emphasize how much more important the pressures are which devolve upon the officer in the field from within the infrastructure of which he is a part. One feels that there is a greater insistence upon these pressures than in Kipling, although some of them are immediately familiar. First

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1. For an example see Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.95
 2. Joyce Cary : Mr. Johnson. (1939) 1961. p.15. Compare, too, the symbolic import of Jarvis's decaying headquarters in Joyce Cary : Cock Jarvis. An Unfinished Novel. ed. A.G. Bishop. 1975. p.243

there is reference to a lack of understanding and even hostility on the part of public opinion at home based upon a limited awareness of the actualities of the Imperial mission. Burwash is disturbed by the power of the press to influence policy in The African Witch (1936)¹ and Bradgate's relationship with Jacob in Aissa Saved (1932)², is modified by his uneasy awareness that the latter may follow precedent by writing complaints to newspapers or even M.P.'s in England. This lack of understanding is expressed in other terms by a deep uncertainty in Imperial policy which contributes further to the impotence of the officer in the field. There is the contradiction between the aims of developing Nigeria for metropolitan industrial exploitation and preserving the integrity of native life, discussed in Chapter Three. But there is also evidence of a recognition that Imperialism has had its day. Rudbeck's confusion is intensified by Bulteel's reaction to his misgivings: "No long views - the age for long views ended twenty years ago - and above all, not too much zeal."³ Significantly, as early as 1919, Cary himself seems to have instinctively felt the truth of this later view when, in a letter to his wife, his comparison of the Roman with the British Empires is conceived elegantly, with an insistence upon the imminence of the latter's collapse.⁴ Moreover, as with Kipling, there is an emphasis upon a deep-rooted conflict between the upper and

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1. Joyce Cary : The African Witch. (1936) 1951. pp.76-7
 2. Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. p.82
 3. Joyce Cary : Mr. Johnson. (1939) 1961. p.209
 4. M.M. Mahood : Joyce Cary's Africa. 1964. p.56

lower rungs of the hierarchy. This ranges from the stupid snobbery of White's behaviour towards Gore in An American Visitor (1933),¹ to the comic nature of Bewsher's evasive action to escape his superior Alabaster in the same novel, to the deeper implications of the attitudes expressed by Bradgate in Aissa Saved (1932), or by the redoubtable Cock Jarvis. The despair at times evinced by these two suggests the frustration engendered by the failure of the junior officer to convince the desk-bound administrators of the necessity to adapt an a priori ideology to the field officer's specialized knowledge of the particularities of his district. Bradgate feels utterly misunderstood by his superiors:

Damn it, he had nearly killed himself for these apes at Kolu, and what for? Who cared or knew how hard he worked if he filled in the monthly returns, an hour's job. ²

Bradgate, of course, has considerably greater resources of both inward self-control and in terms of companionship than Cock Jarvis, who by comparison often sounds shrill and self-pitying. But they share a similar misgiving over the lack of recognition and support they receive, which is not so much the expression of egotism, but an indication of the terms in which they see their service. The only rewards for such an ill-remunerated task can be inner satisfaction and a sense of value provided by the recognition of one's fellow craftsmen, to use Kipling's image.

1. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.38
 2. Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. p.112

This insight must inform one's response to what at first seems merely to be a bitter self-pity in Cock Jarvis:

"I was one of the cheap fools who sang out 'God Save the King', and did the scrapping. I cleaned the ground and dug the foundations, and now I've got left in the cellar, here, walled up."¹

And it never allows one to comfortably endorse the various representations of Jarvis's behaviour by his superiors as being "mad", "lunatic" or "off his head". Jarvis may be exceptional in the degree of his uneasiness at the perspective of the central administration, but a similar discomfort is felt by each one of Cary's junior political officers.

In Cary's fiction, the individual junior officer does not have the same recourse, in grappling with the problems of value and meaning in his existence, as that available to the average I.C.S. or Indian Army figure in the work of Kipling. While Kipling, too, concentrates upon the junior echelons of a particular hierarchy, there is much more of a sense of homogeneity of purpose between upper and lower ranks. Typically, for instance, the senior figure is a paternalistic figure and his lieutenants are almost wards. By contrast, figures such as Jarvis and Bewsher seem to be in a limbo world, so totally rejecting what they interpret as an entirely distinct ethos operating amongst their superiors, that it is almost a point of honour to be passed over for promotion. What is often a jest in Kipling - the removal

1. Joyce Cary : Cock Jarvis : An Unfinished Novel. ed. A.G. Bishop. 1975. p.110

from reality of the upper rungs - is rarely allowed to become utterly serious, by virtue of the knowledge that in the last analysis, seniors and juniors co-operate in a spirit of confederacy and unity to subserve the larger interests of the Empire. By contrast, the aims of higher and lower ranks in Cary's work seem irrevocably contradictory and result in an attitude represented at its most extreme by Cock Jarvis:

"Totty Bloxam is the typical great man up at Zungeru. He looks like a sow on her hind legs, and he's thrived on dung-eating all his life. When the Governor kicks him he wags his tail, and flaps his ears, and says 'Thank you, sir. It's a privilege to have the advantage of Your Excellency's opinion on this point'; and then he goes out and gets his own back by sacking a clerk or murdering a bush officer."¹

The logical progression of such an attitude is that the junior officer who, like Tring or Thomson, attempts to advance himself in the service is regarded with extreme suspicion.

Similarly, whereas Kipling's junior officers offer a sense of group cohesion and mutual support, particularised in the image of the mess or the club, the inter-relationships of the lower echelons in Cary's work seem almost predatory at times. There is little sense of an esprit de corps operating at this level, through which the isolated officer can find compensation and consolation for the rigours of his service. While the esprit de corps can provide a source of strength against such obviously threatening and easily identifiable hostility as that provided

1. Joyce Cary : Cock Jarvis : An Unfinished Novel. ed. A.G. Bishop. 197 p.116

by the civilian traders in An American Visitor,¹ the internal working of the group system is fraught with friction and mutual suspicion. This varies in degree from Bewsher's rueful memory in An American Visitor of the manner in which Jarvis cunningly exploited an ambiguously worded memorandum from Bewsher to his own advantage; to the disturbing tension between Jarvis himself and Thomson over the arrest of Mallam Aliu in Cock Jarvis; to the insidious and self-advancing attitude of Tring in Mr. Johnson, who sees in the unorthodox management of Fada by Rudbeck an opportunity for his own advancement.

The junior officer in Cary's work would seem to suffer from other pressures which in Kipling's fiction are mediated by a firm conviction of the ultimate unity of the Imperial impulse. Thus he is often the fulcrum upon which the various branches of the Service balance their mutual antagonisms. If it is not enough that the D.O. has to assimilate the needs and desires of missionaries, as in Aissa Saved, or attend to the prejudices of civilians such as Mrs. Pratt or Dryas Honeywood in The African Witch, or satisfy the demands of speculators and traders in An American Visitor, he must also reconcile other contradictory forces. Thus Bradgate's attempt to liberate Yanrin from the spectre and actuality of poverty and even famine, by developing an infrastructure to rationalise distribution of food resources, is continually subject to the jealousy of the Treasury and the

1. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.183

P.W.D. His experience is shared by Cock Jarvis and by Rudbeck In Mr. Johnson. Similar tension is evident between the military and civilian authorities, as in Cock Jarvis's duel with Captain Packer and Burwash's hostilities with Captain Rackham in The African Witch. While Cary exploits much of this tension for light-hearted ends, the central insight is never less than serious and Bewsher's death is the most tragic symbolic result of such conflicts. Caught between his own sense of the value of Native life, the missionary zeal of Marie, the exigencies of Alabaster's directives, the rights of the tin-miners, it is clear that he is destroyed quite as much by the pressures generated within the Imperial structure as by the anger of the Birri, which is never more than the literal cause of his death.

Deprived of a meaningful conception of a team, Kipling's symbol of the Great Game obviously loses most of its force; so much so, that if one's opponents are as much within one's own group as outside of it, the Game becomes largely absurd. Given the cultural and literary traditions within which Cary was working, it seems impossible that he should be unfamiliar with Kipling's fiction. The only mention of his predecessor in Cary's African novels would seem to reject the validation of the Imperial mission found in that writer, Cary assuming it to depend upon an over-estimation of national virtues.¹ Thus Cary's utilisation of the image of the Game, far from dignifying his construction of the Empire in action, is directed at underlining the lack of

1. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.130

coherence characterising the inter-relationships within the structure as a whole. The connotation of selfless aspiration and a commitment to genuine ideals has disappeared from the image in the following example from Aissa Saved:

For the Treasury roads, bridges, hospitals have nothing to do with trade or humanity, but are counters in a game. The Treasury won this game in Yanrin and scored a thousand pounds. But the drought laying bare the bed of the river gave Bradgate a chance of building a temporary bridge, to last perhaps ten years, at a cost of twenty to thirty pounds.

The Treasury refused the thirty pounds on the grounds that the Public Works department did not approve temporary bridges.

The P.W.D. has a different function from the Treasury. Its job is to fight for money as hard as it can. But it must prevent any other department such as the political or the military from works which might otherwise be carried out by itself.¹

Jukes's description of Bewsher's attitude towards Birri as being equivalent to that appropriate to a game of spillikins² is refuted only with some discomfort by Gore. Jarvis's duel with Trotter is described as a ridiculous kind of game,³ as is Rudbeck's plan to open up Northern Fada, both by his superior⁴ and the authorial voice.⁵

Had Cary left his examination at this point one might have felt him to be a good satirical critic of the idiosyncrasies and follies of Imperial administration. But in rejecting the idea of loyalty to a group with a pre-established code as being

1. Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. p.70
2. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.48
3. Joyce Cary : Cock Jarvis : An Unfinished Novel. ed. A.G. Bishop. 1975. pp.49-50
4. Joyce Cary : Mr. Johnson. (1939) 1961. p.47
5. *ibid* : p.83-4

the validation of one's commitment to the Empire, Cary examines other potential anchors on which may rest the justification of the Imperial mission. In a sense he goes on to examine the nature of the rules which define the Game, and given that games are essentially self-referential, he engages in a quest for the ultimate locus of values within Imperialism. What one notices emphatically in these novels is Cary's insistence upon the moral necessity of exploring and questioning the importance of the Imperial enterprise. There is little sympathy for the individual who unhesitatingly adapts himself to the modes of behaviour and thinking which have been established within the hierarchy prior to his arrival. Dollar's criticism in An American Visitor stands uncorrected by any authorial comment as he surveys the Nigerian political service:

"It's just like school over again. The little boys look to see what the big boys do and if a first-class Resident went about in a dog-collar, they'd all be hooking themselves up behind."¹

Rudbeck comes in for some satire for his adoption of his superior's predilection for roads and Cock Jarvis's criticism of his sedentary superiors tends to revolve around their sycophantic obedience. What vindicates Bewsher, Bradgate and Rudbeck within their worlds is that they establish a critical relationship towards the structure of which they are part. The sum of their experience constitutes the measure of Cary's larger inquiry, an inquiry which, arguably,

1. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.181

leads him to posit an absurdist symbol of the world in this fiction.

Cary's use of religion in his novels was discussed at length in Chapter Two. Here it suffices to notice again that, in several of the works, religion is invoked as perhaps constituting the locus of values which Cary is seeking, although ultimately most of Cary's political officers share Bradgate's uneasy rejection of the Church as an adequate guide to the Imperial mission:

Bradgate was of course a loyal son of the Church, for which he had filial love and respect, but he had not been to a service for thirty years, and he had even a vague notion that this abstinence was meritorious, that on the whole he showed himself a man of religious probity in not going, because he had another vague notion that the creed, if he ever had time to examine it and find out its real meaning, would not represent his own belief, whatever it was, when he had time to look into it. ¹

But while a rejection of the authority of religion, whether Christian or pagan, allows Cary to condemn baby-burials and politically based witch-trials in The African Witch, or the grotesque self-destruction which a commitment to it results in during Aissa Saved, it is clear that Bradgate has shuffled off the real problem. This would seem to be stated in An American Visitor, where three complete pages are devoted to the sermon of the not unsympathetic missionary Dobson, whom the hero Bewsher

1. Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. p.109

rather approves. The crux of the sermon is the Rev. Dobson's assertion which sets Bewsher thinking:

"The world without a provident and loving God has been compared with a lunatic asylum, but this is quite inadequate to describe the horror of the conception...a world without justice, mercy, or indeed any object at all." ¹

In order to refute such a claim the individual political officer must draw his moral support from a construct which provides a genuine alternative to this critical perspective. To admit the claims of religion is to be compelled to endorse the grimly pessimistic viewpoint of Cock Jarvis, who recurrently alludes to the problem of spiritual authority in his function as a District Officer:

"What would Jesus think of the Col. Sec. tickling Parliament and kicking the Governors and the Governors tickling the Col. Sec, and kicking the Residents. He'd laugh. He'd think we were like a lot of silly dirty little guttersnipes on a mudheap scratching each other's eyes out about an old tomato can." ²

What Cary's novels explore is the possibility of viable alternatives to such a "choice of nightmares".

Cary, as one saw in Chapter Two, placed his faith in an ideal of a rationally constructed Nigerian social structure freed of its traditional dependence upon sources of strength inherently anti-rational and self-destructive. Yet the consistency and self-subsistence of rational thought is seen to be incapable of sustaining the function of a comprehensive tool with which

1. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.217
(my ellipsis and italics)
2. Joyce Cary : Cock Jarvis : An Unfinished Novel. ed. A.G. Bishop 1975. pp.208-9

to deal with social problems, whose alleviation must begin in the problem of values. Cary's fiction openly admits the consistency of much Native thought and there is never a suggestion that the mental structure which produces his norms is in any way superior as a process to that of the subject people's. In terms of its ability to move coherently from premise to conclusion, the native mind is seen to be quite as efficient as the European's. Thus the competence of the District Officer to direct the Africans' future for them is seen to depend upon the ability to enforce the consequences of what are ultimately arbitrary sets of premises. The matriarch who subscribes to Aissa's metamorphosis is ridiculous only if a particular epistemological premise is made and the nature of her perception of reality dismissed out of hand:

The old lady for her part had no shadow of doubt that she had seen Aissa change because she knew already that the girl was a witch and able to change herself.¹

The question is more important and problematic when a whole pattern of social behaviour is involved. Bradgate's reaction to the sale of children in Yanrin at the beginning of a famine is guided by assumptions about the complete inadmissibility of slavery under any circumstances. Yet the local rationale is that it is better to sell them to neighbouring tribes if it improves their chances of survival. Cary's description of the

1. Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. p.85

antagonism which Bradgate's values engender is ironic in a manner which reduces the District Officer rather than the tribespeople and illustrates the conflict between the premises which are decided upon:

But it was generally agreed that his objection to the selling of children, as also to slavery, was religious, because there was no reasonable explanation for it.¹

A similar conflict is apparent in Cock Jarvis's quarrel with the Alkali in his district over the problem of whether women should be imprisoned for repeated civil disobedience, as Jarvis advocates, or whether there should be a continuation of the traditional measures of beating, which, as the Alkali argues, results in less of a disruption of the overall pattern of family life.

The conflict over value-judgement and premise, then, would seem to lie at the root of Cary's examination of the Empire. On the one hand development brings with it all of what Joyce would call "syphilisation", the disastrous hybrids such as Coker or Akande Tom whose over-estimation of material progress is evident in his attitude towards his ragged suit:

[He] felt to the end of his toes and hair the quality not merely of a white man, but all that belongs to him - the power of his engines and guns, the magic of his telegraphs, gramophones, radios, motors, ships, and his mysterious being.²

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1. Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. p.117 (my italics)
 2. Joyce Cary : The African Witch. (1936) 1951. p.149

Louis Aladai represents the problem at another extreme. A product of Belton Public School, he is a keen student of Wordsworth and regularly hums snatches of Wagner. In many respects he is the most sensitive and civilised figure of the novel, bearing the same relation, in terms of education, to Rackham, as Mister Johnson does to Sargy Gollup. Yet both figures are alienated from their people as a consequence. Johnson's repeated failures with Bamu are of a kind with Louis's failure to understand Elizabeth's genuine concern for a traditional way of life. On the European side, it is perhaps Rudbeck above all who feels this apparently irreconcilable contradiction and since Mr. Johnson was the last of Cary's African novels, it may well constitute a reflection of Cary's own final comments upon the redundancy of the Imperial mission.

Rudbeck begins his service as a typically conscientious officer whose zeal seems to depend directly upon his lack of independence of mind.¹ The first real attempt at personal judgement succeeds from an intense feeling of disappointment at the conclusion of the Fada road which has absorbed all his energies and aspirations hitherto. Instead of elation he feels emptiness and purposelessness which give way to intense self-criticism over what he concedes to be a failure to evaluate thoroughly the implications of his function as an Imperial administrator:

1. Joyce Cary : Mister Johnson. (1939) 1961. p.46

Far bigger and grander than he had ever thought possible. But what was it doing to Fada? Where were all the good results? Could it be that dirty old savages like the Emir and Waziri were right in their detestation of motor roads; that roads upset things, brought confusion, revolution. And wasn't there confusion enough? Wasn't everybody complaining that the world was getting into such confusion that civilization itself would disappear. ¹

Rudbeck significantly fails to come to terms with his anomie and is unable to get to the source of this "confusion". His attitude towards his previous devotion and effort is sharply modified. Rudbeck's vision becomes distinctively absurdist, in its idiom, at least, through his conviction that "he has been used and driven like a blind instrument"² and that his future energies can only be harnessed in a "blind treadmill effort".³ It is his bitterness at failing to make comprehensible his own purpose, as well as the larger Imperial purpose, which results in his defiance of regulations at the execution of Johnson. This act involves the dramatisation of a disillusion which makes Rudbeck's continued performance of his duties untenable and, furthermore, suggests a victory for Johnson's spirit, with deeper connotations for the relationship between Europe and Africa.

In an intellectual set-piece common in Cary's work, the grounds for Rudbeck's act of defiance are carefully prepared. During Rudbeck's conversation with his superior, Bulteel's inability to decide whether Rudbeck's work represents progress

1. Joyce Cary : Mister Johnson. (1939) 1961. p.167
 2. *ibid* : p.169
 3. *ibid* : p.169

or not and his persistent conviction that anyone with a coherent plan for the Empire is a Bolshy, it is quite clear that Cary's voice can be heard in Rudbeck and in Gore of An American Visitor. The latter suggests:

"We haven't got a system at all - no sort of principles. None of the people we sent out have the faintest idea of what they're for ... We don't even know what to do with an empire. We can't even guess what it's for."¹

At a moment such as this one feels very intensely the sense of inner collapse and retraction which was possibly as important as external pressure in terminating the Empire. It is only a defined, coherent and self-conscious programme, argue Cary's novels, which can give meaning to the functions of those such as Gore and Rudbeck. Determined to settle once and for all the cause of his disillusion, Rudbeck forces Bulteel to engage him in argument. The ensuing exchange is half pathetic and half tragic. Bulteel rejects the idea of a plan:

"Well, sir, an idea. I suppose some people do have an idea of what life ought to be like - the Catholics did and the missionaries do, or ought to - and I suppose old Arnold did."
 "Oh, Arnold, the Rugby man - yesss."
 "I don't mean their ideas would do now, but only that a general idea might be possible - something to work to."
 "Well, what idea?"
 "That's the question."
 "Yes, that's the question."²

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1. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.98 (my ellipsis)
 2. Joyce Cary : Mister Johnson. (1939) 1961. p.168

One cannot escape remembering the terrible irony in An American Visitor that it is the Birri who have "a Victorian self-confidence and dignity founded on a complete idea of things"¹ and that it is the influence of the whites who are making that cultural unity disintegrate. If Cary believed it was a measure of rational self-sufficiency which constituted Europe's chief gift to Africa,² equally the worst destruction which was its by-product, was conceivably a spiritual limbo for tribes such as the Birri. It seems evident that by 1939 Cary could no longer subscribe to a belief in the Empire's future, nor even that the relations which organised it, in idea and social praxis, would express an "average plan of life" as it could for Kipling. From then on the Empire fades almost entirely out of his fiction and he attempts to realise this average plan in quite different artistic images and in singularly distinct social milieux. To attempt to continue the work of Empire in this flux of historical and intellectual loss of direction, is to leave the individual Imperial officer with any powers of mind in the acutely uncomfortable, even disturbed position in which Rudbeck is left at the end of the novel:

He feels more and more disgusted and oppressed, like a man who finds himself walking down a narrow, dark channel in unknown country, which goes on getting darker and narrower; while he cannot decide whether he is on the right road or not.³

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1. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.19
 2. M.M. Mahood : Joyce Cary's Africa. 1964. p.190
 3. Joyce Cary : Mister Johnson. (1939) 1961. p.224

Such an analysis might lead the reader to assume that Cary's tone is essentially at the tragic end of the absurdist spectrum. This, however, is not the case. Cary is a master of comedy, but the infusion of comedy into the philosophical construct which he proposes always subserves the integrity of that larger purpose. In the tradition of comedy, Cary rests with the instructors rather than the entertainers. Cary's African novels evince a pessimism characteristic of the decade. By the time he had come to write Aissa Saved, as he asserts in the preface:

I had realized the fundamental injustice of the world. It had 'come home' to me. And once a fact of that size 'comes home' it never goes away again. It is a permanent resident of the largest size and the most insistent voice.¹

This perspective defines Cary's use of comedy. Even in his apparently most disinterested use of comic description, to fix in one's mind the external physical characteristics of a given character, there is an element of deliberate gothic or grotesque which corresponds to his larger insight of a distorted, absurd world. The following description of Henry in An American Visitor contains in its caricature a measure of the dislocation between Henry and the social environments to which he simultaneously belongs, and which he is powerless to escape:

1. Joyce Cary : Aissa Saved. (1932) 1972. p.9

Henry was just out of gaol for robbing carriers' women. He was a miserable-looking object, not much more than the dirty framework of a negro hung with the rags of an old khaki shirt whose flaps in front and behind dangled in ribbons over the greasy legs of a pair of dress trousers. His hat was bright green felt shaped like a pudding basin; a lady's hat begged from Hasluck.¹

The descriptions of Gore and Mrs. Dobson,² equally distorted, establish the alien quality of their presence in Africa - they are almost freakish and give a disturbing sense of unnaturalness. At times Cary's comic sense is as dark as a medieval danse macabre and anticipates the bitter, pathetic tones of Beckett. Examples are the death of Louis in The African Witch, or the weighing of Johnson with cans of jam, flour-bags and cash in order to determine the necessary length of rope with which to hang him. In neither case is the comedy abolished. Indeed, by refusing to allow a genuinely tragic tone to develop, Cary emphasizes the ludicrous, the cruel and the absurd condition in which his characters live, black and white mutually incomprehensible to each other, each group struggling with the erosion of "a complete idea of things", and inherited structures of belief. It is a world in which Bewsher is killed by the people whose welfare has occupied his whole working life and in which Aissa, in a darkness of self-surrender and ignorance into which her new religion has thrown her, can sacrifice her only son. In conclusion, Cary's vision of the Empire is that it is untenable

1. Joyce Cary : An American Visitor. (1933) 1976. p.14
 2. *ibid* : p.30 and p.109 respectively

and lacking any serious validation, bereft of vitality and vigour. The description of Fada station in Mr. Johnson undermines the traditional symbol of the Empire in a darkly satiric tone which remains Cary's chief characteristic at this stage of his artistic career, and which is often implicit, too, in the narratives of Conrad and Kipling:

It is as if some giant had tossed down a few scraps of old rotten hay on a mangy lion skin, tufted with moth-eaten fragments of the hair and scarred with long, white seams. These are the marks of temporary water-courses or drains.

The fort, on a slight hill which represents the flattened head-skin of the lion, is a square of earth rampart which has been levelled by time almost to the ground, so that the guard-room just inside it, a mud hut with a porch of corrugated iron, stands up like a miniature cracker hat, a kepi, stuck there, on one side of the lion's battered head, in derision. The tin porch is slightly crooked over the gaping door, like a broken peak pulled down over a black, vacant eye. The gateway of the fort is merely a gap in which dogs like to sleep. ¹

The strong sense of a parallel to the description of the ruins on Axel Heyst's island² would seem to suggest that the problems raised by Victory, with respect to the ideology of Imperialism, were in fact insoluble.

1. Joyce Cary : Mr. Johnson. (1939) 1961. p 14-5
 2. Joseph Conrad : Victory. (1915) 1967. p.5

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