The Last Romantics

Kipling and Yeats, a Comparative Biography 1865-1906

Submitted for the Degree of DPhil (English), Hilary Term 2013

Alexander Bubb, Hertford College

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Abstract

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My thesis examines Kipling and Yeats within the structure of a 'comparative biography'. My premise is that reading these two near-exact contemporaries alongside one another yields remarkable discursive echoes. My method consists in identifying these mutual echoes in their poetry and political rhetoric, and charting them against synchronicities in their lives. By reading one author against another in a fashion that might be considered canonically incongruous, I seek to throw light on unacknowledged links running across the cultural nexus of the period.

I find these echoes particularly intriguing since Kipling and Yeats were for most of their careers irreconcilable political enemies. Yeats in his political ascendance frequently played to the gallery by denouncing Kipling, while the latter hardly varnished his opinion of Irish poetry and Irish nationalism. However, a cross-reading of the two poets' bardic ambitions, heroic tropes and interpretations of history reveals that they frequently partake of a common discourse to achieve their opposed political ends. After supplementing this analysis with a biographical perspective, we can perceive that these discourses originate in their late 19th century artistic upbringing, and in the closely linked social circles which they inhabited in fin-de-siècle London. It is their very mutuality during the 1890s which imparts rancour to their twentieth-century attitudes, after the Boer War had ideologically sundered them.

Throughout, the thesis conceives them as figures transiting through both space and period. They had to reject but also adapt their Victorian inheritance in order to carry forward the Romantic poetic. Simultaneously, they undertook a physical transition between the colonial or semi-colonial societies of their birth and the metropolitan arena of their celebrity and influence. I see them as hybrid personalities and as romantic intellects, bringing imaginative fire from the colonial margins to satisfy the orientalist curiosity, and to soothe the fin-de-siècle anxieties, of the imperial centre. Although these peregrinations lead to a juggling of identities and poetic masks, in this dynamic lay both their success as authors and their influence as political and prophetic figures.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

In 1903 an American interviewer noted 'an unexpected hesitancy' in W.B. Yeats upon asking him a question that was, at that time, among those most frequently put to literati on the trans-Atlantic lecture circuit.[1] Would he care to comment on the works of a well-known figure whom their mutual friend W.E. Henley had once nicknamed 'the kipperling'? 'I shall say nothing what ever about Kipling if you please,' replied the pre-eminent Irish author. 'I will say nothing about any living poet. If he would have the goodness to die I would have plenty to say.'[2] Or so Yeats recollected, in a placatory letter to his collaborator Lady Gregory. Up to that point when the clever reporter caught him off guard, he explained, he had diligently curbed all remarks of an 'Irish' nature. In the pages of the New York *Sun*, however, the expansive poet appears quite in control of the exchange:

> 'Kipling? Oh, Kipling had a soul to sell, and he sold it to the devil … Undoubtedly Kipling is a man of great genius. He has done a work of great beauty and a new kind. But latterly he has turned himself into a kind of imperialist journalist in prose and verse, and with all that I have no sympathy. Ten years ago Kipling mattered greatly to men of letters—today he matters much to journalists.'[3]

A casual reading might put Yeats's barb down to a battle of the bays between strident British imperialism and resistant Irish nationalism, or at least to long-standing enmity. In fact, Rudyard Kipling had only recently joined the lengthy Yeats enemies list. 'Latterly' as Yeats remarks, he had been editing a government newspaper in South Africa, setting him at variance with those who opposed the Boer War and Irish enlistment for it. Before 1899, however, Yeats had shown little objection to the man from India. Indeed, in the literary press he had praised Kipling's renderings of 'the colour and spectacle of barbarous life'.[4] If the war had provoked the imperialist in Kipling and the nationalist in Yeats to part ways, what had transpired to bring about their prior convergence?

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[1] Edwin Arnold (1891), Arthur Conan Doyle (1894) and Sidney Lee (1903) had all been asked the same question on their respective American tours. See Philip Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain 1870-1918* (Oxford, 2006), pp.582-9.

[2] 'what ever' is correct. Yeats's misspellings are so frequent that I have chosen, like his biographers, not to mark them '[sic]'.

[3] W.B. Yeats, *The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats*, ed. John Kelly and others (4 vols., Oxford, 1986-), iii, 467.

[4] W.B. Yeats, *Uncollected Prose by W.B. Yeats*, ed. John P. Frayne and Colton Johnson (2 vols., New York, 1970-75), ii, 42.

Much of the rich literary texture that connects these two authors has slipped into a critical lacuna. The task of this thesis is to retrieve it. Chronologically, it will examine their early development in the 1870s and 1880s, their interconnections during the 1890s and lastly the events, in the early twentieth century, that initiated their estrangement within the historical record. They are not the only casualties of a fragmented view of the past. But it is singular that the nexus of aesthetic and political debates that drew together the first two English-language Nobel laureates, their vast shared public to whom they broadcast simultaneous responses to war and atrocity, and even their living and working at times within minutes of each other, crossing myriad paths from Hardy's parlour to the Savile Club billiards room—and yet it seems, poignantly, never physically meeting—should today go almost unremarked. Rather, both poets have often been deprived of the justice of their context, and unquestioned generic assumptions have been made *a priori*. 'Yeats's career overlaps with those of both Kipling and Forster,' Stephen Regan observes, 'and yet the three hardly overlapped in their lives or in their work.'[5] Frequently these two nearly exact contemporaries, who spent equal portions of their lives either side of 1900, have been canonically assigned to different centuries.

A large part of this stems from a difficulty in overcoming the received images of 'WBY' and 'RK' that have been bequeathed to the post-modern era. Their two-dimensional portraits have been engineered by both detractors and hero-worshippers, of which their political affiliations form just one aspect. When Auden granted Kipling the racialist and Yeats the fascist Time's premature absolution, he failed to perceive that these two had already set about erasing Kipling the lyricist and Yeats the occultist, Kipling the modernist and Yeats the Victorian from the canonical memory.[6] Reacquaintance with these personalities necessitates the peeling away of reputations, and appreciating how their literary legacies were originally formed.

It is also important to resist and decode the authoritative voices of the authors themselves. 'Ten years ago Kipling mattered greatly'—Yeats's statement in 1903 implies that a man at the peak of his career, and just six months younger than himself, is already past tense. Indeed, Yeats was presciently

[5] Stephen Regan, 'Poetry and Nation: W.B. Yeats', in Richard Allen and Harish Trivedi (eds.), *Literature and Nation: Britain and India 1800-1990* (Abingdon, 2000), p.79.
[6] In the original version of his elegy 'In Memory of W.B. Yeats.' Edward Mendelson (ed.), *The English Auden: Poems, Essays and Dramatic Writings* (London, 1977), p.242.

anticipating Kipling's critical decline over the following decade, but he was also displaying what his biographer R.F. Foster has called 'a protean ability to shift his ground, repossess the advantage, and lay a claim to authority.'[7] If Yeats excluded his peer from the vanguard, it begs the question of how they first came to be associated. That among Yeats's contemporaries, perhaps only Kipling can rival him in the determination to seek poetic authority, is the first clue to restoring their shared intellectual background.

The answers are to be found chiefly in that mutually formative period which lies at the heart of this thesis—a milieu from which Yeats was later to claim Kipling had never mentally departed.[8] The London of the 1890s is a place that recent studies have made more readily accessible.[9] In addition, superior biographical studies of each poet, by Foster and Andrew Lycett, coupled with scholarly editions of their collected letters, have done much to recover Kipling and Yeats in their full complexity. In the furtherance of this aim, this thesis will complement the biographical discipline with a comparative approach.

Reappraising the Late Victorian Literary Field

A comparative attitude is one poised to penetrate and interrogate the 'authoritative version.' Its principal benefits can be summarized within S.S. Prawer's concept of 'placing', defined as 'the mutual illumination of several texts'.[10] Contrasting one author with another enables the critic more sharply to distinguish the characteristic technique and personality of each, and to 'place' them more surely within their own style. As one contemporary is set alongside another, the latter day reader can assess each in critical relief, viewing them in the round instead of as a flattened portrait in Yeats's municipal gallery. With the abolition of these icons, Kipling and Yeats re-emerge as men of their

[7] R.F. Foster, *W.B. Yeats: a Life* (2 vols., Oxford, 1997-2003), i, xxxi.
[8] Given the opportunity to edit literary history, Yeats acknowledged Kipling's prominence at the turn of the century but not his relevance. 'Victorianism had been defeated,' he reminisced in the introduction to a major anthology, 'though two writers dominated the movement who had never heard of that defeat or did not believe in it: Rudyard Kipling and William Watson.' See W.B. Yeats (ed.), *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (New York, 1936), p.xii.
[9] See, for example, Karl Beckson, *London in the 1890s: A Cultural History* (London, 1992); Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst (eds.), *The Fin de Siècle: a Reader in Cultural History c.1880-1900* (Oxford, 2000).
[10] S.S. Prawer, *Comparative Literary Studies: an Introduction* (London, 1973), p.144.

time. Fin de siècle London, the principal literary field into which this thesis aims to recontextualize them, will be examined in depth in Chapter 5.

There are already precedents for reacquainting each of these authors with their peers and re-emphasising them as figures of their own historical moment. Graham Hough argues that Yeats's Rhymers' Club milieu can be used to place him with greater historical and aesthetic accuracy at the foundation of his career.[11] Louis Menand, chasing up some remarks of Harold Bloom, has elegantly argued that Kipling should be recognized as a member of the same Aesthetic tradition which unites Pater and Wilde.[12] Comparative investigation is now helping to restore his engagement, often underestimated, with the turn of the century literary world. Peter Childs, exploiting a comparison with Hardy, re-places him at the heart of early twentieth century artistic and public life. For poets initiating their careers at this stage, he writes, 'Kipling is the genius of contemporary literature and provides the benchmark against which their work is judged.'[13] One has to search widely for critical interest in specifically relating Kipling to Yeats, but the suggestive power of what exists often outweighs its brevity. 'Mention of Yeats and Kipling in the same sentence,' speculates an American textbook, 'suggests a different way of defining the Victorian era'.[14]

Heterodox comparison can, indeed, open up closed routes into a deeper and richer knowledge of a period. Little explicit contact between authors is not, moreover, necessarily a drawback. David Damrosch has recently remarked on the contribution that oblique pairings can make towards the discipline of field studies. Referring to his own teaching of Joyce, he has noted that the introduction of first Ibsen, and then two authors whom Joyce did not know—Tagore and Ichiyo—into the frame of reference can help to place Joyce geographically and temporally by suggesting 'something of the literary "field" within which Joyce was writing, or more generally, what was possible to write before

[11] Graham Hough, *The Last Romantics: Ruskin to Yeats* (London, 1961), pp.192-4, 215.
[12] Louis Menand, 'Kipling and the History of Forms', in Maria DiBattista and Lucy McDiarmid (eds.), *High and Low Moderns: Literature and Culture 1889-1939* (Oxford, 1996), p.149-51.
[13] Peter Childs, *The Twentieth Century in Poetry: a Critical Survey* (London, 1999), p.20.
[14] William Flesch, *The Facts on File Companion to British Poetry: 19th Century* (New York, 2010), p.417.

him.'[15] As a biographical exercise, this serves to defamiliarize the historical figure, before dynamically re-acquainting him with his context.

Once re-established in the literary field, Kipling and Yeats can be seen in engagement across it. For this purpose, I have made use of specific linking figures (notably Wilde, Lionel Johnson and W.E. Henley) to demonstrate how common themes run through their early critical reception, and how their canonical division was determined as much by their shared milieu as by their own intentions. As benchmarks for aspiring poets, London's professional bookmen often made use of Kipling to critique Yeats and vice versa, championing one man against the other as the voice who would best speak to the forthcoming century. Thus the aesthetic debates and concerns which intimately linked them can be illuminated by re-exploring the comparative arguments that their peers often drew between the two. The analysis of reviews, awards and other indicators of literary standing can not only show how reputations were formed and authority levered, but can trace intellectual exchange across the literary spectrum, linking authors in sympathy or in opposition through the reading culture of their times. Contemporary readerships did not always draw the political line between their oeuvres required by the post-imperial era. American and European readers frequently viewed Kipling and Yeats side by side as the two major representatives of British poetry. When the young Robert Frost was in London in 1913, he wrote of literary history in the making: 'How slowly but surely Yeats has eclipsed Kipling'.[16] As such, the mutual 'placing' of these two poets is an exercise in recovering not only their individual careers, but in re-animating what Lawrence Rainey calls the 'density of the social space' wherein poets and artists of this era interacted with each other through multiple social networks and mediums of publishing, performance and broadcast.[17]

Confronting their Uncanny Echoes

Conjoint with its purpose of re-visualizing the late Victorian literary field, this thesis will also seek to identify and explicate telling mutual echoes in Yeats and Kipling's creative writing and political

[15] David Damrosch, 'World Literature in a Postcanonical, Hypercanonical Age' in Haun Saussy (ed.) *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, (Baltimore, 2006), p.50.
[16] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 471.
[17] Lawrence Rainey, 'The cultural economy of modernism' in Michael H. Levenson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism* (Cambridge, 2005), pp.34-5.

discourse. Although Yeats, through his association with Pound, is often classed as a modernist poet, the attentive reader can often find him on the same page with Kipling, sometimes in those very features for which younger writers found him 'modern.' By way of illustrating my method, I shall follow up a comparison suggested by Jan Montefiore: a coterminous matching, in 1919-20, of Kipling's 'The Gods of the Copybook Headings' with Yeats's 'The Second Coming'.[18]

Thematically, they are prophecies of coming apocalypse, linked by a grim notion of cyclical history that is reflected in the quite different metre and syntax of each poem. Yeats is the more sophisticated, referring to his philosophic system of gyres in the opening lines, and as one historical cycle reaches its climax the revolving symmetry of 'turning and turning', 'falcon' and 'falconer' and 'hold' and 'world' gives way to disassociated impressions of chaos. Glib were it not expressed so harshly, Kipling's is a more didactic moral drawn out through successive incarnations of dreamers undone by ever-defective human nature. By ironic, antithetical twists of fate pacifism results in war and socialism in poverty—reversals embodied in sharp-tongued lines whose rhymes coil reproachfully back on themselves. Some of Yeats's lyric quality is echoed however, in the inexplicable and eerily silent cruelties of history, 'a tribe … wiped off its icefield' or the lights going out in Rome, images of civilizational decay with which the Irish poet would have sympathized. Both poems also envisage sinister embodiments of the coming darkness—the 'rough beast' and eponymous Gods—the first of which 'slouches' while the latter 'limp.'[19] Their presence reflects both Biblical allusion and a common fascination with violence. The poems share a conservative temperament, reflective less of conformity than of deep scepticism and anxiety. Their oracular power also partakes of the oratorical. Appearing in the *Sunday Pictorial*, Kipling's poem was 'pitched' from its conception as a public poem, headed with the date: 1919. 'The Second Coming', while composed in that year, did not appear until late 1920, and then in a more highbrow organ: the *Dial*, perhaps reflecting Yeats's wariness of political intervention during the early stages of the Irish Troubles. He attended to his role as a national poet retrospectively, however, by misdating 'Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen' to give the impression that it was composed in the eponymous year.

[18] Jan Montefiore, *Rudyard Kipling* (Tavistock, 2007), p.111.
[19] See Rudyard Kipling, *The Complete Verse*, ed. James Fenwick (London, 2006), pp.657-8; *The Variorum Edition of the Complete Poems of W.B. Yeats*, ed. Peter Allt and Russell K. Alspach (London, 1957), pp.401-2.

These juxtaposed echoes, then, can help us to redraw the links which connected them within aesthetic, technical and ideological fields, as well as to reanimate the cultural nexus through which their paths crossed. But more significantly, as this example shows, it may also uncover a narrative of intimacy and entanglement hitherto not anticipated. The best word to apply to the phenomenon observed may be that used by Angela Smith in her comparative study of Woolf and Mansfield: *familiarity.*[20] The reader thinks she knows them, but the point at which they become unfamiliar to the reader is potentially where, within the literary field, they may become recognisable to one another. Unlike Smith's subjects, Kipling and Yeats were not in regular dialogue and do not appear to have substantially read each other's work. As such there are few obvious patterns of exchange or influence in their work. What is present is a broader sensation of déjà vu when contemplating the broader themes, aesthetic concerns, political positioning and instinct for form that govern it. These characteristics, I would suggest, either share a common origin in their contemporary Victorian upbringing, or else are tied to authorial anxieties that *necessarily* and *characteristically* beset them as men of their generation and historical moment.

The methodological paradigm this implies is one of parallel development within the broader evolution of literary trends, but by no means in mutual, hermetic isolation. Clearly each is aware of the other's presence, and when Yeats makes a satiric allusion to the jingoistic Kipling, or the latter indulges in some tirade against velvetine aesthetes and jumped-up Irish poetasters, they are 'placing' themselves aesthetically and politically in contra-distinction to the other. While this may not be a case of what is conventionally understood as 'influence', therefore, it is a profitable area for the application of a 'counter-influential' model. As opposed to 'Positive Influence' (borrowing, imitation, adaptation etc.), Elias Canetti has highlighted the importance of patterns of 'Negative Influence' or 'counter-influences.' Counter-images,' he adds, 'not always obvious on the surface, are more important than models.' In the case of Kipling and Yeats, one might even make a case for what A.L. Bem has called 'influence by repulsion.'[21] Certainly each poet came to feel that they stood in the vanguard of rival literary movements—respectively the schools of action and moral and the school of the subjective, the

[20] Angela Smith, *Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: a Public of Two* (Oxford, 1999), pp.1-2.
[21] Both quoted in Prawer, *Comparative Literary Studies*, p.66.

soul or the Symbol—and the potential for rapprochement was inhibited by sharper, political divisions. Evidently each articulated his own persona, both poetic and political, in part by defining himself against what the other was seen to represent, and this was a fissure pursued, deepened (indeed, perhaps originated) by journalists and literary critics. Though it may appear ironic therefore that, in spite of this antagonism, Kipling and Yeats at times appear to be echoing one another's thoughts or pursuing their goals through allied strategies, I argue that the repulsion suggested by Yeats's indiscretion in New York was in fact prompted by their underlying mutuality.

Mapping their Lives: Transitions through Time and Space

These echoes often speak less of sympathy than of tensions, ambiguities and contradictions embedded in their literary character. This thesis will seek to identify and map them, therefore, not only against synchroncities or meeting-places on their authors' biographic trajectories, but against points of schism and discontinuity. Such moments might be said to epitomize the lives of men who may be considered in terms of what the anthropologist Victor Turner called a 'threshold figure'—a personality whose cultural role is to transit geographical, temporal and social borderlands.[22] Although they may superficially appear very different poets, as late Victorians Kipling and Yeats had to negotiate an artistic transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. The comparative perspective must be used to place them dynamically within their changing context, not merely reassigning their 'place' in chronological sequence, but endowing them with historical motion.

Their progress through time is matched by parallel journeys through space—migrations from the countries of their birth and Romantic inspiration to London and America, where by translating themselves for the consumption of a metropolitan audience they attained fame and influence. This interlocking of place with time is crucial to an understanding of these artists who were by necessity retrospective. Glancing over their shoulders at the departing nineteenth century, their transmutation of *temps perdu* into autobiographical elegy is formed within that internalized place of origin—the

[22] See Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca, 1974), pp.258-9

Memory Harbour of Jack Yeats or Kipling's 'Mother of Cities'.[23] Their temporal unease was not unique. Housman too had his 'land of lost content', but his melancholy was displaced onto an emblematic Shropshire that he had scarcely visited, whereas the bond which linked Kipling and Yeats to the dependencies of their genius was far more evocative and conflicting.[24] Like Hardy they were time-torn, but it is their place-torn character which ensures their contribution to early modernism. Both seek to address the fragmentation of metropolitan culture, by importing into the urban *Waste Land* imaginative intensity from the colonial margins.

This transitional narrative, then, is crucial to reimagining the literary field through which Yeats and Kipling's work circulated. Its full intricacies, however, call for a more sophisticated praxis. Michel de Certeau has described the various attempts—by Weber, Kuhn and Lévi-Strauss among others—to justify recourse to a zeitgeist, paradigm or mentality in describing a period. The inherent ambiguities of such 'totalities' leave them open to the charge of ontologism. Unwieldy and obstructive tools, they have met with severe criticism by Michel Foucault.[25] Historians of our time, he wrote in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), delve the strata of history for single units of evidence and—sorting and placing each with its fellows—attempt to constitute long vertical narrative or 'series' through time. In a countervailing trend, however, exponents of the history of ideas (including literary critics), expose the discontinuity and non-linearity of series, which refuse to remain discrete but intersect unexpectedly with each other. In place of the historical 'series', Foucault proposes the 'discursive formation' as a conceptual framework comfortable with the dispersedness and contradiction inherent in the development of an idea or ideology.[26]

Foucault's description of 'constellations' of discourses supplies the conceptual clarity for this project which vague notions of zeitgeist cannot. While Foucault admits that a named period is an arbitrary imposition, it does not for him necessitate the imposition of a *narrative*. His critic attempts first to achieve as broad a knowledge as possible of the period, conceiving it in terms of a complex web of

[23] From 'To the City of Bombay', Kipling, *Complete Verse*, pp.142-4.
[24] See A.E. Housman, *A Shropshire Lad* (London, 1986), p.64.
[25] Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York, 1988), p.28.
[26] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (London, 1972), pp.6-9.

intersecting and parting discourses. What the historian needs to take in, he writes in a striking passage, is

> Different *oeuvres*, dispersed books, that whole mass of texts that belong to a single discursive formation—and so many authors who know or do not know one another, criticize one another, invalidate one another, pillage one another, meet without knowing it, and obstinately intersect their unique discourses in a web of which they are not the masters, of which they cannot see the whole.[27]

Ledger and Luckhurst have already proposed the application of Foucault's model to a period characterized by an 'extra-ordinary sense of cross-fertilization between forms of knowledge.' Their hope is that enunciating 'the constellated discourses of the Fin de Siècle' may 'open up the interconnections of these structures again,' restoring some of the motion and fluidity to a period rendered static by preconceptions.[28] If Kipling and Yeats are to be re-endowed with cultural and political agency within this period, they must also be seen in negotiation with the discourses that they encounter. These are, indeed, the crowded chambers in which they 'meet without knowing it.'

Tracing Kipling and Yeats through Fin de Siècle Discourses

Although the biographic chronology forms the backbone of this thesis, therefore, it cannot entirely dictate its structure. Each chapter also views Kipling and Yeats paradigmatically, through shared discourses whose valencies extend across the breadth of their lives. The principal discourses which shall be examined include Decadence, nationality, 'dreaming' and—an allusive field which connects many of their political as well as artistic statements—that of romance and the Romantic. Romanticism is one of those 'ready-made syntheses' against which *The Archaeology of Knowledge* militates and, following Foucault, I aim to treat it less as a continuous tradition or genealogy of influence than as a discontinuous and multifaceted discursive formation. As a family of critical terms it is, significantly, a discourse that takes shape during Yeats and Kipling's poetic apprenticeship. The usage of 'romance' ranges from R.L. Stevenson's generic advocacy of the short romance as successor to the defunct three-decker novel, to Andrew Lang's more holistic conception of 'romance' as a locus for cultural revival and renewal. As for 'Romanticism', Prawer weighs up at length its disputed deployment as a

[27] Ibid., p.126.
[28] Ledger and Luckhurst, *The Fin de Siècle*, pp. xx-xxii.

historical phenomenon and a 'typological' mode, but critics such as Northrop Frye and Ziolkowski have overlooked the fact that from the fin de siècle onwards the tradition of High Romanticism becomes an invokable heritage, and that both Kipling and Yeats do repeatedly invoke it.[29]

The Romanticism or romance they or their contemporaries invoke is never the same thing. Michael O'Neill and Peter Howarth have recently shown how, in the writings of Modernist critics, 'Romantic' as a label is a misleading stalking horse, while the debates in which it is deployed nonetheless reach back to the early nineteenth century. Thus the Georgian poets are rejected as 'Romantic' by Poundian antagonists whose aesthetic programme in fact reproduces the theories of Coleridge.[30] Romanticism is a legacy, then, but one whose disjointed articulations must be referred always to the unique concerns of their individual speaker. I would, however, like to connect Kipling and Yeats through two meandering but discernible strands in this wider discourse. Landscape and belonging is a theme which concerns us from childhood, which Chapter 4 treats in depth. The drive for public authority, which reaches back to the 'unacknowledged legislators' of Shelley's *Defence of Poetry*, becomes an increasingly prominent theme in the chapters thereafter. Lastly, it is important to compare Yeats and Kipling's sense of themselves as 'last romantics'. If there is a sense of revival in fin de siècle invocations of 'Romantic' and 'romance', then it is a last-ditch revival or one that is already too late—that of millenarian evangelists *avant le deluge*. They peddle a draught already viscid in the bottle, and—within the discourse of Decadence—the rejuvenation it will bring will prove only a final, dying efflorescence. Israel Zangwill merely brought this pessimistic subtext to the surface when, in 1916, he attacked Romanticism as false art which had led European society blindly into the Great War.[31] Several of my key secondary texts were published or reissued immediately after the next war, Hough's *The Last Romantics* and Le Gallienne's *The Romantic '90s* both dwelling nostalgically on that droll and eccentric decade while at the same time—implicitly—seeking the first harbingers of disaster. But this dilemma of attraction and repulsion, destiny and doom, had fretted at the word from

[29] Prawer, *Comparative Literary Studies*, p.121; they invoke it in such phrases as 'We were the last romantics', 'Romantic Ireland's dead and gone' or 'To the True Romance'.
[30] Michael O'Neill, *The All-Sustaining Air: Romantic Legacies and Renewals in British, American, and Irish Poetry since 1900* (Oxford, 2007), p.6; Peter Howarth, *British Poetry in the Age of Modernism* (Cambridge, 2005), p.60.
[31] Israel Zangwill, *The War for the World* (London, 1916), pp.93-4.

at least the 1880s.[32] 'Romantic' is a promise to recover fresh purity and innocence, then, and yet it is also something already tainted.

As personalities in transition, Yeats and Kipling's engagements with their nineteenth-century inheritance are self-consciously ambivalent. Although they consciously shrugged off the baggage of Lockwood Kipling's Pre-Raphaelite idealism and John Butler Yeats's [henceforth JBY] Positivist rationalism, their discomfort with the contemporary world often led them to confront it within a Victorian idiom. The apocalyptic resonances of 'The Second Coming', as John Rosenberg has suggested, reflect in fact a youth steeped in Tennyson's *Idylls* and Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night* (one of Kipling's personal favourites, this further ties Yeats's poem into the genealogy of his own 'Copybook Headings').[33] Their identification with the bardic arts, as Ronald Schuchard has explored in respect to Yeats, is on the one hand a strategy for corralling an enlarged, newly-literate reading public into a national (or imperial) community. It simultaneously retains, however, a distinctly Morris-eqsue, anti-modern, dissatisfied and contrarian tone.[34] The literary modernists Filippo Marinetti and T.E. Hulme may have fulminated in lecture and editorial against worn-out English 'Romanticism', but the notion of the artist in isolation—legislating for his times from a place of alienation—was part of the Romantic legacy bequeathed to them by Yeats and Kipling.

Their experiments with a variety of Romantic forms and tropes, in the context of fin de siècle London, will be the subject of the fifth chapter. The first two chapters, instead, will detail their inheritance of Romantic doctrine and aesthetic during their childhood and adolescence. This includes the theme of childhood itself, and the atavistic, mythic imagination attributed to children in late Victorian culture. During the course of their careers, infancy would become a disputed territory at the origin both of artistic insight and national belonging. Hatred of England, where they were schooled, and suspicion of modernity in general is also explored in these chapters, as is their psychically divided nature—manifested, in both cases, by hallucinatory episodes often exacerbated by chemical stimulant. Usurping the English poetic lineage (and Romantic inheritance) from a position not central to

[32] The elder Yeats, for example, alternately embraces and casts off the mantle of Romantic visionary sage. See O'Neill, *All-Sustaining Air*, p.55.
[33] John Rosenberg, *The Fall of Camelot: a study of Tennyson's 'Idylls of the King'* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), p.36.
[34] Ronald Schuchard, *The Last Minstrels: Yeats and the Revival of the Bardic Arts* (Oxford, 2008), pp.xxix-xxv.

metropolitan literary culture but lateral to it, they enter London clutching the imaginative opiates of the imperial margins. As such they are in the vanguard of the modern quest for alternative spirituality, inclining to the secret conclave offered by Freemasonry and Theosophy, and rejecting conventional religion in preference for Islam, Buddhism or a composite occultism. It is an impetus that drew both poets imaginatively towards the East.

Political ideologies and enmities, and the means of engaging with them poetically, were major discourses for both poets. They aspired to be Shelleyan legislators but were charged with unscrupulous rabble-rousing, using their Victorian 'training' to conflate the subjective private world with the political, public world. They both employed novel means to summon a community of readers, through newspapers and popular magazines, in recruiting speeches, lectures and psaltery recitations. High-flown and yet necessarily populist, they were by turns trailblazers for younger writers and undignified counter-examples for 'high[er] moderns.' This pursuit of public authority is the subject of the concluding chapter, which opens up promising avenues for future work. In the years succeeding this thesis's remit, Yeats and Kipling's political dispute increasingly drew the cultural realm into its rhetorical cohorts. As such they are key figures for the understanding of how art intersected with politics at what Lionel Trilling called 'the dark and bloody crossroads' of the modernist period. Quoting Trilling, Sara Blair comments that 'in the moment of modernism, "culture" itself—what constitutes it, whose property it is, how it identifies or informs national or racial bodies—is a deeply political issue.'[35] Yeats and Kipling's work must be at the heart of any explanation of this modernist kulturkampf. Their linguistic convergence demonstrates how notions of the romantic or heroic can be invoked simultaneously within both imperialist and nationalist discourses.

Comparative Biography

The narrative focus of this thesis is not, and should not be, of uniform intensity. Large stretches of time are sometimes passed over rapidly, so that specific moments of convergence—or conflict—can be treated in depth. A parallel timeline is provided (see Appendix), to assist locating these key

[35] Sara Blair, 'Modernism and the Politics of Culture' in Levenson (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, pp.157-8.

moments amid the broader lifespan. When deployed correctly, as the New Historicists found, the eloquence of anecdotes contradicts retrospective assumptions. The historian and anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot argues that historiography should consist of unmuffling the 'bundles of silence' that lie in unexplained gaps pasted over and excluded by dominant readings.[36] In this respect echoes and intersections between Kipling and Yeats might serve to detect critical silences overwritten by nationalist, imperial or postcolonial narratives. At the same time, discretion and caution are required against the banalities of coincidence. Parallels of chronology can on occasion throw up strange and striking affinities which, when probed, dissolve like ghosts. To be seduced by them is to succumb to a determinist reading.[37]

Likewise, it is imprudent to perceive Kipling and Yeats as companionate. I have found no record of them speaking with one another, or even directly corresponding. But it is possible to think of these consciously self-divided men as *familiar* in a different, more uncanny fashion. Julia Kristeva wrote in *Strangers to Ourselves* about the shift which arrived, perhaps with Freud's concept of *unheimliche* after WWI, when 'the foreigner is acknowledged to be within and not a hostile presence outside the self.' 'We are our own foreigners,' she writes, 'we are divided... and when we flee from or struggle against the foreigner, we are fighting our unconscious.'[38] Something of this model, which Angela Smith applies to Mansfield and Woolf, might be used for the more estranged but strangely proximate Yeats and Kipling. In their youth, each man conducted an ongoing *agon* with their nineteenth-century precursors—Kipling with Browning; Yeats with Shelley and Tennyson.[39] Both partook of a London milieu, moreover, preoccupied with throwing off the encrusted tropes of Victorian poetry. In time, this quarrel with the past fed into their quarrel with each other, so that by doing battle they inadvertently echoed one another. Peter Childs has written, for example, of the dampening effect the masculine discourse of Kipling and Newbolt had on the 'personal' school in English literature.[40] This was something which Yeats had to overcome, but ironically his attempt to ground a rhetorical

[36] See Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, 1995).
[37] It is important to make use of examples of *synchronicity* without adopting an overly *synchronic* view of history. Fredric Jameson warns against models, including those of Foucault, that exclude dialectics of struggle and resistance. See *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London, 1981) pp.90-1.
[38] Quoted in Smith, *Mansfield and Woolf*, pp.2-3.
[39] See Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (Oxford, 1997), pp.11-12.
[40] Childs, *Twentieth Century*, p.58.

fraternity in the quest for a personal Ireland finds its counterpart in Kipling's attempt to voice, in the fantasy of renouncing one's self to the Indian other, his own underlying strain of solitude and alienation.

> Know that I would accounted be
> True brother of a company...[41]

> To learn and discern of his brother the clod,
> Of his brother the brute, and his brother the God,
> He has gone from the council and put on the shroud.[42]

What Foster calls Yeats's 'alchemical capacity' to transmute experience into art was a skill shared by Kipling.[43] As such the events of their lives are vital to this study. However, it is the comparative juxtaposition of their work that forms the mechanism to re-envisage the literary field which they traversed. A life-narrative is, if treated sympathetically, an instrument well-suited for cutting horizontally across the vertical 'series' constructed by Foucault's historians and illuminating new discursive formations. Biographies have also been arranged as vertical series, but by 'sympathetic' I mean a treatment which avoids a developmental trajectory, keeps its eye off the finish line, and imagines its subject faced at every stage by forking trajectories. A powerful way of adumbrating these potential futures is to suggest how one author's path might have intersected—had circumstances favoured it—with another. I have sought to push this principle a step further: how better to break down 'ready-made' and unquestioned sequences of influence, tradition, or *zeitgeist* in favour of new asymmetric patterns than by writing history predicated on authors who 'meet without knowing it'?

My method can be called comparative biography, therefore, but of a sometimes shadowy and affective kind. 'Following the thread of analogies and symbols', as Foucault writes, critical analysis of this sort 'animates the most opposed figures'.[44] Interweaving parallel lives through discursive echoes, the relationship it seeks to establish is a liaison of intimate strangers. There are few precedents for this in the discipline of life-writing. Dual biographies have typically been structured around influence, exchange, collaboration or long-term rivalry, but Yeats and Kipling's is an unintentional

[41] Yeats, 'To Ireland in the Coming Times', *Variorum Poems*, pp.137-9.
[42] Kipling, 'A Song of Kabir', *Complete Verse*, pp.409-10.
[43] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, xxvi.
[44] Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp.22, 150.

collaboration, an unacknowledged rivalry. Such an unfamiliar encounter is a model, however, with which Yeats himself would have recognized. Convinced that personalities were only fully realized in the pursuit of their opposite, he believed that after death he would confront the mythic hero of his five-play cycle, Cuchulain, uncannily familiar to him after a lifetime of cultivating the antithetical self.

This opportunity for juxtaposition was too tempting for Graham Hough, the Burma railway veteran and post-war critic from whose first book I have borrowed my title. In the epilogue to *The Last Romantics*, Yeats meets his despised contemporary H.G. Wells in Hades, and watches the nineteenth-century world burned up in the inferno of Hiroshima. The science-fiction sage is introduced as a witty counterpoint, but his appearance caps a narrative that fundamentally reflects Yeats's own mythic self-authoring as the elegist to a dying tradition. Elsewhere Hough makes use of Kipling, but only fleetingly, and merely to isolate the characteristics of Yeats's milieu. The aim of this thesis is to view this phase of late Romanticism in its full permutations—not to stage hypothetical encounters, but to uncover real but subterranean dialogues. Hough's reluctant colloquy, however, does offer one vital principle: as argument gets underway between the shades, their fundamental differences emerge through the discourses that they share. Though Yeats initially persists in his mortal disregard for Wells, therefore, in their afterlife he finds that he cannot dismiss him: 'We writers! How generous of you to assume that you and I have had any purposes in common.'[45]

[45] Hough, *Last Romantics*, p.264.

2. 'We Shall Go Back': Childhoods Lived and Relived

If we conceive the condition of Yeats and Kipling's lives as one of translation and pilgrimage, the obvious place to begin a study is at the place of embarkation—the native anchorage from where their lives' trajectories may be charted. Here perhaps might be located the ghosts of themes and germs of dilemmas which would absorb them in later years.

Despite the expectations of their readers, however, neither writer could really claim a static point of origin. The Anglo-Indian prodigy who stormed onto the London literary scene in 1889 had, in fact, made his first return trip to the mother country before his fifth birthday, when he had trained his ventriloquistic ear on the dialect of his grandparents' Worcestershire.[1] As his schoolfriend George Beresford suggested in the year of Kipling's death, many of his more casual early readers would not have realized that he first read and wrote poetry not in India, but in a boarding school on the north coast of Devon, in the West London studios of his maternal relatives and, from age five to eleven, amidst the bullying of an evangelical Southsea foster-mother to whom Alice and Lockwood surrendered their dark-complexioned boy to prevent his growing up altogether *jungly*.[2] Today, 'Yeats Country' tourists gather around a carefully-chosen gravesite in the shadow of Ben Bulben, but the poet's first two blue plaques are to be found on a down-at-heel villa in suburban Dublin, and on a Bloomsbury terrace where the family moved in 1867 after John Butler Yeats threw up the Bar and, to his wife's dismay, turned painter. His children were to spend years shuttling between various London addresses and the Liverpool docks, from where family-owned steamers conveyed them to lengthy holidays with their mother's people in Sligo.

If the poets' early days were characterized by displacement and motion, perhaps it was for this very reason that the demarcation of a place of native origin became so vital to them. No threshold was crossed on their life's journeys without a habitual backward glance at the paths trodden and untrod, and the place 'where all the ladders start' was the point from which they oriented their respective

[1] Andrew Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling* (London, 1999), p.38.
[2] G.C. Beresford, *Schooldays with Kipling* (London, 1936), p.277.

trajectories through time and space.[3] For both men the act of retrospection and evocation was creatively stimulating, sometimes—in the case of Yeats's interrogation of spirits—undertaken literally as a ritual exercise. The purpose, therefore, of gazing back with them is not to mark the future course of their lives in the experiences of their formative years. Rather it is to read Kipling and Yeats themselves in the act of reading the present into their past. It was part of their distinctive timeliness to act as their own mythologists in an era of burgeoning literary celebrity. Various family stories circulated publicly, for instance, concerning infantile omens of their nascent genius. Confronted with scenes such as the impetuous 'Ruddy' striding across paddies trading pidgin Hindustani with a Marathi *ryot*, or 'Willie' Yeats encountering supernatural apparitions in his bedroom, contemporary readers and journalists were eager to know how the poets' formative years made them what they were.[4] That both were artists' sons, in particular, continues to concern us, and will be addressed at the end of this chapter. But the more pertinent question that must first be borne in mind is: how did the two poets fashion themselves through their childhoods? Their elusive autobiographies, therefore, are principal comparative texts for this chapter.

It could be said that the first is a nineteenth-century question and the second a twentieth-century, post-Freudian line of inquiry. To answer the first biographically, Yeats and Kipling's formative years were an upbringing which grounded them in the cultural world of late Victorianism, while their adolescence began with a return from metropolitan schooling to a place of rediscovered origin. Motion and place are the dominant motifs. In answering the second, however, it is important to remember that while both poets ascribed great meaning and influence to their childhoods, this interest was oriented in a manner very different from our own. As Jacqueline Rose makes clear in her Freudian study of *Peter Pan*, psychoanalysis did not read the patient's childhood experiences as a primer but as a palimpsest: 'it persists as something which we endlessly rework in our attempt to build an image of our own history.'[5] If Kipling and Yeats showed signs of grasping this model of identity, their understanding owed less to contemporary science than it did to their Romantic predecessors. For

[3] W.B. Yeats, 'The Circus Animals' Desertion', *Variorum Poems*, pp.629-30.
[4] See Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.4. Charles Eliot Norton, the Harvard savant, holidayed with the Kiplings at Nashik in the late 1860s and reproduced this anecdote in his preface to the 1900 American edition of *Plain Tales from the Hills.*
[5] Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan, or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction* (Macmillan, 1984), p.12.

example, their lyrical poetry on childhood themes demonstrate that, for their generation, retrospection and nostalgia did not only concern time lost and time recovered, but also time foreshadowed. Understanding of the future was dependent on our recollection of the past—in effect, to predict the future was to remember it. Their near-contemporary Henri Bergson, who enjoyed something of a philosophical cult at the turn of the century, theorized that memory is the paramount faculty which, by linking time to place, enables this holistic historical sense. Like Bergson, Kipling and Yeats describe memory in terms of sight. But the French thinker's conception of memory as a constant, involuntary and often unconscious influence does not fully register with them. Their use of reverie as an induced state, and retrospection as a wilful instrument, gestures back—partly to the positivist enterprise of self-investigation, and partly to the visionary historical conspectus in precursors like Shelley. Moreover, language is the tool which they use to construe and communicate meaning from the past. Bergson celebrated musicians but not poets for, as he warned, verbalization is the point at which confusion and misrepresentation begin. If we are to perceive why Kipling and Yeats were later so often accused of insincerity, propaganda or 'false' art, then our examination must begin with their representations of childhood. To put the poets in their intellectual context, then, through what contemporary modes of understanding did childhood take on for them such significance?

The Meanings of Childhood

> All little children when they begin to think and talk are like strangers suddenly arrived in our dusty old world ... hence a certain quaintness in what they say or do. If this quaintness lasts into adult life and continues on to the end, they are men of genius.
>
> - John Butler Yeats, unpublished 'Memoirs'[6]

Their era gazed back on childhood searchingly. With mingled curiosity and concern, it looked for the subtle influences which, forming a reservoir of vital memories, were understood to resonate with future experiences and constitute our character. Childhood, somewhat disturbingly, had been acknowledged as something which never quite departed, but remained and sustained. As the young

[6] See Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 15-16.

Tennyson had felt, a 'child's heart within the man's / Begins to move and tremble.'[7] The age's *curiosity* might be attributed to Positivist teaching that empirical experience is the foundation of knowledge, but its *concern* to the realization that our perceptive faculties are neither consistent nor always rational. As Rosemary Lloyd has shown through her analysis of nineteenth century French texts, the latter viewpoint is fundamentally associated with Romanticism and with children. The child's supposed 'intensity of experience' made it a locus for 'the Romantics' privileging of the imaginative and the irrational.'[8] For the following generations, childhood became a broader and a stranger domain, embracing Freudian anxieties, the riddle of the *mal du siècle*, and other unknowns of the modern self. A bogus medium who teases the cracks of Victorian rationalism, this is what Browning's exploitative Mr Sludge realized the year before Kipling and Yeats were born: 'wise men hold out in each hollowed palm / A handful of experience, sparkling fact / They can't explain.'[9]

Each understanding, Positivist and Romantic, comes down to writers of the late nineteenth century, not least through parents like John Butler Yeats who juggled both credos within their complex personalities. Natural history by firsthand observation and Sir Walter Scott by lamplit narration was JBY's curriculum when he took his eldest son on a painting trip to Buckinghamshire, aged eleven.[10] Genius itself is a Romantic concept, and the JBY who cribbed the quotation above from Baudelaire assiduously nurtured it in his offspring. Rousseau's *Émile* is generally acknowledged as the first modern primer for parenthood and, as with many others who imbibed its principles, JBY's methods uneasily combined generous liberality with close scrutiny and restraint. If a child is to develop by wandering freely amidst the variegated forms of nature, as the Genevan philosopher intended, its innocence must be protected from the corrupt perversions of civilization.[11] Yeats's grievance against his father appears to have been that he was by turns negligent and, on certain points, fiercely exacting—not least in his frequent admonitions against assimilation with the degraded and alien

[7] 'Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue' in Christopher Ricks (ed.), *The Poems of Tennyson* (London, 1969), p.668.
[8] Rosemary Lloyd, *The Land of Lost Content: Children and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century French Literature* (Oxford, 1992), p.27.
[9] 'Mr Sludge, "The Medium"', ll.1211-13 in Robert Browning, *Selected Poems*, ed. Daniel Karlin (London, 2004), pp.237-8.
[10] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 24.
[11] Sally Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child: child development in literature, science, and medicine, 1840-1900* (Oxford, 2010), p.6.

English capital. This contrasts tellingly with the young Kipling, quarantined instead because his parents feared his growing up *too innocent*, like the sylvan 'wild boys' who so fascinated Rousseau's successors.

As for solitary roaming, if Yeats's childhood melancholy can be partly ascribed to the intermittent withdrawal of fatherly affection, this may have resulted from JBY's sense that during the solitude of his own youth he had 'early learned to sustain myself by reverie and dream.'[12] A statement like this partakes of the Romantic notion that the artistic temperament derives from a vibrant juvenile imagination, a discourse which Sally Shuttleworth reveals in a far-reaching study to have endured a troubled history over the course of the nineteenth century. Yeats and Kipling's childhoods lay somewhere between the *psychiatric* diagnoses of 'moral insanity' on the basis of an infantile penchant for fibbing or make-believe (deviances which obsessed the mid-century bourgeois household), and the neo-romantic cult of childhood and its fantasy realms encouraged by late-century *psychologists* such as James Sully. Literature played an important role in this transition. If, as a child, he was paraded in the street by his foster-mother bearing the placard 'LIAR', Kipling the adolescent returned to a home in which storytelling was a core familial activity, spurred on possibly by Robert Louis Stevenson's influential 1878 essay 'Child's Play'.[13] By adopting the popular anthropological trope of recapitulation (the theory that growing children re-enact the evolution of the race, so that infants are akin to savages), Stevenson argued that children cannot be said to belong properly to the modern world, but 'dwell in a mythological epoch, and are not the contemporaries of their parents'.[14] As we shall see, childhood as a vehicle of time-travel was to prove a beguiling concept for Kipling and Yeats, promising an insight into humanity's vital creative impulses through the fetishistic primitivism of toddlers. By way of precedent, these are the same theories which inform Edmund Gosse's use of the term 'natural magic' in his landmark childhood confession *Father and Son* (1907), which foreshadowed the subsequent memoirs of his literary protégés Kipling and Yeats. Confined in the

[12] John Butler Yeats, *Early Memories: Some Chapters of Autobiography* (Dundrum, 1923), p.2.
[13] See Rudyard Kipling, *Something of Myself*, ed. Jan Montefiore (Ware, Herts., 2008), p.10. Such humiliations should by no means be considered extraordinary. In her autobiography, Elizabeth Sewell remebered very similar treatment being meted out to a schoolfellow in the 1820s (Shuttleworth, *Mind of the Child*, p.62).
[14] Robert Louis Stevenson, *R.L. Stevenson on Fiction: an anthology of literary and critical essays*, ed. Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh, 1999), p.37.

cellar of 'the House of Desolation' at Southsea, Kipling was to play similar imaginary games by means of a related activity described by Gosse as a schooling in *romance*: 'the magic of literature.'[15]

As autobiographers and mythologists of childhood, then, Kipling and Yeats review their past through multiple lenses: rational and irrational, reductive and ideal, Modern and Victorian in equal measure. Their attitudes to writerly development range from the drily causative to the disturbed and supernatural. Inasmuch as a poet is untrustworthy, for example, Kipling states the bald facts: he learned to lie at Southsea to avoid a thrashing (and, ironically, to avoid being called a liar). But as for the lifelong insomnia that began to haunt him aged thirteen, and which was to prove as creatively stimulating as it was psychically unsettling, he notes mysteriously: 'for the first time, it happened that the night got into my head.'[16] It must be remembered that even Romantic Victorians feared the childhood imagination, as the arena of nightmare, just as much as they celebrated its joyful fantasies. Indeed, childhood itself was compared by authors both scientific and literary to the dream-state. Sleep and wakefulness, perhaps, were not even fully distinguishable to some young children. 'I was a dream child,' wrote the art historian John Addington Symonds, 'incapable of emerging into actuality'.[17] For Kipling this insomniac period, which he spent with his mother following his 'rescue' from Southsea, did plant a vital germ. For it was then that he commenced another activity often compared to dreaming: imaginative writing. His memoir *Something of Myself* does not venture to explain why nightwalking and the act of composition became for him mutually associated with sinister irrationality. By locating its origin, however, in the boyhood shame of trying to explain a smashed jug discovered in the morning, he hinted at something which Yeats also came to discover. A poet, as well as a psychologist, can draw on infancy to evoke powerful images, but to manipulate them into symbols and meanings is to toy with things whose power derives from their privacy, secrecy and inexplicability. This is important, because not only did both poets re-fashion their histories by

[15] Edmund Gosse, *Father and Son: a Study of Two Temperaments* (Oxford, 1974), pp.57, 51, 93. Reading Gosse's memoir, Kipling alighted especially on 'the same idea of avoidance of my surroundings by "natural magic" (in my own case by discovering a charm. I used to make 'em out of old boxes stuffed with wool and camphor-scented).' See *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling*, ed. Thomas Pinney (6 vols., London, 1990-2004), iii, 278.

[16] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.11.

[17] Shuttleworth, *Mind of the Child*, pp.48-9; *The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds*, ed. Phyllis Grosskurth (New York, 1984), p.92.

remembering their childhoods but, for a variety of connected reasons, they also encouraged their readers to do the same.

Kipling and Yeats present their childish selves as innocents in Eden, with their 'wise' adult selves still clutching childhood's handful of 'sparkling facts.' This sustaining resource underwrote their Indian and Irish identities, and was crucial to how they understood the practice and purpose of their art. Because Kipling, in his children's writing, appealed to his reader's own remembered (or fantasized) youth, he would later be charged with the charlatanism of Browning's Mr Sludge.[18] But fulfilling the insatiate memories of their readership with overmastering fictions was a method of 'explaining' that empowered the fabulist in both men. A close comparison of two nostalgic poems may elucidate the meanings—personal, artistic and political—pregnant in the mystery of childhood.

The School of Sight: Defining Poetry in Visual Terms

> The herring are not in the tides as they were of old;
> My sorrow! For many a creak gave the creel in the cart
> That carried the take to Sligo town to be sold
> *When I was a boy with never a crack in my heart.*
>
> Yeats, 'The Meditation of the Old Fisherman', 1886

> We shall go back by the boltless doors,
> To the life unaltered our childhood knew—
> To the naked feet on the cool dark floors,
> And the high-ceil'd rooms that the Trade blows through.
>
> Kipling, 'The Song of the Wise Children', 1902[19]

The handful of childhood images evoked in their memoirs do indeed sparkle. Despite the title of his first volume of autobiography, Yeats's *Reveries over Childhood and Youth* are by no means hazy or dreamy. Indeed, some of the most striking and effective images that either writer achieved are childhood's talismanic *aides memoires*. For Kipling, the children's bare feet on the bungalow's polished cement floor betrays a remarkable vulnerability, while the trundling fisherman's cart possesses a descriptive clarity for which Yeats frequently struggled in his early verse. Their autobiographical narratives both commence with a sequence of such images, flickering past with

[18] A.E. Housman, for example, would later describe *The Jungle Book* as 'a tract in wolf's clothing.' See Norman Page, *A.E. Housman: a Critical Biography* (London, 1983), p.146.
[19] Yeats, *Variorum Poems*, pp.90-1; Kipling, *Complete Verse*, pp.73-4.

filmic intensity. 'My first impression is of daybreak, light and colour and golden and purple fruits at the level of my shoulder,' is Kipling's startling description of the birth of visual consciousness, while Yeats's 'first memories are fragmentary and isolated and contemporaneous ... for all thoughts are connected with emotion and place without sequence.' His earliest recollections are of gazing out of windows, first upon a Dublin wall of cracked and peeling plaster and then—rather like the young Gosse, obliged for respectability's sake to frolic only with his eyes—upon some boys playing in the London streets. The intervening shift of both time and place has vanished from memory, 'as if time had not yet been created.'[20] Kipling's less confined early childhood is relived through the 'dimly-seen, friendly gods' of Bombay's temples, coconuts tumbling in sea winds along the Esplanade and, discovered at the bottom of the garden, the hand of a Parsi child dropped by a vulture gliding from the nearby Towers of Silence.[21]

Their prose here is very much in keeping with the understanding of sensation and memory proposed by Pater in his conclusion to *The Renaissance*. In the course of life myriad subjective impressions tumble upon human minds, each 'keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world.'[22] As autobiographers, Kipling and Yeats attempt to describe the subtle 'weaving' of images into the tenuous fabric of the self. Like Pater, they invoke all the senses to educe infantile perception, but principally the visual memory. Their preoccupation with childhood, moreover, suggests the implications that Pater held for poets of Romantic pedigree, who had imbibed Browning, Arnold and Tennyson's preoccupations with the integrity of *vision*. Sight for these Victorian precursors had not been merely a passive receptor, but a penetrative faculty outwardly and critically engaged with the world. In their work, the prerogative of the High Romantic seer had taken on the graphic attributes of an age exposed as never before to images, with Arnold underlining the duty of all authors in painterly, perspectival terms: 'to see the object as in itself it really is.'[23] Kipling and Yeats were both raised amidst the graphic arts, and Kipling takes up wholeheartedly the analogy between painting a physical

[20] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.3; W.B. Yeats, *Autobiographies*, ed. William H. O'Donnell and Douglas N. Archibald (New York, 1999), p.41.
[21] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.3.
[22] Walter Pater, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, ed. Matthew Beaumont (Oxford, 2010), p.119. The stylistic antecedents of their memoirs may be modernist works such as Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, but Pater remained a governing influence upon Kipling, Yeats and Joyce.
[23] Matthew Arnold, *Selected Poems and Prose*, ed. Miriam Allott (London, 1993), p.174.

and writing a descriptive picture. An ardent Browningite, his one concession to 'the Woman' of Southsea was that dodging her blows and ill-moods impressed upon him the credo of his poetic hero Fra Lippo Lippi:

> Why, soul and sense of him grow sharp alike,
> He learns the look of things, and not the less
> For admonition...[24]

The preoccupation with truthful sight and embracing vision remained with Kipling throughout his career. Later, it became itself the subject of a poem, 'When Earth's Last Picture is Painted'. Furthermore, by informing the metaphor of the world as a book in 'The Sestina of the Tramp-Royal', it suggests that universal meanings may be extracted from the world by a trained observation of the world that is, like Impressionist painting, both focused and diffuse.[25] The young Yeats, by contrast, kicked against Arnold's 'criticism of life' and the restraints it imposed on poetic theme by privileging the collective over the individual, an objective criterion over subjective insight. In this he followed Pater and kindred defences of 'anarchic' genius over canonicity and consensus, such as Wilde's essay 'The Soul of Man under Socialism.' What in time would give the lie, however, to his latent Arnoldianism was his need to train the sight to frame images of universal resonance, 'generalizations' as he initially disparaged them—an anxiety which, as for Kipling, is closely tied up with politics and the synthesis of national or imperial cultures.[26] As the mature Yeats wrote in 1913, 'Ireland is being made & this gives the few who have *clear sight* the determination to shape it.'[27]

If the flicker of images upon the infant retina brought out the Paterian sensibility in their writing, the interpretation of those images was an unmistakeably critical, Arnoldian activity. 'The child's relationship with the world in which it finds itself,' writes Lloyd, 'its sense of insertion into a particular physical or social space, and the ways in which it makes meaning of that space are central

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[24] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.10. Kipling quotes these lines of Browning's 'Fra Lippo Lippi' in full.
[25] Kipling, *Complete Verse*, p.72.
[26] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.163. Miriam Allott has commented that 'the idea of "wholeness" penetrates' the whole of Arnold's 'The Study of Poetry', 'and carries with it a kind of pre-Yeatsian desire for unity of being.' Arnold's model in this respect is Sophocles, who 'saw life steadily, and saw it whole' ('To a Friend'), and Yeats's concerns in this regard emerge in his own Sophoclean poem, 'Colonus' Praise'. See Arnold, *Selected Poems and Prose*, pp.xlv, 23 and Yeats, *Variorum Poems*, pp.446-7.
[27] Yeats, *Collected Letters*, accessed through 'Past Masters' database: http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2067/xtf/view?docId=yeats_c/yeats_c.04.xml;query=determination%20to%20shape;brand=default;hit.rank=1#rank1. To Gordon Craig, 28 May 1913. My italics.

to the nineteenth-century image of childhood.' A stage of development explored by many of the texts in her study is the generation of meaning and narrative from disorder and disjunction, the 'deciphering of the world.'[28] In 1885, Tennyson's blind seer 'Tiresias' began his monologue by recollecting the wonder that dawned when first

> the blessed daylight made itself
> Ruddy thro' both the roofs of sight, and woke
> These eyes, now dull, but then so keen to seek
> The meanings ambush'd under all they saw...

Embarking on their own first publications just as the Laureate's long-gestated poem went to press, Kipling and Yeats in turn came to read this subtle growth of worldly understanding back onto their own childhoods. They Romantically summoned and revived this state of youthful perception, suffused with meaning, in works as diverse as 'The Stolen Child' and *Kim.* Childhood became for them not just the foundation of knowledge but the school of sight—the proving ground for the core poetic faculty.

What their interests amount to is an inherent inclination to symbolism—putting aside the term's formal and French connotations. They sought a method to unite Paterian subjective impressionism, to which they respond aesthetically, with its antithesis Arnoldian collective vision, to which they were philosophically and politically indebted. This will be more fully explored in Chapter 4. The significance of childhood, for this reconciliation of two modes of remembering, is that to adopt the child's perspective is to be putting word to object and object to symbol, reading the world and deciphering its language. This is a crucial activity for poets who for reasons personal and political inscribe meanings on to the past and upon places in the past. In the words of Yeats's final poem of artistic confession, they engineer from their own remembrance 'masterful images' which 'engross the present and dominate memory.'[29] The plucking of resonant symbol and poetic image from the unplumbed flux of memory was an activity which for them shared the discipline of verse. In fact, the temptations of nostalgia were actually something to be guarded against during composition. When drafting the outlines of his autobiographical novel *John Sherman* in 1887, Yeats confessed to his fellow-poet Katharine Tynan that he was 'as usual fighting that old snake—revery, to get from him a

[28] Lloyd, *Land of Lost Content*, p.187.
[29] Yeats, 'The Circus Animals' Desertion', *Variorum Poems*, pp.629-30.

few hours each day for my writing.'[30] A mode of disciplined reverie was possible, however. For the parameters for training this inward eye of memory were defined by specific geographical place.

Genius Loci: Childhood Places

Yeats was writing to Tynan during one of his frequent revisits to childhood haunts around Sligo town and harbour. Here he could call on his occultist uncle George Pollexfen at Rosses Point, the isolated village to which he rode through the night aged seven to collect a railway pass. He could see the church at Drumcliffe where his paternal great-grandfather had been Rector, and look upon Knocknarea, the mountain which Lily Yeats had drawn for her brother in letters he received during JBY's painting excursion in Buckinghamshire.[31] In one of *Father and Son's* key passages Edmund Gosse, another city-born child, describes his first glimpse of the sea at Torbay, explicitly measuring his prose against Wordsworth's *Prelude*.[32] Yeats, who was familiarized to the Atlantic coast from an earlier age, does not describe his first visit to Sligo in revelatory terms. But he is similarly self-conscious, furnishing his readers with a Romantic codex for the growth of a poet's mind charted upon a storied natural landscape, to which 'little shut-in places' like the London homes which feature so little in *Reveries* are anathema. 'I only seem to remember things dramatic in themselves,' he hints after describing a mournful return to England in 1874, following two years' residence in Sligo, 'or that are somehow associated with unforgettable places.'[33]

Yeats's Sligo is a place where free physical movement foregrounds imaginative liberty, where the absence of constrictions is implicit in its unfallen innocence. Although he was an urban child, Kipling throws a still more Edenic light on Bombay, the 'Mother of Cities' to which he returns by the 'boltless doors' of fancy. He was indulged, of course, as few home-grown toddlers would have been. His servants and pony afforded him the luxury of exploration in a large tropical city. Kipling emphasises also, however, the privileges of access conferred by childhood. Temple sanctums from which white adults were barred unbolted their portals to him, as did the precincts of language, in which his

[30] Yeats, *Collected Letters*, i, 28.
[31] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.43; Yeats, *Collected Letters*, i, 4.
[32] Gosse, *Father and Son*, p.57.
[33] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, pp.71, 59.

untutored brain acquisitively grasped idiomatic gossip and folklore. From the moment when he found himself 'haltingly' adjusting his speech to dinner-table English from 'the vernacular idiom that one thought and dreamed in', a disjunction began to appear in Kipling's mindset between the domains of adult and child, which was analogous to the sundering of 'European' from 'native' society.[34] As he matured, perceptions and descriptions of his native country also entailed the partition of gender. His ayah features more than his mother, and his father barely at all, in his nostalgic dreams of Bombay, while the India of his working life would be one of isolated masculinity and segregated womanhood. Following habit, Kipling characteristically persisted in straddling this border.

Yeats was not poised over such an extreme geographic fissure, but the ideological gap in some ways yawned wider. Sligo was his mother's country, the place where old maids and bachelor uncles acquainted him with the banshee and other notions discountenanced by John Butler Yeats. In his early writings, however, it became the legendary arena of heroic deeds of manhood. Despite Hardyesque assertions of the emotional history of places, perhaps the avoidance of change and contradiction necessitated that it become a land more important to remember than to literally revisit—one local later claimed that, in their mature years, Yeats's brother the painter was much oftener seen in the neighbourhood. Just as it was a place secluded from the trials of adulthood, Sligo remained a place set slightly apart from his metropolitan origins and preoccupations.[35] In 'The Meditation of the Old Fisherman', the forces which constrict the imaginative life of nature, and turn the world from one of play and abundance to graft and the labour for dwindling fish remain unnamed. But they are understood to replace the transitory creak of the creel with the irreparable cracks of shattered innocence. The poem is an effort to resurrect and immortalize those boyhood journeys along the harbour, an effort wrought across a weakening distance. Time and age, of course, are the attenuating factors in this distance, but actual geographic separation must not be overlooked. Crossing the estranging sea was not only a formative experience—it later furnished an image for articulating voyages of retrospection and voyages to immortality. Such passages would be undertaken from *Oisin* and *The Shadowy Waters* to 'Sailing to Byzantium'.

[34] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.4.
[35] See Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 548.

> A poignant memory came upon me the other day while I was passing the drinking fountain near Holland Park, for there I and my sister had spoken together of our longing for Sligo and our hatred of London. I know we were both very close to tears and remember with wonder, for I had never known any one that cared for such mementoes, that I longed for a sod of earth from some field I knew, something of Sligo to hold in my hand.[36]

In this extract from *Reveries*, yearning and longing contribute to an imaginative enactment, an elaborated melancholy piqued—as Yeats later claimed his most famously nostalgic poem was—by the trickle of a mechanical fountain. Exile was a trope familiar to contemporary Irish writing. Given, therefore, that Kipling was being sent 'Home' for his education (a common practice, the rationale for which he later supported in a newspaper column), the forcefulness of his own lament continues to startle.[37] In 'The Song of the Wise Children', the demise of youth is very specifically associated with another country, a place of alienation: Britain. From the frozen 'North', where 'frost and fog divide the air, / And the day is dead at his breaking-forth,' the wise innocents of his title flee to the warmer suns and kinder constellations of southern skies. Their erstwhile prison is the same waste to which 'Ruddy Baba' is deported through a flickering series of Paterian impressions in *Something of Myself*:

> Then those days of strong light and darkness passed, and there was a time in a ship with an immense semi-circle blocking all vision on either side of her. (She must have been the old paddlewheel P&O *Ripon.*) There was a train across a desert (the Suez Canal was not yet opened) and a halt in it, and a small girl wrapped in a shawl on the seat opposite me, whose face stands out still. There was next a dark land, and a darker room full of cold, in one wall of which a white woman made naked fire, and I cried aloud with dread, for I had never before seen a grate.[38]

Both poets may have portrayed exile as the antithesis of native origin, but it is in fact presaged everywhere in their descriptions of Bombay and Sligo. Travel is inherent in these places. Both are harbours, the latter populated by ships owned and operated in part by Yeats's relatives, the former a place of high ceilings stirred by winds which speak (as they do literally in 'The English Flag'), of trade, commerce and imperial reach. In another poem, Kipling explicitly rejoiced at his birth within a zone of transition:

> Mother of cities to me,
> For I was born in her gate,
> Between the palms and the sea,

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[36] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.58.
[37] In the *Pioneer,* 19 November 1888, he argued against the foundation of a school for Anglo-Indian children at Bombay.
[38] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.4.

Where the world-end steamers wait.[39]

The poem goes on to describe how wherever the speaker travels, he is able to dispel any disorientation by invoking this maternal badge of affiliation: 'of no mean city am I.' In effect he roams the world while staying still, much like one of Kipling's readers. Cultures of shared place bring out the deep parochialism of Kipling and Yeats, but must not be permitted to obscure their fundamentally worldly character. The parochial is a vital home anchorage, but its school of sight trains visionaries of worldwide ambition. Lloyd extends her description of 'deciphering the world' to the numerous texts in which children who have cosmprehended the world around them begin to grasp in abstract the world *without*. Baudelaire's child undertaking a 'voyage' by means of gaslamp and lithographs; Pierre Loti savouring the ring in adult mouths of the phrase 'les colonies'; Conrad putting his boy's finger on the blank heart of Africa—the later nineteenth century supplies countless examples of infant Crusoes grappling with a geography of novel scope.[40] Other children of Yeats and Kipling's generation no doubt did the same. Their unique position in adulthood, however, would be not of metropolitans clamouring for the exotic intensity of unfallen races, but of hybrid go-betweens supplying it.

In this respect, the native place plays a role analogous to that of the humble props which both poets recall devising for themselves as a vehicle for imaginative transport. For Yeats this was the 'log in a distant field I often went to look at because I thought it would go a long way in the making of a ship.' All his early fantasies, he recalls, were of ships and sea-battles, even when the working vessels of Sligo were miniaturized into model boats plying the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens.[41] No doubt he was romanced by an environment permeated with travel, for global lives had washed up world artefacts on both sides of his family. Arrayed on Grandfather Pollexfen's shelves could be found pieces of coral, a jar of water from the Jordan, Chinese pictures upon rice paper and an Indian ivory walking-stick. JBY even recalled one of the highlights of Sandymount Castle as being a Burmese

[39] 'To the City of Bombay', *Complete Verse*, p.142.
[40] Lloyd, *Land of Lost Content*, pp.163, 61, 179; Joseph Conrad, 'Geography and Some Explorers' in Robert Kimbrough (ed.), *Heart of Darkness: an Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources, Criticism* (New York, 1988), p.147.
[41] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.47; 'A little navy floats / In his early pages', comments Clive James in his poem 'The Later Yeats'. See *Nefertiti in the Flak Tower* (London, 2012), p.61.

sword, looted by an uncle at the taking of Rangoon.[42] In retrospect, Yeats saw his imaginary frigate as a fastness closed against the tempests of life, a security threatened by the rough manners of the Godolphin School, Hammersmith.

> When I had gathered pieces of wood in the corner of my great ship, I was confident that I could keep calm among the storms and die fighting when the great battle came. But now I was ashamed of my lack of courage.[43]

A sense of erecting mental bulwarks against infant fragility also informed Kipling's recollections of imaginary voyaging. Consigned to the cellar at Southsea with only a copy of *Robinson Crusoe* for company, he fashioned a South Sea trading post from a coconut shell, a tin trunk and a piece of packing case 'which kept off any other world ... The magic, you see, lies in the ring or fence that you take refuge in.'[44] For the adult poets, the zones they claimed as places of native origin, and from which their respective migrations were portrayed as exile, served as their imaginative refuge. Alternatively, to use the title of Jack B. Yeats's painting, they were their memory harbours, the anchorages from which they imaginatively set sail to confront the external world, and to which they could repeatedly come back in adulthood to review their subjective inner journeys. Happening across the painting years later, Yeats studied and digested *Memory Harbour* as one would a chart, 'houses and anchored ship and distant lighthouse all set close together as in some old map.'[45]

Repeating the strategy of Kipling's magic ring, it was imperative that both poets maintained a grasp on these countries of the mind in which they would always in fact find themselves, to varying degrees, outsiders. It is in keeping with Yeats's self-image that the first fifteen pages of *Reveries* leave the reader with the impression that his early years were spent almost exclusively in Sligo, until the day when an acerbic aunt informed him: 'You are going to London. Here you are somebody. There you

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[42] Ibid., p.42; John Butler Yeats, *Early Memories*, p.55. Perhaps betraying aristocratic pretensions, the home of JBY's uncle Robert Corbet was merely a crenellated suburban villa.

[43] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.61.

[44] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.7. Crusoe was a resonant figure for Yeats also (see p.90), as was Sinbad the Sailor (see next footnote). It is strangely appropriate that these maritime adventurers should come to signify, for two such international poets, a safe and constant anchorage. References to the *Arabian Nights*, in particular, seems to suggest the aspiration to weave, from memories of their parochial upbringing, narratives of mutative, world-embracing power.

[45] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.72. 'I have walked on Sindbad's yellow shore and never shall another's hit my fancy,' the passage continues. For further Sinbad references, see *Variorum Poems*, p.371 and *Letters*, i, xl. JBY inscribed an abridged copy of the *Arabian Nights* for Yeats's seventh birthday—listed in Edward O'Shea, *A Descriptive Catalogue of W.B. Yeats's Library* (New York, 1985), entry 676.

will be nobody at all.'[46] Such a reading of his life was evidently in keeping with his readers' expectations, as was his counterpoising the imaginative freedoms of a rural Irish upbringing against the dull brutality of English school life. That Kipling, however, should have confounded some of his own readers with the same retrospective contrast—pagan light against Christian darkness—demonstrates how genuinely vital it was for both poets to maintain the tranquil integrity of a landscape against which the struggles of their lives wove and unwound themselves. This is why Bombay and Sligo are not just marked indelibly on the world map, but also places frozen in time and inaccessible to uninitiated adults. The full subtleties of Lockwood Kipling's 'blazing beauty of a city' are appreciable only by those blessed few whose 'childhood knew' it. In the same manner, Yeats told his sister Lily shortly before his death (specifically invoking the visual memory) that 'no one will ever see Sligo as we saw it.'[47] The meanings childhood held for them, though anchored to specific places, were valuable principally therefore for being unchangeable.

'The Life Unaltered'—Childhood Times

The past to which Kipling and Yeats look back is one of antediluvian innocence. It is felt to precede some momentous *alteration* which will change the world of their childhood to 'the land of lost content'. This change lies partly, as we have seen, in the geographic dislocation experienced by children of the Empire—on a far grander scale, and in the long run more fascinating to readers than Housman's yearning for a Shropshire on which he only ever possessed a tenuous native claim. But Kipling's life unaltered and Yeats's heart uncracked did speak to the sense of temporal displacement into which Housman had very successfully tapped. More than a haunted fascination for childhood *temps perdu*, it was based on a broader sense of qualitative change brought about by amnesiac modernity. Their elegies are not just for lost time, but for lost worlds, lost ways of life.[48]

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[46] Ibid., p.56.
[47] Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.29; Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 24.
[48] A few years before Yeats and Kipling's births, Arnold had already announced the advance of 'one irresistible force, which is gradually making its way everywhere ... altering long-fixed habits, undermining venerable institutions, even modifying national character: *the modern spirit'* ('Democracy', 1861). See Arnold, *Selected Poems and Prose*, p.153.

They were equipped to articulate this lament firstly by the particular timespan of their experience. Like Hardy, they witnessed 'the Century's corpse outleant'.[49] Living beyond him, they also vigorously participated in inscribing the meaning of that fallen era. As early as 1902, Kipling was consciously addressing his prelapsarian generation. 'We shall go back' signifies not only the native-born wise children, but strikes a more general elegiac note. 'The life unaltered our childhood knew' lies behind some late-Victorian watershed, beyond the ken of latter-day readers. It also points to how the theories of recapitulation applied by Stevenson to play tended to find, in children, a corrective prospect to the cultural fragmentation feared by poets and psychologists alike. In 1904, the leader of the American Child Study Movement G. Stanley Hall lamented that our 'shop-worn' and 'bankrupt' modern civilization was erasing the past, but that children were 'freighted with reminiscences of what we were so fast losing.'[50] More significantly, however, Kipling's children are fleeing modernity and 'dreaming back', as Yeats would say, into the mother-memory of the Orient. He was by no means the first author to equate the 'primitive' East with the West's lost cultural unity, but he was one of the first to map this fantasy onto his personal journeys of nostalgia.

Kipling and Yeats thus addressed fin de siècle anxiety from the viewpoint of colonial societies that were experiencing the arrival of modernity at a more dramatic pace. Yeats's poem is narrated from two perspectives: the fisherman's recollected childhood in 'the Junes that were warmer than these are,' when 'the waves were more gay'; and the grey-eyed present, where the sea evokes only the growing hardships of his livelihood. The sense of temporal dislocation, however, is the poet's own. He wrote these verses close to his twenty-first birthday in the presumably wet June of 1886, and in a Sligo which had become by the following year 'the lonliest place in the world to him.' It remained 'more dear than any other place', but for the sake of 'no flesh and blood attractions—only memories and sentimenttalities accumulated here as a child.'[51] Though based at least partly on a real person, therefore, the speaker is one of Yeats's many personae. [52] It is notable, however, that he chose to dramatize his own sense of personal decline in a figure representative of the slow demise of the

[49] *The Variorum Edition of the Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy*, ed. James Gibson (London, 1979), p.150.
[50] Shuttleworth, *Mind of the Child*, p.268.
[51] Yeats, *Collected Letters*, i, 41.
[52] For example, a version of him narrates a significant later poem, 'The Fisherman' of 1914, also written in June.

'traditional' mode of life on the west coast of Ireland, which was of such precious significance to Yeats and the Irish cultural revival. For Yeats's collaborator and fellow-playwright J.M. Synge, the Gaelic-speaking communities of the Aran Islands possessed an alien dignity which he saw coarsely uprooted by evicting bailiffs and a 'mechanical' constabulary, who 'represented aptly enough the civilization for which the homes of the island were to be desecrated.'[53] Kipling's was a more decidedly urban genius—if the city was Yeats's principal milieu, then it was for Kipling also the cockpit of narrative. As we shall see, however, in spite of his inflexible support for British rule, Kipling perceived acutely in the Punjabi agricultural setting the dramatic and deleterious breaks with the past that it was wreaking within Indian society.

The landscape that responds to Yeats's moods in pathetic fallacy was mutating at a modern speed of which the aged Wordsworth had received only the early intimations. Always accompanying the will to travel back to a beloved place, then, was the stronger desire to travel back in time. Written two years later, 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' came to exemplify Yeats for a whole generation of readers and, like Kipling's 'Song of the Wise Children', the poem is structured around an expressed yearning for return—appropriately, it owed much of its subsequent popularity to the sense of exile among American Irish. Its use of fragrant natural imagery to suggest renewal and rebirth find bucolic echoes ('lisp of the split banana-frond') in Kipling's poem, which charts a seasonal cycle from the wintry north to a southern summer. In both poems, the Romantic rediscovery of nature's sustaining harmonies prefigures the successful preservation and recovery of a lost place, and the establishment of a fixed point in the flux of time.

Such are the benefits of hindsight, and if discrepancies between the Sligo envisaged by the fisherman and the lake isle which haunts the minds of modern hikers might be explained by the physical *distance* at which 'Innisfree' was written, then a contrast between the former poem, or contemporary letters to Tynan, with what Foster calls the 'disingenuous masterpiece' of *Reveries* shows how the possession of a pocket of time had become only more precious during the intervening decades.[54] Then

[53] John Millington Synge, *Collected Plays and Poems and the Aran Islands*, ed. Alison Smith (London, 1996), p.292.
[54] 'Innisfree,' as will be examined in Chapter 4, was composed during a particularly desolate phase in London; Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 492.

again, more was at issue than personal ennui to make Kipling and Yeats write verses of deep, rejuvenating nostalgia in their youthful twenties and thirties. For them, the personal became early bound up with the public and—although this would be much more true of the Irish poet—autobiography with history. As the popularity of 'Innisfree' demonstrates, to frame subjective experience within the lens of art is to create an image of broader significance for communities and nations. The fixing of time, the definition of place and the exertion to reconnect is a political act.

The Political Uses of Childhood

The preoccupation of Yeats, and Kipling also, with imagined collectives is foregrounded in their memoirs. Recalling Milton's 'fit audience, though few', each addresses himself to a select community of readers and, in both cases, 'friends.'[55] The expectation is that these confidants will either share mutual recollections or will, self-effacingly, make-believe that they do. Taken into the author's confidence, they are implicitly invited to ratify, and participate in, the poets' claims on childhood places. How and why, then, did Kipling and Yeats attempt to ground their political visions within the poetic 'school of sight'?

To articulate their claims, firstly, both poets weaved into childhood places a broadly dynastic narrative. In *Reveries*, the advent of an adolescent craving to escape family parlours and roam the nearby mountains is thematically paragraphed with a developing interest in the county histories, which establish the ties that bind those houses and relatives to the landscape and its legacy.[56] The entitlement inferred by family and caste was a theme which Yeats was to make with increasing vehemence as his career progressed, and was echoed by Kipling's more racially-delineated mythos of legitimacy, claimed through membership of a Civil Service breed of 'dolphin families' whose grim humour, down-at-heel chivalry and mad martyrism bears a slightly starched resemblance to Yeats's Georgian Anglo-Irish. Neither poet of course was ever entirely in control of his somewhat confused identity, any more than he could fully mould his reputation. An even stronger and more skilfully

[55] The dedications to *Reveries* and *Something of Myself*, respectively, are 'to those few people mainly personal friends who have read all that I have written' and 'to my friends known and unknown'.
[56] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.71. Declan Kiberd has commented on the Anglo-Irish need to achieve impatriation through geography rather than history. See 'Yeats, Childhood and Exile' in Paul Hyland and Neil Sammells (eds.), *Irish Writing: Exile and Subversion* (London, 1991), p.134.

pitched appropriation was pulled off by Yeats's fellow nationalist and unobtainable paramour Maud Gonne. An article published in a French magazine during the late 1890s sought to anchor her friend's pure Irish upbringing, and unimpeachable patriotism, in the world his childhood knew.

> Il passa son enfance chez ses grands parents à Sligo, où le paysage étrange, la nature sauvage et séduisante, impressionnèrent sa jeune âme et laissèrent une trace ineffaceable sur toute son oeuvre. "Tout enfant, avant meme que j'aie compris le mot patriotisme, je me sentais prêt à me mettre à genoux pour embrasser la terre de cette petite ville de Sligo," me disait un jour Yeats, et cet amour passionné pour le sol natal a trouvé sa plus belle expression dans son poème si simple et si touchant *Innisfree.*[57]

Though intended for a lay audience, as far as Irish affairs were concerned, the article took up the same premise upon which so many individual Yeats and Kipling poems are based: places are highly idiosyncratic, their particular character may be experienced, imbibed and can in turn mould a person's character, who then possesses imaginative rights on them. It demonstrates, moreover, that asserting these rights could be a propagandistic business, and that the claims made by nationalists were often not different in quality from those made by an imperial speaker, such as Kipling's Cockney soldier who sings nostalgically of 'the road to Mandalay.' Within this discourse, place names possessed a talismanic quality. Seeking to demonstrate a keen early comprehension of this equation between place, memory, vision and belonging, Yeats claimed that an awareness of racial difference at his Hammersmith school stemmed not merely from playground paddy-baiting. 'No matter how charming the place,' he recalled of an outing with his English companions on Wimbledon Common, 'I knew that those other boys *saw* something I did not *see*. I was a stranger there. There was something in their way of saying the names of places that made me feel this.'[58] In description, unsurprisingly, childhood became a contested space. For Kipling, this concerned firstly his Indian 'birthright', and secondly the competing lore of his schooldays propagated respectively in the memoirs of his friends Dunsterville and Beresford, and in his own semi-fictional *Stalky & Co*. Although he never attained the same oppressive celebrity, Yeats was obliged to deal with an exploitative article by Thomas Stuart

[57] from *Le Magazine International.* See Dublin, National Library of Ireland MS 12145. My translation: he spent his childhood at his grandparents' home in Sligo, where a landscape remarkable for its savage and seductive nature moulded his youthful soul, leaving an indelible trace throughout his whole oeuvre. "As a child, before I could even understand the word patriotism, I was ready to fall down on my knees and kiss the earth of that little town of Sligo," Yeats told me once, and this yearning love of native skies has found its most exquisite expression in that so simple, so touching poem *Innisfree*.

[58] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.70. My italics. With similar phrasing on p.61, Yeats remarks 'I was divided from all those boys ... our mental images were different.'

published in the *Dublin Figaro* in 1892. This schoolfellow retailed an embarrassing portrait of the classroom poet in the same newspaper which, only a few months before, had accused the émigré Yeats of feigning patriotism.[59] Accusations of deceit, then, were not confined to childhood. The line between telling tales and telling lies remained unsteady, destined to be re-drawn by anyone claiming to validate or discredit a symbol.

In spite of this rancour, childhood was amenable to political discourse. First of two principal qualities, in this regard, was innocence and the seriousness of play. 'Never a crack', reminisces the old fisherman: the flawless state of boyhood is a life uncracked, which in Irish idiom could also mean undisturbed or uncrazed. The word will later be associated with the political madness or 'hysterica passio' which Yeats saw engulf contemporaries like Gonne in the 1910s, and with 'The Crazed Moon' that he described shining upon a 'crack-pated' era.[60] Faced with the degenerative crazing of the world, Kipling as well as Yeats would recognize a vain wish to turn back the clock. Retrospective transport to the realm of childhood, however, had always been a key element in their political strategy. Yeats's fisherman begins by addressing the ocean which was to play such a significant part in the poets' infancy: 'you waves, though you dance by my feet like children at play.' Play, which rhymes with the 'gay' innocence of boyhood, was a fin de siècle analogy for the artistic life, or the life lived aesthetically and inquiringly. Janet Montefiore, for example, describes the young Kipling's Christmas holidays with his Arts and Crafts relatives as an escape from Southsea into 'a world where men spend their lives in making beautiful and interesting things, doing for the life's work what children do as play.'[61] As a renovating influence in the world, it could also be deployed as a political metaphor. By adopting the perceptive vision of children, one can decipher new understandings, new unities and collectives in the world. As Yeats reminisces in a sentence highly redolent of Kipling's

[59] *Dublin Figaro*, 24 Sept 1892, 18 Jun 1892.
[60] '*Hysterica Passio* dragged this quarry down': see 'Parnell's Funeral', *Variorum Poems*, p.542. In 'The Circus Animals' Desertion', Gonne is associated first with that 'pity-crazed' embodiment of Ireland, Countess Cathleen, but later with the fanatic-hearted country lamented in 'Remorse for Intemperate Speech' (*Variorum Poems*, pp.629-30, 506). Chasers of the moon have their fingers transformed into vicious needles of bone, 'blenched by that malicious dream' in 'The Crazed Moon', while in 'Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen', Europe's complacent pre-war intelligentsia 'learn that we were crack-pated when we dreamed' (*Variorum Poems*, pp.488, 431).
[61] In her introduction to Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.xvii-xviii.

hidden infant worlds and fantasies of contact, 'when friends plan and do together, their minds become one mind and the last secret disappears.'[62]

Childhood's second advantage as a vehicle for political meanings was that it did not necessitate their full, verbal articulation. Plucking redolent visual image or symbol—with allusive, Paterian prose—from the flux of memory was sufficient. To paraphrase a famous passage published by Bergson in 1896, memory is a night sky which shines its dim starlight down on our present consciousness: whatever background glimmer we passively receive from it guides our future steps. But to make an active, conscious effort to remember is to be an astronomer, turning the lenses of a telescope until life is diffracted in a galaxy of miscellaneous constellations hidden to the naked eye. This is the first stage. The second is to inscribe a shape between the nebulous points of light and, having drawn a meaning from the past, go on living under a zodiacal sign. To accustomed, self-conscious rememberers like Kipling and Yeats, it might have occurred that children who 'decipher the world' perform a related exercise in the present. Children play amid the flux and confusion of novel impressions, but by honing their perceptions they delineate structure in the world around them, resolving stability and identity from disaggregation.

As the delightful picture-primers of the era attest, this attribution of meaning was a linguistic process.[63] Bergson points here precisely to the problem that would vex Yeats and Kipling's ambitions. He had warned that language would never attain the capacity to describe the perpetual process of remembering that comprises our being—no image could be masterful enough, no symbol prismatic enough. Rousseau, moreover, had anticipated him by laying his firmest strictures against language: children should learn only the simplest spoken words for concrete, natural objects or else nothing. Premature self-consciousness, and 'abstract' or 'idealistic' thought, was precisely where infant minds lost their way. This is why, as Rose demonstrates, much fin de siècle childrens' literature appears to be pursuing a reassuring stability of language—Kipling, in particular, would have much recourse to its transparent *diction.* It is also why Jack B. Yeats's paintings of Sligo, occupying the same inspirational zone as his brother's poems, seem to have stimulated and discomfited in equal measure.

[62] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.69.
[63] For example, see *The Golden Primer* (1884), illustrated by Walter Crane.

What struck Yeats in *Memory Harbour* was the realization that another had seen what he had seen. Jack, miraculously, had known the same sensation, and nurtured the same wish to see again, to re-envisage—perhaps even to repair and to re-unite.

The painting was a touchstone for Yeats's own polyvalent 'masterful images'—masterful because calculated to 'dominate [the] memory' of those exposed to them. Haunting the poet, it also reminded him of the shortcomings and contestability of his verbal art. Their eventual failure to make the short-cut from intuition to articulation, through a masterful image, would lead both men to rue the mournful falling short of reality from ideal. As we will see from their literary and painterly schooling, however, this failure was in a way always built into their enterprise. It is now necessary to determine on what sources they may individually or mutually have drawn, beyond personal memory, to compose these images. To fully understand political strategies in Yeats and Kipling's art, we must reconstruct their artistic upbringing.

'Artistic' Childhoods: Early Reading and the Culture of Victorian Retrospection

It was a very Victorian tryst. Two Yorkshire Methodists met for the first time at a picnic beside an artificial lake in Staffordshire: both twenty-six, both children of ministers, and both rather more interested in poetry than religion. They took an afternoon stroll and passed an elderly broken-down horse. 'Thrust out past service from the devil's stud', remarked John Lockwood Kipling, then training as a potter at Burslem. 'He must be wicked to deserve such pain', Alice Macdonald responded instantly. The man turned to the woman and exclaimed in delight 'you read Browning!'[64]

However Alice's sister Edith may have embellished this cute family story, it highlights something noteworthy. The boy who was born at Bombay two years later, and named after the reservoir where John and Alice had bandied 'Childe Roland' together, developed in a literate and catholic cultural milieu. His was a somewhat unconventional, but for that distinctively nineteenth-century, childhood. If he was permitted a rather longer leash in Bombay than the average middle-class child raised at 'Home', it was to nurture robust health in a climate where many colonial offspring died in infancy. Anglo-Indian laxity aside, however, in essence Kipling's upbringing sprang from a progressive and

[64] Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.25.

liberal late Victorian courtship. He was often left idle, perhaps at times insufficiently loved, by parents who still did not quite know what was to be done with children. But in the hours when he was not minded by servants or other guardians, Lockwood and Alice were capable of energetic experiments in the training of the boy's cognitive acumen and, in keeping with the family's temper, his artistic sensibility. They reverenced the independent imaginative life and understood that it was with children that this life was at its strongest and most vital. John Butler Yeats, for his part, would pursue its development almost fanatically. In both cases, family lore attributed vision and inspiration (of a specifically Celtic nature) to the mother's side. The incontinent qualities Alice Macdonald (quick and acerbic) and Susan Pollexfen (taciturn and superstitious) bequeathed to their sons, the fathers were assumed to have made good with the meticulousness and conceptual clarity innate to a painter.[65]

Poetry, which Kipling's mother wrote and which both poets' fathers avidly read, may in fact have shaped their role as parents just as it shaped their sons' art. They were acquainted no doubt with the cult of childhood inspired by Wordsworth, and likewise with Arnold's conviction that, having found the modern urban soul 'bound' in a 'benumbing round' of 'doubts, disputes, distractions, fears', the lake poet had sought to recover the lively vision of young eyes, and breathe into darkened minds 'the freshness of the early world.'[66] The venturing joys of childhood were to salve the withered consciousness of maturity, which meant, ironically, that children were encouraged to live in both innocence and experience. Alice refused to explain to her son how the child's hand had come to lie at the bottom of their tropical garden, 'but my *ayah* told me'—thus initiating a culture of secrecy that is so characteristic of Kipling's child-figures.[67] Just as important to this impetus as the Romantic cult of nature, moreover, was the Victorian game of reading. The habit of reverie which had furnished Tennyson with such inspiration and dilemma, notably in 'The Lotos-Eaters', originated in a bookish childhood:

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[65] 'By marriage with a Pollexfen [I] have given a tongue to the sea cliffs', boasts JBY in *Autobiographies* (p.52), while in *Something of Myself* (p.47), Kipling described his mother as 'all Celt and three-parts fire'. Her brother ascribed Rudyard's genius to Lockwood's methodical omniscience, combined with Alice's 'swift insight, and the kind of vision that is afforded by flashes of lightning'. See Frederick W. Macdonald, *As a Tale that is Told: Recollections of Many Years* (London, 1919), p.334.

[66] In 'Memorial Verses'. See Arnold, *Selected Poems and Prose*, pp.75-6.

[67] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.3.

> When the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free
> In the silken sail of infancy,
> The tide of time flow'd back with me,...

to Baghdad and the court of good Harun al-Rashid, as written in the *Arabian Nights*.[68] Tennyson's verses suggest that to be transported back imaginatively in time, to embrace the Other and imagine oneself a 'True Mussulman' comes easier to the ductile minds of children. The laureate of their parents' generation was important early reading for both poets, Yeats's 'Junes that were warmer than these are' deriving perhaps from 'those old Mays had thrice the life of these' in 'The Gardener's Daughter'. Tennyson not only exposed them to a fundamental Victorian literary reverie, but also taught them their perennial caution with it. He himself had been key to its development, not least in his peopling of evocative landscapes with *invented* happy memories.

Habits of reverie, and the imaginative relocation of the self, spoke of both playfulness and an anxious escapism. Tennyson's verses also implied that children became habituated to this most Victorian of mental exercises through their reading culture. Kipling honed the skill with his packing case in the cellar, but in time two father-figures flung open their libraries to him. After his removal from Southsea in 1878 he was deposited once more in a transit station for colonial children, in this case a cut-price public school for military families called the United Services College. Despite its location in a resort named for a Charles Kingsley novel, muscular Christianity and athletics were low on the agenda at Westward Ho! In this unusual academy, *Men and Women* was literally flung at his head, while poetry classic and contemporary awaited him in the study of the headmaster Cormell Price, interspersed with travelogues and tuition in Russian.[69] 'Crom' was a university friend of Rudyard's uncle Edward Burne-Jones, who shared his own eclectic reading interests during the boy's Christmas visits. In what Lycett has called a 'quest for cultural syncretism in a post-Darwininan age,' the painter delved into such diverse sources as Assyrian and Celtic myth, before Swinburne turned him on to Omar Khayyam and all things Persian. Tennyson's favourite *Arabian Nights* was recited for the children, who addressed each other 'daughter of my uncle' and 'true believer' in anticipation of

[68] 'Recollections of the Arabian Nights', *Poems of Tennyson*, pp.205-10.
[69] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, pp.19, 21. See also Rudyard Kipling, *Stalky & Co.* (London, 1899), p.217.

Kipling's own archaic rendering of Eastern speech.[70] Kipling's voracious childhood reading, therefore, was not only firmly grounded in the mid-Victorian canon (in the second chapter of his memoirs he quotes Browning and Swinburne each twice, and parodies Tennyson). It also embraced what were then beginning to be adopted by the West as classics of a global literature, a process which indicated not merely the confidence of Western appropriation, but also an incipient cultural restlessness and instability. If he exceeded the scope of Yeats's early reading, which was similarly broad, then the latter more than made up for it during the often mystic explorations of his twenties.

As we have already seen, in the boys' parental experience loving (and analytical) attention would alternate at random with rebuffal and discoveries made in solitude. Lockwood, for example, would construct a sand-canoe so that his son could pursue fancied voyages on Littlehampton beach, curiously echoing not only Willie's shipboard fantasies but also the 'magic circle' to which he was about to abandon Rudyard at Southsea. Father and son did not see each other again for seven years.[71] Yeats underwent a similar estrangement from an affectionate if heavy-handed father. JBY wrote constantly to Susan Yeats of their eldest son, urging her to make allowances for his 'sensitive, intellectual and emotional' personality much as Alice Kipling beseeched Crom Price to watch out for a disorientated boy with 'a great deal that is feminine in his nature.' However, the prodigal father was so often absent in pursuit of bohemia that in 1872 he bade his wife 'Tell Willy not to forget me.'[72]

The adult poet's 'first clear image' of JBY has him

> just arrived from London and ... walking up and down the nursery floor. He had a very black beard and hair, and one cheek bulged out with a fig that was there to draw the pain out of a bad tooth.

With characteristic gusto, the painter then set about teaching his son to read, although his pedagogic style is remembered as 'angry and impatient.'[73] He was more successful at the literary classics, often reciting aloud during the Yeatses' holiday reunions and introducing his son to Chaucer, Dickens and Balzac in this manner. The artist was later to claim he had moulded the poet's interests by narrating *Le peau de chagrin* to him in the summer of 1874, although Yeats remembered that the books which

[70] Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.57; Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.8.
[71] Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, pp.45, 76.
[72] Ibid., p.74; Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 16.
[73] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, pp.53-4.

had really enthralled him as a boy were 'Scott first, and then Macaulay.' Called upon to entertain his own children fifty years later, he reached at once, somewhat to their surprise, for *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.[74] Anglo-Irish literature is also likely to have featured, although it was not until his late teens that the translations and reifications of the Celtic cultural revival began to heavily occupy Yeats. Despite its sentimental limitations, the geographic memory of William Allingham's verse was an important influence. Born barely twenty miles from Sligo town at Ballyshannon, the most noted Anglo-Irish émigré poet in 1870s London had been briefly engaged to Alice before her marriage to Lockwood. Poems like 'The Fairies' and 'The Winding Banks of Erne', wrote Yeats in his mid-twenties, would always be 'best loved' by those who had grown up on Ireland's western seaboard and for whom it 'became a portion of their life for ever.'[75]

Ambition and Ambivalence: Self-conscious Inheritors of a Wearied Poetic

Whether the boy learned his lessons at this time or later, identity—artistic and national—was a core component of JBY's syllabus. William Butler Yeats grew up with intimate knowledge of his family's historic roots and possessions, some chimerical or exaggerated and much hanging on the noble middle name. As his biographer has written, Yeats's formative years coincided closely with the crisis period of agricultural unrest and reform from which the Protestant Ascendancy was never to recover. Stories of past honour were matched for volume with family whisperings of successively lost lands.[76] Just as Kipling would bring a characteristically biblical analogy to bear on his expulsion from India, this was a mythology of lost Eden in the making. It would be a mistake to imagine that the young Yeats was heavily preoccupied with his class, but his affiliation with the Anglo-Irish was not so consciously retroactivated as was Kipling's with his colonial 'caste' (he remembers the USC as a 'caste school').[77] Kipling was an oddity at school but Yeats was more firmly an outsider, both for his Irishness and his embarrassing, genteel poverty. Moreover, while it was a common assumption among his later detractors that dormitory sadism had made of Kipling a militant disciplinarian, Yeats's schooling at

[74] Ibid., p.68; Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 17.
[75] Yeats, *Uncollected Prose*, i, 210.
[76] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 30-1, 3.
[77] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.13.

Hammersmith from 1877 to 1881 was at least as brutal and certainly less nurturing.[78] It may have been partly to bolster his son's flagging confidence, in this environment, that JBY repeatedly harped on the vulgarity of 'tow-rows', as Yeats remembers English tourists being called in Sligo, and the inherent superiority and grace of all things Celtic.[79] 'The typical Irish family is poor, ambitious, and intellectual', he insisted in a late essay. More importantly, JBY absolutely impressed upon his offspring the distinction of being the child of an artist, and the need for them to live up to this calling. Family shame and compensating pride are artfully combined in section VII of *Reveries*, which pairs the drab vignette of a Strand hotel room housing a disgraced and bankrupt relative with memories of inwardly declaring, while surveying the raucous playground, 'I am an artist's son and must take some work as the whole end of life and not think as the others do of becoming well off.'[80] The combination of artistic breeding with Hibernian finesse would be reflected, later, in his centralization of the Irish bard (see p.221) in revived Celtic culture.[81]

Harbouring a similar conviction of having been born to a poetic—or painterly—destiny, Kipling too marked a point of artistic self-realization on his childhood timeline. Part of the summer spent with his mother between Southsea and Westward Ho! was passed at lodgings in the Brompton Road—the same house where the night got into his head—and in the nearby South Kensington Museum. 'These experiences were a soaking in colour and design,' he writes of the galleries which Lockwood had helped to establish. 'By the end of that long holiday I understood that my Mother had written verses, that my Father "wrote things" also; that books and pictures were among the most important affairs in the world.'[82] If this sentiment appears retrospective, it is borne out by a personal questionnaire, circulated amongst the family c.1880, in which the first query concerns 'poetry.' Rudyard's opinion is

[78] Yeats remembered the Godolphin School as 'an obscene, bullying place, where a big boy would hit a small boy in the wind to see him double up' (*Autobiographies*, p.64). Kipling faced abuse at Southsea, rather than at the comparatively benign USC. For assumptions of a hard knocks education see, for example, Leonard Woolf and E.M. Forster's comments in Mulk Raj Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury* (Delhi, 1995), pp.74-5. Insightful though his remarks are, Forster is here really thinking of his own miserable schooldays.

[79] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.61. The slur refers to a well-known patriotic song, i.e.: 'with a tow row row row row row row for the British Grenadiers!' No doubt Walter Scott was also attractive for his demure denigration of the Sassenach.

[80] John Butler Yeats, 'Back to the Home' in *Essays Irish and American* (Dublin, 1918), p.30; Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.65

[81] See, for example, Yeats's preface to his anthology *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (London, 1888).

[82] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.13.

that it 'is never to be taken lightly under any circumstances.'[83] It may not be possible to delineate a coherent zeitgeist in the late nineteenth century, but a personal zeitgeist existed for Kipling and Yeats. Both poets, then, received early tuition in the Romantic centrality of art to society. Later chapters will examine the repercussions of this Morrisite (or Ruskinian) conviction that the world must be made fit for artists to inhabit. For now, Kipling and Yeats came to early, if not allied, conclusions—appearing at times, indeed, over-versed in the direction art was or should be heading.

Both could boast of paternal links, JBY's somewhat raffish, to the London artistic establishment.[84] Alice had been prompted to court Allingham by the wedding of two of her sisters to Pre-Raphaelite bohemians, Edward Poynter and 'Uncle Ned'. Proximity to this same set was no doubt one of the attractions of the Yeatses' move to Edith Villas, West Kensington, from 1874. When WBY was not in Sligo, he was now barely three minutes walk along North End Road from the Burne-Jones household, and just across the railway line from Rudyard's other holiday berth in Warwick Gardens. This was the home of an Anglo-Indian family friend and her two bookish cousins, one a novelist, who entertained Christina Rossetti and kept two clay pipes tied with black ribbon because they had once been smoked by Carlyle.[85] Five years later, JBY was to cement his artistic credentials by shifting westward to Bedford Park—a place where, he informed his son, there would be a boundary wall and no newspapers admitted. Yeats colours this environment with peacock-blue doors and Morris wallpaper, and adds knowingly that Norman Shaw's model village promised the kind of happy lives, it was imagined, people had known 'long ago when the poor were picturesque.'[86] A mixture of sincerity and circumspection characterized Yeats's later attitudes to the artistic temperaments he had observed as a child. Kipling however, while still a schoolboy, already affected an urbane savoir faire about all things Pre-Raphaelite. If not entirely the dandified aesthete portrayed in the acerbic anecdotes of his schoolmate Beresford, the latter's assertion that the boy envisaged glory not in India but in the

[83] Rudyard Kipling, *Writings on Writing*, ed. Sandra Kemp and Lisa Lewis (Cambridge, 1996), p.1.
[84] John Butler Yeats's artistic circle emerged principally from Heatherley's art school. It included J.T. Nettleship and John Todhunter and was loosely styled, whether in irony or homage, 'the Brotherhood.' See Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 12.
[85] Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, pp.38, 81.
[86] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.66. Yeats was himself later guilty of idealizing the Irish 'peasantry', and perhaps did so with his father's relish for controversy. ''The Irish make good servants and their gentry make good masters,' wrote JBY, 'because both are still mediaevalists' (*Early Memories*, p.61).

London of bookmen and clubmen is supported by Kipling's letters, and by the family questionnaire's hearty derogation of all things provincial. Certainly he indulged just what he was punished for at Southsea, 'showing off'. Original editions of Beresford's book contain several boyhood caricatures. One features a smug-looking and almost moustachioed Kipling asking a cherubically impressionable classmate "Have you heard of Froissart?" "Is it a kind of tuck?" "Yes".[87]

He manifested his confidence with the cultural developments of the day partly by exercising a deflating satire. 'It was not what I had fancied,' laments a music hall buffoon capering at chivalric love in one schoolboy lyric, ''Twas no Dryad's half-heard note'—this reflecting Christmases spent in the lap of William Morris,

> For the Gods are dead and done with,
> And we learn their names by rote.[88]

Furthermore, he honed his lifelong skill for parody on Tennyson's 'The Epic' and other images of the Arthurian heroic. A sentiment like this came naturally to a wit formed in the artistic milieu of late Victorian doubt and reverie—he knew its maxims and its clichés. Less ostentatiously, Yeats too had taken the subdued pulse of a self-consciously worn-out poetic. 'The woods of Arcady are dead,' he responds.

> Of old the world on dreaming fed;
> Grey Truth is now her painted toy;[89]

—a sly riposte to Comte, Mill and the Positivist philosophy on which his father had been raised and which he relentlessly championed.[90] Yeats's reply is more earnest—as a young man he repudiated the 'too reasonable' George Eliot while Kipling devoured the gritty cynicism of Zola—but in time both poets would wrangle with the fin de siècle antinomy foreshadowed by Kipling's title 'Romance and Reality'. Nor was Yeats's dictum that the head must 'bow a ceaseless obeisance to the heart', foreign to the schoolboy Kipling.[91] American light verse and W.S. Gilbert may have shaped his flavour for

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[87] See Beresford, *Schooldays with Kipling*, pp.32-3, 64, 100, Plate II.
[88] Kipling, 'Romance and Reality', *Early Verse by Rudyard Kipling, 1879-1889*, ed. Andrew Rutherford (Oxford, 1986), pp.129-30. For other chivalric burlesques, see pp.119, 131.
[89] Yeats, 'The Song of the Happy Shepherd,' *Variorum Poems*, pp.64-6.
[90] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 7.
[91] Yeats, *Collected Letters*, i, 8.

burlesque and ballad, and Swinburne the long rollicking metres that were to appear so antiquated to modernist critics. It is a mistake, however, to entirely dismiss the early verse's introspective, melancholic strain as adolescent maundering.[92] Juvenile only in its derivativeness, this confessional note would remain a subtle but abiding mode in his poetry.

What these connections amount to is that both poets were deeply rooted in the metropolitan artistic culture of the Seventies and Eighties, and its influence is felt long afterwards in unexpected ways. More importantly, both were attuned all too keenly to the plangent elegiac note which undercut the teleogic optimism of that era. If Carlyle had advocated hero-worship as a saving principle for the industrial era, Morris's sagas and Burne-Jones's paintings showed that heroism could be more effectively invoked to militate against it. 'Crusade and Holy Warfare against the age,' had been their undergraduate pact when they joined to paint the ceiling of the Oxford Union Rossetti in 1857, with a little help from Crom Price.[93] Self-defeat, however, was always implied in this nostalgic mission. This impetus of their fathers' generation toward legend and anti-modern retrospection would continue to appeal to Kipling and Yeats, but the new permutations they would give to its values sprung from their comprehension of its limitations. The happy shepherd's denunciation of 'Grey Truth' derived originally from Yeats's uncollected *The Island of Statues*, a verse drama that combines Spenserian pastoral with Tennysonian reverie and features a supernatural island which both anticipates 'Innisfree' and recalls the 'magic circle' of childhood games. In one speech Naschina lays down the standard of heroism expected of any prospective lovers:

> I weary of your songs and hunter's toys.
> To prove his love a knight with lance in rest
> Will circle round the world upon a quest,
> Until afar appear the gleaming dragon-scales:
> From morn the twain until the evening pales
> Will struggle. Or he'll seek enchanter old,
> Who sits in lonely splendour, mail'd in gold,
> And they will war, 'mid wondrous elfin-sights:
> Such may I love. The shuddering forest lights
> Of green Arcardia do not hide, I trow,
> Such men, such hearts.[94]

[92] One critic has compared this style to Yeats's early love lyrics. See p.82.
[93] See Houghton, *Victorian Frame of Mind*, pp.320, 326.
[94] W.B. Yeats, *Variorum Poems*, p.651. For Tennysonian reverie, see I, i, 134-140.

That questing heroism is no longer a viable theme is a Pre-Raphaelite trope which was practically second nature to Yeats, although he could not have anticipated the violent heroes who would confront him in later years as nationalist literalizations of his verse paragons. In his juvenilia he endeavoured, like Tennyson's Everard Hall, to 'remodel models'. The true weariness is not Naschina for her wooer's idle amusements, however, but the poet's for the threadbare icon of the knight—one of a multiplying number of foiled circuitous wanderers challenged, in this period, by the global universality which shall be discussed in the next two chapters. What late Victorians called romance came down to young readers as a muddle of tropes and imagery.[95] If the dragon should prove unavailable, he shall dig up some enchanter or other—no matter, because it is the evocation of mood rather than the actual subject which concerned the developing poet. The poem reveals Yeats deploying these tropes with conscious theatricality. More importantly, it suggests the extent of the self-realization—in both men—that they had, like all children, steadily internalized the romance narratives to which they had been exposed, and incorporated them into their own story of self. The miscellaneous 'elfin-sights' call to mind a much later piece of writing, Kipling's 1909 story 'Cold Iron'. In a thinly-veiled self-portrait, Kipling describes the shadowy Arthurian fantasies which 'the Boy' invests with the passionate substance of his tempestuous and confused emotions—'all his own magic, of course.'[96] This reflects Kipling's own particularly advanced conception of the power of play, which would animate his own writing for children. But the same fundamental understanding sustained both poets' attempts to address the *weltschmerz* of their own generation by framing mythologies of nation and empire.

'The need of the Ideal': the Crisis of Action in Romantic Poetry

'It seems to me as if there were much less of the old reverence and chivalrous feeling in the world', the elderly Tennyson famously declared. 'I tried in my "Idylls" to teach men these things, and the

[95] Arthur Quiller-Couch's memory of his childhood fantasies 'drawn indiscriminately' from the *Morte d'Arthur*, Bunyan's *Holy War*, Pope's *Iliad*, and Scott's *Ivanhoe* illustrates the overwrought saturation of the reading culture. Mixing fairytales with history, he would have Wellington break a lance with Captain Credence or Tristam of Lyonesse. See Jerome K. Jerome (ed.), *My First Book* (London, 1894), p.270.
[96] 'The Epic', *Poems of Tennyson*, p.584; Kipling, *Writings on Writing*, p.6.

need of the Ideal.'[97] Kipling and Yeats were well acquainted with the intellectual fractures which enervated Tennyson, but these did not preoccupy them. The 'doubts, disputes, distractions, fears' to which Arnold had referred in 1850 now call to mind at once Lyell and Darwin, religious scepticism and political radicalism. Such controversies did not break parent and child asunder in the 1870s, at least in the Kipling and Yeats households. Lockwood Kipling admitted in later life to have never possessed any firm belief in a personal deity, a position roughly mirrored by his son, whose evangelical guardian at Southsea left him with a quotable familiarity with scripture unusual for his generation, but thoroughly embittered him against proselytic creeds.[98] His incantatory yearning for catechism and ritual, explored through eastern religions and Freemasonry is, however, another matter that perhaps set him on a more eccentric course than his father. The real grounds for intellectual fissure were more obvious in the Yeats household. Like Lockwood, JBY was no enthusiast for Sunday service. But neither did he see eye-to-eye with the spiritualism practised by his brother-in-law George Pollexfen, upon whom his son paid frequent visits—because, in a significant phrase, he possessed 'a mind full of pictures'.[99] For the intellectual sea-change which set in after 1870, as Walter Houghton remarks in his seminal analysis, was not a crumbling of orthodoxies but a creeping relativism—the sense that knowledge could not be established canonically, but only by sideways glimpses.[100] Thus while JBY clung to the grail of positivistic truth discoverable by scientific method, his son's determination to piece together the fragments and impressions of Paterian experience by occult means did not accord.

Their violent clashes were, it turned out, to set the tone for Yeats's poetic career. His obstinacy and axiomatic mindset, moreover, echoed that of his Anglo-Indian contemporary. Both would periodically exhibit a relativist habit of debunking universal doctrines (especially teleologies of peace and democracy) as evanescent and futile. Nevertheless, both would also startle their parents by becoming—Yeats inveterately so—formulators of systems and forceful dogmas. This tendency had its roots in Tennyson's irresolute grasping after an 'Ideal'. What they had formatively witnessed, in the

[97] Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred, Lord Tennyson: a Memoir* (2 vols., London, 1897), ii, 349.
[98] See A.W. Baldwin, *The Macdonald Sisters* (London, 1960), p.132.
[99] Yeats, *Autobiographies,* p.83.
[100] Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870* (New Haven, 1957), p.14. Houghton cites specifically the relativistic historiography of Morley and Sidgwick.

core works of their precursors, constituted a crisis in Romantic poetry. Was it to turn inwards, addressing the poet's subjective emotion, or was it insist on outward, objective *vision*, conceiving ideals for the age? *Empedocles on Etna* had exemplified the first school, before Arnold both decried his own tendency and fruitlessly advocated, in its place, the 'grand style.' Tennyson himself did much the same with his adjustments to *In Memoriam*, including the opening credo: 'men may rise on stepping-stones / Of their dead selves to higher things.' These lines precipitated a domestic outburst when set for Yeats, aged about sixteen, as a school essay title. 'That is the way boys are made insincere and false to themselves,' declared the Rousseau in JBY, zealously pouncing on this scrap of pedagogic idiocy. 'Ideals make the blood thin.'[101]

Although Yeats would eventually cede this ground to his father, their ongoing quarrel over sincerity and ideals will continue to crop up over the coming chapters—as will the crisis of authority in Romantic poetry (see p.126). The significance of childhood for this was, however, that although both Yeats and Kipling would sometimes make claims as peremptory as Shelley's for poets' legislative role, their tenability as prophets was based on something more subtle. They understood *reverie* not just as a subjective exercise, but as a compelling collective rite. Articulating the concept much more fully than Kipling, this is why Yeats later applied the word to the audience viewing a tragic drama. He wrote of 'passionate reverie', imparting a sense of power and intensity to wistful memory and dream, and harnessing the psychic energy associated—as we saw earlier—with childhood hallucinations and nightwalking.[102] If he chose the epigraph 'in dreams begins responsibility' for a 1915 volume of verse, he also understood with Kipling that in memory begins identity and polity.

The culture Kipling and Yeats knew in their formative years was pregnant, but not yet alive, with imperial intent and nationalist implication and their 'Ideal', as it emerged in their early twenties, would be articulated to a large part in political terms. This was reflected in their making a more robust use of the retrospective literature to which they had been exposed, in particular Scott and Macaulay. Yeats's favourites effected a more historically-grounded, scholarly engagement with the past, with a quasi-political intent eagerly grasped by both him and Kipling. Macaulay's objective was to establish

[101] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.76.
[102] See W.B. Yeats, *Essays and Introductions* (New York, 1986), p.245; and p.354. for 'passionate reverie'. Also rendered as 'excited reverie', the phrase is discussed further in Chapter 4 (see p.101).

a Whiggish historical comparison between republican Rome and imperial Britain, both polities emerging through analogous periods of tyrannic strife and bardic heroism. This offered a rich and resonant approach to cultural memory, a model of temporal continuity which complemented the migratory, late-century poets' linking together of 'unforgettable places'. The lays Macaulay had composed to distract himself from tedious Indian service were, ironically, exploited by Kipling to envisage a similar historical and cultural unity in the subcontinent.[103] The ballad, aspiring to be a universal genre, was key to this endeavour and shall be discussed in depth in Chapter 6.

For Yeats in his late teens, the promise was of collapsing modern Ireland with ancient Ireland ('heroic period', as Standish O'Grady subtitled his 1881 history). The two countries—real and romantic—would vex him for the remainder of his career. Contrastingly, ideals would remain for the time being anathema to the cynically over-schooled Kipling. Composed at the USC after a failed attempt on Queen Victoria's life, early admirers sometimes took 'Ave Imperatrix!' as a harbinger of Kipling's future convictions. The ode is less significant, in fact, for its *in utero* jingoism than for its close attention to global goings-on. 'Where the scarce-seen smoke-puffs flew / From Boer marksmen in the grass,' and Lord Roberts's march to Kandahar are what excites his most accomplished lines. These were arenas for an imperial project which, for him, would be the vehicle of a romance no monarch could embody. A letter relating the incident suggests that Kipling's reaction to the attempted assassination was, indeed, chiefly bemusement, and gratitude for a day off school. He would always portray overt patriotism rather contemptuously, as in a chapter of his fictionalized school memoir *Stalky & Co.*, in which the college tolerates the visit of a 'flag-flapping' local worthy. Identity, the story implies, is fostered through unspoken group dynamics which to lay bare is taboo.[104] But as Kipling's biographer speculates, a much more influential lecture may, instead, have been recited to him at this stage. Beresford's readings from John Ruskin had made the foremost arbiter of taste a guiding light of Number Five Study. In 1870, the critic had used his inaugural address at Oxford to

[103] As a stylistic model for Kipling, Stanza IX from 'Horatius' is exemplary: 'There by thirty chosen prophets, / The wisest of the land, / Who alway by Lars Porsena / Both morn and evening stand: / Evening and morn the Thirty / Have turned the verses o'er, / Traced from the right on linen white / By mighty seers of yore.' Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Lays of Ancient Rome* (London, 1926), p.12

[104] Kipling, *Complete Verse*, p.135; Kipling, *Letters*, i, 18; *Stalky & Co.*, p.214.

urge ambitious youngsters out into the colonies.[105] If the schoolboy Kipling was indeed impressed with the grandeur of 'Imperial Duty', therefore, it was of lasting significance that this drilling should be filtered through a discussion of aesthetic discipline.

Estrangement and alienation became, perhaps, the overriding theme of Romantic poetry in its period of late Victorian dilemma. As the tradition's new interpreters, Kipling and Yeats posited identity and belonging as a solution. Evidently, their responses to the prevailing crisis in poetry would be coterminous with their political projects as these would now begin to emerge. This link would be cemented when the opportunity arose, in their seventeenth year, to consciously re-ground themselves within childhood space. Beresford relates with heavy irony how Kipling at school abhorred all things mechanical and 'of the earth, earthy', reflecting the anti-industrial prejudice of his artistic contacts. But the handfuls of dust which Yeats spoke to Maud Gonne of embracing were to prove far more significant for the Anglo-Indian than any fetish for machinery.[106] Likewise, the Last Minstrel whom Yeats had enacted for his children had warned that the man is incapable of feeling poetry 'Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd, / As home his footsteps he hath turn'd, / From wandering on a foreign strand'. This Romantic theme would undergo new developments when an art student came to self-consciously identify with an Ireland partially foreign to him, and when an English teenager bent his steps *home*ward to India.

[105] Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.104. As Lycett notes, one of the most receptive readers of this lecture was a young Cecil Rhodes.
[106] Beresford, *Schooldays with Kipling*, p.112.

3. Returns, 1881-1886

Overwritten with subsequent meanings, the elegantly archetyped childhoods revealed to Yeats and Kipling's community of 'friends' were the product of deft narrative. Their stories reach a turning point, in the seventeenth year, when return and reacculturation to their native countries is presented as triggering the recovery of self. Though of manifold importance, as this chapter will demonstrate, this relocation was not foreordained but abrupt and circumstantial. On the completion of his studies at Westward Ho!, Crom Price informed the prolific editor of his school magazine that a professional berth had been secured for him. While his friend Dunsterville crammed for Sandhurst, Kipling was to embark by P&O at the end of the summer holidays, and put his nose to the grindstone of a North Indian newspaper. In the Yeats household meanwhile, JBY's finances had hit a low ebb and, convinced that portrait commissions would come more easily in Dublin, he took a studio near Stephen's Green and moved the family to a long low cottage at Howth. Kipling's was undoubtedly the more dramatic shift—he would probably have been more successful at navigating Paris than his native city (a visit during Lockwood's supervision of the Indian exhibit at the Exposition Universelle of 1878 had initiated his lifelong Francophilia). Yeats, on the other hand, had been brought up to think of Ireland as his home and London as the abode of aproned philistinism. For both poets, however, the return 'Home' would be crucial. It not only set the tone for the conflict between native and metropolitan associations that would characterize their future work, but also intervened precisely as the first omens of that work began to appear. In systems of association, in their attitudes to painting, and preoccupation with demotic culture, the poets develop countervailing—and yet often curiously parallel—commitments and involvements in their home domains. By appraising this experience, this chapter will show the groundwork being laid for their subsequent negotiation, in their early twenties, of the London book world.

Howth/Dublin: Art, Politics and Folklore

The specificity of each context directs us to examine each poet in turn, while drawing comparative links between their respective milieux. Two motifs typify this period in Yeats's life: the renouncing of scientific interests and, connected to this, domestic friction and a search for alternative father-figures in Dublin society. Though he was not greatly familiar with the city of his birth, this introduction to its intersecting cultural and political circles was timely. Hammersmith had offered few opportunities to go one-up on his complacent English schoolmates, but he consoled himself that 'it is romantic to live in a dangerous country.'[1] Ireland was now gripped by the Land War, and the Yeats family was about the suffer the same fate as the two hundred evacuated 'Irish kernes [sic]' whom Kipling, still versifying in his dormitory, had recently spied crowding into a neighbouring college ('the sons of land-owners who missed all / Their rents when the Green Isle went wrong').[2] Although Yeats later attempted to salvage some aristocratic prestige by asserting that his father still arbitrated in the disputes of his former tenants, Gladstone's Land Act of 1881 meant more than lost income. The political patrimony of the Ascendancy was also slipping away. Although they were not reckoned amongst elite 'county' families, the Yeatses could claim friendship with Isaac Butt. Following that politician's death, however, the leadership of the resurgent Irish Party had passed to Charles Stewart Parnell, the maverick orator whose revolutionary brinksmanship, no less than his epic fall in 1890, ignited the possibility of radical and divisive change in Irish life.[3]

All this is likely to have remained relatively distant to Yeats for the two years the family lodged at Howth, a fishing village just beyond the mouth of Dublin Bay. Each morning he rode the train into town and breakfasted in JBY's studio, before proceeding to the Erasmus High School in Harcourt Street. In his free time he fashioned a new imaginative hideaway in a cave on the Howth cliffs, formerly the refuge—he was told rather poignantly—of an evicted tenant. Here he slept at night hoping to catch moths—natural history being at this age a major preoccupation, which led him on somewhat perilous boating expeditions to offshore islets. The cave spurred another interest, however,

[1] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.61.
[2] Kipling, *Letters*, i, 13-15.
[3] See Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 29-31.

when passersby mistook him for the actual ghost of the troglodytic phantom of the Land War.[4] Attending to his mother's conversations with their servants, he found that Howth possessed its own particular supernatural geography, and within a decade its attendant spirits would populate the 'Village Ghosts' chapter of his *Celtic Twilight.* For now, the 'Romance and Reality' duality coined so sententiously by his contemporary at Westward Ho! perhaps had occasion to occur to him also. For while he tormented a pious local fossil-hunter with the combative maxims of Darwin and Huxley, and took his ecclesiastical bearings from his ironic father, it was notably on a Sligo holiday that—so he later claimed—returned to him 'the superstitions of my childhood.' At Ballisodare and Rosses appeared strange lights which he attributed uneasily to the fairies. 'I did not believe with my intellect that you could be carried away body and soul,' he attempted to rationalize, 'but I believed with my emotions'. 'The belief of the countrypeople,' he added significantly, 'made that easy.'[5] It is facile to view Yeats as gullible and unreflecting during his career of paranormal inquiry, but this passage underlines his interlinked poetic and political motives. His Romantic convictions told him, firstly, that passion trumps reason, especially when that passion sways people. Secondly, if the supernatural was a manifestation of the villagers' *natural* relationship to the land, it could imbue his anti-modern vision for Ireland with a transformative prospect. To paraphrase Foster, Yeats knew how to extract what he needed creatively while straddling the philosophical fence. If his friend and sparring partner George Russell insisted on the *actuality* of meditative visions, then Yeats regarded them as purely symbolic.[6] As with Kipling upon his own return to India, the folklore of ghost and sprite would offer him an entrée into traditional narrative cultures.

It is notable that his change of heart, as he remembered it, is expressed in terms of play and fantasy. Once the tireless naturalist, he no longer imagined himself a scientist but 'began to play at being a sage, a magician or a poet' and developed a 'monkish' disregard for his former pursuits. He struck the poses of Manfred—Byronic and *contra mundum*—and Shelley's Alastor, whose melancholy barque ferries characters to his own Spenserian *Island of Statues.*[7] It was from his father's lips that he first

[4] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.76, 79.
[5] Ibid., pp.88-9.
[6] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 51.
[7] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.80, 92.

heard pronounced one of the sacred texts of his youth, *Prometheus Unbound*, although JBY steered around passages which proved for him the poet's lamentable drift towards 'abstraction'. For the painter, this was coterminous with affectation, idealism, insincerity and infelicity, and as with *In Memoriam*, the literary corrective to these baleful influences was dramatic verse. Supplementing their meagre studio breakfasts with *Coriolanus*, JBY could intone for his son the hallowed emotions of speakers poised in passionate action, unadulterated by either appraisals of lyric beauty or much worse, desultory analysis of the poem's ideas—for JBY too dreaded the intellectual paralysis of 'doubts, disputes, distractions, fears', and like his son harangued Arnold's despicably English tendency to expose Victorian malaises to objective scrutiny. Better the most histrionic soliloquy than the puny postures of islanded selfhood styling itself a 'criticism of life'! 'In literature' at least, as his son remembered, JBY 'was always Pre-Raphaelite'. In his own memoirs, the painter blamed his failure to fully master the nervous twitch of self-interrogation, and to be a pilgrim of the sweet imaginative life, on once missing an afternoon appointment with D.G. Rossetti.[8]

Remembering this time, Yeats emphasised his father's Pre-Raphaelite literary tastes because JBY the painter was already neglecting to keep the artistic faith. Later chapters will discuss how Yeats was to find his own lyric solutions to the anxieties of insincerity or impurity that were periodically to accuse him, in his father's voice, right until the end. What concerns us now, however, is JBY the painter, and his adolescent son's sometimes explosive aversion to his new stylistic direction. Forsaking the sensibilities of 'the Brotherhood', JBY had begun to turn his hand to impressionistic scenes of urban life. His new style was exemplified by *Going to their Work*, gratifyingly exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1887 but described by his son as 'that grey thing he did in Dublin of the Girl with the basket.'[9] If the young Kipling's icon of felicity was the Parisian boulevardier—a persona he frequently adopted, for ironic effect, in his Indian journalism—then Yeats mistrusted anything that smacked of metropolitan modernity.

As with many young men of the era, no doubt things French were loaded with sexual connotations, and according to his own confession Yeats was in youth as 'prudish as an old maid.' In any case, he

[8] Ibid., p.81; John Butler Yeats, *Early Memories*, p.29.
[9] Yeats, *Collected Letters*, i, 12.

took violently against the painted coquettes of a Manet café scene which came to Dublin, penning by contrast some admiring verses on a piece by one of his father's London cronies, John Nettleship, of wild beasts escaping a forest fire. Nettleship had returned from a stay with an Indian prince bearing a portfolio of such studies, and it was perhaps the exotic provenance that made this lurid and ferocious painting appear to the young art student—for such Yeats now was—pregnant with unarticulated allegory.[10] He announced his attraction to 'patterns and rhythms of colour' purely for their sensational value. In time, this pattern-finding mindset would aid his search for symbolic structures in painting, but for now he aligned himself with Whistler and *japonisme* by way of protest against his father's abandonment of the mythic narratives that suffused his earlier designs.[11] Associating this objective trend with his father's positivism, he began to yoke the French realist painters Jules Bastien-Lepage and Charles Durand alongside T.H. Huxley and John Tyndall as the four horsemen of 'scientific' modernism.[12]

Kipling came to know the Parisian ateliers through his adolescent amour Flo Garrard, who attended the Académie Julian. His parallel preoccupation with French painting reflects the artistic training he shared with Yeats, and highlights their temperamental differences. Besides speaking warmly of 'pere Durand', he also never wavered in his determination to 'see the object as in itself it really is'. It is unlikely Yeats would have found much to agree with in his 1892 essay 'Half a Dozen Pictures', which exalts the observation and hard line above colour, pattern, and mood, and implicitly expects paintings to contain some scene or narrative.[13]

As each chapter shall elucidate by stages, however, their clashing convictions on art were linked by similar underlying ambitions. Both shared an Arts and Crafts sympathy with unalienated craftsmanship. Both deplored, in different ways, the self-consciousness of all modern culture, and insisted that art must originate from outside the artist—for Kipling, in the human world; for Yeats, in

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[10] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, pp.85, 92; Yeats, 'On Mr Nettleship's Picture at the Royal Hibernian Academy', *Variorum Poems*, pp.688-9.
[11] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, pp.432, 91.
[12] He later arraigned them repeatedly in *Autobiographies*. For a fuller discussion, see Ronald Schuchard, 'Yeats, Titian and the New French Painting' in A. Norman Jeffares (ed.), *Yeats the European* (Gerrards Cross, 1989), p.143.
[13] Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 41; Rudyard Kipling, *Letters of Travel, 1892-1913* (London, 1920), p.70.

tradition. Locality was significant—urban painters, they felt, could not attain pure form because the very nature of their context was flux and change. Most importantly, both distrusted (but also learned from) French Impressionism. Taking it as a token of artistic indiscipline, and of the fragmentation of modern culture as a whole, they called for a method, as Yeats put it in 1913, to 'mould vast material into a single image'—a numinous symbol. For Kipling, this was a rigid compositional structure welding a profusion of independent details; for Yeats, some dramatic sensation of power, splendour and wonder. Their instinctive yearning for order on a visually grand scale would prove a defining characteristic of their artistic and political projects, and they would continue to associate it with their fathers' youthful milieux—not Millais or Rossetti *per se*, but what Yeats called 'our more profound Pre-Raphaelitism'.[14]

O'Leary and Ferguson

The High Romantic persona Yeats cultivated in Dublin was filtered no doubt through Victorian sensibilities, but the purpose was to antedate them. He began to sport his trademark elaborate neckties because he believed they were the habitual ornament of Byron. This uniform was evolved with Russell, whom he first met at the Metropolitan School of Art, and it could be seen as the outgrowth of the coterie he had already accrued in Harcourt Street, where his retainers drew up a waggish diagram of natural selection culminating in Yeats himself. Comparisons might be drawn with Kipling's saturnine precocity, but then 'Gigger' or 'Beetle' rarely played the leader in his gang, preferring throughout his career to channel his burning ambitions into an influential background role. By contrast, Yeats's juvenile élites evince, for Roy Foster, an abiding impulse not only to form organizations but to 'assert his authority within them.'[15] As this section will explore, moreover, he now began to assemble his own hierarchy of precursors and mentors—another evolutionary procession, but intended this time to be read backwards into the Irish past.

[14] Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, pp.354-5.
[15] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 33.

'Every community is a solidarity, all depending upon each, and each upon all,' he wrote in 1886, implying as much censure of Ireland as tribute.[16] Although he was now dwelling shamefacedly in a redbrick suburban villa at Terenure, membership of a well-known Protestant family still guaranteed what Foster calls 'a sense of caste' behind the Georgian facades which Yeats could now reach (eventually) on foot without the improvident expense of a rail fare. Polite Dublin was a community of at most three degrees of separation, but JBY and his sons privately snubbed those who confined their wits to the salons of Trinity College and its inscrutable Professor of English, Edward Dowden.[17] The academy, however, was not wholly tainted with 'West Britonism'. In 1885 Charles Oldham founded the *Dublin University Review*, not only a valuable outlet for Yeats's early verse but a nucleus for the kind of community he needed. The Contemporary Club met above a bookshop in Grafton Street, and acted as a social thoroughfare where politico-religious partisanship was sidelined in favour of sparring bonhomie and robust debate. Propped by a broad class consensus, but also promoting encounters against the bourgeois grain, it was a corner from which to imagine cultural unity. Here WBY met not only the Land War radical Michael Davitt, but also figures of the nationalist literary revival then being spurred by the anticipation of Home Rule: the Gaelic scholar Douglas Hyde, the academic journalist T.W. Rolleston, and most impressively John O'Leary, 'the handsomest old man I had ever seen.'[18]

O'Leary was a returned exile and former political prisoner, a man of solemn and untrifling utterance who immediately appealed to the Yeatses. Like the Jacobite diehards of *Redgauntlet*, his superannuated Fenianism had gained a romantic lustre now that constitutionalism appeared to have put rebellion out to pasture, and his presence at the Contemporary Club was described in suitably Scottian terms by H.W. Nevinson: 'sitting among us muttering of strange old things, I felt as when one suddenly comes on a cromlech standing in a grouse-moor.'[19] If this memorialization seems premature, perhaps it was rather germinal, for the Phoenix Park Murders of 1882 had been an omen not only of the violent clashes to come in Ireland, but of revolutionary terrorism throughout the Empire. O'Leary stood humanely against this, and when Yeats later had cause to ruminate on hatred

[16] Yeats, *Uncollected Prose*, i, 88.
[17] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 29.
[18] Ibid., pp.39-42; Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.100.
[19] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 43.

and heroism, O'Leary's was one ghost that he invoked. 'My tone throughout is the tone of Wolfe Tone', ran the punning introduction to the veteran's memoirs—self-deprecating perhaps, but perhaps also shrewdly indicating the potency of words to a listener steadily resolved on setting the keynote for his generation.[20]

If the returns experienced by both Yeats and Kipling can be defined by the induction, transgression and re-envisaging of collectives, then John O'Leary was a conduit for all three. He urged Yeats to join Dublin's reformed Young Ireland Society, a principally cultural organization named in homage to Davis and O'Connell's generation. The young poet may even have sworn the Fenian oath. Certainly he embraced Parnell, whom JBY cautiously mistrusted, and with him the whole rebel legend stretching back to the 1798 uprising. Indeed, alternative traditions and idioms were O'Leary's principal legacy to the Yeatses. He offered 'ways in which father and son could "belong" to the new Ireland' by opening up to them a Catholic vernacular mythology probably quite alien to their Trinity milieu.[21] Given the run of O'Leary's library in the same way that Price had given Kipling the liberty of his, Yeats recalled that 'for the first time I began to read histories and verses that a Catholic Irishman knows from boyhood'. In late 1887, *The Gael* published his own versification of one such story, 'The Protestants' Leap', which narrates the comeuppance of some murderous Cromwellian soldiers who are led over a cliff by the devil. The gung-ho Celtic athletics bulletin had taken Yeats's work at O'Leary's recommendation, as did pro-Irish American papers.[22]

It is significant that, through O'Leary, Yeats gained access to the sphere of popular ballad and narrative, and of the nationalist verse and polemic of Young Ireland—the first rural, the second urban—alongside the altogether more ancient Gaelic mythical canon, newly translated by figures like Sir Samuel Ferguson and Douglas Hyde. A talisman connecting political venture with cultural discovery, O'Leary's innate romance bound together the deep past and the vital present to produce what was for Yeats an imminent, revolutionary moment in time.

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[20] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, pp.102-3; John O'Leary, *Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism* (2 vols., New York, 1969), i, xxiv.
[21] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 44.
[22] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.435; 'The Protestants' Leap' was rediscovered by John Kelly, who gives it detailed treatment in 'Aesthete among the Athletes: Yeats's Contributions to *The Gael*', *Yeats Annual* 2 (1984), 75-143.; Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 44.

Writing on the cusp of fifty, Yeats would ascribe the whole output of his mature career to this gaslit hedge-schooling in nationality. Such foreshortened self-portraiture did not, perhaps, do justice to his recent volume *Responsibilities*, but it rightly highlighted the dramatic discovery of new subject matter gained not at the parental knee, but from the shuffling of identities undertaken in Grafton Street.[23] Ferguson, in particular, supplied a valuable reserve of that masterful imagery venerated in 'The Circus Animals' Desertion'. Yeats's juvenilia was often as solemnly emulative as Kipling's was gleefully parodic, but this new cache enabled him to surpass both the Shelleyan proclivities of his student peers and the jaded palate of 'sub-Tennysonian' imitation. *Lays of the Western Gael* filled the place of Macaulay's similarly-titled poems, opening up the past and offering the maturing poet an escape route from the modern age, with its dying traditions and diseased selfhood. 'To thee are committed the keys of the past', Ferguson promised the Celt in 'Adieu to Brittany'—verses quoted by an article in Oldham's *Review* with which Yeats cut his critical, as well as political, teeth.[24] Ferguson had retired to Howth, where Lily Yeats would admiringly present fresh fish at his doorstep, but it was his death in 1886 that allowed her brother to sketch the first of many great men on the canvas of history-in-his-time. In the process he somewhat disingenuously reconciled the antiquarian's politics to his own—Ferguson would hardly have written 'The Protestants' Leap' (his own 'Willy Gilliland' is the ballad of an Ulster Covenanter who dirks his persecutor as the latter emerges from Mass). Ferguson had also urged his Celtic survivor to

> Leave to him—to the vehement man….
> In the Idea's high pathways to march in the van,
> To o'erthrow, and set up the o'erthrown.[25]

But Yeats quotes this after praising the *Lays* chiefly for their vehemence, and for displacing outmoded chivalry in his imagination with figures of breathless Homeric primitivism, 'still wet with the dew of their primal world.' That they are heroes is necessarily Victorian, but that they are Irish fortifies emasculated reverie with something like a goal, to be attained by vigorous backward flights through time. Back to their native legends men go year after year, the reviewer declared (reflecting the

[23] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.104.
[24] Yeats, *Uncollected Prose*, i, 102.
[25] For 'Adieu to Brittany' and 'Willy Gilliland', see Sir Samuel Ferguson, *Lays of the Western Gael, and other poems* (London, 1865), pp.140, 110.

contemporary interest in mythic recapitulation), 'that they may not be lost in a world of mere shadow and dream.'[26]

Although his enjoyment of Nettleship's oriental intensity signalled that Yeats did not abandon 'foreign themes' with quite the same abruptness with which he shed the authorial beard sported in JBY's 1886 frontispiece portrait for *Mosada* (a verse play set in Spain), the shift in gear from private dream to collective retrospection was seminal.[27] This transition was underpinned by place—as always, a communal inheritance which is subjectively experienced. He pumped his circle for information on locales associated with even the weakest Irish poems, and took care to subtitle 'The Protestants' Leap' with the Gaelic name for the escarpment where the cutthroats met their doom. 'Lug-na-Gal' lies, indeed, slightly to the northeast of Sligo town, suggesting that he may have heard the story as a child before it was endowed with greater significance under the tutelage of O'Leary. It fitted in to the sacred geography of the coast which Yeats was now literally charting for himself. Just as Jack Yeats's *Memory Harbour* would lay out remembered monuments of the harbour at Rosses 'as in some old map', after the family migrated to London in 1887 his brother would chart storied Sligo in pastels across his bedroom ceiling. The tiny cove Pooldoy was presumably labelled, since the refuge it offered from a herd of marauding bulls is the local basis for Yeats's 1887 fable of the giant *Dhoya*. This first venture into fiction, which will be treated fully in Chapter 6, demonstrates for Richard Finneran the 'special delight' Yeats took at this time 'in discovering a continuity of belief in legendary materials.'[28]

Such a thorough effort at *grounding* his output might be read as a counterweight to the 'abstraction' from which his father would continue to ward him, but it was from his reading of Young Ireland that Yeats confirmed JBY's suspicions that romantic imagery and high passion, when not mutually articulated by lived experience, expended themselves in rhetoric. Yeats had no intention of fettering himself to the propagandistic expectations of his editorial patrons. The poetic infelicities of Thomas Davis's generation were so much the plainer to him because they corroborated a sentimental

[26] Yeats, *Uncollected Prose*, i, 90, 81 .
[27] Ibid., ii, 509; Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 40.
[28] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, pp.104, 437; W.B. Yeats, *John Sherman and Dhoya*, ed. Richard J. Finneran (New York, 1991), p.xi.

symbology he would later denigrate as 'harps and pepperpots'—exemplified by the hammy martyring of Robert Emmet on the Dublin penny-stage. It obstructed Ireland's evolution of a more sophisticated palimpsest of nationhood.[29] If the nation was historically frozen, then so was the poetic self which lacked an autonomous language. Young Ireland continued to represent to the fascinated Yeats an impassioned voice lying unarticulated beneath poetic convention.

John Butler Yeats had prescribed dramatic verse as a cure for this species of creative malaise, but his son favoured a subtly different course: 'personal utterance'. Differing from Wordsworth because amplified by nationality, it provided Yeats with the aesthetic virtue which JBY rated above all others—intensity.[30] His new work was to be intrinsically, rather than objectively, Irish. The value of its nationalism would lie in its subjectivity. However, the methods which Yeats chose to summon the trapped self involved a much sharper break with his father, once again in terms that were fundamentally visual and hence, as will be discussed in the next chapter, reminiscent of Kipling. While the stubborn empiricist contented himself with the single plane of quotidian reality, as mystic and psychic researcher his son evolved an ever more plural model of human consciousness. Along with some art school friends, he had fallen in with a trend that embraced the diverse concerns of Ireland, Britain, India and America, where it was founded in 1875.[31] For all its mocked pretensions, Theosophy nonetheless furnished poets and artistic groupings with something significant and modern: a new lexicon for articulating the self. This quality, in particular, underlay the close association that the movement would foster over the coming decades of mystics with nationalists. More important still was its role as a platform for new, alternative collectives, lying intermediary between classes, races, and—in very pragmatic terms—between civil society and government. Paying homage to Victorian Positivism while reasserting the value of mystic insight, it claimed to pursue a scientific study of comparative religion that inspired broad sympathy across a highly-dilated intellectual spectrum. This cultural relativism appealed to an elite segment of Anglo-Indian society and provided the multiracial forum from which, in 1885, would emerge the Indian National Congress. This was more than enough

[29] Yeats, *Autobiographies,* p.182.
[30] 'Romantic convention, unconscious drama', was how Yeats later summed up his juvenilia. *Autobiographies*, p.105.
[31] His relationship with the organization is explored fully in Ken Monteith, *Yeats and Theosophy* (London, 2008).

reason, as shall be seen later, for Kipling to mock its alternative, telepathic hierarchies in his 1888 story 'The Sending of Dana Da'.

All these mingled concerns contributed to *The Stolen Child*, the poem which is usually regarded as Yeats's first mature work. Its fleet-footed prosody conjures a supernatural eeriness striking, though by no means unique (it can be found both in Allingham and Ferguson). It does, however, make two significant contributions to its genre. The first is the volition of the child (really poised, 'solemn-eyed', on the threshold of adulthood), who is not stolen but forgets his family and rides off with the fairies, spellbound by his own sorrowful quest for knowledge. Secondly, the familiar domestic world beginning to flicker in Lethean dissolution achieves an imagistic clarity, pregnant with symbolic potential, which would come to distinguish Yeats's most resonant lyrics:

> Away with us he's going,
> The solemn-eyed:
> He'll hear no more the lowing
> Of the calves on the warm hillside
> Or the kettle on the hob
> Sing peace unto his breast,
> Or see the brown mice bob
> Round and round the oatmeal-chest.[32]

It is a tightly controlled poem in the classic Yeatsian manner, but it is also the first poem that can be seen to have controlled, as great works do in their composition, its author. Hence its ambivalence: like Alastor the child is summoned to its voyage, but the poet is tugged back to the hearthstone. Yeats knew that this dynamic interplay of fairy fantasy and hard reality would not be pliable in his inherited modes of overwrought Arthurianism or urbane impressionism, and he exploited the Ferguson article to stake out his canon. He recruited O'Leary's library shelves into a sort of pre-Victorian Brotherhood. The coming poets he claimed, like Celtic Wordsworths, would describe nature as known in the bright-eyed 'early world' of the nation's childhood, instead of colluding in the utter reduction of material beauty to a template of 'masks behind which go on the sad soliloquies of a nineteenth century egoism.'[33]

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[32] Yeats, *Variorum Poems*, p.88.
[33] Yeats, *Uncollected Prose*, i, 103.

For Yeats in relation to Kipling, this provides a locus of divergent opinions but convergent sensibilities. In India, the latter was starting to assume a suspicious and pugilistic attitude towards the Aesthetic young men described to him in letters from his London relatives, characterized by a flat refusal to face reality. Yeats meanwhile (who would, in a few years, be dining with the 'epicene Oscar Wilde') had thoroughly digested what *he* considered the fount of affectation and degeneracy in metropolitan literature.[34] His was to be a bardic, Byronic reaction against George Eliot, Matthew Arnold, music halls, three-decker novels and London in general. The careworn sophistical voice of English literature, to which it had fallen in the late nineteenth century, was to be exorcized by the simultaneous renovation of nationalist discourse in Ireland. Dublin was, however, ultimately not the place to accomplish such an overthrow. It was not until his re-migration to the English capital in April 1887 that Yeats would tell Tynan 'I feel more and more that we shall have a school of Irish poetry—founded on Irish myth and History—a neo-remantic movement.'[35] What Yeats meant by that, and what Kipling would contribute to his 'movement', will be explained in Chapters 3 and 4. How Yeats's discoveries in Dublin were echoed—and rebuffed—by his contemporary in Punjab must concern us first.

Lahore: a Provincial Community

Yeats's five pet-hates were all firmly in the good books of Rudyard Kipling, or at least the Kipling who left school for India in 1882, and for whom the longed-for Home usually meant the illuminated theatres of the Strand rather than the secluded corner of rural Sussex to which he would later retire. A reading of his return in parallel with Yeats's elicits as many differences as similarities. But as their combative attitudes to literary establishments suggest, broader common trends underlay surface currents. In some regards, Kipling returns the Victorian gaze of John Butler Yeats. Indeed, the Anglo-Indian was to remain on the painter's mind for years after (see p.119). Kipling too favoured dramatic verse and monologue, playing first collaborator and then bête noir to Simla's amateur theatrical scene, and even applying the cynical and morbid wit which became his Indian trademark to *The Story of the*

[34] Kipling, *Letters*, i, 252.
[35] Yeats, *Collected Letters*, i, 12.

Gadsbys—a moral drama which omits the moral. His rare self-dramatizations in these years, like 'The Story of Duncan Parrenness' or 'My Own True Ghost Story', often followed a gothic bent. Given his own intermittent 'Blue Devils' and the spectre of insanity in his family, the naked self was an apparition which he always regarded with some anxiety (hence his chary manner towards spiritualism). His trademark narratorial presence in the fiction of this period is merely that of a cunning cipher, a Browning auditor recording the lives of characters poised at 'the dangerous edge of things', whom he has persuaded to trust him (or who, perhaps, have rather beguiled him into their confidence). Despite the scorn that Yeats would later heap on him in New York, however, 'abstraction' rarely featured in his father's later remarks on Kipling. As JBY understood, the return to India was integral to Kipling's growth into—though few realized it—a Romantic poet. In between the lines, propping the rhetoric, one can always find personal utterance and hoarded memory.

His school prize-poem 'The Battle of Assaye', if free of snake-charmers, imagined the Indian heat and jungle in the stereotypical terms which most schoolboys would have used. The battle moreover is schoolboy Virgil, its rout described explicitly as the sort of chivalric deed unknown to the degraded present.[36] India would certainly change that, but the first sign of his cultural reawakening was linguistic rather than heroic. Writing at the end of his life, he claimed that his first steps ashore at Apollo Bunder summoned forth spontaneously foreign words familiar and yet unknown. 'My English years fell away, nor ever, I think came back in full strength.'[37] Self-divisions like this dramatically evoke what Jonathan Bate has called Kipling's 'mongrel' character, but they also formed part of his self-fashioned literary mystique. At the time, Rudyard boarded the P&O steamer with reluctance. As the vengeful Beresford shrewdly pointed out, Kipling had already made other plans—including what he considered a marriage engagement that was, in due course, to be smartingly '*javabed*'.[38] As for literature, the boy who had read everything positively savoured the prospect of Gissing's 'valley of the shadow of books'. Disillusionment was to be his métier, though Fleet Street rather than Grub Street was his likely ambition. Thus while his mother blamed the dullness of their Indian life for her

[36] Kipling, *Early Verse*, pp.162-166. The narrative begins 'so I write / My record of brave deeds in a dead age.'
[37] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.22.
[38] Jonathan Bate, *English Literature: a very short introduction* (Oxford, 2010), pp.19, 150; Beresford, *Schooldays with Kipling*, p.315; Javabed: an Anglo-Indianism of which Kipling was fond. Derived from the Urdu for 'answer', it was a wry euphemism for 'given the brush-off.'

son's frequent bad moods, her friend Edith Plowden became the confidante for his metropolitan longings.[39]

'I feel very much that I am in a strange land', he confessed to her a few months after arrival, followed in his first sweltering June with the more panicky '"oh give me a London *trottoir*, some byewalk damp and muddy, / In place of this wholesome heat" is the cry of your washed out Ruddy.' But even these excitable verses also made concession to the joys of 'a ride in an Indian dawn', while the end of 1883 struck an equally ambivalent, but deeper and graver note:

> .....you *see* I am tied
> Verily, tight am I tied
> To the land.[40]

Terminating a lengthy stanza on newspaper toils, these lines begin to express the confluence of obligation and labour with wonder and fascination that came to reinforce Kipling's own preoccupation with the *groundedness* of Anglos in Indian soil (lending itself, often enough, to graveside humour). Interestingly, after sending letters and verses to 'Aunt Edith' quite frequently until late 1884, his last two passages from India arrived at one-year intervals, in August 1885 and December 1886—the latter prefixed with copious apologies. Did London literary gossip no longer hold the same cachet? The longest letters, from now on, would be addressed to his cousin Margaret Burne-Jones, telling her all about India.

Indeed his identity was beginning to bifurcate in accordance with the genuine interest and love he professed for 'the country.' He began to punctuate his letters with Hobson-Jobsonisms intelligible only to the old stagers whom, he soon realized, were a race apart not only from the 'natives' whom they governed but from their fellow Europeans.[41] It took him time to penetrate this slightly incestuous society (its most striking characteristic was its universal 'knowability' which guaranteed hospitality across a vast geographical area), and the niche he found remained always provisional.[42] If to count himself 'true brother of a company' with the denizens of the Club—who chased down drain-digging,

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[39] Baldwin, *The Macdonald Sisters*, p.128.
[40] Kipling, *Letters*, i, 27, 38, 48.
[41] Ibid., i, 93; see, for example, a letter to Edmonia Hill of May 1888, pp.173-6: 'double dâk from the South...praise be to Allah...weary dinner at the L G's...*Khitmatgar peg lao*...sent him off, to my Father on whose head he will sit.'
[42] 'The Phantom 'Rickshaw', *Collected Short Stories* (5 vols., London, 2005), ii, 83.

bridge-building or famine relief with successive whiskies—became increasingly important to Kipling, nonetheless much of his early work observes the British community from a certain distance. In 1883, for example, he described his own position in 'The Song of an Outsider'. Another juvenile poem, 'The Song of the Exiles', gestured at fellowship, which in 1884 found utterance through 'We of the East'. But it was not until six of his 'seven years' hard' had elapsed that he produced the thinly disguised and famously hurtful self-portrait 'Baa Baa Black Sheep', which betrayed a countrybred boy's expulsion from his Indian Eden.[43]

'Baa Baa Black Sheep', which will be discussed more fully in Chapter 6, initiates a direct lineage leading to 'The Song of the Wise Children', 'The Native-Born' and other such elegies for Indian belonging. But although disembarking within sight of his birthplace had sounded an echo of continuity, Kipling's final destination was somewhere quite different, noticeably adult and principally male. Several days' journey north, Lahore lay in a climate both meteorologically and politically distinct. One long corridor where Yeats and Kipling are forever crossing paths and cutting one another is that connecting parochialism with metropolitanism. Yeats seems to have enjoyed returning to his native shore, Kipling less so. Once landed, both had to travel beyond their comfort zone, claiming to have discovered the obscure, rural and unspoiled heart of their riddle of origin. But Yeats especially would have bridled at the epithet 'provincial'—these men were born in transition zones, and marrying the urbane with the authentic was their métier. Going 'beyond the pale' was an artful transit which Yeats cultivated on his excursions to the Irish west, and Kipling in Lahore (he even borrowed the Irish usage for a story about the perils of interracial assignations).

'Beyond the Pale', like many other stories and poems, was set in Kipling's new home, where he hit the ground running with alacrity at the crisis-prone *Civil & Military Gazette*. The ancient Punjabi capital, which probably most schoolboys probably knew only from Milton, was not a coastal margin where temple conch answered steamer's horn. Lying far inland on the north Indian plains, it was an outpost annexed by the colonial state barely thirty years earlier, and a place of marked segregation. Europeans dwelt in the civil lines and cantonment to the south of the walled city, whose twisting

[43] 'Know that I would accounted be / True brother of a company', run the opening lines of Yeats's 'To Ireland in the Coming Times' (*Variorum Poems*, p.137); Kipling, *Early Verse*, pp.193, 198, 230.

gullies were—especially by night—a formidably 'native' domain. Somewhat down-at-heel, Lahore still possessed in its grand ensemble of fort, tomb and mosque 'an architectural *coup d'oeil* worthy of an imperial city,' in the words of a guidebook co-authored by Lockwood Kipling. For now, this far outstripped anything the Presidency cities could offer.[44]

Neither was Punjab governed like Bombay. Outside the courthouse stood a statue of Sir John Lawrence, holding in one hand a pen and in the other a sword. The inscription challenged passersby to choose their instrument of rule. It was an ironic coincidence, significant for the development of Kipling's politics and for his preoccupation with power and violence, that he was schooled amidst the army 'caste' before being posted to the army-dominated province. The two were coterminous—when he dispatched admiring news reports of the martial discipline paraded before the Afghan Amir in 1885, there were no less than seventeen Westward Ho! old boys in and around the Rawalpindi Durbar.[45] Both his Anglo-Indian and 'native' Indian fictive masks, therefore, were resolutely Punjabi. 'I am back among my own folk,' he bragged to a friend after a few months downcountry, 'the savage, boastful, arrogant, hot headed men of the North... men I can understand.'[46]

The frontier-mentality of the Province likewise shaped his politics. The boy who had named Gladstone as his favourite statesman now affectionately disregarded Crom Price's letters on Indian policy, which were informed by liberal tracts and travelogues such as Treveleyan's *Letters of a Competition Wallah*. One presumes he swiftly laid this parting gift of the headmaster's aside, along with the Yeatsian beribboned pince-nez in which he had posed for a photograph on departure.[47] His Aunt Georgiana's genteel socialism was now displaced by the stiff-necked utilitarian paternalism characteristic of Punjabi administration, a mentality that jealously guarded the power of the district

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[44] T.H. Thornton and J.L. Kipling, *Lahore* (Lahore, 1876), p.4. The relevant passage from *Paradise Lost* is quoted on p.ii.

[45] See Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State: Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947* (Delhi, 2005) and Clive Dewey, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes: the mind of the Indian civil service* (London, 1993) for the military, paternalistic nature of Punjab administration, and its violent consequences for the modern partitioned province; Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.146. Moreover, the Lawrences' forthright 'Punjab style' of governance actually anticipated the common tendency of British colonial administrations, in Kipling's time, to conflate Max Weber's two counterposed modes of rule. Within a supposedly rational and efficient 'bureaucracy', self-effacing and self-abnegating officers actually wield even more 'charismatic' power. See Daniel Bivona, *British Imperial Literature, 1870-1940: Writing and the Administration of Empire* (Cambridge, 1998), p.30. Kipling's departmental sympathies, then, were nostalgically up-to-date.

[46] Kipling, *Letters*, i, 167.

[47] Kipling, *Writings on Writing*, p.1; Kipling, *Letters*, i, 35, 91; Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.113.

officer and resisted central interference from Calcutta or London. It was not long before Kipling discerned the place of the upcountry newspaper in this equation, and started to tackle liberal reforms and bureaucratic bumbling with a line in caustic mofussilite satire.[48] 'Supreme Government' in Kipling's fiction is not a term of praise. His *duty* as he conceived it was to mock and prod that snoring giant into disbursing funds for drains, canals and railways. Sewerage and hygiene were particular hobbyhorses, and his journalism sometimes adopted the oozing style associated with Dickensian squalor in order to ironize idealizations of brahminical India. Romance and reality were evidently still revolving in his writerly nature, for he termed Peshawar 'wonderful' even as he decried its filth.[49] At his most pragmatic and ends-oriented, it can seem that verse and journalism meant much the same thing to the adult Kipling. In unconscious anticipation of his later critics, however, he assured Margaret that didacticism was a sphere quite distinct from Art.[50] Thus spake the son of Chelsea. Ruskin's address at Oxford had demonstrated that the exaltation of art-as-civilization practised by Arnold, and Carlyle's 'philistine' contention that a railway empire made a greater epic than any *Iliad,* were by no means incompatible.[51] Attempts to differentiate between the 'high' art of Yeats and the 'low' aims of Kipling, as Chapter 6 will show, have disguised the way that both poets predicated grandiose goals on petty but needful contingencies.

The colonial answers he fired back to his cousin's metropolitan questions about Indian race relations, social reform and political self-determination, however, show Kipling already warming to the authority conferred by a group identity. Keating notes that the audiences assumed by Kipling's early verse are self-referential coteries or fraternities—first his extended family, then the College, and at last the Club. Printed in newspapers, discussed in railway carriages or even sung around pianos, his poignant commemorations of Anglo-India's political orphanhood, cultural isolation and tragic

[48] *Mofussil*: the sticks or hinterland. The *Mofussilite* was a Meerut newspaper with an 'upcountry' Anglo-Indian readership.
[49] Rudyard Kipling, *Kipling's India: uncollected sketches 1884-88*, ed. Thomas Pinney (London, 1987), pp.69-77, 82-5.
[50] See Kipling, *Early Verse*, pp.184, 231, 255; Kipling, *Letters*, i, 92-4.
[51] Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (London, 1870), p.201.

demeanour aspired to the level of 'communal rite.'[52] If this ambition set its face against the 'aesthetic' stance which was beginning to attract Yeats, it was also highly comparable to what Yeats was doing in *The Gael*, the *Boston Pilot* and the *Providence Sunday Journal*—the two Irish-American papers also somewhat embattled publications speaking to a community of exiles. As we will see, moreover, in London each man would have recourse to both the elite coterie and the populist platform in their attempts to resolve the aforementioned crisis of action in Romantic poetry. Possibly the tendency towards artistic Brotherhoods and communities of readers was a general phenomenon of the late nineteenth century, as much as the yearning toward childhood innocence ('we' being the operative pronoun in Arnold's 'Memorial Verses') indicated a need for collective reverie. In respect to political or crypto-political organizations, meanwhile, a certain permeability of classes or cultures made its need felt for Kipling as well as for Yeats. For the Anglo-Indian poet, Freemasonry—that great imperial 'knowability'—was the forum that enabled crossovers while also laying down the rules for engagement. The methods of this Lahori Contemporary Club were more arcane, because its trespasses more illicit. Here, as Lycett notes, Kipling met soldiers and other blue-collared packhorses of empire, ratifying the characteristic equation of work, duty and community which led Noel Annan to term Kipling the sole English analogue to Émile Durkheim.[53] Although Durkheim was not to publish until after Kipling's last departure from India, first-hand experience of a volatile political situation in which order was sustained only by the mutual interest of several groups—who imposed severe social discipline upon their members—combined with Arnold and Carlyle's strictures against the rootless anarchy of industrialized Britain, edged him towards remarkably comparable views. The sophistication of Kipling's social understanding lay not merely in his positivist reading of religion and other vehicles of common symbol, but in the moral individualism of characters like Stalky, whose acts within the microcosm of the dormitory transgress against official authority while reinforcing the pupils' internal code of conduct.[54]

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[52] Peter Keating, *Kipling the Poet* (London, 1994), pp.10, 24; for Anglo-India's tragic mirth and quixotically aristocratic bearing see 'Christmas in India', *Complete Verse*, p.43. 'The Anglo-Indian is a political orphan', is one of 'The Enlightenments of Pagett M.P.' (a story published in the *Pioneer*, 16 Jun 1886).

[53] Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, pp.176, 191.

[54] Noel Annan, 'Kipling's Place in the History of Ideas', *Victorian Studies* III, 4 (June, 1960), 327, 333. Expanding on Annan's observations about the unifying and ritualistic quality of work for Kipling, Bart Moore-

Although he shared this preoccupation with achieving cultural unity within cross-sections of society, Yeats in some ways lacked Kipling's organic sense of the development of a common ground. To use Durkheim's terms, he refused to acknowledge that modern society existed on a basis irreducible to 'traditional' models. Yeats's first articles insisted that 'every community is a solidarity', whereas the upcountry press of which Kipling was now a member addressed itself constantly—in Bart Moore-Gilbert's terms—to 'the problem of solidarity'.[55] The tacit circumscriptions of Anglo-Indian society prompted, moreover, a fascination with in the cultural situation of people who have strayed beyond their pale and are now poised between alienation and re-assimilation. Freemasonry, by facilitating the latter process, empowered Anglo-Indian society's ability to ground itself and evolve.[56] As regards Kipling's own career, Lahore's Masonic Lodge ('Hope and Perseverance') gave him a useful alternative milieu to the official circles in whose eyes, as he warned himself in his 1886 skit 'The Man Who Could Write', he risked becoming tiresome and odious. The backbiting libels emitted by some of his Indian contemporaries in later life are well known. They are also hardly surprising given that Kipling seems to have spent his final year in India burning his bridges by firing off scorching personal lampoons, first at an ineffectual government inquiry and then towards the Allahabad convention of the nascent Indian National Congress.[57]

Beyond the Pale: Identifying with non-white India

These spiteful *badnaam*-ers in after-years sometimes fixed on Kipling's supposed racial transgressions, such as concealing Eurasian parentage or, less improbably, 'going for a mucker' in Lahore's brothels.[58] If the outsider never fully won the confidence of the exiles, his strongest work was to emerge from the acquaintanceship, licensed by his profession and facilitated by the Lodge,

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Gilbert points to the kinship with Durkheim's evaluation of the guild or *corporation* as the prime social unit in a capitalized economy. For Kipling, the exemplary corporation is the army regiment, which he often treats with religious language ('regimental Saints', 'Sacrament of the Mess'). See *Kipling and "Orientalism"* (Beckenham, Kent, 1986), pp.162, 166.

[55] Moore-Gilbert, *Kipling and "Orientalism"*, p.153. Turning the pages of the *Pioneer* and *Civil & Military*, Moore-Gilbert notes the frequent reports of suicide, murder or insanity amidst its beleaguered readership. Multiple reviews of Enrico Morselli's (a forerunner of Durkheim) 1881 study of suicide are also extant.

[56] If he repeatedly exalts ritual as a safeguard against individual *anomie*, Moore-Gilbert notes (ibid., p.173), Kipling also insists on its flexibility in response to changing human needs.

[57] Ibid., 229-30; Kipling, *Complete Verse*, p.12.

[58] Charles Allen, *Kipling Sahib: India and the Making of Rudyard Kipling* (London, 2007), p.119; Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.199.

with the broader provincial community. A bifurcation had opened in his already prodigious output: short stories and risqué verses dealt with the internecine comedy and tragic brutality of Anglo-Indian life, while ballads, monologues and tall tales emerged unsolicited from the 'dark and crooked and fantastic, and wicked, and awe inspiring life of the "native"'. The working title for what became the more Simla-oriented *Plain Tales from the Hills* was 'Punjab People Brown and White.'[59] It appears that the original volume would have incorporated more of the 'native monologues' (see p.88)—all recognisably northwest Indian personae, which once they had reached England were stamped with the approval of Andrew Lang in the *Saturday Review*. Noting the separate strands, the veteran bookman set the taste at Home by asserting that their author was 'far happier with Afghan homicides and old ford-watchers ... than with the flirts and fribbles of the hills.'[60]

This would presumably have gratified Kipling, whose efforts to meet Lahoris on their own terms soon moved beyond the pro-British notables and Arya reformers whom he would have encountered at Masonic gatherings.[61] That Kipling harboured an eagerness to understand Indian customs and language is not in itself remarkable. Any government handbook would have advised the civil and military officers with whom he fraternized to do the same. What is striking about Kipling was his willingness to stretch the terms under which these encounters were governed, to drop formalities and vacillate in an off-the-record space lying between an apartheid orthodoxy and the compromising of his status. He even devised a journalistic term of art for this limbo: 'the fourth dimension.' Gambling-houses and opium dens satisfied a fascination for the extreme which owed something to Émile Zola, as well as a taste for sensational reportage. Though Kipling's presence at these houses of ill repute was remarkable less for his race than for his class, he possessed an appetite for conversation and faculty for egalitarian exchange which meant that some of his most enlightening breakthroughs were no more raffish than a day out at the Chiragan Fair. Allowing himself to be led by his valet through the commotion, here he met the British community's servants at their leisure, displaying out of mufti 'the manners and instincts of gentlemen.'[62]

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[59] Ibid., p.196; Kipling, *Letters*, i, 99.
[60] Roger Lancelyn Green (ed.), *Kipling: the Critical Heritage* (London, 1971), p.44.
[61] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.29.
[62] *Kipling's India*, p.153.

The privileged access permitted to children was a fictional trope which began to appear only towards the end of his Indian apprenticeship, and which would take twelve years to fully develop.[63] Meanwhile Kipling explored various fantasies of disguise, infiltration and belonging, such as the adventures of Strickland the detective or the secret life of Holden, who suddenly finds himself muttering in bloody earnest the Islamic prayers he had diffidently cribbed in the run of official duties, when called upon to sacrifice a goat at the birth of his mixed-race son.[64] More interesting is the remarkable material gleaned simply from his journalistic bad habits, including an insomniac night-walking half 'Haroun Al-Raschid in search of strange things' and half Dickens prowling the London abyss.[65] Indeed, at his most mysterious and 'oriental', Kipling is actually at his most metropolitan. These excursions beyond the pale undertaken 'for the sheer sake of looking' were carried off in the literary mode of the nineteenth century urban jungle. Drawing equally on French realism, Richard Burton, de Quincey, James Thomson and even the Parisian flaneur, Kipling ironically compensated for his lost bohemia by mirroring the western cosmopolis in the densely-layered pre-modern citadel.

> One would come home, just as the light broke, in some night-hawk of a hired carriage which stank of hookah-fumes, jasmine-flower and sandalwood; and if the driver were moved to talk, he told one a good deal.[66]

This Baudelairean mode is quite fitting, since Lang's review would only have confirmed his suspicions that he could secure literary celebrity at Home by irradiating the disenchanted western city—not so much with eastern light, as will be explained later, than with an eastern way of seeing. To the ambitious writer, Lahore already swelled with unborn narratives. 'Our city, from the Taksali to the Delhi Gate,' he told the *Civil & Military's* readers, 'would yield a store of novels.'[67] His schoolboy imitations of Rossetti were now reviewed ruefully—he had penned his final maudlin love lyric in late 1882, and given it a title ('As Far as the East is Set from the West') that ironically anticipated the manly border ballad of 1889 that would prove the most famous of his Indian poems. Punjab had probably saved Kipling from bookish affectation and JBY's 'insincerity', with Lang justifying his

[63] See the stories 'Tod's Amendment', 'Little Tobrah' and 'The Story of Muhammad Din.'
[64] Kipling, *Collected Short Stories*, ii, 347.
[65] Kipling, *Letters*, i, 127.
[66] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.29.
[67] *Kipling's India*, p.267.

preference for the Indian stories because they were the 'least cynical.'[68] To adapt a maxim of Yeats, the challenge now was to hammer those thoughts into artistic (and political) unities—an exercise that would take its cue from the intricate craftsman's mind of Lockwood Kipling.

Complementing the Verbal with the Visual

In June 1884, a column appeared in the *Civil & Military* proposing the scrapping of the incongruous lyrics of popular songs for pianoforte, and their replacement with something better fitted to a subcontinental setting. Despite its tone of facetious pedantry ('Come under the Punkah, Maud', is one suggestion), it nonetheless seems to appeal to a broader Anglo-Indian discourse concerning the withered decadence of western society in comparison with their own vigorous lifestyle. If my counsel is followed, Kipling wrote,

> there will arise a race of virile poets, owning no allegiance to, drawing no inspiration from, Western thought, who will weave for the drawing-room of the future, songs as distinctly *sui generis* as an overland trunk or a *solah topee* and breathing in every word the luxuriant imagery and abundant wealth of expression peculiar to the East. To ensure this, however, our children must be trained from their cradles to discard the nursery rhymes of an effete civilization.[69]

The article foreshadowed several of Kipling's prime concerns: childhood development, the fostering of literary communality, *grounded* cultural authenticity and, underlining the last, visual and verbal amplitude. The real bounty of the East, he implied, lay in what had drawn him at school to American dialect writers like Mark Twain, Bret Harte and Joel Chandler Harris (and which likewise attracted Yeats[70]). They expounded localized linguistic traditions enriched by admixtures and intersecting registers, and by foundation in everyday, usually active, life.

A contemporary anthropologist might have called it language observed in its social function, The author's father, now supervising both the Mayo School of Art and the nearby Lahore Museum, would in this regard have provided expert testimony. Although Kipling heroized the often spartan domestic economy of the ordinary civil officer, he was spared its uncouth rigours. Erudition and taste were the saving graces of the family's dusty roadside bungalow, as were the prestigious artistic commissions

[68] Kipling, *Early Verse*, p.176; Green (ed.), *Kipling: the Critical Heritage*, p.44.
[69] *Kipling's India*, pp.44-5.
[70] Over the next decade, Yeats would also pay heed to attempts at national self-definition through Americanized registers of English. See p.171.

bestowed on Lockwood. He adapted his brother-in-law Burne-Jones's sensibilities when designing the princely heraldry at Lord Lytton's chivalric durbar, providing an aesthetic corollary to the political analogy the Disraelite Viceroy conceived between medieval Europe and 'feudal' India. Operating in the other direction, he imported Indian carpenters to fashion oriental rooms for the Queen and Duke of York, upholding South Kensington's principles of traditional craftsmanship. Less celebrated are his sketches and engravings, including the portraits of Indian artisans at work requested by his civilian patron Henry Rivett-Carnac.[71] These demonstrate, as Holman Hunt had done in the Levant, that British Asia was an environment where the jaded Pre-Raphaelite gaze could still rest undisturbed on a scene of the middle ages, flushed in polychrome sunlight. Having inherited this painterly eye, it is unsurprising that artistic turns of phrase became frequent in his son's Indian writings. A Shia preacher called to mind the saints of Venetian frescoes, his dirty sheet the lavish drapery of Renaissance sculpture, while an Indian tour was insensitively urged on Uncle Ned's struggling son Phil, who 'doesn't know what light and colour and sunshine are.'[72] Culminating in his novel *The Light that Failed* (see pp.195-6), Kipling's artistic values would continue to be articulated through painterly analogies.

If Lockwood's light illuminates the southward flight of the 'Wise Children', it also permeated the panoramic knowledge that has been long been identified as the instrument of Kipling's masterful envisaging of India. Henry James, who would befriend the young writer in London, wrote at this time that 'in the palace of art there are many chambers and that of which Mr Burne-Jones holds the key is a wondrous museum.'[73] The painter's Indian relative now curated a literal 'house of wonder' or *ajaib ghar*, as the Urdu still reads on the portals of the Lahore Museum. Besides its capacity to draw a unified tree of Indian aesthetic development, its collections responded to Lockwood's conviction that an artistic conception of the world was paramount. Any imaginative mind that adhered to the Kiplings' utilitarian coda needed a domain of wonder—the family's role in this narrow colonial society was to balance bureaucratic uniformity and myopia, a frequent subject of mirth, with romance

[71] Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, pp.63, 294, 40.
[72] Kipling, *Letters*, i, 95.
[73] Henry James, 'The Picture Season in London' in *The Painter's Eye: Notes and Essays on the Pictorial Arts*, ed. John L. Sweeney (London, 1989), p.147.

and insight. It was a creative vacillation which both father and son would have already noted in the small but accomplished oeuvre of their Lieutenant-Governor Sir Alfred Lyall, whose monologues of geriatric rebels sullenly reconciled to British rule partake equally of Punjabi martial race politics and of armchair Fenianism.[74] Such an apparent contradiction was reflected also in the common preference, which Lockwood passed on to his son, for Muslims over Hindus. Punjabi Muslims (and Sikhs) dominated the army, and British authority depended on their loyalty. But the aristocratic hauteur of formerly ascendant Islamic élites, who declined to dilute their established culture with Anglophile mimicry, was very appealing to a certain mindset.[75]

Lockwood's holistic vision of Lahori culture was linguistic as well as graphic, a tendency which directed his enquiries well beyond the Persianate gentry who, as he noted disapprovingly in his guidebook, reckoned 'a smattering of Saadi, Hafiz, Zauk, and Nizámi' sufficient for a literary education. In keeping with his son's interest in the 'abundant wealth of expression peculiar to the East', the curator devoted twelve pages to 'vernacular' poetry, including 'the professional *Mirásis* or *Bháts*, a tribe of hereditary ballad singers, whose songs, ballads, and tales, recited at weddings and other festivities, are in reality the favourite literature of the day.' 'Reflecting the mind of the people with great fidelity,' this living tradition is accorded much higher value than the Sanskrit classics now presumed to be wholly unread in the original. Lockwood pursued this sentiment in his magnum opus, *Beast and Man in India.* [76] Effectively a work of social anthropology carried off with the vim of a memoir, this study of the myths, jokes, proverbs and idioms surrounding common fauna (supplemented, of course, with plentiful illustrations) sought to open 'a side door into Indian life, thought, and character, the threshold of which is still unworn.' If inclining to a narrative of decline, it also applied a sophisticated historical perspective, accusing Western scholarship and the revivalist Arya Samaj (then attaining prominence in Punjab) of conspiring to fix India in 'a wonderful

[74] See, for example, 'The Old Pindaree'. Sir Alfred Lyall, *Poems* (London, 1907), p.6. Kipling's reference to Irish sources should not be underestimated. A copy of Ferguson's *Lays of the Western Gael* can be found in his library at Bateman's.
[75] Kipling, *Letters*, i, 100; Thomas R. Metcalf discusses the Anglo-Indian admiration for Islam in *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.143-4.
[76] Kipling & Thornton, *Lahore*, pp.16, 25.

immutability', when in fact 'its history is one long chronicle of protest, dissent and change.'[77] As a vision of cultural unity, it resolutely promoted a reading of what Yeats would later the call 'the book of the people'. Intersecting with contemporary debates in England on the divergence between 'high' and 'low' literatures, it also sheds light on why the Irish poet laid such emphasis on Antoine Ó Raifterí and the more recent, eighteenth century tradition of ballad and strolling bard as well as the remotely ancient sphere of Gaelic saga.[78]

Following this example, in India the latent Arnoldianism of Lockwood's son loosened its grip somewhat on the grail of Art, and refastened itself upon a vernacular cornucopia fast disappearing in his beloved metropole. Vigorous Indian ballad had already supplanted flimsy drawing-room lyric, a trend continued by his later flight from 'bourgeois' folly (see p.220, n.166) to the roughneck music hall. Now his narrative genius began to adjust its eyes. His report on the Mohurram commemorations in late 1887 began in a format to which he had now become habituated—the affected boredom of a seen-it-all who is no longer enthralled by the common wonders and odours of claustrophobic Lahore. Significantly, what suddenly captures his jaundiced curiosity is an image of literary culture undergirt by religious communality (the Shia whom he observes, it must be remembered, constituted a close-knit minority).

> In the broader streets, surrounded by the faithful, sat Maulvis reading the story of the death of the Blessed Imams. Their *mimbars* were of the rudest, but the walls behind them were in most cases gay, with glass lamps, cuckoo-clocks, vile 'export' trinketry, wax flowers and kindred atrocities. A Normandy shrine could hardly have been in worse taste, but, looking at the men who listened, one forgot the surroundings. They seemed so desperately in earnest, as they rocked to and fro, and lamented.... One man, austere, rugged-featured, and filthily clad, had sat down upon a shop-board in a side-alley and his small congregation were almost entirely provincial. He preached literally, as the spirit moved him, and whatever Power may have come upon him held, and shook his body. The *jats* made no sign. Only one small child ran up and put his hand upon the preacher's knee, unterrified by the working face and the torrent of words.[79]

Other writings from the time evince his suspicion that, lamentably but inevitably, Indians would pawn their inheritance for social advancement and government employment, winning only rootless *anomie*. This is already the complaint of the shrewdly-drawn Wali Dad in 'On the City Wall', a self-described

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[77] John Lockwood Kipling, *Beast and Man in India: a popular sketch of Indian animals in their relations with the people* (London, 1891), pp.238, 8.
[78] 'Whatever's written in what poets name / The book of the people.' 'Coole and Ballylee, 1931', *Variorum Poems*, p.492.
[79] *Kipling's India*, p.268.

'demnition product' who like Stephen Daedalus cannot even articulate his thoughts without quoting English authors.[80] But the image of the 'provincial' crowd, attending rapt to a stream of ancient narrative undisturbed by the ticking of clocks and other European bric-a-brac, may intuit something of which the Kiplings could not have been explicitly conscious. What they were witnessing in the mid-80s, during the crucial decade when European empires missed their chance to fully penetrate Asian economic systems, was a subtle absorption and rapprochement with Western culture.[81] Kipling feared cultural erosion and deracination in India as much as Yeats resented music hall and other 'tow row' enormities in Ireland. As will be seen in the next chapter, episodes like this offered the former a means to conceptually reconcile his native India with the imperial identity he would soon adopt.

Lahore was the axis for an influential array of concerns, aesthetics and prejudices. The Punjabi dust, moreover, was where unballasted fancies descended and became 'of the earth, earthy.' Kipling could now complement a Hardyesque sensitivity to the lived history of a landscape, with intuition for the secret life of social environments (Yeats was to evolve a comparable reverence for the historic gentry house). He had his own mindmap of the city, and his stories respond to its internal sense and geography.[82] He owed this grasp to night-walks and long hours spent atop a minaret at the Mosque of Wazir Khan, waiting for the electrifying *azan* which exemplified for him duty and collective ritual held together by resonant liturgic language. This vigorous Islamic aesthetic would inform his unyielding attitude to the slipshod Britain to which he returned in 1889.[83]

His achievement in this regard, although it was to cause sensation in England, was not unprecedented. His panorama of the Indian city, so intriguing to a western reading public preoccupied with urban culture and concerns, had already been realized by the civil servant turned poet and editor

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[80] Vernacular songs and tale-telling are the most appealing facet of the world presided over by Lalun the courtesan, who lures and outwits her English admirer in 'On the City Wall'. Wali Dad propagates a song in the bazaars that celebrates her cozening of the Government—but only for ears capable understanding his chain of sly puns. Kipling, *Collected Short Stories*, i, 430, 427.

[81] This is a core argument of John Darwin's *After Tamerlane: the Rise and Fall of Global Empires, 1400-2000* (London, 2008), p.499.

[82] The Mohurram procession which is attacked by Hindu rioters in 'On the City Wall' emerges—as I have discovered in person—from the southeastern neighbourhood, around the Lal Masjid, where Lahore's Shia still dwell today. It is then ambushed in the 'Gully of the Horsemen'—evidently the main bazaar which runs from the Golden Mosque down to the Delhi Gate ('the Gate of the Butchers', alluding to long-established halal shops hard by). For the real incidents on which Kipling based his description, see Alex Tickell, *Terrorism, Insurgency and Indian-English Literature, 1830-1947* (London, 2012), p.131.

[83] See 'The City of Dreadful Night', Kipling, *Collected Short Stories*, ii, 486.

Sir Edwin Arnold. His Miltonic gospel of Buddhism *The Light of Asia* had itself, in a more academic fashion, posited Asian solutions to metropolitan doubts, distractions and fears. It had been a college favourite of Kipling's, furnishing him with jaw-cracking untranslated gobbets of Sanskrit verses along with, for the 'sheer sake' of looking, rich tableaux depicting

> ...the glad and sad things of the town:
> The painted streets alive with hum of noon,
> The traders cross-legged 'mid their spice and grain,
> The buyers with their money in the cloth,
> The war of words to cheapen this and that,
> The shout to clear the road....[84]

...and so on, in the vein of Browning's 'Contemporary.' Kipling's achievment was to locate specific meaning behind the merely generic, and although he inclined now to a highly purist, singular, priestly notion of cultural unity, he would in time come to find means of reconciling this to the diverse modern pluralities which Matthew Arnold could never stomach.

After examining the *Bhagavad Gita*, Arnold had denoted his ideal of objective, detached vision 'the Indian virtue.' Kipling seems to have thought of himself at this time as a critic of life, advising an importunate Simla poetaster in 1888 to 'go simply and deliberately at the reality of this life as you see it'. This was his last summer at Simla, and he sent a valedictory letter of thanks to his father in suitably craftsmanlike terms.[85] His family had told him he was 'blue-moulded with India'.[86] In keeping with underlying fin de siècle currents, however, he was about to discover that the worldly critic of life is also destined to a life of wandering and looking-on—perpetually marginal. In the *Annals and Antiquities* of Colonel James Tod, whose dynastic histories informed Lytton's ornamental fixation with 'chivalric' India, Kipling came across the picaresque figure of Rao Oméda, the Rajput prince who is required to atone for a crime but who

> felt his mind too much alive to the wonders of creation, to bury himself in the fane of Kanya, or the sacred baths on the Ganges;

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[84] Edwin Arnold, *The Light of Asia* (London, 1879), p.69.
[85] In this verse letter, Halim the Potter offers deferential thanks to his father Yusuf, 'the man who made / Him and his knowledge'. It borrows Browning's style as well as his metaphor (from 'Rabbi Ben Ezra') of the divine potter moulding the pot of humanity. See Kipling, *Letters*, i, 235-7.
[86] Kipling, *Letters*, i, 244.

Instead he roams the country on continuous pilgrimage between sacred sites, bearing a load upon his back at which warriors would blanch in 'these degenerate times.'[87] Kipling chased up Rao Oméda on his visit to Bundi in Rajasthan in 1887, penning a series of travel sketches for the *Pioneer*.[88] It is fitting that Kipling came to find himself most at ease not in a station among 'men cynical, seedy and dry' who steadily resented him, but rather vagabonding on the various assignments which his chief devised presumably to keep him out of trouble.[89] Ultimately, he fled the provincial world in favour of the city of his ambitions, not realizing how desperately, in time, he would come to long for parochial familiarities. As with Yeats, his return to London would initiate his existence as a 'Threshold Figure', perpetually oscillating between native refuge and cosmopolitan imperial system. This re-migration would also position their art, as shall be seen in the next chapter, at a juncture between the objective visual realm, and a transfigured, symbolic economy of dreams.

[87] James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han: or, the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India* (2 vols., New Delhi, 1978), ii, 401.
[88] See Rudyard Kipling, *From Sea to Sea and other sketches: letters of travel* (2 vols., London, 1904), i, 162.
[89] Kipling, *Early Verse*, p.250.

4. Threshold Figures, 1887-1890

The sudden and unexpected return from England to their countries of birth had been triggered, in the early 1880s, at a crucially formative stage. Through a precipitate reintroduction to their maternal country (under paternal auspices), Kipling and Yeats had each discovered in their late teens a viable and—so it appeared then—expansive field in which to root their evolving art. In Dublin, Yeats had obtained access to a world of demotic legend rich in creative possibility, liberating him from the fruitless imitation of Tennyson's own 'remodelled' models. Less predictably, Kipling had discovered in India various unorthodox outlets for his painter's eye and sensuous Swinburnian rhythms. The rigour of Indian life had its own leathery hedonism and without this stimulus, Peter Keating has ventured, he may instead have continued to refine the furtively whispering love poetry that today's reader might identify as the early drafts of Ernest Dowson or, indeed, of W.B. Yeats:

> There is light on your face and mine—
> The shades retire—
> Our arms meet and entwine
> Around the fire,
> Our flickering wind blown fire.[1]

They were now poets of locality—and it is this concept of the local, and its limitations, that will form the principal focus of this chapter. In Kipling's case, it requires a conscious re-adjustment to appreciate how precisely and deliberately the early journalism contextualizes its author for his domestic, Anglo-Indian audience. Linguistic and geographical references advertise him as a Punjabi writer even more assiduously than Yeats promoted his Sligo credentials.[2] Any claim which either poet made to comprehensively *know* his country, however, had to be extrapolated from the specific localities that had nurtured him. Their respective discoveries of India and Ireland were only half accomplished through literal return. More thematic than chronologic, this chapter examines the poets' methods of reproducing their native countries through reverie, following their re-migration to London.

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[1] Keating, *Kipling the Poet*, p.15. The quotation is from 'Pro Tem', *Early Verse*, p.74.
[2] Kipling's localism comes out most strongly when describing his sole visit to southern India, a disorientating transit by railway in which 'for four days and four nights in the belly of the train [I] could not understand one word of the speech around me.' See *Something of Myself*, p.54.

Relaxing the contextual frame, it seeks to compare them instead within the Romantic tradition which they adapted and, arguably, perverted. At each stage of the chapter, we will see how this tradition impinges on their creative relationship to locality.

Although distant from Kipling and Yeats in style and temperament, Wordsworth was for both a fundamental precursor.[3] In 1798, an enthusiasm for idealist philosophy had led him to Goslar in Lower Saxony, but an abrupt departure from Germany and impulsive return to his childhood home in Cumbria unpent an internal dam. There he crafted a lucid perambulating style cleansed of metropolitan embellishment—the same aesthetic purity that Kipling and Yeats would also claim to have adopted from roadside encounters with the expressive speech, and demotic legend, of a society still bound to the land. As Fiona Stafford demonstrates in her study *Local Attachments*, Wordsworth was not only 'the earliest writer to understand fully the necessary connections between the poet and his "first place"'. He was also foremost in establishing the modern relationship between poets and their readers. If human consciousness was increasingly understood as the asylum of an islanded, individual experience, his career demonstrates how poets of the nineteenth century could nonetheless strike a collective resonance by sounding the names of rivers and villages known exclusively and subjectively to themselves. Knowledge of the local could underpin intimations of the universal, and this creative duality was to remain at the core of Romantic lyric.[4]

Some of Yeats and Kipling's most remarkable performances are, in essence, variations on this theme by Wordsworth. But the pressures and conflicts that beset their careers also stretched and distorted this inherited poetic. Firstly, each sustained not one local attachment but two, pertaining respectively to opposite poles within the national sphere. Kipling was born on the Bombay Esplanade, where P&O passengers first stepped ashore on Indian soil, but as a pup journalist was embedded 'upcountry' in a

[3] Wordsworth typically appears in Yeats's critical writings only as an over-intellectualized, or over-English, foil to the resurgent poetic imagination which he advocates. However, he acknowledged in a late interview that the Cumbrian poet, alongside Tennyson, had been the author he most venerated in his youth. See Joseph Hone, *W.B. Yeats, 1865-1939* (London, 1967), p.34. The similarities in their attitudes, as well as Yeats's 'radical' reworkings of Wordsworth are discussed in Maneck H. Daruwala, 'Yeats and the Ghost of Wordsworth', *Yeats Annual* 13 (1998), 197-220. Kipling had evidently read Wordsworth to advantage in Crom Price's library, though the Romantic poet he most sought to emulate was Burns.

[4] Fiona Stafford, *Local Attachments: the Province of Poetry* (Oxford, 2010), p.38.

landlocked garrison town.[5] By contrast, for most of his youth Yeats skirted around Ireland's chief port of entry, steaming directly from Liverpool to the maritime backwater of Sligo. Only after his own adolescent return did he study the city of his birth at the head of Dublin Bay. Experienced in different sequences for each poet, these locales nonetheless comprised analogous pairings, representing India and Ireland at their most inward-looking and outward-trading. Weighted with implication, 'provincial' and 'cosmopolitan' were the labels that came to denote them and, as we shall see, Kipling and Yeats could commit to neither. They remained, necessarily, poised ambivalently at their various thresholds.

Secondly, Wordsworthian lyric as they developed it became less confessional than performative. Wordsworth described his own zone of origin as 'the hiding-places of my power'.[6] Imaginative power sustained by private secrecy is a recognizable pattern—we have already seen it circumscribed by tin trunks and fallen logs, stories played out in what Yeats called 'a shadowed, limited place, such as children love.'[7] Chapter 2 began to suggest, however, that when these concealed places were deliberately opened to public scrutiny, and placed in correspondence with the larger entities of nation and world, the interaction could prove artistically taxing and politically vexing. The close of the last chapter added, furthermore, that both poets wished to preserve their native countries from malign worldly influences, but could not opt for stifling quarantine. Enclosure and secrecy continue to characterize Yeats and Kipling's 'hiding-places', therefore, but it is a secrecy into which their self-selecting community of readers must be carefully initiated.

This conscious artificiality, combined with their unconvinced but unavoidable cosmopolitanism, shaped their political application of Wordsworth's poetic. For Wordsworth himself, when he addressed a copy of *Lyrical Ballads* to Charles James Fox, the soul of the nation was at stake.[8] By contrast Kipling and Yeats, neither of whom could truly claim to comprehend his country, exercised a prerogative instead to create it. Outsiders in their colonial milieux as well as in the metropole, they set out more consciously than Wordsworth or Burns to translate local experience into a collective image.

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[5] Lockwood Kipling was startled and, perhaps, discomforted by the cosmopolitanism of the great maritime entrepôt. He called Bombay 'a very un-Indian, Cockney sort of place' (quoted in Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.32).

[6] *The Prelude* (1850), xii, 279. *Prelude* quotations are taken from *The Prelude: a Parallel Text*, ed. J.C. Maxwell (London, 1971).

[7] Yeats, *Uncollected Prose*, ii, 437.

[8] Stafford, *Local Attachments*, p.96.

Also now in question, furthermore, was the nation's place in the wider world, and this additional, global dimension threatened to disturb and set at conflict the complementary relationship of local and universal. Sustaining this pairing, as we shall see, was to prove a delicate balancing-act for Kipling and Yeats, but it would impart a cunning and ambiguous power to their writings. To investigate this however, it is first necessary to consider the means by which they set out, while still in Lahore and Dublin, to position themselves at imaginative thresholds.

Encountering the World: Spiritual Transmigrations in the Fin de Siècle City

As discussed in the last chapter, it was Theosophy that provided Yeats, during his years at the Art School, with his first imaginative vehicle for expanding beyond his own introverted 'dread self', into a realm of psychic foreignness with the potential for both instability and intensity. Minus the political animosity, he could be quite as sceptically satiric as the Kiplings on the subject of A.O. Hume's extravagant claims to be despatching missives to his guru in the Himalayas via some sort of telepathic postal service.[9] But when, in 1885, Yeats helped found the Dublin Hermetic Society and encountered the first of what would be several important Indian interlocutors, the concept of astral communication through time and space took on a new poetic vigour. Propounding a philosophy 'at once logical and boundless', the Bengali Theosophist invited from London inspired the juvenile poem 'Kanva on Himself'.[10] Thirty years later Yeats worked up their remembered conversation into the canonical 'Mohini Chatterjee.'

> I asked if I should pray,
> But the Brahmin said,
> 'Pray for nothing, say
> Every night in bed,
> "I have been a king,
> I have been a slave,
> Nor is there anything,
> Fool, rascal, knave,
> That I have not been,
> And yet upon my breast

[9] See Yeats, *Letters*, i, 13. That Hume, a prominent civil servant, had also helped found the Indian National Congress hardly enamoured Theosophists to the Kiplings. Lockwood, who attended one of Madame Blavatsky's séances at Simla in 1880, considered her an 'interesting and unscrupulous impostor' (Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.152).
[10] *Autobiographies*, p.98.

A myriad heads have lain.'"[11]

In the following stanza, the Brahmin's 'turbulent' young questioner contradicts his plea for mental detachment. Refusing to turn the mirror of his soul away from the illusive stream of images that the unenlightened call reality, he asserts instead that the reincarnative cycle exists so that the abiding passions of lovers and tyrants might 'be satisfied' in the beds and bloodshed of successive lives. This was Yeats propounding his mature conviction that the cosmos is regulated not by harmony but by conflict—life is a tragic drama, in which men play, by turns, both creative and destructive roles. But the desire to don the theatrical mask, and the sexualized passion to encounter and inhabit other selves, is present already in the first stanza, as it was more dimly in the original 1880s draft.

This kind of spiritual projection takes on an extraordinary new potential with Yeats, but it was an established element in Romantic thinking on the imagination. 'Higher minds', Wordsworth wrote in the climbing of Snowdon, 'from their native selves can send abroad / Kindred mutations.'[12] It was also Wordsworth's impulse, as will be discussed shortly, to consciously identify with beings alien and peripheral to his experience. Moreover, this poetic innovation itself originated in the Enlightenment concept of Sensibility, which proposed that 'every individual can'—and morally should—'recreate, through the imagination, the feelings of another.'[13] As a universal model of social relations, sensibility is the foundation of a civilized polity—that is, of a modern nation. Moreover, an enlightened nation is also sympathetically interested in the condition of others. As Julia M. Wright demonstrates in a detailed study of nineteenth century Irish writings on India, debates on the legitimacy of imperial rule frequently turned on the discourse of sensibility. If the Irish peasantry were denigrated as insensate brutes by Victorian apologists for their subjugation, Irish romances of the *Lalla Rookh* era depicted transgressive Indo-European or Muslim-Hindu lovers struggling against the adamantine disapproval of caste laws or Islamic Puritanism (both stand-ins for British-Protestant colonialism).[14] Just as Wright's story comes to an end in the early 1890s, however, this tradition re-proliferated in the occult

[11] *Variorum Poems*, pp.495-6.
[12] *Prelude* (1850), xiv, 90-4.
[13] Julia M. Wright, *Ireland, India and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Cambridge, 2007), pp.18-19.
[14] Ibid., pp.18-19.

renascence then overtaking genteel Dublin. Among Yeats's art school friends, Russell—now signing himself 'AE'—remained the most ardent Theosophist practitioner and organizer.

Looking back on this generation long after their deaths, the fantasy writer Lord Dunsany recalled a typical account of Russell's own spiritual transports.

> AE once told me that he was walking one day under a row of lime trees and as he passed by the fourth lime tree his spirit left his body and went down the road of that long wandering all the way to India and became incarnated in an Indian boy and grew with him in India to manhood. When a riot occurred in some Indian village, in which the young man was killed, the spirit returned to AE walking under those lime trees. And he noticed that as it came back to him he was passing the fifth lime tree.[15]

The riot is the most striking feature, for the mutual identification implies a common political cause behind the late colonial violence likely threatening Ireland, as well as India, at the time of Russell's episode. The anecdote also turns on the Romantic understanding of childhood discussed in the first chapter. With typical eccentricity, Dunsany explains that because the Irish race originated in the East, Russell's soul was forever yearning for return to its native soil. Filtered through the reincarnative doctrine of Theosophy, his identification with a boy follows Romantic logic in that children, in their psychic primitiveness, clutch the key to our suppressed racial memory.[16] Delving into the origins of civilization, it suggests how warring modern nation-states might be reconciled to their common humanity. Placed against the context of the religious internationalism of those decades (such as the Chicago World's Parliament of Religions of 1893), Russell's reverie of past lives constitutes a spiritualist parable of the progressively globalized, interconnected world of Russell's lifetime. His ghostly transmission mirrors the radical compression of space and time achieved by electric telegraph and rapid travel.

Dunsany's description of Russell's oriental cast of mind was also prompted, however, by his wish to draw comparisons between the Irish mystic poet and another literary friend—Kipling. Born into the uppermost heights of the Ascendancy, Dunsany's political straddling of independent Ireland and imperial Britain, combined with an idealistic and Romantic view of poets, led him quite logically to pair the Anglo-Indian with his Irish contemporaries. When visiting Kipling in 1935, he may even have

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[15] Lord Dunsany, 'Four Poets: AE, Kipling, Yeats, Stephens', *Atlantic*, CCI, 4 (April, 1958), 77-78.

[16] Kipling stories that concern the influence of past lives or of other, dead souls on the living imagination include 'The Finest Story in the World' and 'Wireless' (see p.205).

narrated this anecdote to his host, who had never met AE but offered some 'sympathetic words' on Dunsany's recent elegy for the deceased Dublin sage. In the case of both men, Dunsany attributed a childlike sense of wonder, and disposition to prophecy, to the inner pull of an eastern nature.[17] The comparison should not, however, be put down to the anecdotal whimsy of a mischievous survivor. Dunsany's comments were at least partially prompted by Kipling's personal mystique, which from the beginning of his career revolved around his mixed, slightly obscure heritage.

If Yeats, in 1885, had begun to look toward India as an arena for pursuing experiments within a global economy of identities, Kipling too sensed its potential in an equally speculative venture he undertook shortly after, but never thereafter explicitly repeated. In the first half of 1888 he produced four masterful vignettes, now denoted in somewhat offhand fashion as the 'native monologues', but at the time collected under the punning title *In Black and White*. Peppered with Hindustani argot and obscure geographical references bartered exclusively between men, they are the kind of story written with a local, Anglo-Indian readership purely in mind. All feature an Indian speaker telling his story to an attentive and cunningly unassuming 'sahib' from the local *khubber-ke-kargus* (newspaper). For the first two, comparatively weak, sketches ('Gemini' and 'At Howli Thana'), Kipling conceived his informer as merely an untrustworthy and dissimulating petitioner seeking administrative redress. But in 'Dray Wara Yow Dee' and 'In Flood Time', the 'awe-inspiring life of the "native"' is revealed to the wayfaring Englishman in a private confession, disclosed in an uneasy place outside the sphere of civil authority. As in 'Mohini Chatterjee', moreover, the vicarious experience indulged in these stories is one of bawdy passion and violent death. In the first, a sociopathic Pathan slays his unfaithful wife and begins a crazed and unending pursuit of her lover; in the second, a Punjabi Leander swims the foaming Barhwi to possess his beloved, while a vengeful rival drowns in the flood. The addition of violence to these narratives of desire is a powerful and disturbing new element, the outcomes of which would only fully emerge in the upheavals of the First World War and its remorseful aftermath. What concerns us, for now, is the quality of stretching the self that the Monologues share with 'Mohini Chatterjee', and that both poets share with their Romantic predecessors. This quality lies at the

[17] Neglecting Yeats and Stephens, most of Dunsany's article concerns Kipling, AE, and the similarities between them. Both are characterized as open, curious, childlike and fundamentally rural personalities. AE, he writes, 'was one of the kindest men I have ever known. The kindest was Kipling.' (Dunsany, 'Four Poets', p.78).

beginning not only of Yeats's, but also of Kipling's attempts to envisage and idealize their respective countries of birth. Furthermore, it would come to enable and stimulate their larger efforts to poetically comprehend the modern, interconnected world.

The 'native monologues' represent Kipling at his most acutely Browningesque, but overcoming his predecessor's influence was not the only reason he never revisited this experimental format. Soon after, when Kipling began to write for an international market, the cynical journalistic intermediary largely disappeared from his narratives. There was no longer any need to dramatize the awkward, slippery and bluffing conversation between native informant and English scribe. When Kipling's Anglo-Indian anecdotes became global artefacts, they began to draw the reader directly into fluid interlingual encounters—what Janet Montefiore calls 'a charmed world of direct feeling and eloquence.'[18] If there was a yearning for this sort of contact among the metropolitan reading public, then it was strong in Yeats, for whom the vista of spiritual transmigration opened up by Mohini Chatterjee and the Theosophical Society was always more important than literal dialogue. Indeed, this desire swiftly led him on to the subversive practices which, as Madame Blavatsky herself warned him in 1888, were already being sidelined from the Theosophical mainstream. An alarming brush with a disruptive spirit in Dublin served to put him off séances for a decade, but Yeats's allied interest in ritual magic progressively limited the appeal of the Society and the tolerance of its members. Nonetheless, as a nexus of global encounter Theosophy remained influential and useful, especially since visionary Celts owned for a time a pronounced cachet within its spiritual economy. 'They all look to Ireland to produce some great spiritual teaching,' Yeats gossiped after tea with Blavatsky in January 1888, adopting an acerbic tone for the benefit of the more prosaic O'Leary. 'The ark of the covenant is at Tara.'[19]

[18] Montefiore, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.38. Montefiore lays great importance on Kipling's eccentric but studied method (developed in early stories like 'Little Tobrah' and 'Without Benefit of Clergy') of rendering the demotic accent of north Indian speech in an inverted, archaic and proverbial English. 'Kipling gives the illusion of undoing the curse of Babel,' she adds, 'allowing his English readers to comprehend the strangeness of Indian lives, not as rulers but as companions or lovers.' This method undergirt, in fact, his whole effort to characterize Indian culture as a syncretic and integrated whole. For to imagine a language is, as Wittgenstein famously aphorized, to imagine a world (pp.36-7).

[19] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 45-6. Until her death in 1891, Yeats called on Madame Blavatsky frequently at the home her followers leased for her in Holland Park.

If, from a heterodox fringe within Dublin's too cosy intelligentsia, Yeats was participating in a project of spiritual worldliness connecting Ireland with India, then his re-establishment at the hub of imperial cultures in April 1887 was carried out in a distinctly un-cosmopolitan spirit. A 'dull and dirty' city, was his initial reaction to another of JBY's precipitate moves, 'where you cannot go five paces without seeing some wretched object broken either by wealth or poverty.' After ten months back in Earl's Court he wrote to Tynan, 'I feel like Robinson Crusoe in this dreadful London'.[20] Possibly he played up the disgust for his Clondalkin-bound correspondent, but an uncollected poem also arraigns the Mammonite vulgarity of the city ('Sordid sorrows of the mart, / Sorrows sapping brain and heart'). The abysmal tone is Blake's, who was beginning to occupy much of his reading time.[21] Keeping up his identification with the shipwrecked exile of childhood reading, and warming to the Indian themes he was discovering in the late 1880s, Yeats revenged himself by allusively positioning London at the abject periphery of civilization.[22] From the vantage of a temple in the Sanskritic 'Golden Age', Vijaya explains to Anushya the sadness of the stars' celestial pilots:

> ....for they see
> The icicles that famish all the North
> Where men lie frozen in the glittering snow...
> And, ever pacing on the verge of things,
> The phantom, Beauty, in a mist of tears.[23]

The men are rendered motionlessly impotent. If their unconsummated passion in pursuit of a forlorn and phantasmal goddess is an image of decadence, then their abysmal location demonstrates how an artistic consciousness of decadence was necessarily a metropolitan, imperial phenomenon. In imagery suggestive of the anxious fatigue besetting high imperial Europe at that time, the imperial hub is spinning off its axis as old centralities and old certainties fragment. It appears that London, rather than Dublin, is the seat of an inconsequent provincial island.

Today it is tempting to read 'Anushya and Vijaya' in light of the postcolonial efforts towards cultural realignment traced in Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe.*[24] But Yeats's lines were

[20] Ibid., i, 11, 15, 50; Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 59.
[21] *Variorum Poems*, 731-3.
[22] He had been reading the *Sakuntala*, for example. See *Letters*, i, 138.
[23] *Variorum Poems*, p.73.

also refracted through his precursors' work (Tennyson's hawkish poems of political disgust frequently conclude with a resolution to flee to the dignified and spiritual 'South'), as well as echoed in his contemporary's. Later Kipling wrote of how the tree-toad and trumpet-flower 'soon undo what the North has done' to the absconding Wise Children. More trenchantly, he gave thanks in 'To the City of Bombay' that his birth 'Fell not in isles aside— / Waste headlands of the earth.' His reaction at the time was just as dramatic as Yeats's, and his abhorrent recoil from the rainy 'trottoirs' and theatre lights he had craved, aged seventeen, in the unstimulating *mofussil* is particularly striking. [25]

In spring 1889, Kipling had sailed from Calcutta with the express ambition of becoming a citizen of the world, using his early royalties to return to Europe the long way round—via Burma, Malaya, Hong Kong, Japan, and North America.[26] He wrote on the hoof, amassing a thick volume of travel letters, but was left unmoved by the pomp of his final destination. The imperial centre had disclosed a hollow, rotted core. To reach his digs near the Strand he had to sidestep courtesans of a distinctly unoriental cast. Suburban trains clattered outside his window, and he once saw a man slit his own throat and collapse in a pool of blood on the cobbles below. Neither were Fleet Street and Clubland quite as he had hoped. To many of the sophisticates and bookmen he had once aspired to join he took a prejudicial dislike, regarding them as pontificating bounders with only a hack's schooling in the Franco-British classics. 'Their stuff seemed to be a day-to-day traffic in generalities,' he remembered snobbishly, 'hedged by trade considerations.'[27] In untreatable cases they were velveteen fops, aping Wilde and feckless with over-thought. It is notable that Yeats, who came to know and admire Wilde, also adopted at first a priggish and aloof disdain towards his fellow 'young litterary men' flaunting the '"bon mots" and absence of convictions that characterize their tribe.'[28] Their prejudices emerged from quite contrary professional standpoints, Yeats resenting the journalistic slickness of the professionalized book trade while Kipling—proud of his inky fingers—lampooned its amateurism and

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[24] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: postcolonial thought and historical difference* (Princeton, 2000), p.4. To "provincialize" Europe, in Chakrabarty's sense, is to demonstrate how European ideas that were projected as universally valent were, in fact, drawn from very particular intellectual contexts and historical traditions.
[25] *Complete Verse*, pp.74, 143.
[26] Kipling, *Letters*, i, 244.
[27] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, pp.46, 112.
[28] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 21, 15.

affectation. But their introverted and overintellectualized targets, as incapable of intense experience or 'passionate reverie' as they were ignorant of the wider world, were seen to labour under the same urban malaise of a corrupt civilization. Although Yeats was, eventually, to participate far less reluctantly than Kipling in the literary scene and its critical debates, the suspicion of decadence would soon spur their mutual efforts—from the 'Henley Regatta' to the Rhymers' Club—to reinvigorate both the arts and the body politic.

Kipling's dislike of London was phrased in explicitly artistic terms. There was 'no light' in this place of fog and monochrome uniformity, peopled by 'savages living in black houses and ignorant of everything beyond the Channel'.[29] These comments were calculated to find a sympathetic ear in the Italophile art critic John Addington Symonds. Retaining for the time being his column inches in the *Civil & Military Gazette*, Kipling also treated his tropical Anglo-Indian readership to ten biting sketches satirizing the ignorance, drunkenness and effeminacy of literary and political life in the unmannerly capital. This series represents a bonfire of several adolescent vanities (he chose to caricature not Gladstone himself, but the utopian idolatry of Gladstone), as well as a certain measure of assertive dissimulation (his narrator rejects some fashionably 'unwholesome' French novels, even as he wrote to Lahore for the manuscript of *Mother Maturin*, his unfinished chronicle of an Irish brothel-keeper).[30] The articles also marked a coterminous and spasmodic retreat into his India-born identity, often enacted by sardonically reversing the established train of colonial knowledge (an Indian Gulliver finds himself among 'unmitigated barbarians'; an anthropologist finds all the customs of 'Heathendom … of equal ethnological value'; and a gruff Civilian once incapable of distinguishing 'one nigger from another' now finds Londoners 'deathlily alike').[31] More searchingly melancholic—while no less emphatic—was the poem 'In Partibus', in which a 'fog-bound exile howling for Sunlight' utterly dismisses the formless, irrational and alien city with a Hindi word.

The buses run to Islington,
To Highgate and Soho…

[29] Kipling, *Letters*, i, 348.
[30] See 'The Adoration of the Mage' and 'The Three Young Men' in Rudyard Kipling, *Abaft the Funnel* (New York, 1909), pp.287, 257. It is probable that *Mother Maturin*, now lost, was modelled largely on Zola. Kipling named Zola as a favourite novelist on the family questionnaire, and while a schoolboy saw a theatrical version of *L'Assommoir*—the novel is also alluded to in 1888's 'The Last of the Stories' (*Writings on Writing*, pp.1, 17).
[31] Ibid., pp.314, 292-3, 223.

But I can only murmur 'Bus!' [enough]
From Shepherd's Bush to Bow.[32]

Most of 'In Partibus' consists in listing the jumbled names of districts to which the author can attach no memory or association, in marked contrast to Kipling's Lahori writings in which haunts such as Wazir Khan's mosque or the Taksali Gate are almost characters in their own right. He had mapped the Punjabi city first journalistically and then imaginatively, in terms of history, tradition and established communities. The entanglement of life and story within this dense mesh of knowledge is made manifest by an article from his brief revisit to Lahore in 1891, in which Kipling surveys familiar roads and buildings but draws no distinction between the real and fictive events associated with them. 'Here lived the Jews of Shushan, there, arrogant and unashamed, was Lalun's naughty little house, Azizan of the Douri Bagh was a little beyond, and the house of Suddhoo was not far off the ringing roaring gulley of the coppersmiths, where the lean traders sat by piles of beaten gold vessels selling the splendour of the East for a few annas.'[33] Lacking such meaningful geography, London is instead an inscrutable sprawl shaped not by aggregation but by deformative forces. Upon asking a policeman for directions in the Mile End Road, the returnee narrator of 'Letters on Leave' is told '"You go back to the country where you comed from. You ain't doin' no good 'ere!"[34]

None of this, it is easy to forget, was entirely new to Kipling. He was already perfectly familiar with the notion of London as a terrifying, anonymous, carnivorous sprawl from his reading of both Dickens and James Thomson. A boyhood favourite, the Dantesque night-walker's *City of Dreadful Night* later influenced (as did Kipling himself) Eliot's *The Waste Land*.[35] Moreover, the revolt of his as well as Yeats's pastoral strain against the malignant capital was a pattern already established by Wordsworth, who recalled his own youthful disillusionment with London's 'blank confusion' in *The Prelude*.

The slaves unrespited of low pursuits
Living amid the same perpetual flow
Of trivial objects, melted and reduced

[32] *Early Verse*, p.472; Kipling, *Letters*, i, 361.
[33] Rudyard Kipling, *Kipling Abroad*: *Traffics and Discoveries from Burma to Brazil*, ed. Andrew Lycett (London, 2010), p.76.
[34] *Abaft the Funnel*, p.249.
[35] For Kipling's juvenile imitations of Thomson, see *Early Verse*, p.242.

To one identity....[36]

The invective of late 1889 and 1890, however, reveals Kipling adding a novel slant to this urban genre, as he articulated his loathing for the modern western city from the perspective of a colonial outsider. From such a vantage, the attitude of London could potentially shift from a moral whirlpool or degraded nadir—the Vanity Fair of human greed—to something that revolved outward, a tempest threatening to ravage and consume other places. Raised on Pre-Raphaelitism, Yeats had long rehearsed the artistic gesture of flight from the degraded present. Now he too increasingly perceived urban modernity as a *spatial* influence, though he was to deliver his most indignant diagnoses of the malaise in 1910s Dublin rather than 1890s London.

There was an incipient modernism in this consciousness of being apart, being foreign, which found outlets—as will be seen later—in more than just *The Waste Land*. Moreover, Yeats and Kipling's development of Wordsworth's poetic was once again reflected in the distinctly modern peculiarity of their biographical trajectories. Wearying of the German intelligentsia and inspired by a casual perusal of Burns, Wordsworth returned home and wrote 'Tintern Abbey'. Kipling and Yeats failed to complete this conventional Romantic arc, subsequently followed by prodigal poets from Thomas Hardy to Pablo Neruda. Committed to an often disgruntled and reluctant cosmopolitanism, they fulfilled the vow to 'go back' only intermittently, or in the mind. This engendered a novel, more dislocated species of Romantic lyric, as well as a new kind of poetic politics, acutely mindful of audiences and the rhetorical or perspectival adjustments they required. It was a question of readership as well as of literary milieu that decided Yeats, whether or not he was willing to acknowledge it at the time, against settling properly in Ireland for several decades. In the summer of 1887, he had seized the opportunity to decamp from London to Sligo, where he completed his first draft of *The Wanderings of Oisin*. But the debilitating melancholy of the place, haunted by a sense of lost time, warned him that as an actual refuge it was only of sporadic use. Intellectual gregariousness drew him to Dublin in the autumn—another, entirely opposite comparison with Defoe's castaway evoking his wavering state: 'I am as hungry for news as Robinson Crusoe.' If in Sligo he found his muse constricted by nostalgia,

[36] *The Prelude* (1850), vii, 722-728.

hwoever, in Dublin his attempts at self-invention were hampered by internecine squabbling, and dogged by lingering anecdotes of his adolescent eccentricity. He spent the autumn at Tynan's house near Dublin, leaving in January shortly after her 'literary coterie'—of which his 'exquisite and ethereal' persona formed the chief ornament—was gratuitously spoofed by a casual acquaintance in the Dublin *Evening Telegraph.*[37]

There is an intriguing and poignant passage in the second of Kipling's ten Anglophobic sketches, 'The New Dispensation'. As a prelude to deploring the lack of trust and feudal courtesy between servants and their employers in the capital, Kipling recalls the eagerness of his valet Kadir Baksh to accompany him abroad. '"Though the sahib says he will never return to India,' explained the faithful retainer, 'yet I know, and all the other *nauker log* [domestics] know, that return is his fate."'[38] The sahib was almost truthful. Kipling's brief reappearance in Lahore and Bombay in 1891 was his last glimpse of India, though it remained obsessively fixed in his mind's eye for years after. The suggestions and invitations to return, and to pass comparative judgments, must have been frequent. A letter of Lord Curzon survives from 1902, inviting Kipling to enjoy the Viceroy's hospitality in Delhi, and in 1922 a civilian enthusiast regretted that the poet could not attend the unveiling of a memorial tablet at his father's house in Bombay. 'I think that you owe India another visit for things are changing and I feel sure that a visit from you, so that our people out here could feel you understand their special difficulties, would be a real encouragement to the Britisher out here.' Kipling appears to have excused himself with a profession of illness.[39]

His decisive aversion continues to puzzle devotees, especially since it caused him evident pain. In 1913 he published one of his last travelogues, a peculiarly spiritual journey up the Nile during which he experienced the temptation to proceed further east, to India, almost as a physical ache. 'I felt as though I was moving in a sort of terrible, homesick nightmare,' he wrote to one of his few trusted friends, 'and as though at any moment the years would roll away and I should find myself back in India. But it is twenty five years and twenty six days since I left it.'[40] David Lloyd's discussion of

[37] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 24; Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 73-4.
[38] *Abaft the Funnel*, p.315.
[39] Sussex University, MSS 38/18/1, 38/18/4.
[40] Kipling, *Letters*, iv, 231.

Yeats's 'aesthetic politics', however is suggestive of a potential equivalence between Kipling's anxiety and postcolonial modes of thought. The effort to imagine a nation often assumes the form of a narrative of desire, and because the desire is inchoate—an unfulfilled longing for unity—the narrative is 'implicitly one of return.' But it is also necessary that the promised return be 'perpetually deferred and in turn perpetually invoked, until symbol, subject and nation come to form a single totality.'[41] If Kipling resisted the consummation of this desire, therefore, his reticence was in keeping with his political goals for India.

This much they had already seen in Wordsworth. The same feeling of exclusion and deprivation from the space of childhood was, in fact, already central to his poetic. Kipling acknowledged the debt by heading the chapter of *Something of Myself* which describes his migration to London with a quotation from *The Prelude*: 'the youth who daily farther from the East / Must travel'.[42] While Wordsworth's landscapes are sometimes guiltily haunted by the ghost of a reproving father, prematurely dead, Kipling inwardly resents the mother who tore him away from his cradle but thereby—bequeathing her Celtic wit and vision—hurt him into poetry. The vow 'we shall go back', above all, is a recognizably Wordsworthian trope. It was, however, the indefinite postponement of homecoming that signalled a new manipulation of the Romantic lyric. This represented a stretching of parameters that would for both poets, ultimately, lend itself to meditations on failure rather than visions of national reunion. Many of Yeats's finest late poems would stem from a conviction of betrayed ideals, and the repudiation of de Valera's Ireland framed as heroic defiance. His melancholic rebukes would find striking echoes in Kipling. The latter's position would prove, however, the more fully untenable. Though cast in a different mould than Yeats had envisaged, Ireland did eventually awaken to a wounded nationhood. But the integration of India within the greater cultural 'totality' of the Empire was a reunion fated to permanent deferral. This is why it was Kipling's quioxtic burden or 'fate', as Kadir Baksh had tried to warn him, to continually re-enact the pain of banishment on himself.

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[41] David Lloyd, *Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Post-Colonial Moment* (Durham, NC, 1993), p.71.
[42] 'Border preoccupations with him [Wordsworth] derive typically from a sense of personal exclusion'. Jonathan Wordsworth, *William Wordsworth: the Borders of Vision* (Oxford, 1982), p.83, 63-4; Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.41.

To fully explore this remorseful, late stage in their lives is beyond the remit of this thesis. The doom to wander, however, points to a further characteristic whereby Kipling can be reintroduced to the Romantic tradition, and thereby into comparison with Yeats. Their sense of an unjust ostracism made both Kipling and Wordsworth receptive to the figure of the wandering exile. The former identified with the vagabonds and mendicants of India in the same way that the latter valued the company of dispossessed nomads and gypsies he met on Cumbrian roads. Yeats was likewise drawn to tinkers, solitaries, lunatics and the strolling bard. Their significance lay, principally, in the state of mind—or rather, state of vision—that they represented. Their social marginality became for Wordsworth not only a mirror of his own rootless wandering, but an analogy for his mental exploration of the border between what could be *visibly*, empirically known and what was intuitively grasped during a *visionary* episode. To imaginatively experience the life of the marginal alien was, therefore, the first step toward seeing 'into the life of things.' Having made his crucial transition back to the Lakes, this rediscovered affinity for the border state triggered Wordsworth's astonishing creativity between 1798 and 1805, after which he 'settled down' domestically, politically and poetically. His decline thereafter as an artist lends additional weight to his poetic legacy. It lay upon his inheritors the burden to prolong somehow this condition of intensity, to renew the sense of alienation, to reaffirm the vow of radicalism (indeed, as the arch-Conservatives of their later years, Kipling and Yeats in some ways proved themselves the ultimate Romantic radicals). The cultivation of the border state, then, was key to their advancement of the Wordsworthian mode. However, it was also facilitated—and indeed, necessitated—by the unsettled nature of their local attachments.

The Fetish of the Frontier

It was one of Wordsworth's legacies to make his literary descendants highly conscious not only of their own precise geographic vantage, but also of where their readers stood. A Wordsworthian poet is necessarily a translator, his audience lying at a metropolitan remove from his parochial horizon. 'The ability to combine inside and outside perspectives,' writes Stafford, 'is characteristic of the poets who made local work the basis of their wider reputations.' In this, Kipling and Yeats were not alone. But a particular self-awareness and delicacy is enrooted in the interpreters of border regions—regions that

are themselves thresholds, porous and often contested, and where a liminal sensibility is habitual to the inhabitants.[43] 'In such regions, a stable viewpoint is neither easy to achieve, nor necessarily appropriate', and to depend upon such ground, to call it home, is to be aware of 'inherent fissures' that impose a necessary distance. Poets of these places often display 'an instinctive sense of internal detachment'. They do not sharply distinguish between the familiar and the foreign, because even at close quarters they perceive home from a lofty, critical vantage. Raymond Williams, who grew up in the Welsh Marches, termed this training of the eye 'Border Vision.'[44]

'Living in a state of psychic unrest, in a Borderland,' wrote the mestiza poet Gloria Anzaldúa in 1987, 'is what makes poets write and artists create.'[45] The subsequent 'border theory' that was so stimulated by her work sought to elevate the deprived, subaltern perspective by making a creative virtue of its trans-national, split position. By contrast, Yeats and Kipling's restless situation was one of class privilege, and they extrapolated from it a skilful claim to influence and authority. Certifying, through native origin, the authenticity of their knowledge, they simultaneously allowed their cosmopolitan experience to shape a flexible politics. Nonetheless, thinking of them in Anzalduá's contemporary framework of international migrancy is helpful. The localities which had nurtured them were, indeed, border territories on more than one level. Grandfather Pollexfen's shelves testified to Sligo harbour as a place of ocean-going transition, while Bombay constituted a mercantile emporium on the brink of a vast and challenging 'native' hinterland. A waystation of another kind, upcountry Lahore formed a bastion guarding the approach to the Subcontinent's fontanelles—the Afghan passes that exerted such a powerful fascination on Russophobic Anglo-India. Later a theatre of infiltration and counter-espionage, Kipling originally celebrated 'the Frontier' by reinventing the border ballad, a genre popularized at the beginning of the century by Sir Walter Scott (and read by JBY to his teenage son). In place of Percy, Tam Lin or Redgauntlet, a British subaltern pursues a horse-thief in 'The

[43] The term liminal or threshold figure, and the theory of his or her social purpose, originates in the writings of the anthropologist Victor Turner. See p.8.
[44] Stafford, *Local Attachments*, pp.149-150, 159.
[45] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands, La Frontera: the New Mestiza* (San Francisco, 1987), p.73.

Ballad of East and West', while the Emir Abdur Rahman dispenses grim justice at Kabul in 'The Ballad of the King's Mercy.'[46]

Sinking its roots deep during the 1890s was the notion of Ireland itself as a cultural frontier zone, across which—like the medieval English Pale—an insidious urban monoculture was advancing its pickets westwards. Appealing to Protestant writers of a highbrow, anti-populist bent perhaps even more than it did to mainstream nationalism, the concept was delivered pithily by a writer much more likely to be seen in a Parisian café than a rustic shebeen. 'We, sitting on the last verge,' wrote George Moore in 1901, 'see into the universal suburb, in which a lean man with glasses on his nose and a black bag in his hand is always running after his bus.'[47] Generally impatient of homesickness, even Moore had holidayed in Galway, following the same compulsion that drew Yeats further outwards from Sligo, in expectation of some craggy ultimate brink in Connemara or the Aran Islands. For Yeats's contemporaries in the Celtic Revival, the Irish west came to signify a redoubt of visionary heroes and humane religion, wrestling with Saxon modernity for the fate of the body politic poised between them in Dublin. Scene of many future battles, even as a teenager Yeats approached the latter obliquely from rural and storied Howth.

The landowning class with which Yeats, over time, would increasingly identify cannot be easily compared with the 'Heaven-Born' civilian Ascendancy in whose gossipy wings Kipling had temporarily dwelt (although the comparison was certainly made, by such denunciatory Free State voices as Aodh de Blácam).[48] Nevertheless, certain recurring themes still link the experiences of the uncovenanted, non-university educated, miscellaneous Kipling and the Anglo-Irish art school graduate who, as Patrick Kavanagh put it in one his less-acid remarks on Yeats's aristocratic pretensions, 'was always conscious of being something of an outsider' both in his country and amongst his class.[49] One of these themes is the supernatural undercurrent that tends to rattle beneath

[46] Kipling also quotes from the famous Scottish ballad 'Sir Patrick Spens' (in order to facetiously describe the railway policy of a Rajput sovereign) in *Letters of Marque*. See *From Sea to Sea*, i, 111.
[47] George Moore, 'Literature and the Irish Language' in Lady Augusta Gregory (ed.), *Ideals in Ireland* (London, 1901), p.51.
[48] Quoted in Philip O'Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State, 1922-1939* (University Park, Penn., 2004), p.416.
[49] Patrick Kavanagh, *Collected Pruse* (London, 1967), p.254. As for Kipling, the Yeatses' friend Edward Dowden had an Anglo-Irishman's (or a Trinity don's) sensitivity for his marginalization within a marginal

the Puritan vigour of a colonial caste. The greater vulnerability of Kipling's position is betrayed by the self-consciously Gothic menace of nocturnal Punjab, 'the Oldest Land' where he too could proceed unsettlingly into the twilight and put it down afterwards to a Celtic sensibility.[50] For Lahore, as much as Rosses or Howth, was a place also of spiritual attenuation, a skein of the supernatural through which passed *bhut*, *churel* and *djinn* in place of fairy, banshee or *pooka*. Ghosts are a complex topic, but it is important to note that for both poets they were not only emanations from another time, but also revenant aftershocks of some geographic displacement. Kipling's best ghost story—and one of his most modernist works—concerns a sailor in Cape Town driven mad by a newsreel whereon he views the flickering spectre of his erstwhile amour 'Mrs Bathurst', hunting him down in London. This ghostly heritage also left its impress on the psychically eerie, even sacramental quality of the poems which explain or defend Yeats and Kipling's own border vision, from the 'things discovered in the deep' of 'To Ireland in the Coming Times' to the much-quoted quatrains of Kipling's 'The Two-Sided Man'.

> Much I owe to the Lands that grew—
> More to the Lives that fed—
> But most to Allah Who gave me two
> Separate sides to my head.[51]

To possess border vision is to be habitually self-reflexive, self-examining, and both Kipling and Yeats used monologue to dramatize their liminal nature to a degree of which such Romantic predecessors as Scott, too vexed by his dual loyalties, had been skittishly wary. It served as a means of fixing and focussing that detached, foresighted vision that characterizes border poets. Attaining this vision enabled them to convert a homely locality—to use Jay Appleton's terms—from a 'refuge' into

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community. 'Everything I have heard of R.K. rather tends to confirm your genesis of the Anglo-Indian *outsider*,' he wrote to Harold Littledale in 1900. 'But perhaps my informants, who call him a *bounder*, saw the wrong side of him.' See *Letters of Edward Dowden and His Correspondents*, ed. E.D. and H.M. Dowden (London, 1914), p.302.

[50] See Kipling, *Complete Verse*, p.406. Patrick Brantlinger discusses the use of Gothic tropes to shadow forth both the physical and psychic vulnerability of India's isolated British administrators in Chapter 8 of *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca, 1988). It should be noted, however, that the parodic young Kipling employed these tropes in a fashion that was both bookishly and politically self-conscious. This is best illustrated by the stagey, cloak-and-dagger bookplate Lockwood Kipling designed for 'The Phantom 'Rickshaw'—a supernatural but deliberately comic story.

[51] Yeats, *Variorum Poems*, p.138; Kipling, *Complete Verse*, p.478.

a 'prospect.'[52] A refuge is a lair of dreamy retreat, whereas a windy prospect is a vantage from which to imagine a future. From a promontory of sufficient height, the parochial home can be placed in relation to historical time, and to the wider world.

Wordsworth's hiding places lay both in the fastness of Cumbria and in the privacy of the past. His adept transitions from those sanctuaries to a public space and general present give his meditations their panoramic quality, and thereby demonstrate that what initially appeared as the solipsistic withdrawal of the poet's faculties ('self-closed, all repelling' as Blake describes Urizen) could silently germinate and flourish into open, sensual creativity. As Jonathan Wordsworth remarks, for his illustrious namesake reverie is not a state of dejection, but 'comes as the reward of total receptiveness, and never extinguishes the bodily awareness that is a vital part of this.'[53] It is a heightened, not subdued, condition. Well-versed in Blake, it is probable that Yeats applied the same admonition to the otherworldly abstractions of his own juvenilia. Sligo in the summer of 1887 had made him wary of debilitating nostalgia but, as mentioned in Chapter 2, he would later coin a striking oxymoron to describe the transport of his mature muse: 'passionate reverie' or 'excited reverie'.[54] 'A Prayer for my Daughter' (1919) uses the latter phrase, as it describes an Atlantic storm battering the shutters of Thoor Ballylee while Anne Yeats sleeps in her cradle. It anticipates several successive poems in which Yeats would literally attain a prospect—over the Galway hills as well as over the landscape of his past—from the castellated roof of his tower-house. In both subject-matter and imaginative attitude, the poem echoes Coleridge's 'Frost at Midnight'. Yeats rotates in his memory the glances and gestures of Maud Gonne, which for decades had fixated his mind's eye, just as Coleridge turns from his sleeping child and fancies, in the flickers of the dying hearth, the dancing shadows of youthful regrets. Coleridge's own episode of excited reverie sounds very much like the 'middle state of mind' he described in his Shakespeare Lectures of 1811-12. This state, he explains, is 'more strictly appropriate to the imagination than any other, when it is, as it were, hovering between images. As soon as it is fixed on one image, it becomes understanding; but while it is unfixed and wavering

[52] Quoted in Stafford, *Local Attachments*, p.38.
[53] Wordsworth, *Borders of Vision*, p.11. For Urizen, see *Blake: the Complete Poems*, ed. W.H. Stevenson (Harlow, 2007), p.255.
[54] Yeats, *Variorum Poems*, p.403.

between them, attaching itself permanently to none, it is imagination.' For Coleridge, this creative wavering is clearly associated with his friend Wordsworth's preoccupation with the liminal state—a desire to linger, shivering, at the borders of vision. In fact, Coleridge goes on to uphold it as the central criterion of poetic quality:

> The grandest efforts of poetry are where the imagination is called forth, not to produce a distinct form, but ... the substitution of a sublime feeling of the unimaginable for a mere image.[55]

According to Coleridge's precepts, then, poets should pursue the ineffable. Once they had attained a lofty prospect, however, Kipling and Yeats frequently sought to channel and cast that sublime feeling into a brazen, indelible symbol. The struggle for conceptual clarity was itself, Yeats realized, integral to his creative process and was commemorated in such 'fitting emblems of adversity' as his tower at Ballylee. Like 'The Circus Animals' Desertion', 'A Prayer for my Daughter' is one of several poems in which Yeats almost ritually divests himself of his accrued images, abridged self-reproachfully here to 'the sort of beauty that I have approved.' They embody, it is implied, a dangerous passion, and the second stanza's prospect over 'future years' (which, in his excited reverie, Yeats had imagined were already upon him) is a forecast of murder and frenzy. The power and influence of concrete symbols is a major connecting theme for this thesis's double narrative. Before addressing this theme fully in the final section, however, it is first necessary to consider how such symbols could take their form and character from the decidedly un-concrete, ineffable prospects glimpsed by both Kipling and Yeats both in imperial borderlands and at spiritual thresholds.

To attain the resolution of a definite image implies the end of a journey. How is this to be achieved if the homecoming of Yeats's and Kipling's wanderers is, necessarily, deferred? The persistent resonance for them of the border-figure, and the difficulty of construing from their uncertain state a prospect of visionary mastery, is brought out by an instance of ironic but altogether appropriate poetic borrowing. Kipling avoided passing public comment on his literary peers (venting the hotheaded opinions of his twenties only in private), and was able to enjoy from an early age the rich author's disdain for reviewing. Hence little evidence survives for his knowledge of Yeats's poetry. By 1903,

[55] Quoted in Wordsworth, *Borders of Vision*, p.20.

however, ‘Innisfree’ was a poem that seemingly everyone had read (or heard). In ‘Chant-Pagan’ he modified its familiar refrain to lyricize the worldly consciousness of a rural man mentally enlarged—and left morosely alienated—by the visual experience of a cosmopolitan empire. ‘I will arise an’ get ’ence’ vows a discharged irregular of the Boer War, determined like Tennyson to ‘trek South’ and escape the pale sunshine and stale breezes (and, more bitingly, the menial jobs and demeaning class system) of ‘awful old England’. The measure of his disaffection is the resolution to swap rolling the Squire’s lawn for service on the South African ranch of ‘a Dutchman I’ve fought’. At least there he can satisfy the broadened appetite referred to at the close of the final verse—the desire to ‘see’:

> Me that ’ave watched ’arf a world
> ’Eave up all shiny with dew,
> Kopje on kop to the sun,
> An’ as soon as the mist let ’em through
> Our ’elios winkin’ like fun—
> Three sides of a ninety-mile square,
> Over valleys as big as a shire—
> *“Are ye there? Are ye there? Are ye there?”*[56]

The one definite feature in this envisaged landscape is ‘some graves by a barb-wire fence’—fallen comrades, and perhaps also the uncoffined burial of Drummer Hodge described by Hardy four years earlier.[57] Another rural recruit, Hodge died before he even had a chance to learn the southern constellations or grasp ‘the meaning of the broad Karoo’, whereas for Kipling’s soldier-settler this is a landscape that can be interpreted. The stars were his compass when he rode by night ‘Forty mile often on end, / Along the Ma’ollisberg Range.’ Nevertheless, one of the poem’s strengths is that it retains a portion of the faraway eeriness that permeates Hardy’s elegy, not least in the glinting summons of the heliograph—*“Are ye there?”*—waiting to be answered. Aerial communication over a great distance is, as in ‘Mohini Chatterjee’, not ultimately about discovering a stranger but encountering a strange self—or, rather, *remembering* a past incarnation. ‘Me that ’ave been what I’ve been’, is the poem’s first line, and indeed almost every verse begins and ends with the capitalized word ‘Me’.[58] The

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[56] *Complete Verse*, pp.368-9.
[57] Hardy, *Variorum Poems*, p.90. Kipling first met Hardy, through his father, at the Savile Club shortly after arriving in London (*Something of Myself*, p.44).
[58] The quotation from ‘Innisfree’ is the single exception. The accusative ‘me’ in place of the more assured ‘I’ indicates that the ultimate purpose of the Pagan’s journey is to determine exactly what ‘me’ is. The same conscious objectifying of the self is performed by the hero of the novel published two years before ‘Chant-

'Pagan' exile seeks union with what the older Yeats would have termed his anti-self, through which he will attain a more complete personal actualization. This connotes not only his better, more adventurous nature but is also embodied in a political antithesis: his former adversary, the 'Dutchman'. While this gesture could be read as an exasperated token of Kipling's post-war disillusionment, identification with an honourable foe was a significant trope, established as early as the English youth's 'face to face' rapprochement with his Afghan opponent in 'The Ballad of East and West.'

The borrowed line was parodic but carried, as Tricia Lootens has pointed out, a serious intent.[59] By rewriting the fin de siècle poem perhaps described more frequently than any other as 'romantic', Kipling demonstrated that the motif of fleeing to the cultural frontier from the sickening metropole could be a gesture both deeply parochial and emancipatingly worldly. Yeats's speaker abandons the city for a garden in time-honoured fashion, but Kipling's vaults the garden wall and heads for the veldt. The decisive and permanent act towards which they edge is oddly solitary, undertaken with a desperate vow unencumbered by friends or dependents. 'He travels the fastest who travels alone' would be the Pagan's motto, one of those proverbially banal refrains that suddenly gain a new pathos when applied to Kipling's own life.[60] As poems of imagined flight, furthermore, both are about crossing more than one type of border: colonial frontiers, class barriers, personal inhibitions, and artistic orthodoxies. They are 'pagan' poems both in this heretical, dissenting sense as well as in their druidically mystic response to landscape. They are also poems destined for a shiftless audience, a displaced national community. 'Innisfree' was to attain its apogee of fame and resonance not in Ireland, but among the Irish emigrants in America and elsewhere to whom Yeats attached early hopes of corralling into his cultural project.[61] 'Chant-Pagan', no less, is written for a diaspora of demobbed refugees, autonomous men of the empire who have been re-confined in their stifling place of origin,

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Pagan' when he muses "Who is Kim—Kim—Kim?". See *Kim*, ed. Edward W. Said, (London, 2000), p.233. Kipling denotes this as an innately 'Eastern' meditative capability.

[59] Tricia Lootens, 'Alien Homelands: Rudyard Kipling, Toru Dutt, and the Poetry of Empire' in Joseph Bristow (ed.), *The Fin-de-Siècle Poem: English Literary Culture and the 1890s* (Athens, Ohio, 2005), p.295.

[60] 'The Winners', *Complete Verse*, p.428. Interestingly, the poem's speaker describes it as a 'heretical song.'

[61] 'Now that the race is so large, so widely spread, and so conscious of its unity,' Yeats wrote in his second obituary notice for Ferguson, 'the years are ripe [for] a truly great and national literature' (*Uncollected Prose*, i, 103). In fact, convincing Irish-Americans to open their minds—and their pockets—to his programme for cultural renewal was to prove more frustrating than Yeats originally hoped.

denied the cosmopolitan opportunity for reinvention.[62] In fact, as a line that speaks to a community 'I will arise and go now' is not only pagan but also Biblical—as Dunsany pointed out in his reminiscences of Yeats and Kipling, these are words spoken by the Prodigal Son. Disguising, perhaps, a wish for distance from his own overbearing father, Yeats had chosen the most Kiplingesque method of hitting on a reverberant and memorable refrain.[63]

'Chant-Pagan' derives, as Lootens notes, directly from Wordsworth's investment in 'the revelatory power of landscapes of memory', but it is also an almost anti-Wordsworthian piece of writing.[64] South Africa is not, or not yet, a locality for the speaker. It is defined by expanse and potential, and to embrace its unfathomed horizons entails the discarding of any fixed notion of home. The speaker discards, in fact, his very nationality, committing himself to an as-yet-undefined order of imperial identities. If the minutely-observed particularities that had characterized his Indian work appear to be dissipating, in Kipling's middle years, into the visual abstraction of ''igh, inexpressible skies', then the poem also testifies to the breadth of his imperial ambition. Furthermore, it reveals his penetrating insight into a submerged factor that agitates both his speaker and the hermit of Innisfree. The international prospect attained in 'Chant-Pagan' overlooks another kind of frontier which he, as well as Yeats, first perceived when entering the 1890s metropolis: the inexorably advancing, deracinating and homogenizing influence of the modern world over distinct societies. This is the 'somethin'' that has 'gone small with the lot', the disenchantment which has leeched the drab hue of 'pavements grey' into human knowledge and perception.[65] It is an influence coeval with the greater processes that have deprived Yeats and Kipling's speakers of their autonomy of movement, and governed their modern diasporic lives.

To appreciate the poets' sensitivity to the threats, and possible boons, of imperial globalization it is necessary to understand not only that their respective border localities were already economic hinterlands being progressively remodelled under metropolitan pressure. Their work, in Yeats's case

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[62] Marketing in Ealing in the wake of the Great War, Katharine Tynan (now Hinkson) wrote that she 'got the essence of Kipling's "Me!"' from a butcher slicing bacon. '"It do seem poor business after what you've been doin'," he said.' See Katharine Tynan, *The Wandering Years* (London, 1922), p.88.
[63] Dunsany, 'Four Poets', p.80.
[64] Lootens, 'Alien Homelands', p.294.
[65] 'Of old the world on dreaming fed; / Grey Truth is now her painted toy', Yeats complained in 'The Song of the Happy Shepherd' (*Variorum Poems*, pp.64-5).

explicitly, was also an effort to frame and fortify these zones as cultural frontiers. Both knew that societies frequently define themselves in relation to their margins. Staking out a place for native affinity, however, within a world of correspondences was a task that involved securing some partitions, while allowing others to be porous. It was a dilemma that impressed itself on Kipling by stages, as he made his protracted journey back to London in mid-1889.

Encompassing the World: Kipling's Long Road 'Home'

'Chant-Pagan' is a monologue without an auditor—not a dramatic monologue then, but a surly, eremitic and *lyrical* soliloquy. The speaker's literary ancestor is 'The Dicharged Soldier' from *Lyrical Ballads*. Updating Wordsworth, however, Kipling does not interpose himself in the text as a genteel interpreter of his vagabond's marginal insight, and instead allows his extempore song of himself to voice a radical, subaltern ideal of Empire. However, the Pagan's more plainly anti-Wordsworthian qualities reveal the difficulties for Kipling's imperial vision. Firstly, his isolation is mainly self-imposed; secondly, his return home from foreign exile does not restore to him his dormant identity, but instead leaves him unsatisfied; lastly, he thus repudiates the rural cradle that shaped him as a child, and directs his yearning of return towards an empty, 'inexpressible' space in which he can fashion himself anew. How could men like this, dispersed across the world by forces beyond their control, be convinced to adhere to an international community? More acutely for Kipling, how could his own pastoral destination of ever-deferred return, India, be reconciled with the imperial and economic systems that were re-shaping it? The clockwork and knick-knacks he had seen, as mentioned in the last chapter (see p.78), undermining the sanctity of the Mohurram preacher appeared from London to be gaining the upper hand.

The alienation he experienced in London in 1889 was undoubtedly a violent shock, but it was really the culmination of the successive culture-shocks he had undergone on his long trans-Pacific voyage home. The nature of this journey is best illustrated by some morose verbal quibbling, weighted with colonial ennui. 'I want to go Home! I want to go back to India!', he wrote as the steamer conveyed

him from Singapore to Hong Kong, barely a month into his trip.[66] Given the capital H, was he yearning for a speedy passage to London, or a swift return to Lahore? Half ironic melodrama, and half real imperial agoraphobia, this was Kipling grasping the strange pathos of his situation as well as exploiting the creative possibilities of his betwixt-and-between state.

The journey presented him with several problems, the first of which was the transnational, cosmopolitan lifestyle enabled—indeed, necessitated—by imperial traffic. This concerned the greater British world of which India formed an integral part, but it was also a challenge to which India had to respond internally. Not the only respect in which he anticipated the upcoming generation of Indian nationalists, it was in India's well-worn, intrinsic capacity for self-regulation and absorption of foreign influences that Kipling reposed much of his hope. This is why the series of dramatic culture shocks that comprised his seven-month voyage actually began before he left Indian soil. His travelogue *From Sea to Sea* begins with a 'disquisition upon the otherness of things' that is, in fact, a discussion of the "foreign" customs of Calcutta, including a moribund Anglophile habit of sober promenading. Casting a cynical mofussilite eye on the mixed, juvenant, cockney quality of moneyed ports, Kipling is content to forget his own beloved home town of Bombay in order to command the sympathies of his upcountry audience. But his newfound aversion to the modern city—later manifested in Chicago, New York and of course London—also reveals that for him the word cosmopolitan, as it was for many writers of his era, was a derogation.[67] It meant dilution and superficiality, if not degeneration. Obsessed with speed and ignorant of locality, the maladroit late Victorian tourist or 'globe-trotter' whom he tirelessly lampooned in all his travel-writings was, for example, 'extreme cosmopolitan.'[68]

Ironically, Kipling's anti-imperial detractors often accused him of promoting the very shrinkage and trivialization of Asian cultures that he fervently abhorred. Indeed, these malign effects of colonization placed him in unresolved conflict with so much he supposedly stood for. The heretically traditionalist

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[66] Kipling, *From Sea to Sea*, i, 260. He played again on the word's capitalized resonance for an Anglo-Indian audience by titling the article he wrote on his brief return to Lahore in 1891 'Home' (see *Kipling Abroad*, pp.65-77).

[67] E.M. Forster is a notable example from the opposite end of the political spectrum. For Forster's use of the word, see *Howards End*, ed. Paul B. Armstrong (New York, 1998), p.229.

[68] Kipling, *From Sea to Sea*, i, 207, 312.

G.K. Chesterton, who defended the unique dignity of 'every tiny town or place' in his novel *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, referred to him as 'the philanderer of the nations' in a 1905 review titled 'On Mr Rudyard Kipling and Making the World Small.'[69] Behind the frenzied sightseeing of wealthy philistines, however, Kipling had already perceived the deeper, more destructive rootlessness that threatened the integrity of his own poetic 'hiding places.' Shortly before clearing his desk at the *Pioneer* offices in Allahabad, he had interviewed a local man who had returned from South Africa's diamond rush, having made a quick fortune selling overpriced provisions to miners. Speaking a compound of 'cheechee' English and Boer slang, the merchant relates his unsuccessful attempt to reintegrate in his native village. 'My people is all dead ... I belong to nowhere now.' He belongs only in Kimberley, a pastless boomtown that Kipling describes as 'Tom Tiddler's Ground' and which, like the Pagan's destination, is a dauntingly 'inexpressible' place where men must manufacture their own tradition.[70] The pen-portrait combines pathos with disquiet, as though the merchant were cursed—a sympathetic suspicion that also marked Kipling's attitudes to Jews, and informed the moniker he supposedly fashioned for himself in literary London: 'The Man from Nowhere.'[71]

Whether it reflects faithful journalism or an overenthusiastic allusion to some Gothic novel, the Romantic trope of the tragic wanderer presented to Kipling a genuine fear. With characteristically skewed genius, he had sought to avoid being an interloper in India by playing the vagrant, idealizing in multiple poems, articles and homages to Walt Whitman the casual brotherhood of the road. 'I met a hundred men on the road to Delhi and they were all my brothers,' is a so-called 'native proverb 'inscribed on the flyleaf of *Life's Handicap*, a volume subtitled 'being stories of mine own people.' This discourse partakes also of the mystic fraternity of the Masonic tradition, and like Freemasonry itself, the apparently transgressive encounter with native coevals in fact reinforces the colonial

[69] G.K. Chesterton, *Heretics* (Peabody, Mass., 2007), p.22. Chesterton inadvertently tars Kipling with his own brush, labelling him an exemplary 'cosmopolitan' who looks at the world through a telescope, when a microscope would reveal its true wonders.

[70] Kipling, *From Sea to Sea*, ii, 377, 373. Though the interview is presented as a story, it is unlikely to have been wholly fiction. An expression meaning 'no man's land', 'Tom Tiddler's Ground' was its original title.

[71] He fictionalized the first Jew he met in a Lahore story, 'Jews in Shushan' (*Collected Short Stories*, ii, 460-2). J.M. Barrie claimed that Kipling referred to himself this way in 1890s London. See *Two of Them* (New York, 1893), p.144.

system.[72] The poetic—more specifically the balladic—world is where songs of cultural mutuality and moral egalitarianism drown out the call for political redress. On the global scale, moreover, Kipling's Indian affiliation would later justify his 'legislative' authority as laureate of Empire. This entitlement was merited not by his unimpeachable "whiteness", but because he could claim to "know the ground" and had felt the soil under his fingernails. To use another example from 1890s South Africa, the dubious legitimacy of Lord Milner's hawkish 'kindergarten' as a school of global policy was underwritten, in Kipling's view, by each man's membership of one particular colonial community. Although their understanding of nationality in their respective homelands was quite distinct, therefore, in respect to their metropolitan status the myth of Indian authenticity was as important for Kipling as the claimed Irish cultural lineage was for Yeats.

Kipling's cosmopolitanism, therefore, if it can be called that, was barren when not complemented by provincial experience. As with the man from Kimberley, 'vernacular' language was the benchmark of authenticity, and pidgin the watershed of cultural dilution. His father's punctilious regard for demotic speech and folklore furnished him, on his voyage east, with a criterion by which to judge both governors and governed. At his first port-of-call, in Rangoon, he ran into an old Punjab hand whose command of the vernacular used to mark him out as 'one of Us', but who in his new post bossed 'Madrassi' attendants in truncated coolie-English. Horrified, Kipling told him '"you're no better than a Bombaywallah"' (once again, conveniently forgetful of his own birthplace).[73] The bonds of caste and religion that Kipling had learned to regard as paramount in Lahore, undergirded by linguistic subtlety and literary tradition, now appeared flimsy and dissolute before the economic exigencies of a world in motion. Or rather, if they were to survive they would need to be clannishly instrumentalized, as he discovered at Hong Kong and Guangzhou. The disciplined industry of the Cantonese migrant workforce summoned from Kipling an outburst of intemperate xenophobia. They were truly and terrifyingly strange to his Anglo-Indian mindset—strange because homogenous, lacking the familiar, discriminating details of Indian foreignness—and their predominance touched a native nerve. For he

[72] Notice "mine": another of Kipling's archaisms intended to denote Indian speech patterns. For a more thorough examination of the social dynamics of the Craft in colonial India, see Rachel Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire: Freemasons and British Imperialism, 1717-1927* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2007), pp.4-7.
[73] Kipling, *From Sea to Sea*, i, 227.

had learned, to his dismay, that the European taipans and venture capitalists of South-East Asia had chosen to feed their booming labour market not with caste-restricted Indian manpower, but almost exclusively with cheap Chinese coolies.

Capitalism, therefore, so integral and logical to the growth of imperial influence, actually ran directly counter to the bureaucratic, highly conservative concept of responsible governance to which Kipling had become inured in Punjab. Whether they unpatriotically sold artillery to a resurgent China, or rigged elections and built helter-skelter railways in California, what Kipling saw justified the snobbery of Simla officialdom and brought out the colour in his dormant anti-modern streak. Although he would never have dubbed them 'boxwallahs', businessmen remained subservient in his mind to the dour writ of a militarist government, as unchanging as the perennial vagaries and savageries of the 'human nature' it sought to curb.[74] On the global scale, he would come to embrace the political compact advocated by Joseph Chamberlain in 1903 which also, in essence, sought to suborn animal spirits to the directives of that Kipling shibboleth 'the Law'. Fearing imperial rivals and internecine dissent, Chamberlain insisted that the colonies be economically bonded to the metropole within a closed system, insulated from foreign competition by tariff-protection.

Where antique India would fit into this ruthless and fast-changing world was uncertain. As Anthony Giddens has remarked, globalization's effects are determined not by what 'it' does, but by how communities respond to the challenges presented to them by economic processes.[75] How should the Orient orient itself? In this case, Hong Kong had posed a difficult question. As though in mockery of the taipans' blow to his homeland's struggling economy, Kipling found amidst the newsprint enclosing his freshly-polished shoes the fragmentary, but cautiously optimistic headline: 'there is no Indian nation, though there exist the germs of an Indian nationality.' The land that had gripped him with its unrelenting reality was made to appear as immaterial and contrived as vapour. Punning better

[74] Like his attitudes to Americans, Kipling's position on capitalism was two-minded. He repeatedly celebrated businessmen and their growling, masculine shop-talk, even making a perverse virtue out of the vulgarity and narrow-mindedness with which Yeats was later to stuff his bourgeois straw man. But while their energy and ambition was a necessary antidote to a laconic bureaucracy, their speculations should ideally, as in India, go hand-in-hand with the government's railway and irrigation policies.

[75] Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge, 1990), p.64; Malcolm Waters, *Globalization* (London, 2001), p.4.

than he knew, he concluded 'I am sadly out of conceit of mine own other—not mother—country.'[76] The vigorously modernizing response adopted by his next destination, Japan, commanded his grudging respect. But that India, perhaps led by the successors of the 1880s Congressmen whom he had arrogantly burlesqued in Allahabad, might one day emulate the Meiji revolution was not merely risible to Kipling but culturally profane. The new constitution, new army and new uniformed railway conductors of which he found the Japanese quietly proud were, so far as Kipling was concerned, lamentable developments in a country that otherwise surpassed the picturesque in an unbroken aesthetic communion with its own history.

It is not difficult to detect here the familiar backhandedness of colonial rule, 'gifting' progress and development in selected quarters while retarding the musculature in other limbs of the body politic. But it must also be appreciated how deeply troubled Kipling was by the need for India to retain her particular, provincial integrity within the imperial world-system. Most significantly, he actually articulated that need in terms of nationhood. For this voyage along the oceanic rim of Asia gave him, for the first time, a perspective on India as a whole, from the outside. India was not only a genuine entity, he perceived, but also the military hub and headquarters of the region. She was, indeed, defined by her tentacular relations with the surrounding Indian Ocean. Her Chettiar traders shipped commodities on the Irrawaddy while her turbaned Sikh constables patrolled the Straits Settlements.[77] Andrew Lycett has noted that Kipling had already, by this stage, become accustomed to 'considering local developments in terms of their consequences for the future of the Empire'. But it was this voyage which impressed him finally with the conviction of British dominion as a vast interconnectivity, a world system in which each member played its integral role. The proven fact of this lay as much in the Chettiar and the Sikh as in the warships he admired at Vancouver, or the shore batteries at Singapore.[78]

This, indeed, was the most noticeable change in outlook to emerge from the long voyage to London. The effigy of Kipling that posterity has handed to us—the sedentary, patriarchal avatar of Empire, the implacable proponent of worldwide dominion and Law—first begins to emerge on this trip, from

[76] Kipling, *From Sea to Sea*, i, 256, 275-6.
[77] Ibid., i, 240.
[78] Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, pp. 239-40; Kipling, *From Sea to Sea*, ii, 58, i, 268.

within a juvenile persona of restless candour and impiety. Previously an upcountry colonial, Kipling now became an imperialist, with his earlier provincial concerns now embedded within a much larger structural blueprint. What originally motivated this imperial mentality was not, however, the proconsular vices of bellicosity and cynical realpolitik that were later imputed to him. Firstly, he realized that he possessed an unprecedented opportunity as an author to attain global reach and influence—something that came at first as a rude shock. In a particularly apposite moment of disorientation, he found he had travelled East only to meet himself coming West—in the form, that is, of American pirate copies of *Plain Tales from the Hills* being hawked from a Yokohama bookstall.[79] Secondly and more importantly, the imperial mindset was for him less a matter of pragmatism, or of ideology, than of certitude: a stabilizing, comprehending influence. Kipling was fond of misquoting Tennyson's 'Ulysses' throughout 1889—'much have I seen, cities and men'. Underlying the combative maturity of these worldly overtures, however, lay a fear of falling into the vertiginous, pathological rootlessness of that quintessential Victorian wanderer.[80] The imperial world-system was a device that could regulate, and turn to a positive emblem, the figure he had already used to imagine an Indian cultural totality (or perhaps, even nationality)—the Wordsworthian peripatetic vagrant. In successive travelogues, and poems like 'The Sestina of the Tramp-Royal', Kipling continued to celebrate vagabondage as a process of serendipitous encounters and moments of recognition. Leaving their mark on both artist and model, these humane *impressions* constitute a nexus of understanding. Understanding the Empire principally not in political but in cultural terms, Kipling would later identify the chief goal of his career in the person of the Australian settler who takes a sympathetic interest in the life of his racial counterpart in British Columbia.[81] Indians were more difficult to incorporate into this Empire of Sensibility, just as Kipling never felt fully comfortable with drawing India into the world economy, or into the federation of self-governing dominions. They enter

[79] Edmonia Hill, 'The Young Kipling', *Atlantic*, CLVII, 4 (April, 1936), 415. Kipling became, subsequently, an indignant but shrewd vendor in the worldwide publishing market.
[80] Kipling, *Letters*, i, 286-8; Kipling, *From Sea to Sea*, i, 217. The actual line is 'Much have I seen and known; cities of men'.
[81] Addressing the Canadian Club, Winnipeg, in 1907. Rudyard Kipling, *A Book of Words* (London, 1928), p.33. More tenuously, in poems like 'The Song of the Cities' and 'The Song of the English', these distant musicians harmonize through the agency of the trade winds.

obliquely, via the familiar personal story of loss and elegy, in the prefatory poem Kipling later composed for his 1907 *Collected Verse*.

> With every shift of every wind
> The homesick memories come,
> From every quarter of mankind
> Where I have made me a home.[82]

As 'Chant-Pagan' would later articulate more fully, the vagrant's path forked in two opposed directions: towards liberation, redemption and the promise of fraternity, and towards a state of baffled, solitary diminishment. As his journey progressed, however, Kipling developed new strategies for balancing his own conflicts and offering to his readers an aesthetic framework for mentally encompassing the world. The first was his conception of a historic Asian continuity underlying imperial suzerainty, binding the continent together culturally and hence justifying the economic network superimposed upon it. Exploring a Japanese temple, his eyes fell upon a wooden relief unmistakably depicting Krishna and Kali, which the bashful monk (again denoted as suspect by 'cheechee' English) passed over with the comment 'I think they are Indian gods, but I do not know why they are here'.[83] The just-surviving fraternity of Asian religion runs through this whole passage, and was a theme that would return with grandeur in a poem composed upon his second visit to Japan in 1892. 'The Buddha at Kamakura' describes gazing on the monumental bronze statue

> Till drowsy eyelids seem to see
> A-flower 'neath her golden *htee*
> The Shwe-Dagon flare easterly
> From Burma to Kamakura.
>
> And down the loaded air there comes
> The thunder of Thibetan drums
> And droned—*"Om mane padme hum's"*
> A world's-width from Kamakura.[84]

The poem meditates on, and seeks to accommodate, the collision of two great vehicles of connectivity: Buddhism and the British Empire. It evinces the possibility that benign British dominion

[82] Kipling, 'The Fires', *Complete Verse*, p.67.
[83] Kipling, *From Sea to Sea*, i, 344.
[84] Kipling, *Complete Verse*, pp.75-6.

actually might help to preserve this linkage, which the American soldiers, tourists and in particular 'beef-fed zealots' (missionaries) he met on the San Francisco steamer are determined to fracture.

The second innovation lay in what might be called the universalizing symbol—a great emblem of sun-drenched Eastern reality that at once confounds knowledge, and yet seems to blur the line between the other and the familiar. The Buddha at Kamakura was later to serve as one of these talismans, but its prototype— the Shwe Dagon pagoda—was to emerge in two remarkable passages from his call at Rangoon.

> The golden dome said: "This is Burma, and it will be quite unlike any land you know about." .... As it stood overlooking it seemed to explain all about Burma—why the boys had gone north and died, why the troopers bustled to and fro, and why the steamers of the Irrawaddy Flotilla lay like black-backed gulls upon the water.

Anticipating some of his great fictional moments, the pagoda elicits a startled reaction not of strangeness but of recognition. If Kipling's vagrants are often, in essence, pilgrims, then like the Lama of *Kim* it is on a sacred riverbank that they wash up at last. It was entirely in keeping with Kipling's unstable imaginative realm, however, that a shift in balance between the objective and subjective could nudge the hyper-real into the surreal. Dining in the Pegu Club on his first night in Burma, he was informed with garrison bluntness of the death of an old schoolmate, Robert Dury, during the campaign upriver. His muddy demise under a redoubt was an image so potent that, according to Kipling's narrative, it provoked one of his extraordinarily vivid nightmares, in which the temple not only dwarfs the British observer, but ravels him up into its all-embracing, indiscernible story.

> All that night I dreamed of interminable staircases ... There was a great golden bell at the top of the stairs, and at the bottom, his face turned to the sky, lay poor old D---- dead at Minhla, and a host of unshaven ragamuffins in khaki were keeping guard over him.[85]

The golden pagoda and bronze Buddha produce the weird, distancing effect that is perhaps best summed up by the sphinxish phrase Kipling used on the Upper Nile, in 1913, to describe a half-abandoned cantonment constructed to serve a half-forgotten war: 'the Riddle of Empire.' Wound up elegiacally with Kipling's own personal mythos, it is a defining element in his contribution to the Romantic poetic. When Coleridge told his audience at the Shakespeare Lectures that the poet must

[85] Kipling, *From Sea to Sea*, i, 219, 229. For Dury's name I am indebted to Pinney (ed.), *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling*, i, 117, n.16.

hover between images, suspending his reader above the level of mere understanding in a state of elated imagination, he was undoubtedly drawing on Burke's distinction between the sublime and the beautiful. 'To see an object distinctly, and to perceive its bounds,' rules Burke, 'is one and the same thing. A clear idea is therefore another name for a little idea.'[86] What might be termed Kipling's Imperial Sublime is the ingenious compromise of a poet whose graphic training, and political ambition, demanded the provision of images: a numinous symbol, blurry-edged but illuminated with mysterious light, and all the subjective sensation elaborated in Wordsworth's ascent of Snowdon re-compressed into a description of Snowdon itself.

A 'masterful image' like the Shwe Dagon encapsulates Kipling's effort to overcome the obstacles to the imperial imagination exposed by 'Chant-Pagan'. It is analogous to what has been called the 'charmed space' he realizes in some of his fictions, in which opposites are reconciled within a landscape pregnant with meanings both personal and cultural.[87] Such an image represents an effort of artistry, intended to hold the local and the global in temporary symbiosis. It is also an element in Kipling's imperial Sensibility, since—like his childhood yearnings—it represents an entirely subjective experience that also holds the potential to constitute a collective sentiment. Lending an increasingly symbolic element to Kipling's 'passionate reverie', this attempt to collapse spaces bears comparison with Yeats's contemporary efforts to interpenetrate his parochial Irish ambit with a global consciousness.

Ireland, India and Empire: Maintaining a Provincial Cosmopolitanism

A useful index for comparing Yeats and Kipling's numinous manner of reconciling cosmopolitan with provincial identities is Theosophy. It is telling to observe Kipling's discursive influence upon an anti-colonial movement that he and his father repeatedly ridiculed. With its transcontinental membership and unabashed splicing of Buddhist, Hindu and Christian philosophy, the Theosophical Society was

[86] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. by J.T. Boulton (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.77.
[87] John McBratney *Imperial Subjects, Imperial Space: Rudyard Kipling's Fiction of the Native-Born* (Columbus, 2002), p.36.

itself a potent product of the new globalization of empire[88], and simultaneously a riposte to its anticipated depredations. Unfurling the broad canvas of the world in a style reminiscent of Kipling was a necessary prologue to expounding the composite doctrine laid out, in its central tract, by the movement's sometime leader—and vocal Indian nationalist—Annie Besant. For the true Theosophist, 'the essence of Religion is this recognition of God everywhere … In the stability of mountains, in the might of crashing billows … in the star-strewn depths of space, in the wide stretchings of deserts, he sees His Immensity.'[89] At its most immanent, the Theosophical temper strains away from text toward panoramic visualization.

Preaching the unity of all faiths and the intermingling of individual consciousnesses, Theosophy was effectively a religious explanation for the economic disorientations of a globalizing world. It was also a programme for utilitarian reform, social uplift, and Victorian self-help in colonial South Asia. Inasmuch as it weds civilizing modernity to the western presence in India, it was a doctrine which, by partaking of the Other, reassured its devotees that they were not at risk of eroding the diversity and particularity of India. As an anticolonial subculture connecting occult radicals in various awakening nations, its adherents in Dublin furnished the young Yeats with his seminal introduction to the mystical. The movement and its submerged networks did not escape the mockery and suspicion of Kipling, and yet the impact esoteric religion made upon Yeats was fundamentally Kiplingesque. Kipling's most persuasive texts (such as *Kim,* in its most meditative and scripturally resonant passages), have a visionary impetus. They sought to facilitate an encounter with what Yeats, in his most influential Indian dialogue, would call 'immeasurable strangeness', illuminated by evanescent flashes of familiarity.[90]

What Yeats hoped to gain from such encounters was perhaps not so different from what Kipling, led by his artistic as well as his political instincts, desired. Sitting at a slight metropolitan remove from Moore's 'last verge', Yeats too stared at first-hand into 'the universal suburb' from the Bohemian

[88] For a detailed explanation of imperial globalization, see Elleke Boehmer, 'The Worlding of the Jingo Poem', *Yearbook of English Studies*, XLI, 2 (2011), 41-57.
[89] Annie Besant, *Theosophy* (London, 1912), p.68. My italics.
[90] "Immeasurable strangeness" was how Yeats described his first impressions of Tagore's poetry. See his 'Introduction' in Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali (Song Offerings)* (London, 1913), p.xvii. The phrase, and relationship, is discussed at length in Elleke Boehmer, *Empire, the National, and the Postcolonial, 1890-1920: Resistance in Interaction* (Oxford, 2002), pp.169-83.

vantage of that most eccentric of suburbs, Bedford Park. His aims for Ireland, likewise, lay not merely in constituting a national culture, but in negotiating a place for that culture within the greater Western (or Eastern) canon. This dual aim was implicit in the Wordsworthian nature of his own career, as a translator of unique localities for a metropolitan audience. Though Yeats's association of deracinating modernity with Empire was considerably more pronounced, there is little evidence to suggest that in the 1890s, or even later, he considered full Irish political sovereignty a practical or even desirable end.[91] For much of his career he most probably expected Home Rule to arrive by constitutional (rather than revolutionary) methods, and for Ireland to remain a self-governing dominion under the Crown. He could not endorse the 'we built the Empire' rhetoric often espoused by Irish Parliamentarians, even after letting his Fenian credentials lapse in his early forties. His resentment of the Empire's materialist, disenchanting erosion of Asian 'purity', moreover, only hardened as the years advanced. Nonetheless, there were potential advantages in remaining attached to Greater Britain, as a type of cultural vehicle. Without access to that fluid, plural global economy of identities, political life may have assumed the provincially entrenched, exclusive, nativist slant that both he and Kipling effectively promoted and yet—especially in their old age—vehemently denounced.[92] What each wanted for his country of birth, within the imperial system, can be suggested by what is morally conferred in a moment of recognition: dignity. The word is used by neither Kipling nor Yeats, but by Yeats's friend and collaborator Lady Gregory. Writing at the end of her life, she repeatedly stated her aim and the aim of her theatrical colleagues as 'to bring dignity to Ireland.'[93] Married to a former Governor of Ceylon, Gregory had travelled to multiple imperial territories through a civil-diplomatic nexus in which her relatives, like many Anglo-Irish families, were thoroughly imbricated. Much of the charm of her Georgian mansion in Galway lay undoubtedly for Yeats not merely in its easeful aristocratic decorum, but in its repository of souvenirs and curios of a whimsical oddness unseen at

[91] R.F. Foster, 'Anglo-Irish literature, Gaelic nationalism and Irish politics in the 1890s' in *Ireland After the Union: Proceedings of the Second Joint Meeting of the Royal Irish Academy and the British Academy, London, 1986* (Oxford, 1989), pp.68-75.

[92] Kipling's too most common targets in this regard were Germany and the United States, the former representing the chauvinistic nationalism into which the latter was always at risk of falling.

[93] For the relationship between recognition and dignity in modern political philosophy, see Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition': an essay* (Princeton, 1992); Lady Augusta Gregory, *Seventy Years: being the Autobiography of Lady Gregory*, ed. Colin Smythe (Gerrards Cross, 1974), p.307.

his grandfather's house (he remembered, in particular, an elephant's foot fashioned into a waste-paper basket).

To vacillate between exclusive and plural conceptions of nationhood, disavowing by turns the narrow-minded provincial and the degenerate cosmopolite—to be in effect, a provincial cosmopolitan—was a confluence of strategies that might be found in many political theorists, both imperialist and anti-imperial, at the end of the nineteenth century. These were not characteristics unique to Kipling and Yeats, though they do suggest much about the reasons behind their mutual echoing. What does mark them out more distinctly from their contemporaries is the numinous, spiritual, symbolic or pseudo-religious quality exemplified by Theosophy. It was a capacious, accommodating, perhaps even evasive means of articulating their aims. Appealing to multiple audiences, it was also a source of influence and authority. The same covert and mystifying language, as already noted, was used to describe the sources of their art (and simultaneously, therefore, the sources of their identity). Kipling, notably, came to attribute moments of inspiration to the wily action of a 'Daemon'. The Blakean term he chose to denote this intuitive instinct, residing on the 'other side of his head', would have seemed much more characteristic of Yeats, who used the word to describe his concept of the anti-self. At a séance in 1912, a spirit named Leo Africanus announced itself as Yeats's 'daimon'. The name, appropriately enough, belonged to an Eastern traveller (specifically a sixteenth-century Moorish diplomat who published a geography of Africa).[94]

All this mysticism, or mystification, offers a clue as to why both Yeats and Kipling's most devoted readers took to their often intensely memorable lines and images as a sort of creed for daily life. In Kipling's case, his worldwide readership assumed the mentality of a club or confraternity who hung on every news-telegram heralding his dramatic fight with pneumonia in 1899. Even more striking in its cosmopolitan import, in 1920 Yeats acquired one his most masterful of emblems of adversity in Portland, Oregon. Approaching him after a lecture, a young Japanese migrant named Junzo Sato presented him with a family heirloom galvanic with noble generations: a five-centuries-old samurai sword. No better anecdote could be given for the universal resonance of a poet who, unlike his

[94] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 464-5.

contemporary, only ever made it halfway to Japan.[95] Invested with both international dynamism and native glamour, clutching some intangible palliative for the world's creeping malaise, Kipling and Yeats were venerated, during their lifetimes, in a manner quite as strange as were the posthumous relics of Shelley or Keats. To conclude, then, by returning to their literary inheritance, how did the Romantic poetic finally warp under the strain of Yeats and Kipling's globalized commitments? How was this process perceived, moreover, by the Irish father who had so ardently cultivated Romantic genius in his sons?

Unnatural Genius: Distorting the Wordsworthian Legacy

It was not until Yeats's thirty-first year, somewhat ahead of our story, that he finally obtained the financial wherewithal to desert the family hearth and set up his own lodgings in the intellectual heart of 'dreadful London'. 18 Woburn Buildings was a threadbare nook tucked behind Tavistock Square, but it was astutely positioned to facilitate its occupant's cosmopolitan mobility—as has often been remarked, Yeats could turn left from the passage and be at work in the British Museum within ten minutes, or turn right for the Dublin boat train from Euston. He sustained this arrangement from 1896 until his daughter's birth, twenty-three years later, necessitated more spacious accommodation. Looking back on that long bachelorhood in December 1917, two months after Yeats's marriage, JBY felt called upon to draw his son's attention rather sharply to the matter of background.

> And what is this background? It is a something on which the verse and the imagery and the thoughts are all embroidered—and this something is found by certain poets through the accident of their birth. They come from India like Tagore, or Anglo-India like Kipling…

For their lack of this 'substance', JBY brought a Victorian's disapproval upon the 'practitioners of free verse' whom he recalled extemporizing at his son's lodgings in the late '90s.[96] This critique of urbane cosmopolites may seem incongruous in a man who, by 1917, had spent ten years refusing to come home from New York (he would remain a professional raconteur there until his death). But we must remember that, as artist and parent, JBY had long abided by the concept of Wordsworthian

[95] Ibid., ii, 167.
[96] Richard J. Finneran and others (eds.), *Letters to W.B. Yeats* (2 vols., London, 1977), ii, 343.

natural genius—inspiration drawn like Antaeus's vigour from the native loam. Despite his disregard for Kipling's 'tinsel and vulgarity', the Anglo-Indian was a recurring example when JBY chose to harp admonishingly on this theme.[97] The Kipling mythos, for him as for so many, was grounded in the idea of a wonder-filled tropical childhood, although it seems he received part of his information from his correspondent's own literary circles. 'William Morris told my son,' he wrote in his incomplete memoir, 'that Kipling when a boy would come home from a day's walk with stories of the day's adventures which were all fiction.' It was, of course, under rather less happy circumstances that the schoolboy Kipling learned to lie, but JBY had spotted that Kipling's India was both very real and also, for that same reason, numinous and revelatory. Minds such as Kipling's and Shakespeare's, he goes on, do 'not cleave to the truth in the common matters of every day' but 'live in phantasy, its falsehood truer than any reality. By such falsehood we get nearer to truth.'[98] His aesthetic views here seem closer to his son's, with one caveat—JBY still upholds the relationship between imagination and the background upon which it feeds. Artists, as Kipling himself was fond of moralizing, do not conjure *ex nihilo*.[99]

Using a painterly comparison that would have pleased Kipling, JBY therefore seems to have associated this earthiness, grounded in childhood scenes, with a capacity for objective and substantial artistic vision. 'Sargent, Kipling and Sarolea give people what they like—a vigorous, brilliant, above all a clear statement of facts,' he had declared in an earlier letter to his son in 1909. 'No poetry or dreams to obscure or impair the sentiment.' This may have stung the poet, especially as it was preceded by the implication that his Pollexfen blood had given him a stoic 'orderliness' but deprived

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[97] He used this phrase in a letter of 1913 to Oliver Elton. See John Butler Yeats, *J.B. Yeats: Letters to his son W.B. Yeats and others, 1869-1922*, ed. Joseph Hone (London, 1983), p.167.

[98] John Butler Yeats, *Early Memories*, p.38. See also John Butler Yeats, *Further Letters of John Butler Yeats, ed.* Lennox Robinson (Dundrum, 1920), p.14: 'In art, background is everything. How much does Kipling owe to his Indian background. Latterly he has discovered Imperialism and English patriotism of which he makes an inspiration; or is it an exploitation?' (to W.B. Yeats, 13 Aug 1916). JBY seems to have been slow to pick up on the idea that Kipling had betrayed his artistic integrity and noble destiny in favour of journalistic politicking, a common jab in the years following the Boer War.

[99] Perhaps because they were such masterful artificers, both Kipling and Yeats were sensitive to the charge that, like their contemporaries in the 'Decadence', they were overly solipsistic and self-deluding, drawing their inspiration from the fancy within instead of the world without. Both sidestepped the question with pseudo-mystical devices, Kipling passing responsibility for the artistic process onto his middleman the Daemon, while Yeats claimed that his images were drawn intuitively from the dumb collective memory of humanity (the *spiritus mundi*).

him of 'high vitality.'[100] However, this was the decade in which Yeats finally overcame the symbolic obscurity and solipsistic illusiveness of his bejewelled 1890s style with new images, whose enhanced definition was due not only to native 'salt' but also conceived, as Marjorie Howes points out, in terms of 'hardness' and 'masculinity.'[101] Perhaps it was this hard-won maturity, then, that emboldened Yeats to retrospectively endorse his father's judgement, including the vague censure of fin-de-siècle callers at Woburn Buildings. Reminiscing, in the early 1920s, on erstwhile peers like Lionel Johnson and Ernest Dowson (whom we shall meet in the next chapter), Yeats somewhat immodestly implies that the reason why the various members of 'The Tragic Generation' failed to attain the poetic heights he had scaled was their lack of a provincial memory harbour. Devoted to an urban Aesthetic existence, and treading the fine ribbon of Paterian prose 'stretched tight through serene air', they lacked the gravity of an Irish (or Indian) storied geography to anchor and steady them in the crosswinds of stormy historical change.[102]

What Yeats's autobiographical narrative—and JBY's critique—fails to accommodate is the degree to which these poets were quite aware of the temporal and spatial disorientation besetting them, and portrayed this condition as either 'tragic' or liberating as they individually saw fit. They were, in fact, harbingers of the modernist fascination with the city as both an inferno of lost souls and a mould-breaking, emancipating space. Their self-consciousness is evidenced by their preoccupation with that same Romantic trope of the rootless wanderer or vagabond that Kipling had used to elegize his own career of persistent culture-shock, but which he had also endeavoured to reconfigure as a positive and expansive attitude. Like his first autobiographical volume *Reveries*, 'The Tragic Generation' sought to justify Yeats's Irishness and thus disguised the passion for transmigrating identities that had, in adolescence, triggered his spiritualist defiance of JBY's Victorian rationalism. Vagabondage was both a degraded and exalted condition for Yeats as well as Kipling in their early decades (their reactionary seniority, for other reasons, would see them entirely discountenance it) and the alternate celebration or

[100] *J.B. Yeats: Letters to his son*, pp.119-20 (I assume JBY is referring to the prolific Belgian historian Charles Saroléa, but Kipling probably would have found a comparison with the famous motorcycle manufacturer equally complimentary).
[101] Marjorie Howes, 'Introduction' in Marjorie Howes and John Kelly (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to W.B. Yeats* (Cambridge, 2006), p.7.
[102] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.235.

denigration of it reflected the balance they carefully maintained between provinciality and cosmopolitanism. JBY's binary reasoning did not tolerate much room for manoeuvre between fidelity to 'background' and 'internationalism ... cold and abstract'—the latter exemplified by the 'bloodless' Rousseau notoriously dropping his unwanted offspring into the foundling basket. Heavily influenced in his twenties by William Blake, it would instead become a central credo of his son that antinomic pairings in fact complement one another. 'Contraries are positive,' he quoted from Blake in his mystical opus *A Vision*. Even the antagonism between England and Ireland was culturally productive.[103]

But perhaps what JBY, always obsessed with the origins of genius, really found disturbing was the sense of something artistically perverse in his son's relationship to 'background'. Yeats's post-mortem on the unfulfilled potential of the Tragic Generation might appear classically Wordsworthian. Indeed, he had begun his critical career praising the 'earth touches' of Ferguson, just as Kipling—then with Ruskin on his mind—claimed to 'hear' a Rajasthani sunset. 'This moment of change can only be felt in the open and in touch with the earth, and once discovered, seems to place the finder in deep accord and fellowship with all things on earth'.[104] The most significant of all their subtle departures from the archetypal Romantic career, moreover, was to contradict the terms of *natural* genius, grounded in childhood memory. For Wordsworth, memory was enough. His first drafts of *The Prelude* celebrate infancy as a visionary period, and with the *Intimations* ode of 1804 he came to uphold the very memories of that period as restorative and fruitful in their own right, helping the adult self to retain the capacity for epiphany. Indeed, memory retrospectively 'half create[s]' these enduringly precious 'spots of time'.[105] As we have seen however, Kipling and Yeats could not be content to linger in the inspirational border-state, 'hovering between images' as Coleridge put it. To address their political objectives, they needed to concretize perception into resonant 'masterful images'. Yeats's ambition for poetry of salt and hardness was explicitly stated, from late 1887

[103] J.B. Yeats, *Early Memories*, p.78; Yeats, *A Vision* (London, 1962), p.72.
[104] Yeats, *Uncollected Prose*, i, 112; Kipling, *From Sea to Sea*, i, 192. With a touch of irreverence, Kipling adds that this relationship to nature has gifted with humane insight his own favourite version of Wordsworth's border-figure, the drunken 'loafer' or European vagrant.
[105] The actual phrase 'spots of time' appears in *Prelude* XII, 208. Wordsworth speaks of what the eye and ear 'perceive' and what they 'half create' in 'Tintern Abbey' (1798). See *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems, 1797-1800*, ed. James Butler and Karen Green (London, 1992), p.119.

onwards, as a struggle to overleap the coils of 'that old snake—revery', the reverie which Wordsworth found sustaining and sufficient.[106] Of the various graphic arts—painting, ceramics, manuscript illumination—to which Kipling liked to refer when articulating his aesthetic credo, his preferred analogy was the stained-glass window. Though it is the product of many craftsmen who labour by their own lights, the universal light of nature transfigures their particular pains and aspirations—'Purfled with iron, traced in dusk and fire'—into a radiant emblem of human endeavour.[107] Experience and emotion remain indispensable, therefore, especially when communal. Nevertheless, the subjection of those Romantic qualities to mind and art became, for Kipling and Yeats, a conscious determination and discipline.

Appropriately, with his insights into how imagination 'half create[s]' what we see and remember, Wordsworth had anticipated them. Composing the early drafts of *The Prelude* in 1799, he realized that the faculty of sight, as he had learned to exercise it during his schooldays, was not just a receptive but a 'plastic power /... a forming hand, at times / Rebellious, acting in a devious mood.' Supplementary to nature, it marks human consciousness as fundamentally distinct and separate from the world—and potentially in disharmony with its surroundings.

> An auxiliar light
> Came from my mind, which on the setting sun
> Bestowed new splendour; the melodious birds,
> The gentle breezes, fountains that ran on
> Murmuring so sweetly in themselves, obeyed
> A like dominion, and the midnight storm
> Grew darker in the presence of my eye:
> Hence my obeisance, my devotion hence,
> And hence my transport.[108]

Wordsworth retreats from the illicit impulse to worship his own creativity over Creation itself. The Miltonic echoes that punctuate these early drafts suggest a comparison with Lucifer, 'rebellious' bearer of 'auxiliar light'. Genius it may be, but an *unnatural* genius, which for the lapsed Pantheist remained effectively immoral. In total contrast, the later Yeats would contrive from his own plastic power a gesture of heroic apotheosis. 'Once out of nature I shall never take / My bodily form from

[106] Yeats, *Collected Letters*, i, 28.
[107] 'Chartres Windows', *Complete Verse*, p.664.
[108] *Prelude* (1850), ii, 362-76.

any natural thing,' he declares in 'Sailing to Byzantium', 'But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make / Of hammered gold and gold enamelling.'[109] This masterpiece of 1927 was, in fact, a triumphant reprisal of those landscapes of fantasy—so contemptuous of the terrestrial—that he had rejected in the early 1900s. Even more telling are the descriptive liberties Yeats took with the South Galway landscape in which several major late poems are embedded. As David Lloyd has observed, by having his readers believe that a subterranean river connected his renovated Norman keep at Ballylee with the nearby estate of Lady Gregory, Yeats snapped the 'symbolic continuity between place and poetic intention' established by Wordsworth. Since Yeats's real objective was the commemoration of his and Gregory's literary legacy, the poem carries out a rhetorical 'arrogation of landscape to allegory'. His was an imaginative attitude determined at every opportunity to set 'another emblem there.'[110]

To revive the dormant nationhood of a colonized people classically requires, as the first step, that its past be perceived as a series of unnatural ruptures and discontinuities imposed by an alien power. The restitching of its historical narrative, therefore, must necessarily be an act of obvious and deliberate artifice.[111] In this respect, Yeats's unabashed subjection of the personal Romantic lyric to his self-mythologizing 'plastic power' is quite consistent with his aims. But where does it leave his ambition to articulate the murmuring voice of an intimate landscape, and the need to justify his status as a *national* poet upon unimpeachably *natural* poetry? Kipling, likewise, increasingly based his reputation as an Indian visionary on the Romantic congruence between landscape and expression, with the urban settings of his earlier stories giving way in time to the iconically pastoral *Kim*. The necessary outcome—and the tendency that perhaps disturbed JBY, who had once commanded his son to write an essay on the line 'to thine own self be true'—is that the mantle of Wordsworthian natural genius becomes a performative role.[112] Self-consciously exotic, Kipling and Yeats rehearsed it with,

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[109] Yeats, *Variorum Poems*, p.408.
[110] Lloyd, *Anomalous States*, p.65.
[111] Ibid., p.89.
[112] 'This above all: to thine own self be true, / And it must follow, as the night the day / Thou canst not then be false to any man' (*Hamlet*, I, 3, 78-81). JBY is quoting the sententious parting advice given to Laertes by his father Polonius, who fails to realize that to retain one's true identity and moral compass it may be necessary—as it is for Hamlet—to practise dissimulation. This was the same occasion on which JBY refused to allow his son to write his homework on the opening lines of *In Memoriam* (see p.49).

by turns, alacrity and reluctance in the literary salons and meeting halls of 1890s London. The next two chapters will bring the thesis to its most closely contextualized phase—the first detailing the single literary milieu within which they now entered and fashioned their reputation, the second examining the formal experiments they undertook in pursuit of their aims in London. If these experiments were inconsistent, then it was of a piece with so many other erratic, warring elements within their art. The rich mythologies they would devise over the coming decade represent, ultimately, an effort to reconcile antinomies on the personal, national, and global scale.

5. Arrival: Negotiating the Literary World of Fin de Siècle London

Writers who established their reputations in the London of the 1890s could be reluctant to own themselves products of a milieu that became, for the succeeding generation, something to mock and disregard. Sanctioned by the gossipy memoirs of its jaded 'survivors', it was easy to repudiate the decade's queer manias and bubble reputations as capricious foibles. When he later came to compete with G.B. Shaw for the dubious honour of 'Last Victorian', however, Yeats told Maurice Bowra that he disliked the experimental era of his ascendance being disparaged. 'The Nineties was in reality a period of very great vigour, thought and passion were breaking free from tradition.'[1] The stereotypes he resented were, in fact, contradictory. The decade was guyed both as the indolent *roué* dissipating on a divan, and as the ecstatic disciple—mystic or political—energetically proselytizing for Theosophy, suffrage, socialism, vegetarianism or any number of heretical creeds. Though it is misleading to speak of the mood or temper of the Nineties, this incongruity offers us a useful paradigm for thinking about the decade. Its minds beset alternately by *weltschmerz* and zealotry, the fin de siècle's discourses oscillated between thorough cynicism and thoroughgoing earnestness.

Newly arrived in London, Kipling and Yeats exhibited both tendencies. Such polarities in the cultural field often seem to hold the two contemporaries at opposite extremes. As this chapter shall explore however, by engaging with them they were also brought into proximity. Above all, both poets felt themselves in the vanguard approaching some wholesale overhaul—social and political, they hoped, as well as literary. A onetime contributor to *The Yellow Book*, the suffragist Evelyn Sharp recalled the short-lived periodical's heyday as a literary scene within which every aspiring writer was hoping to ride 'on the crest of the wave that was sweeping away the Victorian tradition.'[2] If the poets of the Nineties were breaking free from conventions and canons, however, they were also suffering their withdrawal. It was a period without an acknowledged laureate or legislator. Browning died in 1889, Tennyson three years later—supplanted, in a jobbing farce from which both Kipling and Yeats

[1] C.M. Bowra, *Memories, 1898-1939* (London, 1966), p.241.
[2] Beckson, *London in the 1890s*, p.xviii.

stood wisely aloof, by the mediocre Alfred Austin. The two young poets were, nonetheless, opportunists in this neologistic turmoil. They fulfilled the clamour for novelty and sensation in an oversaturated market ('Who will show us some new thing?', began one of the first reviews of *Plain Tales from the Hills*), and furnished a self-consciously fatigued poetic with bold rhythms and diction. They also provided—a craving characteristic of the decade—focussed impressions of intense experience and, for all the difference in their approaches, the pursuit of this quality brought their aesthetic practices into parallel.[3] Aggregated into an imagined world, moreover, their striking foreign imagery amounted to more than mere stimulation of the literary metropole: they aspired to engulf and transform it. Their early twenties had been spent constructing a cultural framework, in Ireland and India respectively, into which their work might be embedded. Now, this provincial project was to be extended and made to initiate a new trend in the metropolitan canon.

As they established themselves in London, they gained shared friends and an influential patron. Reviewers praised and denigrated them in the same critical terms, and regarded them as separate symptoms of broader new trends. The following sections will identify various loci for comparison within the literary world. Firstly, however, it is necessary to consider how they effected their entry into this world. As the conclusion of the previous chapter suggested, in the promotion of their respective aims, *who* the two poets were was as significant as *what* they wrote. Yeats the bard of a culturally reinvigorated Ireland, and Kipling the music hall minstrel of the Anglo-Saxon nations and their hoped-for world dominion, were roles assumed in these years through their negotiation of the metropole. The aspiration of such comparatively marginal figures to capture the literary centre was predicated on a lateral entry. They jumped sideways into a stratified milieu, both geographically speaking and—as 'unnatural geniuses'—from their own eccentric branch of the Romantic lineage. Indeed, this presumption was ultimately why Kipling and Yeats found themselves so often personally caricatured by the satirists of Nineties pretension: because they had so diligently projected their own image, in pursuit of an indirect and unofficial laureateship.

Acting the Part: Literary Celebrity and Persona

[3] Green (ed.), *Kipling: the Critical Heritage*, p.47.

> A poet ... is never the bundle of accident and incoherence that sits down to breakfast; he has been reborn as an idea, something intended, complete.
>
> Yeats, 'A General Introduction to my Work'[4]

It was a measure of success for Yeats to arrive preceded by his reputation. This was particularly true when arriving at an Irish country estate. The novelist Martin Ross was not disappointed at their introduction in 1901, describing him in characteristically saturnine vein to her cousin and collaborator Edith Somerville. Incoherent and accident-prone he may at times have been, but he had nonetheless surpassed her preconception:

> Yeats looks just what I expected. A cross between a Dominie Sampson and a starved R.C. curate—in seedy black clothes—with a large black bow at the root of his long naked throat. He is egregiously the poet—mutters ends of verse to himself with a wild eye, bows over your hand in dark silence—but poet he *is.*[5]

Gradually refined in the intervening decade since his return to London in 1887, this eccentric appearance rarely failed to attract comment—least of all from those who knew already 'just what' to expect. Whether or not Yeats intended it from the beginning, the reviewers and engravers of the literary periodicals had ensured that his mannerisms, faraway gaze and threadbare Byronic dress became integral to the actual poems printed alongside his portraits. Indeed, for his ardent followers image may actually have preceded word. One of his lasting friends, the painter William Rothenstein, first came to know of him upon meeting the decade's consummate hack, Richard Le Gallienne, in 1893. Wearing the velvet jacket, slouch hat and other Wildean accessories that never succeeded in lifting his own reputation above that of versifier, Le Gallienne produced a photograph of Yeats 'of which he nervously asked what I thought.'[6]

Like several members of Yeats's broad circle in London, Le Gallienne was compensating for an unpolished background that was not nearly as interesting as his name suggested. 'Their provincialism was curable, mine incurable,' Yeats would later complain, but in reality his Irishness gave him the same promotional edge over his English contemporaries with which Kipling's Indian background

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[4] Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, p.509.
[5] Edith Somerville and Martin Ross, *The Selected Letters of Somerville and Ross*, ed. Gifford Lewis (London, 1989), p.252.
[6] William Rothenstein, *Men and Memories: Recollections of William Rothenstein* (2 vols., London, 1931-2), i, 132.

armed him.[7] Whereas Le Gallienne lived down his Liverpudlian roots, Yeats was placed to elaborate his own provincial identity and project it onto the metropolitan scene. Rejoicing to find his famed quirks confirmed in the flesh, raconteurs and pressmen were swift to class them as characteristically Irish, or rather Celtic. Melancholic, nostalgic, spiritual, associated by Matthew Arnold with intemperate creativity and the second-sight, the Celtic was not a cultural trend invented by its eponymous Revival, but rather a pre-established current within the 'neo-remantic' mood pervading London that Yeats first detected in 1887. As a poetic mode, it could serve as vehicle for the anti-modern sentiments of an Anglicized Frenchman like Victor Plarr, and it was also a personal posture which Lionel Johnson—a Catholic convert with distant Irish ancestry—could rehearse. Both men, along with Le Gallienne, were associated with Yeats through the Rhymers' Club, an informal group whose meetings at an antique tavern in the Strand were often described as being 'Celtic' in tone, even when not particularly Irish in person. Nor did this carry any controversial political connotations in the late 1880s—the most optimistic stage of the so-called 'Union of Hearts' between the Irish Parliamentary Party and its Liberal partners in government. The fashionable current even sucked in Kipling via the hero of his *Soldiers Three* series, the redoubtable trooper Mulvaney. If Lockwood Kipling had once draped a Celtic aura around his son's precocity, some columnists now actually attributed his artistic intuition to Irish blood.[8]

To inhabit this role demanded agility of Yeats, and on occasion a thick skin. He had to wield the Celtic discourse without becoming hostage to its well-worn tropes and types, ripe for pastiche. Ever adaptable, he was able to play the Irish genius without being *stagey*, baffling his interpreters with other, often contradictory, qualities: parsimony, gossiping, love of argument, and a disconcerting seriousness (especially on occult matters) lightened by abrupt flourishes of epigram. As Celtic glimmer became progressively glamour, however, it was inevitable that the most acerbically penetrating of these anecdotal sketches would bear the signature of his Anglo-Irish contemporaries,

[7] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.148.

[8] A review of 'Irish Fiction' in the *Daily Graphic*, 5 Oct 1891, remarked cryptically on Kipling's 'Irish blood'. See also p.213. Mulvaney's worldly-wise idiom and stagey antics were by no means alien to Yeats's oeuvre at this stage. He would continue to write 'Oirish' dialect in short fiction like 'The Book of the Great Dhoul and Hanrahan the Red' until 1893. Mulvaney's fictional forebears, moreover, are shrewd peasants and rakish duellists from the stories by Carleton, Crofton Croker and Charles Lever that Yeats anthologized in the regrettably-named *Representative Irish Tales* (1890).

especially those perched higher up the Ascendancy ladder. Martin Ross put her finger perspicaciously on Yeats's *genteel* poverty, alluding to the two professions—cleric and schoolmaster—to which absence of talent might have doomed him. More expertly barbed was the portrait left by George Moore in his autobiography *Hail and Farewell*. A Mayo landlord who had befriended Zola and Manet in Paris, Moore's reputation for naturalist novels made him an unlikely collaborator in Celtic revivalist activities. He later revenged Yeats's drawing him into this aberration by portraying the poet as a bumptious parvenu. 'A man of such excessive appearance', Moore reasoned, recalling the black cape and sombrero rapidly stalking the dress circle of a West End theatre in 1894, could only be 'advertising himself by his apparel, as the Irish middle classes do when they come to London bent on literature.'[9]

Hail and Farewell was published in the early 1910s, when the fashion for debunking the Nineties as a decade of frivolous promiscuity and affectation was at its zenith. Poses that may have appeared spontaneously provocative and immodest, however, were often carefully orchestrated. It was, in effect, the decade that invented literary celebrity. Publishers advertised their wares in the print marketplace on the basis not just of a name, or even a portrait, but of a personality. An interest in the biography of living authors that had originally cut its teeth on bearish vignettes of Tennyson and Carlyle was now applying itself, modishly, to an upcoming generation. A lingering Romanticism characterized this elevation of the authorial personality. Preoccupied with 'genius'—and speculating on its childhood provenance—it betrays what was in effect a public demand for authors to demonstrate their difference from ordinary mortals, and flaunt the eccentric trappings of a virtuoso. It was an entrepreneurial atmosphere which old-fashioned dispensers of literary patronage, such as Edmund Gosse, resentfully accused of privileging personal legend over actual literary merit. Nowadays, he wrote, significantly in an article on the death of Tennyson, an 'interesting or picturesque figure, if identified with poetry, may attract an amount of attention and admiration which is spurious as regards the poetry, and of no real significance.'[10]

[9] George Moore, *Hail and Farewell: Ave, Salve, Vale*, ed. by Richard Cave (Gerrards Cross, 1976), pp.78-82.
[10] Edmund Gosse, 'Tennyson', *New Review*, VII, 42, (November, 1892), 516.

Though frequently associated by his lampooners with dreamy absent-mindedness, Yeats's wardrobe and behaviour demonstrated an ambitious and nuanced understanding of his metropolitan environment (an understanding, as I will demonstrate, by no means foreign to Kipling).[11] The 1890s was also an era of expanding readerships and consequent commercialization. For their part, authors needed the validation of reviewers to enhance their altitude on an increasingly crowded Parnassus. Observers who remarked that Yeats 'looks the poet' were implicitly distinguishing him from the lowbrow, mercenary strata of potboiling populists. Moreover, a career like Wilde's—at his height of success in the early Nineties—demonstrated that puffed, youthful genius had not only captured some of the lustrous authority that belonged to the now swift-departing race of Victorian sages. It also expressed something of the heterodox spirit of individualism—both liberating and alienating—that had entered contemporary society. When identity is self-authored and consciously acted on the public stage, dissimulation becomes natural and personality itself is consumed by readers and theatregoers. Yeats 'is one of the two or three absolutely poetic personalities in literature at the present moment', announced one loyal log-roller in the preface to an anthology titled *Lyra Celtica*.[12] The attainment of authority through performance would, as we shall see, become an enduring and problematic theme in his career.

The 'Celtic' posture undoubtedly augmented Yeats's heroic singularity. Furthermore, Irish projects and cultural integrity formed an anchor which held him back—as he later saw it—from the dandiacal excess of the alienated savant or *poète maudit* of the fin de siècle. His sense of self-division, accentuated by occult studies, aided his understanding of the 'masks' through which the isolated psyche projects itself in the world (*Dramatis Personae*, Yeats's title for the 1896-1902 section of his memoirs, alluded to more than his theatrical activities). It also enabled him to avoid the rhetoric and affectation that were beginning to be touted as literary symptoms of the wider civilizational malaise. Writing a study of Browning at the end of the 1890s, G.K. Chesterton turned aside from the chief exponent of the dramatic monologue to pass comment on the tendency among contemporary poets to betray themselves into self-parody through their impulse to *perform*. 'Swinburne, for example, when

[11] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 110.
[12] Elizabeth A. Sharp and William Sharp (eds.), *Lyra Celtica: an Anthology of Representative Celtic Poetry* (Edinburgh, 1896), p.399.

he wrote the couplet—"From the lilies and languors of virtue / To the raptures and roses of vice," wrote what is nothing but a bad imitation of himself,' as though trapped by the necessity of sounding Swinburnian.

> Or again, Mr. Rudyard Kipling when he wrote the line—"Or ride with the reckless seraphim on the rim of a red-maned star," was caricaturing himself in the harshest and least sympathetic spirit of American humour. This tendency is, of course, the result of the self-consciousness and theatricality of modern life in which each of us is forced to conceive ourselves as part of a *dramatis personae* and act perpetually in character.'[13]

The histrionic elegy for his brother-in-law to which Chesterton refers furnished proof, for hostile critics, that Kipling lacked the sensitivity and restraint of a lyric poet. Betraying the idealistic streak beneath the cynical, abrasive tone that characterized his satirical first volume (*Departmental Ditties*) it also indicated his own developing intent to precipitate a renovation in English letters, both through compelling foreign subject matter and a matching authorial enigma. Intimidated by celebrity (he remembered how headlines announcing his wedding in 1892 made him feel 'defenceless'), Kipling's exploration of his own masks at this time emerges most potently in the chalk self-portraits he doodled in Villiers St. Dressed in oriental tunic and cummerbund, with slender fingers and sly, arching eyebrows, one is labelled 'The Climber.'[14] If less personally demonstrative, he was no less ambitious, and motivated even more than Yeats by a combative antipathy to London. Thus Kipling, too, consciously reaped the advantages of having his figure and personality associated with his writing. A blue serge suit buttoned at the collar soon became his own trademark outfit, suggesting workmanlike sobriety and a vague easternness. The latter was indulged more humorously, in private, through a Japanese dressing-gown, monkey-skin slippers and Egyptian fez.[15] An understated exoticism—helped, in Yeats's case also, by a swarthy complexion—characterized the bookplate and magazine portraits so essential at this time to establishing a widespread reputation.[16] In 1891 Horace Traubel, companion of Walt Whitman in his last years, noted in his diary the impression made on the aged poet

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[13] G.K. Chesterton, *Robert Browning* (London, 1906), p.142. For the poem to which Chesterton refers, the 'Dedication' from *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892), see *Complete Verse*, p.68.

[14] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.55. The sketches are reproduced in *Writings on Writing*, fig.1.

[15] Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.253.

[16] One of Yeats's first interviews, a deft piece of log-rolling by Tynan, dwells on his ruddiness. 'He is very tall and very slender; so dark, that he was once taken for a Hindu by a Hindu'. Appropriately (if true), this would presumably have been Mohini Chatterjee or another Theosophist. 'He must have been a beautiful boy,' she adds, 'full of rich Eastern colour.' Katharine Tynan, 'William Butler Yeats', *The Sketch*, IV, 44 (29 November, 1893), 256.

by a onetime admirer newly fêted by the American press. '5.40 P.M. W. reading papers... Had he seen Kipling's portrait in Century? "Yes, and it seemed to me the face *not* of an Englishman... It is undoubtedly a strange face—a *stranger* face. Do you know, Horace, I think this fellow must amount to *some*thing. There is every indication of power—of a something there—though *what* I don't know.'[17]

Aesthetic Power: Negotiating Aestheticism, 'Decadence' and Masculinity

Portraits capturing a far-sighted gaze attuned to broader, foreign horizons were certainly conducive to weaving a mystique of genius, especially if the visionary capacity it suggested was registered in terms of 'plastic' force of inspiration. This was a common trope in Kipling's first wave of reviews, from the strident Mrs Oliphant ('the most powerful of our young writers') to the blessing of the departing Laureate ('the only one of them with the divine fire').[18] This peculiarly forceful tone, and the implications it carried, emerged from a nexus of contemporary trends which Yeats also would have to deftly negotiate. Tennyson's rather pessimistic view highlights two prevailing discourses which were of concern to both young poets lately arrived in London: 'power' was a valuable attribute for exotic birds anxious not to be limed with the epithets 'decadent' or 'aesthete.' Kipling's association with martial *virtus* inevitably made him the more enticing target for wags hunting up new copy in the tireless debate over literature's public role. 'In a photograph, Mr Kipling looks sturdily and strongly built,' noted the gossip magazine *M.A.P.* in 1904, 'whereas in reality he just escapes being puny.'[19] The middlebrow bogey of 'the Decadence' obscured the complex permutations of these discourses over the breadth of literary London, which required careful negotiation by newcomers. Firstly, despite their artistic acquaintance with the Aesthetic movement neither poet could tolerate being perceived by their home audiences as an ineffectual and self-serving dilettante. This was especially the case with

[17] Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (9 vols., Boston, 1906-1996), ix, 9. Whitman was not the only American to be arrested by Kipling's indeterminate pedigree. His future wife, Caroline Balestier, described her suitor as 'refreshingly unEnglish' (Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.311).
[18] Margaret Oliphant, *The Ways of Life* (London, 1897), pp.1-20. Oliphant based her judgment on Kipling's 'manful perception of life as something more than love-making.' In a letter to Kipling of 1909, the Irish composer Charles Villiers Stanford recalled Tennyson making this remark 'in 1890' (Sussex 18/1). Kipling visited Tennyson at Aldworth in August 1890.
[19] Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.354.

Yeats. Probably no book more thoroughly shaped the impressionistic savour of Yeats's prose style than Pater's novel *Marius the Epicurean*—all the more reason, as Stephen Regan has noted, to exploit his first 'Celt in London' column for the *Boston Pilot* to debunk the book, and the doctrine of *l'art pour l'art*, with a volley of neo-Fenian rhetoric.[20] Yeats would repeatedly seek to secure moderate opinion for his Irish schemes by insisting on the essential bond between national 'background' and artistic conviction (an important word for both poets), sometimes resorting to caricature almost as ribald as Kipling's sketches of long-haired 'aesthetes' for the Indian papers.

Contrarian sallies of the 'Celt in London' kind were not entirely disingenuous. The side of Yeats tirelessly pursuing Irish cultural renaissance could not agree with Pater's insistence that the artistic experience was incommunicable and unsocial, serving no end beyond individual joy and sorrow. At the same time he could not countenance its direct opposite. If it was Théophile Gautier that originally set the Aesthetic cat among England's art historians, it was the French anthropological school of Émile Durkheim that, at the end of the century, summed up the wider social dimensions into which that debate had extended. Opposing morality—the domain of action—against art's concern with the unreal, Durkheim ruled that 'an exaggeratedly aesthetic culture, by turning us away from the real world, would relax the springs of moral action.' Furthermore, applying a classic Platonic argument, Durkheim concluded that art's most erosive tactic was to choose morality itself as its subject. By portraying lofty images of moral inspiration, art could betray us into a life of delusive ideals—thinking ourselves charitable because we had pitied Poor Tom, before hopping over beggars at the theatre door.[21]

Such arguments were familiar to Yeats from his father's strictures ('ideals make the blood thin') and conviction—the criterion he shared with Kipling—was subtly different from JBY's 'sincerity'.[22] Although it was also a standard of integrity, the former rendered the artist answerable only to himself,

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[20] Stephen Regan, 'W.B. Yeats and Irish Cultural Politics' in Sally Ledger & Scott McCracken (eds.), *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge, 1995), p.70.

[21] Anthony Giddens (ed.), *Emile Durkheim: Selected Writings* (Cambridge, 1972), pp.110-111.

[22] Sincerity, increasingly, became a term with which Yeats praised or patronized only lesser poets amidst the Celtic fringe (see, for example, p.193). An article written in October 1892, 'Hopes and Fears for Irish Literature', exhibits Yeats drawing on JBY's lessons in Shakespearian soliloquy while also moving away from his father's terminology. Literature should be 'the garment of noble emotion', but by harnessing the *collective* drama of the nation Irish writers can create a new literature 'massive with conviction and profound with reverie' (*Uncollected Prose*, i, 249-50).

and reserved for him the prerogative to re-fashion his society not via objective critique (Arnold's 'criticism of life') but by the transcendent power of imagination. In this respect, metropolitan Aestheticism could be as useful an ally in Irish affairs as it was a convenient straw man. It shared with Yeats a common enemy in philistine, utilitarian, materialist England.[23] Its Arts and Crafts manifestation offered the revival of traditional industries, packaged in a congenial medievalism, while the premium set on individual genius by its Paterian strand enabled Yeats to reject the patriotic bluster of Thomas Davis and fellow mid-century poets. As he began to lock horns with Irish literature's elder statesmen, he realized that the overbearing hegemony of the Young Ireland generation would otherwise have forbade him from addressing political goals with lyric poetry.

The retrospective sentiment of Arts and Crafts surrounded him in Bedford Park, the oddball garden suburb known somewhat pretentiously to its community of academics and unfashionable artists as 'the village', or 'the colony'. Popular with military pensioners, Bedford Park fitted congenially with JBY's straitened income bracket, but as Ian Fletcher has observed it was also slightly out of step with prevailing trends, culturally as well as geographically marginal to London, and consciously old-fashioned.[24] The predominant decor was no longer 'peacock blue' and Pre-Raphaelite, as Yeats remembered from the family's first residence there. In its place, the cooperative shop, printing presses and handloom weaving all testified to the influence of William Morris, whom Yeats had originally encounted in Dublin at the Contemporary Club. In nearby Hammersmith, Morris was at work on *A Dream of John Ball* and hosted socialist lectures and debates around a stout oak table, in a room hung with Rossettis. Yeats soon cut short his visits to these political fora (his insistence that social change must be achieved through religion was scoffed at by a sceptical workingman), but his admiration for the self-styled 'idle singer of an empty day' was undimmed.[25] With his oratorical grandeur and authoritative command of a vast heroic world of saga, Morris represented sacred anger against the age taking its solace in an unfailing, composite historical vision. Yeats's visits to Wilde's home in

[23] Regan, 'W.B. Yeats and Irish Cultural Politics', p.72.
[24] Ian Fletcher, 'Bedford Park: Aesthete's Elysium' in Ian Fletcher (ed.), *Romantic Mythologies* (London, 1967), p.181.
[25] Philip Henderson, *William Morris: His Life, Work and Friends* (London, 1967), p.302. The self-description is from the prelude of Morris's *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-70), a loose cycle of poems themed around a chivalric quest for everlasting life.

Chelsea, decorated entirely in white, would reveal the more vogueish and fastidious, Paterian side of Aestheticism, pursuing a more deliberately modern and urbane search for the fleeting and impressionistic. With its antiquarian fancy dress-parties and Greek-costumed amateur theatricals, Bedford Park was shabby and donnish in contrast. Its artificial whimsy grated by his early thirties, but the broader mood of Morrisite nostalgia continued to accord with Yeats's sensibility and channel one current of his catholic taste.

It also accorded with Yeats's continued perception of the 'heathen' city (as Kipling insisted on describing it) as an exhausted culture. Aestheticism was a movement with a complex but discernible trajectory. By contrast, 'decadence' was a vague, multifarious concept that had no schools or adherents and yet infiltrated discussion everywhere. As we saw in the last chapter, however, it was a useful stalking horse for migrant poets proposing to reverse the contagious fatigue which Yeats termed in one essay 'the slow dying of men's hearts that we call the progress of the world.'[26] The onset of decadence implied the decline and fall of a complacent empire—something that lodged early in Kipling's fatalistic mindset, and would later inform Yeats's mordant analysis of human history, but which for both poets at this stage signified an opportunity. In regard to their personal posture and celebrity, it was something to be (at least superficially) repudiated. But it was also, potentially, a tactical trump. In *Degeneration* (1892), Max Nordau had identified eccentric individuality as a symptom of English cultural dissipation, citing, among other perpetrators, Kipling's uncle Edward Burne-Jones. As Shearer West points out, the stylized, ritual lifestyle essayed by Whistler, Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley constituted 'a sartorial battle with "philistine" society', and hence a controversial, confrontational stance to the public.[27] Earnestly cynical, this was a form of serious play that increasingly appealed to Yeats, who after meeting Verlaine in Paris in 1895 (and reading Nordau's cranky but faddishly influential tract a year later) would add, to the mounting attributes of genius, a flouting of conventional morality. More secure in his reputation by the mid-90s, he delighted in scandalizing his more priggish Dublin acquaintances through his association with the *Savoy* magazine

[26] Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, p.162.
[27] Shearer West, 'The Visual Arts' in Gail Marshall (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge, 2007), p.150.

(though his disdain for its grubby pornographic backer, Leonard Smithers, was if anything increased).[28]

Decadence was an obsessive concept but never a banner. It was applied only negatively, an epithet at the service of all parties. The *Savoy's* inaugural editorial proclaimed that 'we' are not Decadents—it was rather London's middlebrow publishing world, the exclusive tone implied, that was in the throes of degeneration. As much as Yeats could stake his claim, therefore, on the rejuvenative iconoclasm whose advent the prevailing atmosphere seemed to demand, he also needed to avoid justifying the obverse, morose expectation that his inspirational 'power' would shortly burn out. 'But he is very young, will probably break up,' Whitman had added as he mulled over Kipling's portrait with Horace Traubel. 'The precocious, early fellows can't, as a rule, stand the racket.' Ever inclined in this decade to herald the premature onset of arthritis in the latest nimble talent, the critical press obliged authors to affirm that their art was based on a surer fount of inspiration than solipsistic fancy.[29] If Peter Keating (as cited in the last chapter), finds Kipling's cod-Rossetti juvenilia comparable to Ernest Dowson and early Yeats, Yeats firmly differentiated himself from his fellow-Rhymer in a memoir written, conveniently, long after Dowson had met the premature demise to which *The Tragic Generation* was unfortunately prone. 'I understood him too well, for I had been like him but for the appetite that made me search out strong condiments.' Yeats is referring both to Irish inspirants—cultural and political—but also to occult studies. As priestly orders on the Masonic pattern came to supersede his Theosophical commitments, visionary hierophants would increasingly exemplify the 'power' and influence available to magnetic personalities. He remembered the conspiratorial eccentric and would-be Highland clansman Macgregor Mathers, who introduced him to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1890, as 'one of those who incite—less by spoken word than by what they are—imaginative action.'[30]

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[28] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 155.

[29] This glum pattern of poetic decadence was repeatedly predicted to snuff out Kipling's incipient stardom. 'I was always afraid that Kipling would go up like a rocket and come down like a stick', wrote the art critic J.A. Symonds to Edmund Gosse barely a year after Kipling's arrival in London. A sympathetic recipient of Kipling's own complaints about the capital (see p.92), Symonds characteristically attributes his degeneration to its unhealthy influence: 'probably his milieu is not a metropolis'. Phyllis Grosskurth, *John Addington Symonds: a Biography* (London, 1964), p.307.

[30] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, pp.,241, 160.

Voiced in the mid-90s through Havelock Ellis's essays on Nietzsche, masculine vitalism was an emerging trend in thought that would continue to mutate over the coming decades. Yeats was percipient enough to understand the self-destructive impetus that lay behind its appeal. A preoccupation with manful authority, however, continued to characterize self-admonitions to harden his verse and 'hammer' his thoughts (and, by extension, Irish culture) 'into unity'. At twenty-two he considered sleeping upon a board, but the impulse also manifested itself more prosaically.[31] In November 1894 he advised his first lover, Olivia Shakespear, that she could 'treble the solidity' of her novels by making male characters 'salient, marked, dominant'. In the same month he thanked an American spiritualist for sending him the Whitmanesque *Songs from Vagabondia* ('strong athletic open-air verse touched here & there with a more brooding spirit').[32] Putting words into practice four months later, he set about mastering a childhood hobby. To the sister of his host Douglas Hyde, translator and founder of the Gaelic League, fly-fishing appeared amusingly mismatched with Yeats's maladroit and—as women often saw him—delicate urbanity (his hook caught the ear of an unfortunate clergyman).[33] Nevertheless, it suited his aims by providing a gentlemanly, and yet peasant-like, pursuit for his periodic retreats in western Ireland. In Kipling's self-image the fishing-rod had already counterpoised the pen, and he who had been the most bookish of schoolboys flippantly proffered it to a mutual friend in 1890 as an antidote to their lettered squabbles: 'literature is a weariness of the flesh—all books are wicked and the only real thing in the world is a four pound bass coming up with the tide at the mouth of the Torridge.'[34] Not significant in itself, such habits nonetheless indicate shared concerns in Yeats and Kipling's strategies of self-presentation. Manhood, and the value of action, would persist in the former's thinking as much as the latter's. Likewise, Yeats's Aesthetic concerns would embroil Kipling in different, but equally essential ways.

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[31] Ibid., p.279.

[32] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 415, 405. Kipling met William Bliss Carman, joint-author of *Songs from Vagabondia*, the following year in Washington D.C. Whereas *Lyra Celtica* (see p.31, n.12) would list Carman among its 'Celtic Fringe', Kipling's approval was ironically secured by the knowledge that the New Yorker was actually among a 'band of new singers' hailing from Canada, the dominion that Kipling had begun to regard as America without its drawbacks (such as Tammany Fenians). Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 361.

[33] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 150.

[34] Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 8. The Torridge ran close to the United Services College. The mutual friend was W.E. Henley, and 'all books are wicked' anticipates the oncoming spat concerning Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray* (see p.197).

Caricature, another mode of publicity wielded with mastery in the Nineties, has given us a gratifying but foreshortened image of Kipling. The diminutive, hopping bulldog created by Max Beerbohm cemented itself ever faster in the public consciousness as, through incautious outbursts, the older man appeared to live up to its grizzled hysteria. Kipling's actual, often highly defensive, posturing, needs to be seen less as a counter-reaction to metropolitan fashions and preoccupations than as the product and embodiment of them. Whereas his association with duty, restraint and 'the Law' was established in the latter half of the Nineties, his early celebrity was reputed for provocative irreverence, animal passion and the amoral pursuit of experience. In 1891 he lampooned his clubland peers in 'Tomlinson', the ballad of an epicene Don Juan whose debaucheries, like his opinions, are entirely second-hand, and who is denied entry to hell when the Devil realizes his confession of adultery was conned out a bad novel: '"Have ye sinned one sin for the pride o' the eye or the sinful lust of the flesh?"'[35] By contrast, Beerbohm's jutting-jawed sphinx, sometimes puritanically earnest, did not appear until 1896, and only his first outing 'on the blasted 'eath' with a blowsy Britannia in tow gives a sense of the cynical abandon and hedonism through which many understood Kipling's advocacy of 'strong men'. This was by no means palatable to some who would later be clubbed with Kipling within the category 'adventure writers'—a priggish young John Buchan, for example, attributed the glut of 'openly vicious' fiction, in which young men gain knowledge of life by slumming it amidst 'dirt and evil', to the Kipling craze.[36] More suggestively, Evelyn Waugh later referred to Kipling as 'that great laureate of the decadence', and recent attempts have been made to contextualize his celebrity within that prevailing discourse, principally drawing on a discerning analysis published by the short-lived critic Dixon Scott in 1912.[37] Contradicting the notion that Kipling arrived as a bolt from the oriental blue, Scott instead argued that the literary mood was primed for the arrival of a sneering young author, whose favourite word was 'seedy' and whose characters played tennis with the seventh commandment. 'The little sun-baked books from Allahabad seemed if anything,' to Scott,

[35] Kipling, *Complete Verse*, p.289. Compare Yeats's contempt for the mob of 'eunuchs' who rail with envious spleen at 'great Juan riding by' in 'On those that hated *The Playboy of the Western World* , 1907' (Yeats, *Variorum Poems*, p.294).
[36] John Buchan, 'Nonconformity in Literature', *Glasgow Herald*, 2 Nov 1895.
[37] I am indebted for these insights to Jad Adams, 'Decadent or Hearty?: Kipling's Dilemma' (paper given to members of School of Advanced Study, 11 Apr 2007). For Waugh's remark, see 'Let us Return to the Nineties, but not to Oscar Wilde', *Harper's Bazaar*, III, 2 (November, 1930), 51.

'more golden than *The Yellow Book*'. Kipling's compressed, highly artificial stories, glittering like false gems, contained the right mixture of exotic 'raw sensation', squalor, opium and the grotesque ('bizarrerie of the best') to persuade London's bookmen that they were witnessing 'the last delicious insolence of aesthetics.'[38]

Scott's only oversight is to assume that RK was a somewhat combative ingénu whirled along by all this rage of fashion. On the contrary, he had the confidence to manipulate prevailing discourses to suit his purposes, and to add garish tints to what was then still—Yeats used the word to describe his own mercurial impulses—a chameleonic celebrity. Neither were his prejudices as exclusive as might be supposed. Though initially suspicious of the lean, foppish, cravat-wearing Wolcott Balestier, the pushy American publisher's agent soon became one of his very few intimate companions. They collaborated on a novel, *The Naulahka*, in 1891. When Balestier's frail constitution gave out later that year, Kipling cut short his final visit to India and, rushing back to London in turmoil, married his friend's sister Carrie. That Balestier was such a metropolitan creature, a man who despised the western states and travelled to Colorado only to mine local colour for his mawkish novels, makes their friendship all the less likely.[39] Yet Kipling was probably drawn to the same restless ambition and taut energy that others found so irksome (Edmund Gosse termed him 'a queer, strained little type of strenuous Yankee'[40]). Eight months after parodically elegizing Tomlinson, he betrayed his laconic poise by penning the apotheosis that Chesterton found so hyperbolic. The Scottish poet John Davidson who, inspired partly by Kipling, had replaced Christianity with a religion of radical politics and heroic action, might have given Balestier the same reluctant approbation that he conceded to Yeats. Despite their prickly relations at the Rhymers' Club, Yeats claimed that the decade's most intense exponent of masculine vitalism once told him, gripping his hand, that he had 'blood and guts.'[41]

Angered by press gossip, Kipling later would strive to keep the racier shades of his reputation under a lid. In 1897 Eric Robertson, a clergyman who had known Kipling in Lahore, let slip that 'the two

[38] Green (ed.), *Kipling: the Critical Heritage*, pp.309-10.
[39] Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, pp.300-301.
[40] Ann Thwaite, *Edmund Gosse: a Literary Landscape* (London, 1984), p.333.
[41] Carroll V. Peterson, *John Davidson* (New York, 1972) p.82; Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.245.

things beyond his pale' in those days had been 'God and good women.' The alleged roué struck off a missive taut with rage. 'Your little statement is, if it gains any notoriety, more subtly than any other calculated to cripple any power for good that may lie in my work.' Like Kipling's old schoolmaster W.C. Crofts, Robertson may have been party to ambiguous boasting about his knowledge of Lahore's brothels, a subject on which he had always mixed prurience with the moralistic tone of the campaigning journalist.[42] At least in private, however, the Francophile Kipling retained a similar taste to Yeats's magazine friends for demimondaine loucheness, his music hall populism complemented by an equally determined contempt for the 'suburban' bourgeois. 'The town is smugly British', he told an American friend during an ill-advised residency at Torquay in 1896, the year the *Savoy* launched. 'I want to dance naked through it with pink feathers in my stern.' His attitude to the public was similarly two-minded. He reprimanded his more snobbish colleagues for disregarding the popular audience which supported their careers, but was also prone to outbursts against 'the poor little street-bred people'—especially when he felt they had assumed the shape of a mob.[43] As much as he conceived his professional duty as casting a purposeful gaze on the world, he resented philistines who would presume to hold art to account. *The Savoy* was launched as a successor to the defunct *Yellow Book*, which had spectacularly folded when Oscar Wilde's exposure and disgrace also tainted the reputation of its art editor, Aubrey Beardsley. William Watson and Mrs Humphrey Ward threatened to withdraw their middlebrow backlist from the publisher, John Lane, if Beardsley was not given the sack for his erotic drawings. Stranded in New York, Lane bowed to Grundyish pressure against the advice of Kipling, Richard Le Gallienne and the impresario Beerbohm Tree, who all happened to be in the city. Kipling's own sharp-etched, Japoniste draughtsmanship had already been compared to Beardsley's, and he met to console with his uncle's former protégé the following summer in London.[44] This encounter not only complicates his reputation for taboos and conformity (his taste for the sexually risqué was for now well in advance of Yeats). It also demonstrates how to adopt the savoir-faire of the aesthete was for him, like calculated philistinism, a conscious strategy.

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[42] Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 285-6; i, 121.
[43] 'The English Flag' (*Complete Verse*, p.178), a favourite of the equally mobaphobic Tennyson. See Hallam Tennyson, *Memoir*, ii, 392.
[44] Matthew Sturgis, *Aubrey Beardsley: a Biography* (London, 1999), p.239; Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, pp.360, 374.

His relationship with the Burne-Joneses and Morris had keyed Kipling into the Aesthetic movement from childhood, and he had applied its principles to what he saw in Asia. His Indian journalism and early travelogues are full of rather showy allusions to Gautier, Ruskin, and the 'House Beautiful', as well as more serious asides on the erosion of the decorative arts by inferior western manufactures.[45] A few months after composing 'Buddha at Kamakura', he wrote to the publisher William Heinemann that 'Jap' textile printers were being 'demoralized by English and American models and their designs are suffering.'[46] His one luxury in Villiers Street was a Japanese screen embellished with dancing skeletons that he kept, after the custom of Aesthetic painters, for graphic inspiration. Along with his dressing-gown, it was eloquent (and only gently satirical) of the ritualized noble lifestyle that appealed to a succession of middle-class artists—Yeats prominent among them—seeking to constitute a new aristocracy of taste.[47] However, Aunt Georgina's genteel socialism now grated on the returned colonial, as did his uncle's preference for the hated Gladstone. 'I hear that Burne Johnes is a furious Home Ruler', Yeats had noted excitedly in 1887, 'says he would be a Dynamiter if an Irishman.'[48] If Yeats had wanted Aestheticism to find its political teeth in Dublin, hoping his countryman would hate with patriotic fervour what Morris and Ruskin had hated intellectually, Kipling was beginning to perceive the subtler, infiltrating change in politics that the aged Pre-Raphaelite generation were effecting in London (the same indirect influence, in fact, that he himself would attempt to wield).[49] His political instincts would continue to be calibrated, throughout his life, by the cultural mood. As he commented to the architect Herbert Baker in the nervous atmosphere of 1934, the 'trouble' set in motion in the 1890s by the Gladstonian intelligentsia was omened less by their membership of the Fabian Society, or their campaign to reduce the navy budget, than by 'a general and sustained falsity of speech and bearing—presently to become almost integral.' Master craftsmen his uncle's friends were, and gallant crusaders against Victorian décor ('horse-hair chairs, red lambrequins'). But in their

[45] See *From Sea to Sea*, i, 24, 35.
[46] Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 56.
[47] See, for example, James Tissot's painting 'Young Women Looking at Japanese Articles', based on his own studio.
[48] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 14. Burne-Jones's university friend Crom Price was also a Home Ruler. The facetious Beresford speculates that Price, if twenty years younger, would have been enthralled by the 'banshee crowd' (i.e. the Celtic Revival). Beresford, *Schooldays with Kipling*, pp.104-5.
[49] See Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, p.248.

service to a decadent and complacent ruling class, they had abnegated the public role of an artist. 'They were all purveyors of luxuries—utterly dependent on the fabric round them being kept safe.'[50]

Taking Kipling at his word, it might seem that he was now consciously breaking with his uncle's Aesthetic project, and that instead the Irish boy who had once lived down the street would prove its most faithful perpetuator. But if it had become apparent to Kipling that he must seek allies elsewhere, there was no question of rejection. The decorative sensibility remained as important to him as to Yeats (their subsequent homes provide furnished evidence of this), and Yeats too resented the emasculation of craftsmanship by luxury (see his characterization of Margaret Leland, p.190). Painterly concerns meanwhile remained habitual to Kipling, and many of his artistic ambitions lay palpably rooted in his uncle's influence, even at his most aggressively neophyte and iconoclast. It was easy to misread Kipling, in an era when one's personal posture was so often understood to indicate and perform one's aesthetic standpoint. Beerbohm's well-known caricatures are problematic not because unjust, but because they relentlessly opposed Kipling to a context and milieu that often shared his preoccupation with resurgent vigour. For, although articulated in variant manners, this young Turk quality was in fact at a common premium throughout literary London.

Clubs and anti-Clubs: Interlinked Literary Networks

Richard Le Gallienne compared 1890s London to 'a ten-ringed circus, with vividly original performers claiming one's distracted attention in every ring.'[51] Although in hindsight these competing acts looked like warring schools, their quarrels and animosities belied not only their common ground but also significant exchange in their personnel. Something of the interlinked, as well as internecine, qualities of this world is given by a scene in *Young Lives*, Le Gallienne's rather self-advertising literary bildungsroman of 1898. Fresh down from a provincial city, a wide-eyed hopeful is invited to a jaded publisher's party to meet the literary lions of the day.

> "How remarkable!" said Henry, his attention called off by a being with a face that half suggested a faun, and half suggested a flower. A small olive-skinned face crowned with purply black hair, that kept falling in an elf-lock over his forehead, and violet eyes set slant-wise. He was talking earnestly of fairies, in a

[50] Kipling, *Letters*, vi, 262.
[51] Richard Le Gallienne, *The Romantic '90s* (London, 1993), p.79.

> beautiful Irish accent, and Henry liked him. The attraction seemed mutual, and Henry found himself drawn into a remarkable relation about a fairy-hill in Connemara, and fairy lights that for several nights had been seen glimmering about it, and how at last he, that is the narrator, and a particularly hard-headed friend of his, had kept watch one moonlit night, with the result that they had actually seen and talked with the queen of the fairies, and learned many secrets of the ——. The narrator here made use of a long unpronounceable Irish word, which Henry could not catch.

After Yeats is finished with him, Henry is drawn into a conversation about the sins of the Borgias by a macabre *poseur*, before Le Gallienne ventures a highly immodest self-portrait.

> Presently there entered a tall young man with a long thin face, curtained on each side with enormous masses of black hair—like a slip of the young moon glimmering through a pine wood.
>
> At the same moment there entered, as if by design, his very antithesis, a short firmly-built clerkly fellow, with a head like a billiard-ball in need of a shave, a big brown moustache, and enormous spectacles.
>
> "That," said the publisher, referring to the moon-in-the-pine-wood young man, "is our young apostle of sentiment, our new man of feeling, the best-hated man we have; and the other is our young apostle of blood. He is all for muscle and brutality—and he makes all the money. It is one of our many fashions just now to sing 'Britain and Brutality.' But my impression is that our young man of feeling will have his day—though he will have to wait for it.[52]

Despite appearances, the publisher concludes, the young man of feeling 'loves a fight'. Though whether he is spoiling to best his adversary in a brawl of fists (Le Gallienne apparently cultivated his biceps) or of reviews (he would shortly publish *Rudyard Kipling: a Criticism*) is unclear. Clearly the author was retrospectively enlarging his stature within the fabled Nineties scene. What is significant is that Le Gallienne identifies Kipling and Yeats as the two rising stars against whom to measure himself, and—despite their polarized characterization—suggests a fluid literary field through which all three men obliquely mingled.

Besides making all the money, upon his arrival in London Kipling had inherited a much more established network of contacts than his Irish contemporary. He could visit his uncle Edward Poynter and nose around the studios at the Royal Academy. Thomas Hardy, who had met his father when both were working at the South Kensington Museum, advanced his membership of the Savile Club in Piccadilly.[53] Here he met senior bookmen Andrew Lang, Edmund Gosse, Walter Besant and George Saintsbury, all of whom helped to secure his reputation, as well as rising talents like J.M. Barrie and his future tormentor Max Beerbohm. He evidently clashed with some of his peers ('a very fiery

[52] Richard Le Gallienne, *Young Lives* (Bristol, 1898), pp.309-12.
[53] Arthur R. Ankers, *The Pater: John Lockwood Kipling, his Life and Times, 1837-1911* (Otford, Kent, 1988), p.30.

gentleman', the wine-waiter supposedly described him, 'for so small a member'), but seems to have approved the club's ecumenical ethos. Its long common dining table would later become a rendezvous for his political allies, such as Lord Curzon, as well as some unexpected opponents. Erskine Childers, the Boer War veteran whose nautical spy novel *The Riddle of the Sands* effectively combines two of Kipling's works, would later put fiction into practice by running guns for the Irish Volunteers in his private yacht.[54] More freelancing social options included J.K. Jerome's Wednesday teas at *The Idler* office near to his lodgings, or the monthly Vagabonds Club dinner organized by the magazine's sub-editor George Burgin. Capable of great charm, Kipling however could also be awkward and antisocial among his peers, and often preferred to dispense with even these in favour of Gatti's music hall. Even so diligent a lion-hunter as the *Who's Who* editor Douglas Sladen was unable to lure him to his 'functions' in Brook Green, Hammersmith (Brugglesmith in Kipling's jargon—a little suburban for his tastes). Yeats, still living nearby in Bedford Park, visited in 1891 to complain how he was trapped between an Irish public that never bought books, and an English audience suspicious of his nationalism.[55]

By contrast, Yeats had to cultivate his contacts ruthlessly, and like many fighting to establish themselves he was periodically caricatured as an ungainly rolling stone kept in motion by friends in Grub Street. His romantic persona in many ways reflected a reticent distance still separating him from the upper echelons of the literary world. Arthur Symons, a friend and later flatmate, counselled black cloth as both elegant and inexpensive.[56] Unlike Kipling, he could not afford the clubs or, at least regularly, the dining societies where so much of the all-male shoptalk and business of the book trade was conducted. Nor, until the end of the decade, was he prolific enough to engage the services of Kipling's literary agent A.P. Watt, and in the early 1890s continued to rely heavily on O'Leary, John Todhunter and other Irish friends of his father's generation for commissions and odd-jobs, and on Tynan especially for keeping his stock up in the Dublin press. If he could enter the Savile only as a guest until 1917, however, the same talent and appetite for organization he had displayed in Dublin

[54] The works in question were *Captains Courageous* (1897) and *Kim* (1901). The club's historian imagines Kipling's shock at hearing of Childers's execution by the Free State Government in 1922. See Garrett Anderson, *Hang your Halo in the Hall: the Savile Club from 1868* (London, 1993), pp.256, 64.
[55] Douglas Sladen, *Twenty Years of my Life* (London, 1915), pp.165, 76.
[56] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 110.

enabled him (alongside the Welsh folklorist and fellow 'Celtic' exponent Ernest Rhys) to found his own broad congregation.

The cosmopolitan Symons later dismissed Yeats's venture as an ineffectual attempt to replicate the communal sophistication of Parisian writers. But the inaugural meeting of the Rhymers' Club took place in early 1890 not in Wilde's stamping-ground at the Café Royal, but in an upper room of the Olde Cheshire Cheese, a chophouse of high-backed pews and sawdust floor known as the onetime haunt of Dr Johnson. To the nepotistic, disenchanted and competitive literary world satirized by Le Gallienne, an early member, the cosy fraternity of tavern wits served as a nostalgic antidote. The turn of the century saw young men, such as Alfred Noyes, as well as superannuated Victorians like Theodore Watts-Dunton composing drinking-songs for the Mermaid Tavern, and the circle of Elizabethan dramatists who legend has it once met there. The Rhymers did not merrily pass round the wassail-bowl, however. The colourful and sometimes malicious sketches left by its more peripheral members universally acknowledge its often gloomy and unlaughing atmosphere, at which members smoked churchwarden pipes and read their latest verses in hushed tones—perhaps afflicted, despite the Celtic credentials that several touted, by the English horror of baring one's soul. Diverse styles and opinions also made it a curiously incoherent fraternity, embracing Symons's impressionistic nocturnes of music hall and cabman's shelter, and the melancholic hedonism of the Oxford dropout and *poète maudit* Ernest Dowson, as well as the folkloric and 'faery' interests of Yeats, Rhys, Edwin Ellis and others. As an efficient reviewing cabal, they duly promoted this diverse work in the numerous column inches under their control. They shared, paradoxically, a consciousness of being both outsiders (Le Gallienne, Symons and Davidson were Yeats's 'curable' provincials) and, at the same time, an unacknowledged elite, determined to reshape English writing from the Bohemian margins.[57]

The vague, multifaceted yearning for new vigour and to 'express life at its intense moments', as Yeats later described it, kept them in dialogue and dispute.[58] Dowson's hashish smoking, self-

[57] Richard Whittington-Egan and Geoffrey Smerdon, *The Quest of the Golden Boy: the Life and Letters of Richard Le Gallienne* (London, 1960), pp.169-75.
[58] Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, p.494.

conscious slumming, Catholic conversion and fatal attraction to girlish innocence were all conjoined attributes arguing for his elite prerogative to produce refined art from anarchic experience. Other voices however were overtly anti-Decadent and like the Nietzschean Davidson, who desired both the exaltation of imaginative genius and the radical democratization of culture, their unofficial patron Herbert Horne supposedly demanded the membership be less exclusive and acquire more 'blood and guts.'[59] Couching a bid for nationalist standing in backhanded metropolitan gossip, Yeats also criticized the Rhymers' pedantic and solipsistic tendencies in *United Ireland* in October 1892: 'it is not possible to call a literature produced in this way the literature of energy and youth. The age which has produced it is getting old and feeble...in Ireland we are living in a young age.'[60] He had begun, by this point, to feel restricted by the Rhymers' reluctance to discuss poetry in relation to extraneous topics like philosophy, politics or such aesthetic theories as impressionism. In this respect, they were a phenomenon of the fin de siècle—a sort of anti-club, shunning any 'generalization' that might lend them a coherent programme. With hindsight, however, Yeats would claim this deliberate inarticulacy as signifying an avant-garde determination to cleanse Victorian poetry of the scientific and social concerns that Tennyson, Browning and Arnold had set conversing and soliloquizing. Even in his critical *United Ireland* article he sought to defend, with dextrous two-handedness, the Rhymers' elitism and imposition of exacting standards. Identifying this as their governing impulse, Peter McDonald has placed the Rhymers within a literary milieu animated by two axial conflicts: a horizontal conflict between self-conscious 'purists' who upheld the independent dignity of art against the pot-boiling 'profiteers' who saw themselves as vendors in a consumer market; and a vertical conflict between the rising generation and the critical old guard.[61] The Rhymers, aiming to produce verse validated by its own musicality and cleansed of Victorian discursiveness, were thereby aligned against their commercial peers and the publishing establishment. This purist intent must have partly dictated the choice of a venue associated with such a punctilious, conservative and classically-

[59] Whittington-Egan and Smerdon, *The Quest*, p.168.
[60] Yeats, *Uncollected Prose*, i, 249.
[61] Peter D. McDonald, *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice, 1880-1914* (Cambridge, 1997), p.14.

schooled arbiter of taste, even if the Cheshire Cheese's Johnsonian character was somewhat spoiled by a retired ship's parrot who, perched at the bar, loudly exhorted the clientele to drink Scotch.[62]

The pursuit of 'life at its intense moments' signified a change not merely in subject matter, or in poetic celebrity, but also in form. 'In the Victorian era the most famous poetry was often a passage in a poem of some length,' Yeats later wrote, 'full of thoughts that might have been expressed in prose. A short lyric seemed an accident, an interruption amid more serious work.'[63] He had already produced a heroic narrative of middling length, *The Wanderings of Oisin*, as well as a short novel which will be discussed, alongside a contemporary effort of Kipling's, in the next chapter. Preferring 'the acorn to the oak', however, the Rhymers offered a means of both hardening his poetic imagery and avoiding the 'rhetoric' that he would campaign against over the coming years in Dublin, regarding it as the bellicose and sentimental inheritance of Young Ireland. The anthology *The Book of the Rhymers' Club* (1892) and its sequel (1894) contained many of the enduring brief lyrics of the 1890s, from Dowson's 'Non Sum Qualis eram Bonae Sub Regno Cynarae' to Yeats's own 'The Man who Dreamed of Fairyland.' This rhetorical 'loosening' and escape from conventional English diction was also accomplished, evidently, through rhythmic experimentation. The recitative memorability that the substitution of a bacchius for one iamb gave the opening lines of 'Innisfree', Dowson accomplished with the alexandrine. The rollicking, alliterative lines adopted elsewhere for 'Cycling Song' by T.W. Rolleston, a Learyite of JBY's generation who helped Yeats organize the London Irish Literary Society, betray an obvious Kipling influence, as does Davidson's Cockney monologue 'Thirty Bob a Week'. For both, Kiplingesque tropes served a consciously anti-Decadent posture. Less felicitously, Rolleston's 'Noon-Day Elegiacs' also adopted the hyperactive Ulyssean adventurism of the Balestier elegy.[64]

Le Gallienne portrayed Kipling as a 'clerkly', bullet-headed profiteer, and indeed by 1898 he would be one of the wealthiest authors in the world. In the early years of the decade, however, several of Yeats's fellow-Rhymers were drawn to his oeuvre, which took in volatile Swinburnian rhythms as

[62] Whittington-Egan and Smerdon, *The Quest*, p.171.
[63] Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, p.494.
[64] Norman Alford, *The Rhymers' Club: Poets of the Tragic Generation* (Basingstoke & London, 1994), pp.98, 35, 125.

well as examples of minimalist, staccato diction, barrack slang, dialect, and the urban idiom of the music hall. Most importantly, Kipling's moments of intense experience were staged against the intricate, romantic and brutal backdrop of India. Though condescending to Kipling in the press, Symons shared his interest in the music hall, and echoed him both in his development of the dramatic monologue and in the trope of hedonistic wandering.[65] Dowson, meanwhile, found in October 1890 that Kipling was all the rage at Herbert Horne's home in Bloomsbury, 'The Fitzroy Settlement' (a sort of artist's commune). 'Have you read "Wee Willie Winkie" etc?' he wrote to a friend. 'I am going through a course of Kipling directly. The Fitzroy St copies are all lent to the Ballet at present; but I shall follow on with them when they return.'[66] Graham Hough wrote in 1949 that 'there would indeed not be much sense in a grouping that tried to include both Kipling and Dowson.' However, three years later the doomed libertine took *Many Inventions* on holiday, chiefly for the sake of the Mulvaney stories and 'One View of the Question', a malediction on London by a contemptuous Muslim nobleman which Dowson called 'a beautiful piece of satire on English mob-worship.'

A year after Kipling's arrival from India, the autumn of Dowson's first enthusiasm was also the season when critics such as Oscar Wilde began to lead a counterblast to his prodigious fame. However, Yeats—who would later himself give Kipling favourable notice—took from this a reassuring moral for his own run-ins with the press. 'At first a writer is the enthusiasm of a few,' he condoled with Tynan in 1895 after both had felt the lash of the *Irish Figaro*. 'Then comes the day when the pioneer spirits think his fame assured & perhaps a little slacken in their advocasy; and the yet unconvinced many begin to carp & abuse. Do you remember how Kipling got at that stage & stayed in it for a few months some years ago?'[67] Tynan herself had already developed an enduring taste for Kipling, discovering him—ironically enough—through one of Yeats's pro-Irish American outlets. 'In the *Providence Sunday Journal*, a very wilderness of a paper, one discovered the stars in

[65] Browning was a major influence on Symons's, as well as Kipling's, juvenilia. One critic has called 'Red Bredbury's End' from *Days and Nights* (1889) 'Kiplingesque.' See R.K.R. Thornton, *The Decadent Dilemma* (London, 1983), p.137.
[66] Ernest Dowson, *The Letters of Ernest Dowson*, ed. Desmond Flower and Henry Maas (London, 1967), pp.175, 288. Dowson followed up his reference to *Wee Willie Winkie and Other Stories* with an almost parodically decadent aside: 'The curious bewilderment of one's mind after much absinthe!'
[67] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 454.

the English literary sky while they were yet only on the horizon. I remember the delight with which I first read "Danny Deever" there.' She was to correspond with 'the magician' later in life as her young boy puzzled over *The Jungle Book's* Indian argot.[68]

It is through their critical reception that Yeats and Kipling's imaginative appeal and adroit self-positioning can best be brought into comparison, and the Rhymer most invested in promoting both of them as leading members of the coming generation was Lionel Johnson. Reviewer for the *Academy*, Johnson was the scholar of the group and is portrayed in Le Gallienne's 'gathering of wits' as a precocious bookworm. He was also one of the most disastrously unbalanced among the decade's two-sided heads, whose decorous, ritualized approach to living and ascetic Catholicism masked private chaos and dissipation. He succeeded Tynan and remained Yeats's chief literary confidant until 1895, when the alcoholism that would kill him became erratically apparent. Johnson's scholarly gravitas and judgemental silences not only demanded from the gauche, disputatious, proselytizing Yeats a much-needed intellectual rigour. It also raised the critical discussion of Yeats's work to a level unsurveyed by log-rollers who were Irish only by birth, rather than by determined reinvention. Praising *Oisin's* 'spontaneous music', John Todhunter had really done no more than align his friend's son among the imitators of Allingham. Wilde's early review hit a more strenuous note ('he has... that largeness of vision that belong to the epical temper') before collapsing into an atavistic Celtic warble: 'he is very naive, and very primitive, and speaks of his giants with the awe of a child.'[69] Armed with a fervent cultural nationalism derived from a dusted-off 'Old English' patrimony, Johnson by contrast buttressed his 1892 review with all the high seriousness that the *Academy* could muster. Characterizing the Irish in Arnoldian terms of quickness and spiritual intuition, Johnson then used these qualities to link them with Arnold's own exalted Greeks, with Yeats himself exhibiting a Hellenic polish. Instead of allowing 'confused vastness' or 'flying vagueness' to mist his mythic gaze, Yeats's 'art is full of reason', while a 'wider sympathy with the world' equips him to write 'national verse' which is not hobbled by provincialism.

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[68] Katharine Tynan, *Twenty-Five Years: Reminiscences* (London, 1913), p.279 and *The Middle Years* (London, 1916), p.317.
[69] A. Norman Jeffares (ed.), *W.B. Yeats: the Critical Heritage* (London, 1977), pp.68, 73.

Resembling Hopkins in its severity (as well as its sexual repression), Johnson's Catholic ardour imparted a renegade sternness to his laments for the lost cultural coherence of the middle ages. University erudition, moreover, made him a forceful advocate of the literary canon. Although the Rhymers rebuffed the discursive 'generalisms' associated with Arnold, Johnson's attitude to mythology and tradition was—as Yeats's would become—uncompromisingly Arnoldian. As such, he was able not only to position his friend's work in the metropolitan arena as a retort to *l'art pour l'art*, but also to cast him for Dublin's benefit as a portent 'of Ireland's regeneration through the discipline of culture, education, thought'. Endowing the Celtic movement with the unifying virtues of the Renaissance, Yeats's evocations of folklore and legend take on a foundational role. 'The distinction of Mr Yeats, as an Irish poet, is his ability to write Celtic poetry, with all the Celtic notes of style and imagination, in a classical manner.'[70]

Although articulated in a quite different manner from Davidson's, Johnson's anti-Decadent inclinations were perhaps the strongest among the Rhymers, and prompted his keen interest in Kipling. 'Tomlinson' he found 'delightful', while 'Mandalay', he correctly speculated, expressed its author's own 'disgust at London and England after those old times in the East.' More significantly, it was Johnson's wish to herald a poetic oeuvre large enough to fulfil the modern world's want of a mythology that links his Yeats review of October 1892 to the notice of Kipling's *Barrack-Room Ballads* he had written four months previously. Kipling had been on Johnson's radar since at least April 1891, when like Whitman and Oliphant he had heralded the Anglo-Indian's 'real intrinsic power'. As with Yeats, 'Irish of the Irish', Kipling's subject-matter was the fresh and "natural" product of his authentic experience, and yet also the "powerful" invention of his strange, unnatural genius. Indeed, Johnson sensed Kipling in his 'undiluted strength' to bodily inhabit his verses, which he described as 'instinct with life, quivering and vibrating with the writer's intensity.'[71]

Johnson also used the vogueish word 'intensity' to describe Yeats's work, seeking to elucidate his own argument in favour of classicism. He compared Yeats's method to that of Catullus, whose theme in *Attis* is 'Asiatic, insane, grotesque... terrible in its intensity of life.' The success of both Roman and

[70] Ibid., pp.78-82.
[71] Green (ed.), *Kipling: the Critical Heritage*, pp.103, 101, 88, 100.

Irishman was a triumph of poetic strength, harnessing a wild myth to their own narrative vision, attaining in their imagery 'natural felicity... but a felicity under the control of art'.[72] Kipling was evaluated according to the same standards. If his books were articles of what Davidson would have deemed 'flesh and blood', Johnson added in his earliest review his own gutsy terms of approbation: 'mind and matter'. As with Yeats, it was not the poet's own mystique, nor his strange, brutal and rough-hewn subject-matter, nor even his 'Strong Men' (which by 1892, the reviewer warned, were becoming a tedious fad) that most attracted Johnson, but rather a masterfulness and conceptual 'severity'. It entitled Kipling to his place in the vanguard against affectation, solipsism and 'effeminate, miserable people'. It also, apparently, merited forgiveness for his veiled libel on Irish nationalism in 'The English Flag' and (as will be discussed in the next chapter) his overt slander in 'Cleared'. Much more strongly reprimanded is, on the same grounds, his lapses of rhetorical control into the 'spasmodic' and 'overstrained' (in the Balestier elegy). In keeping with Johnson's interpretation of the Rhymers' goals, the highest terms of praise bestowed on both poets were for their judicious economy—in Yeats, 'stately and solemn'; in Kipling, 'swinging, marching music.' 'Restraint, a dislike of the superfluous, how rare is that just now!'[73] As shall be seen, short, lyric, highly-controlled forms, distinctive products of their authorial personalities, would characterize their success in both poetry and fiction.

The Filibuster: a Mutual Advocate and Strange Bedfellow

A similar mixture of artistic rectitude and rhetorical explosiveness characterized Yeats and Kipling's most influential mutual patron, the art critic, poet and bookman W.E. Henley. He too, like Johnson, provides a comparative axis along which our two central figures can be aligned, compared and contrasted. Henley was an unvanquishable ego and forceful but generous editor—a 'Vulcan', as Yeats remembered him, 'perpetually forging swords for other men to use.'[74] He took pride in spotting and disciplining talents greater than his own, who met on Sundays at his home in Chiswick. Yeats found his way here from nearby Bedford Park in the summer of 1888, about eighteen months before Kipling

[72] Jeffares (ed.), *Yeats: the Critical Heritage*, p.80.
[73] Green (ed.), *Kipling: the Critical Heritage*, pp.89, 103, 101, 92.
[74] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.123.

was introduced at the Savile Club. Henley advanced both poets assiduously through the *Scots* (later *National*) *Observer*, an uppity, almost libellous Tory weekly that developed, under his leadership, a reputation for striking new verse and highbrow if trenchant reviewing. The *Observer* was a major outlet for Yeats from 1889 to 1894, publishing several poems and most of the articles and stories that comprised *The Celtic Twilight* (1893) and *The Secret Rose* (1897). Appearing alongside these, from February 1890, arrived 'Danny Deever' and the succeeding dozen of Kipling's *Barrack-Room Ballads*.

Usually remembered for his poem 'Invictus', and for being the peglegged original of Long John Silver, Henley is the last to appear in Le Gallienne's gallery of oddities.

> In the thick of the conversational turmoil, Henry's attention had from time to time been attracted by the noise proceeding from a blustering red-headed man, with a face of fire.
> "Who is that?" at last he found opportunity to ask his friend.
> "That is our greatest critic," said the publisher.
> "Oh!" said Henry, "I must try to hear what he is saying.....
> "The only word I can catch is the word 'damn'!" he said.
> "That," said the publisher with a laugh, "is the master-word of fashionable criticism."[75]

The 'apostle of sentiment' was to Henley a particularly damnable personality. In the *Observer's* pages, sentiment was a scattershot epithet denoting the entire philanthropic and humanitarian impulse of Victorian public life, fired on targets ranging from genteel pinks like Morris and the Fabians, to union militants like Keir Hardie, and even East End pontiffs like General Booth and Cardinal Manning. As well as sentimental, Le Gallienne was also 'effeminate' and advocated the New Woman writers published in *The Yellow Book*—John Lane's circle being, more so than the Rhymers, his main social arena. Henley's masculinist, anti-Decadent bias set him at loggerheads with this Bodley Head group. As Peter McDonald has made clear, however, the *Yellow Book* stable and the Cheshire Cheese crowd shared many values with the rowdy Chiswick salon that Beerbohm nicknamed the Henley Regatta. Lane and Henley in common sought to promote a youthful avant-garde, in disdain of frowsty older arbiters like Gosse, and in contempt of Mudie's and the commercial press ('bourgeois' was one of the *Observer's* favourite adjectives). Henley even arraigned Lane's own pretentious first editions as cynical money-spinners. With as little agenda as the Rhymers, therefore, but galvanized by the

[75] Le Gallienne, *Young Lives*, p.313.

decade's best approximation to Dr Johnson, the Regatta likewise served these two functions for its diverse young membership, who were united by 'their shared principles of cultural legitimacy and their admiration for Henley's strident purism.'[76] Several of them were to remain in Yeats and Kipling's mutual esteem, including J.M. Barrie, the acerbic critic Charles Whibley, and the classical scholar and journalist Leslie Cope Cornford. Tipped off by the latter in 1898 to Henley's impending penury, Kipling drafted a successful petition for a Civil List pension that was signed by Yeats and other old hands. The organizational go-between, with contacts in the Conservative government, was George Wyndham. Both Kipling and Yeats would later cautiously boast of their intimacy with this aristocratic figure, a member of 'The Souls', whose Wiltshire seat neighboured Lockwood and Alice's retirement home, and who as Chief Secretary for Ireland secured Yeats a license for the Abbey Theatre. Of Kipling himself, Yeats's record is vague. 'I never met him' at Henley's, he wrote in *Autobiographies*, though he drew solace from the belief that their patron redrafted Kipling's verses as persistently as he rewrote Yeats's own. Discounting an often dubious memory, and a possible wish to distance himself a subsequent adversary, it seems that Kipling preferred to meet the Regatta closer to his own lodgings—at their secondary, late-night venue of Solferino's restaurant in Soho.[77]

Henley was of the generation intermediary to his 'lads' and that of their parents, and his renegade belligerence answered the mood of their own, as yet unsatisfied quarrels. 'His confident manner and speech,' Yeats remembered, 'made us believe, perhaps for the first time, in victory'. Animated and protean, Henley also displayed the sort of sincere artifice that appealed to Yeats and Kipling's idea of what a poet should be. Like his main poetic influence Whitman, he contained multitudes. Kipling warmed to a veteran 'more different varieties of man than most', while Yeats saw Henley as a great actor with a bad part—a man struggling, through his quarrel with the world, to ignite the dramatic crisis demanded by his tragic personality.[78] Both found his free verse hospital poems inadequate to that demand. Yeats could not agree with a present-tense mode based on fleeting subjective experience, divorced from the primeval foundation of myth and legend. Kipling opposed '*vers libre*'

[76] McDonald, *British Literary Culture*, p.33.
[77] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.123; Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.43.
[78] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, pp.121-23; Kipling's remark appears in a letter of April 1890 (quoted in Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.277).

instead, as he opined at Solferino's after a little too much chianti, because it was 'like fishing with barbless hooks'—meaning, perhaps, that it deprived the poet of his rhetorical arsenal. Henley's response was 'volcanic.'[79] His own great enthusiasm for both young poets was also, it seems, tempered by some reservations. His first boom of Kipling in May 1890 mixed its cheer with a good deal of corrective caution. Though he co-edited the *Dictionary of Slang*, Henley warned Kipling to keep Tommy Atkins's 'atrocious lingo' at arm's length from his own pure English diction. More penetratingly, he detected a 'savour of newspaperese' and urged Kipling to write *en coterie* instead of consciously pursuing the plaudits of the vulgar. Henley's estranged friend Robert Louis Stevenson would, by the end of year, turn abruptly against the young prodigy and deplore his 'smart journalism and cleverness' and shameless 'debauch of production'.[80] Henley's support remained steady, however, in part because his own aims were divided. Yeats had often felt frustrated by the discrepancy between Henley's protective *l'art pour l'art* standpoint, and his aggressive yoking of pointedly-themed poems to the *Observer's* political tirades.[81] It seems that the potential Henley divined in Yeats and Kipling was predicated on their capacity to be both purist and populist, combining elite standards with societal influence—a set of qualities that, given their political engagements, makes comparison important. Yeats later read his own failed attempts to conceive a unifying myth for 'a much divided civilization' onto Henley's frustrations. 'He would be, and have all poets be, a true epitome of the whole mass, a Herrick and Dr Johnson in the same body, and because this—not so difficult before the Mermaid closed its door—is no longer possible, his work lacks music.'[82]

Henley's purism, moreover, may have been particularly congenial to the two artists' sons, because it derived principally from his knowledge of contemporary painting. As editor of Cassell's *Magazine of Art* from 1881 to 1886, Henley had backed the artistic conscience over Ruskin, who was lambasted for his Romantic belief in art's duty to improve its viewers by illuminating nature's pre-existing harmonies (along with the deity's coded sermons). Kipling had imbibed this purposeful aesthetics,

[79] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.43.
[80] Green (ed.), *Kipling: the Critical Heritage*, pp.55-7; Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew (8 vols., Yale University Press, 1995), vii, 337, 66.
[81] Yeats (ed.), *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, p.vi.
[82] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.230.

then lending itself to an idealistic imperialism, at Westward Ho!. At the same time in London, Henley had been blaming it for the vulgar proliferation of 'bourgeois' moralism. Chasing up Ruskin's influence, he damned the Pre-Raphaelites for exercising no compositional restraint, instead allowing divine nature to manifest herself in garish profusion of colour and detail. In reaction, he turned gruff Aesthete and championed the French Impressionists.

If Henley's specific tastes clashed with Yeats and Kipling's, his motives were nonetheless in accord. Not only would Henley brook no priggish English prosecution of Maupassant or Zola. He also set his face against all sentimental treatments in art and literature. It was not so much the urban grime of JBY's *Going to their Work* which had offended his son in 1886, nor the 'realism' of Bastien-Lepage's gross peasantry, but rather their soppy appeal to a society weaned on humane comedy. The sympathetic unions imagined in Yeats's Indian-themed poems of the late 1880s took place in a tragic mode of sorrow and desire, and this preference for art that dramatized singular, heroic passions led him first to legend, then to the theatre and eventually back to the Pre-Raphaelitism of his youth. It led Henley instead to impressionism, or rather to the school of early impressionism represented by Millet, who endowed the dun colours of rural hardship with a grave, numinous atmosphere. Weighty with a larger cosmic resonance, Yeats would later respect this species of symbolic realism when it appeared in Synge's play *Riders to the Sea.* It mirrored what Henley's estranged friend Stevenson was now accomplishing in Tahiti, and anticipated what Kipling—also inclined to draw his analogies from French painting—would achieve by the end of the decade with *Kim*.

While Henley boasted of his 'discovery' of Kipling in a tone of Davidsonian bombast ('no such gutsy person has appeared in English since Dickens'), Yeats's was characterized in the *Observer's* pages as a more conventional Romantic fancy, attuned from childhood to 'the shimmering of ocean, and the dewy forest aisles.'[83] 'Mr Yeats is certainly very close to nature', Henley wrote in his inaugural review, which preceded his first puff of Kipling by fourteen months. But his championing of Yeats was also stimulated, in deeper accord with his aesthetic principles, by a sense of untapped 'power' and of a visionary, plastic imagination. Sometimes this power is only, it appears, at the

[83] In a letter of March 1890. See William Ernest Henley, *The Selected Letters of W.E. Henley*, ed. Damian Atkinson (Aldershot, 2000), p.191.

service of metropolitan escapism. 'The words begin to murmur and sing and shine before the breath of poetic inspiration', the article goes on, before emerald tweeness suddenly graduates to numinous hyperbole. 'Again the common is made uncommon, the old miracle is wrought anew; you are carried away into rainbow-coloured lands of fantasy.' Despite his prolixity, Henley perceived in Yeats's Celtic writings the lineaments of a severer art. He took a proprietorial pride, apparently, in 'The Man Who Dreamed of Faeryland', a lyric of 1891 that makes use of the supernatural realm to dramatize what would become one of Yeats's great themes: the artistic mind's fruitless yearning for the immutable. Prideful, forlorn, self-destructive passion had already added a tragic glamour to *The Wanderings of Oisin*. Henley was characteristic, though unusual among English reviewers, in unreservedly praising that work's flawed epic score and vigorous, if confused, imagery.

> The carver of cherry-stones, the idyllic prattler, and the moping sonneteer are too much with us. All the more gladly should we welcome an author who walks not in the beaten ways that lead to mere prettiness, and dainty trifling and silly cooings and lamenting; who can speak out with the right heroic accent, and kindle the blood with tales of the (strictly historical) deeds that were done in the brave old days "When the Fenians made foray at morning with Bran Sgeolan, Lomair."'[84]

Henley's appetite for Irish glamour proved capacious. He set Whibley to work on Douglas Hyde's folklore collection *Beside the Fire* in 1891, and Yeats was able to return favours by securing Tynan a berth in the *Observer's* stable.[85] Nationalist subtext of any sort, however, was out of the question. In September 1888 Henley had to deny involvement in the *Saturday Review's* hostile notice of Yeats's anthology *Poems and Ballads of Young Ireland.* Wearing his *l'art pour l'art* hat in 1891, he declined a poem by Tynan about the 'Wild Geese' on an aesthetic pretext, and put Yeats on the spot later that year by commissioning him to review the poems of John O'Leary's sister Ellen ('I find it almost impossible to review it for so ultra-Tory a paper as the *National Observer*').[86] Yeats's contributions frequently shared column inches with adverse political leaders. The same issue that originally boomed him also featured a typical tirade against the 'dangerous' Charles Stewart Parnell, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party and 'a deadly foe to Britain.' Yeats later claimed that biting his lip was made

[84] W.E. Henley, 'A New Irish Poet', *Scots Observer*, I, 16 (9 Mar 1889), 446-7.
[85] *Letters of W.E. Henley*, p.196.
[86] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 99, 217, 250.

easier by Henley's aristocratic magnanimity—while the Trinity-educated JBY eyed Parnell as a rabble-rouser, in private Henley called the fierce orator 'noble.'[87]

Relations may also have been smoothed, however, as the Irish question became increasingly entangled in Henley's mind with the nature of empire. His sceptical, nostalgic, patriotic but insular Toryism had unfolded in the late 1880s into an expansive imperialism, attributed by some to his friendship with Kipling and by others to the *Observer's* owner Walter Blaikie.[88] Yeats, who was able to observe the progress of his mentor's politics prior to and during his editorship, had no need of Theosophy to awaken him to Ireland's relationship with the colonies. Analogies had been drawn between British rapacity in India and British misrule in Ireland since the Whigs of Thomas Moore's generation, and were a common rhetorical device of neo-Fenians like Maud Gonne, the fiery radical who was to obsess Yeats over the coming decades. In January 1888, his review of the poet and Land War agitator Wilfred Scawen Blunt for *United Ireland* digressed into Blunt's writings from India in 1884, then administered by Lord Ripon—a figure of hatred for Kipling. Given Ripon's contribution to Gladstone's first Irish Land Act, Yeats pointed out, 'it is interesting to know how they thought of him in that perhaps other Ireland.' More amusingly, a year later he enjoyed watching Gonne harangue her sister's suitor Captain Pilcher for his service in Punjab (it is very probable he knew Kipling, who had often dined with his battalion at Lahore and based Mulvaney, supposedly, on one of its Irish corporals).[89] Yeats it seems voiced no objection, on the other hand, to his Theosophist schoolfriend Charles Johnston serving as an Indian magistrate. On Johnston's return in December 1890, Yeats found him 'greatly improved by his Indian work', and JBY may have been thinking of him in the

[87] According to the first draft of Yeats's *Autobiography*. See W.B. Yeats, *Memoirs: Autobiography—First Draft; Journal*, ed. Denis Donoghue (London, 1972), p.39. For further embarrassing mismatches see the *Observer* of 5 Aug 1890, by which point it had acquired the subtitle 'An Imperial Review.' The issue contained three attacks on Parnell and Home Rule, but also Yeats's 'Ballad of Father Gilligan' alongside Henley's inoffensive 'Summer Song'. Again, on 31 Oct 1891 the paper called Parnell a schoolmaster of blackguardism in a piece sarcastically titled '"Old" Ireland', but also printed Yeats's semi-patriotic poem 'Kathleen'.

[88] Lycett (*Rudyard Kipling*, p.277) ascribes it purely to the periodical's agenda, but John Kelly's biographical sketch (Yeats, *Letters*, i, 492) identifies Kipling's influence as well as Blaikie's.

[89] Yeats, *Uncollected Prose*, i, 129; Yeats, *Letters*, i, 137. The 2nd Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers was stationed at Lahore's Mian Mir garrison from 1885 to 1887. The regiment features as the 'Tyneside Tail Twisters' and the 'Ould Regiment' in several Kipling stories. According to a former colour sergeant, Kipling was introduced to Corporal MacNamara in the canteen having requested to be put 'into direct touch with Tommy Atkins'. See John Fraser, *Sixty Years in Uniform* (London, 1939), p.139.

If not at Lahore, Kipling may also have met Pilcher during the Boer War, in which he captured Ladybrand. Despite her elder sister's animosity, Pilcher did marry Kathleen Gonne and ended his career a Major General. John Lane published his diligent imitations of Kipling (*East is East: Stories of Indian Life*) in 1922.

1910s when he wrote, in an essay on Irish family life, that 'though he go to India, and rule provinces' there was no risk that such a man would be drilled to regularity by bureaucratic drudgery. He would still remain (like Kipling's *Kim*, who serves both government and guru), a 'passionate Irish boy.'[90]

Though his views would become more strident, Yeats was always more interested in saving India from modernity than from colonial impoverishment. Hence the imperial dimension allowed Henley, whom Yeats suggests became an enthusiast of cultural nationalism during their friendship, to avert a clash between his Irish sympathies and partisan commitments. Henley's supposed ambition to set up a Dublin newspaper that would back Hyde's Gaelic League from a Unionist standpoint was entirely congruent in his mindset. The imperial connection would allow national life to flourish without slipping into a narrow provincialism—an argument George Russell repudiated but Yeats, who was never content to spend his whole career in Dublin, may not have entirely discountenanced.[91] Ireland was quite prepared for self-government, Yeats recalled Henley once admitting, '"but we have to think of the Empire. Do persuade those young men that this great thing has to go on."' Yeats declined to propagandize for Britannia, but in a climate when Home Rule and Ireland's future as an imperial dominion seemed certain, the quietistic attitude this implied remained acceptable to him for the next decade. 'There was', he wrote of Henley in the first draft of his memoirs, 'comfort in such an attitude of mind.' Furthermore, as his conviction developed that modern culture was no more than 'a bundle of fragments', he came to regard such contradictory mindsets as Henley's—and, if asked, may well have described Kipling's—as men of their time. This apprehension of fragmentation was, of course, informed by his bitter experience of Irish quarrels. In a possibly apocryphal story, he remembered that the only man in Dublin who was interested in hearing him lecture on this doctrine in the early Nineties was an official of the Primrose League, who was also an initiate of the Fenian Brotherhood. '"I am an extreme conservative,"' the man explained, '"apart from Ireland."'[92]

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[90] Yeats, *Letters,* i, 237-8; John Butler Yeats, 'Back to the Home', p.33.
[91] Russell debated in 1901 how the Irish 'race inheritance can best be preserved and developed.... To some the natural outcome is coalition with another power, and a frank and full acceptance of the imperial ideal. I ask myself, What can it profit my race it if gain the empire of the world and yet lose its own soul.' A.E., 'Nationality and Imperialism' in Lady Gregory (ed.), *Ideals in Ireland* (London, 1901), p.16.
[92] Yeats, *Memoirs,* pp.38-9; Yeats, *Autobiographies,* p.163-4.

Henley's fierce opinions on social issues were to some degree performative, exaggerated gestures of a piece with the *Observer's* contrarian ethos. His Tennysonian hatred of the 'mob' and opposition to universal franchise, however, was in principle attractive to both Kipling and Yeats. His sallies against ruthless tycoons and the lawless power of 'the monster, Capital' must have appealed to Kipling, fresh from his American tour, while Yeats and A.E. saw fit to praise one of Henley's heavy-handed satires on the New Woman and her effeminate abettor.[93] A further trait that was grow ever more prominent in the attitudes of his protégés, long after his own death, was Henley's preoccupation with conflict as a historical and social constant. The *Observer's* euphemistic credo was 'Common Sense', a potent blend of the Carlylean work ethic with contemporary Social Darwinism, whereby 'the unfit' went to the wall. In 1892 Henley published a poem by Edward Cushing, another of his regulars, who wrote that what England needed was 'war righteous and true' and the 'discipline of pain.' Such sentiments could be found across the late Victorian political spectrum—in the chivalric science-fiction of the left-leaning Chesterton, for instance—but they would take on a more ominous tenor in 1938. In one of his last major poems, Yeats drew from the ghost of the rebel John Mitchel a cry that was almost a parody of Kipling's trademark god-bothering diction: '"Send war in our time, O Lord!"'[94] In a final ironic twist, each man would project his most intemperate fantasies of cathartic violence not on the degraded metropole that they both resented, but on the other's homeland.[95]

Solitary Dreamers

Henley's young men, however, were probably drawn to him less for the sake of these particular political antagonisms than by the governing strain of pessimistic individualism that such attitudes betrayed in this garrulous man. Kipling, especially, saw in Henley his own deep-seated sense of the human soul's ultimate, incommunicable solitude, though he gave voice to it—as was his callow

[93] In its 23 Jul 1892 issue, the *Observer* had condemned Andrew Carnegie for using armed Pinkerton agents ('mercenaries' and 'bravos') against striking steelworkers. The poem in question, 'As like the Woman as you can', appeared in the issue of 18 July 1891. See Yeats, *Letters*, i, 264.

[94] McDonald, *British Literary Culture*, p.45; Edward Cushing, 'For England's sake', *National Observer*, 16 Apr 1892; Yeats, 'Under Ben Bulben', *Variorum Poems*, p.638.

[95] See Kipling, *Letters*, iv, 421, 470. To the dismay of an Indian student who called on him in 1937, Yeats recommended that India settle its Hindu-Muslim discord with a 200,000-man battle royale ('"Shanti? Life is a conflict"'). See R.K. Dasgupta (ed.), *Rabindranath Tagore and William Butler Yeats: the Story of a Literary Friendship* (Delhi: Department of Modern Indian Languages, University of Delhi, 1965), p.22.

habit—only through tentative flippancy. 'Since we be only islands shouting misunderstanding to each other across seas of speech or writing,' he wrote, in January 1890, by way of avoiding detailed comment on Henley's hospital poems, 'I am going to say nothing.' Evidently conned from Matthew Arnold, he repeated the sentiment in June and reused the image in the novel he was writing that summer, *The Light that Failed.*[96] It accorded with his own lonely, unsettled circumstances. He suffered a breakdown after one year in London, went on another round-the-world ten months later, and between 1892 and 1896 spent most of his time secluded in rural Vermont, living with his new wife in a timber house he designed in the shape of a ship.[97] But Arnold's warnings of cultural fragmentation, and the severance of the artist from society, were also to vex his opinions for the remainder of his life. Continually harping on the poet's duty to represent his age—and his 'tribe'—he was equally adamant that the fate of a poet was to be finally ignored.

London may have been a ten-ringed circus of coteries and standoffish clubs, but the artist as solitary—'the sad, the lonely, the insatiable', as Yeats described his doomed, overreaching heroes in 1892—was much more emblematic of 1890s literary culture.[98] The Rhymers and the Regatta were both all-male brotherhoods, and even the bearish Kipling—intimate only with Balestier—yearned for companionship in a misogynistic tone, for which the closest corollary may have been the homoerotic undercurrent that Lionel Johnson, John Gray and Charles Ricketts brought to the Cheshire Cheese.[99] In spite of this sometimes frenetic impulse to associate, however, genius was usually conceived in the Nineties as a restless vagabond, exemplified by the well-travelled Symons's valorization of gypsies. Henley, who irreligiously appointed himself 'captain of my soul', failed to see Kipling off from Euston Station when he left on his honeymoon in February 1892. Describing the marriage as 'a blow',

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[96] Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 8, 14. Lockwood exhibited a similar pessimism in some rather unhelpful letters he wrote to Aunt Edith, during a period of emotional crisis for her. The most hopeless thing in life, he felt, was the 'terrible individuality, or rather isolation, of each human maggot' (Ankers, *The Pater*, p.76).

[97] Kipling made nine trans-Atlantic or trans-Pacific crossings between 1882 and 1894, and the monogram he designed for himself was also shaped like an ark (punning on his initials). For details on his Vermont house, Naulakha, see Judith Plotz, 'Kipling's very special relationship: Kipling in America, America in Kipling' in Howard J. Booth (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Rudyard Kipling* (Cambridge, 2011), p.38.

[98] 'The Rose of Battle', *Variorum Poems*, p.114. Yeats was continuing to develop his conception of life as interminable conflict, waged by men whose romantic desires are out of proportion to their humble fates.

[99] Idle speculation as to the physicality of Kipling's affection for Balestier usually pivots on several quotations from his 1890 novel *The Light that Failed*, e.g. 'Oh, my men!—my beautiful men!' See Martin Seymour-Smith, *Rudyard Kipling* (London, 1989), p.189. For the Rhymers' under-acknowledged homoerotic element, see Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 108.

he held like several other contemporaries to the opinion that Kipling's roving, Byronic spark had been quenched by union with a pushy New England WASP. Symons, mourning his youthful forays with Yeats in nocturnal Paris, was to impute the same baleful influence to the 'terrible eye' of Lady Gregory, whom he called 'La Strega' (the witch).[100] Surveying the portraits of Gregory and others in Dublin's Municipal Gallery, after more than thirty years of collaboration, Yeats would write generously that 'my glory was I had such friends.'[101] But one of the plays they produced together, *The King's Threshold* (1904), continued to explore his Nineties sense of the Romantic poet as outcast, struggling towards self-articulation because he has been denied expression through the community. His contempt for the unlettered was sharpened by his editing of Blake from 1889 to 1893, but for tragic archetype Irish literature furnished him with Clarence Mangan (1803-1849), the heart-wrenched scrivener's clerk who rolled a life of bereft indignity into his lyric 'The Nameless One.'

> ...tell how, trampled, derided, hated,
> And worn by weakness, disease, and wrong,
> He fled for shelter to GOD—who mated
> His soul with song.[102]

In reaction against the social art of the Victorian novelist, the Henleyan poet would be an independent filibuster, confronting society through renegade attacks from beyond the pale. Both Kipling and Yeats, in their different guises, aspired to this role. Even George Moore, who so mocked Yeats's idiosyncratic persona, wrote in a letter to Nancy Cunard that the fin de siècle was an 'eccentric'—rather than 'concentric'—age, in which the artist, instead of drawing strength from his surroundings, stood aloof.[103] If some derived from this sentiment the solitary type of a poetic 'dreamer' scorning the world, their purism did not preclude attempts to legislate for society surreptitiously. The rather sing-song lyric by Arthur O'Shaughnessy that, for later generations, epitomized late Victorian affectation and self-parody begins familiarly enough: 'we are the music-

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[100] Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.329; Hone (ed.), *J.B. Yeats: Letters to his son*, pp.151-2.
[101] 'The Municipal Gallery Re-visited' (1937), *Variorum Poems*, p.604.
[102] Clarence Mangan, *Poems by James Clarence Mangan: with Biographical Introduction*, ed. John Mitchel (New York, 1859), p.452. Mangan was a frequent point of reference in Yeats's early articles and reviews, one of which called this 'far the strongest of all his poems' (*Uncollected Prose*, i, 118). Consider also the title of his unfinished novel *The Speckled Bird*, derived from Jeremiah 12:9: 'Mine inheritance is as the speckled bird, all the birds of heaven are against it.'
[103] Quoted in Beckson, *London in the 1890s*, p.44.

makers, / And we are the dreamers of dreams'. But its conclusion, overturning kingdoms with a humming music that Kipling's more ponderous 'prophesying' rarely attained, makes an extravagantly authoritative claim for the world's literary 'movers and shakers.'

> We, in the ages lying
> In the buried past of the earth,
> Built Nineveh with our sighing,
> And Babel itself in our mirth;
> And o'erthrew them with prophesying
> To the old of the new world's worth;
> For each age is a dream that is dying,
> Or one that is coming to birth.[104]

Compared with Shelley's *Defence of Poetry*, which as Philip Marcus has pointed out came to Yeats's attention probably at the same point in the mid-80s, O'Shaughnessy's flippant megalomania may seem a burlesque.[105] But its spiralling tunefulness betrays a vein of pessimistic equivocation, in the manner of Tennyson, that would eventually attain its modernist, apocalyptic acme via the godless Biblicism of Kipling and the occult history of Yeats. That Britain's pomp would be 'one with Nineveh and Tyre' (see p.224) was the former's most quoted augury, while the sinister nativity of a new era amidst the wreckage of a finished cycle would prove the latter's most enduring image.

O'Shaughnessy also reframed the usage of a Romantic word that would become the most common—and most slippery—imaginative placeholder of the fin de siècle. For the preceding century 'dream' had denoted, by turns, both idle fancy and passionate ambition. Linked to the subjective turn in literature, it had signified delusion as well as epiphany, while in respect to art's moral purpose it had served the ends of both purists and social reformers—the first sometimes cloaking the second, as in Tennyson's *The Princess.* These oscillations became more pronounced in the Nineties. The dream is a state of heightened awareness for Pater, but also an expression of mutual isolation, 'each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world.'[106] Taking their cue from Aestheticism, it consequently became a preferred strategy of Victorian positivism's detractors to dismiss teleologies of progress and reform as 'dreams'. As we saw in Yeats and Kipling's juvenilia, however, by their

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[104] 'Ode' (1874), Arthur O'Shaughnessy, *Poems of Arthur O'Shaughnessy*, ed. W.A. Percy (New Haven, 1923), p.39.
[105] Philip L. Marcus, *Yeats and the Beginning of the Irish Renaissance* (Syracuse, 1987), p.xx. Yeats frequently quoted from 'We are the Music Makers'.
[106] Pater, *The Renaissance*, p.119.

adolescence the heroic idylls which Morris had shored, by way of secular religion, against modern delusion had begun to dismiss themselves in the same manner. Hence chivalric Europe fades into the numinous refinement of Lionel Johnson's 'The Age of a Dream.' If there could be no consensus on reality, then no-one could claim more than a relativistic and sentimental relationship with the past.[107]

Kipling and Yeats both make a territorial claim on this grand, angry dismissal of both world and history as *maya*, or illusion. '*Don't* dream', Dufferin warns Lansdowne in 'One Viceroy Resigns', while the Anglo-Irish lineage Yeats would later fashion for himself possessed a perverse genius exemplified by Swift and 'God-appointed Berkeley that proved all things a dream'.[108] It served their anti-modern visions for India and Ireland. They are even more discursively intertwined, however, at the opposite pole of fin de siècle dreaming, where reverie foregrounds an artistic will to power. O'Shaughnessy's 'dreams' are not common fancies. They are only available to 'dreamers', the ecstatic few who give form to the ideal of an era—an ideal which is always dying because a generation's ardour wears it out at the seams, whereupon the succeeding age treads roughly on the dreams of its precursor. In 1892 Yeats addressed to his Irish audience 'the love I lived, the dream I knew', tentatively justifying his political claims on the basis of personal emotion. His sense of discrepancy between real and imagined Irelands steadily hardened, but so did his application of the dream discourse. Speaking to an American audience in 1913, he announced that modern art was arising from the 'battle' of artists seeking to fulfil incomplete reality by summoning forth 'from the invisible world, the compensating dream'. It was inchoate Ireland's privileged destiny to be 'in the midst of that contest.'[109]

It is useful to perceive this discursive oscillation as strategic, enabling a flexible relationship to public affairs. What superficially appeared as withdrawal, from what the Rhymers regarded as the Victorian 'impurities' of politics and science, could also serve as a strategy for critiquing and undermining the social mainstream from an imaginative fringe. It was to Yeats and Kipling's

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[107] 'Desolate and forlorn, / We hunger against hope for the lost heritage'. When lecturing in later life, Yeats frequently cited 'The Age of a Dream' as one of the characteristic poems of the 1890s. See, for example, NLI MSS 30607, 30088, 30635.

[108] Kipling, *Complete Verse*, p.60; Yeats, 'Blood and the Moon', *Variorum Poems*, p.481.

[109] 'To Ireland in the Coming Times', ibid., p.139; NLI MS 30627. It is characteristic of Yeats's thought that a moment of consummation should also be brought about by, or give rise to, a period of conflict.

advantage that their own visionary margins lay beyond London. The political dimensions of their position also enabled them, as Henley seems to have perceived, to appeal both to an elite cohort of dreamers and to a popular, communal vision. They could not afford to ignore either constituency, though their instincts tended in opposite directions—Yeats's to the initiate, Kipling's to the laity. 'The arts lie dreaming of things to come,' wrote the former in 1898, while the ambitions the latter developed in this decade are perhaps best expressed in the disarming enquiry Cecil Rhodes, whom he met in 1897, liked to put to new acquaintances: 'what's your dream?'[110] Each poet continues to deploy the word constantly until, after the First World War, they preside over its discreditation. The question they pondered in 1890s London however, with all their cunning, was what dream did the modern world crave? Running through all the decade's vicissitudes, and animating the axial relations represented by Johnson and Henley, was their determination to formulate a redeeming mythology. Their experiments towards this end, conducted contemporaneously, are the subject of the next chapter.

[110] Yeats, 'The Autumn of the Body', *Essays and Introductions*, p.191; Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.79.

6. Plotting and Scheming: Experiments towards a Modern Mythology

The period from Yeats's befriending of Morris (mid-1887) and Henley (mid-1888) to Kipling's departure for Vermont in February 1892 was one of irregular health, exhausting activity, and experimentation with a variety of literary modes. Both authors were 'plotting and scheming' in their own way, as Kipling put it, 'to write something that should "take" with the English public.'[1] Their folklore-gathering, short stories, ballads and novels will be assessed over the coming pages, as chronologically as possible, before their more ambitious notions of synthesizing mythic corpora start to bear fruit in the decade's middle years.

The pages of Henley's *Observer* provide a running commentary on the frenzied activity of this period. May 1891 offers a paradigmatic example. In this month, Yeats introduced Le Gallienne to the Rhymers' Club, which was progressing towards its first volume. Simultaneously, Mathers was preparing to refashion the ritual and symbolism of the Golden Dawn, a process in which Yeats would play an important role. It facilitated the desire for research into psychic and occult phenomena that had forced his resignation from the Theosophical Society in November. The *Observer* passed mordant observation on both of the trends represented, attributing both to some heretical Nineties *zeitgeist*. The urge to amalgamate, whether with an artistic or political brotherhood, or spiritual order of acolytes, was afflicting all classes. Forming everywhere were fanatic coteries and cabals, from the 'Hedda Gablerites' to the 'Little-Ben-Tillettites', according to an article of May 9th titled simply '"Fin de Siècle"'. But underlying this mindset, the paper announced in the following issue, was 'the philomythic tendency.' 'The Blavatsky is a proof of it,' admitted one of its resident satirists with a sly regard. 'In any case she showed to admiration that myth is the one important necessary of life for the average man.'[2]

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[1] Jerome (ed.), *My First Book*, p.97.

[2] '"Fin de Siècle"', *National Observer*, V, 129 (9 May 1891), 631; 'A Suburban Prophetess', ibid., V, 130 (16 May 1891), 652. *Hedda Gabler* was first performed in London in April 1891, Kipling and Yeats both distrusting the theatrical revolution represented by Ibsen. Tillett, a firebrand orator, was among the leaders of the 1889 London Dock Strike. The *Observer's* terminology was prompted by E.A. Abbott's *Philomythus*, a recent castigation of Cardinal Newman.

Once again, Yeats's magisterial prose writings set his imprint on the decade with a succinct title: *Mythologies*. This chapter will compare his and Kipling's contemporary formal experiments which, though producing often quite different results, reflected their equally acute, outsiders' sensitivity to London's philomythic bent.

Translating Cultures: the Literary Market in a 'Philomythic' Metropole

Late nineteenth-century Europe furnished itself with a plethora of activities targeted at determining common origins. Child psychology, as discussed in the opening chapter, was one such means of drawing out a secular chain of human being. So too was the anthropological research that found its chief spokesman in James Frazer (his 1890 *The Golden Bough* was, for a time, an obsession of Kipling's), who introduced suggestive and appealing narratives of cultural evolution. Syncretic movements like Theosophy, and the more closeted Golden Dawn, not only popularized these trends of thought by re-fitting them to a religious framework. They also translated them to the artistic world. All contributed to what Walter Benjamin later described, with mingled nostalgia and misgiving, as the 'auratic perception'—an aesthetics whereby a disenchanted urban civilization could regain an appreciation of myth.[3] Benjamin's visual emphasis would have been quite comprehensible to the nephew of Burne-Jones—at work in 1890 on his monumental *Star of Bethlehem*—as well as his fervent Irish admirer. In an introduction to Wilde's fairytales, Yeats would later remember London at this time as being 'overshadowed' by the senior painters, while he found in their influence 'something of the mystery, something of the excitement of a religious cult' (recalling Mathers's interest in hiring artists to produce ceremonial symbols and draperies).[4] As contemporary interest grew in the auratic sensibility of 'primitive' cultures, moreover, the young poets' work came to the attention of critics and reviewers, filtered through this emergent philomythic discourse.

This early primitivism had a taint of the violent, resurgent character that was to so alarm Benjamin in the 1920s. In 1885 Morris had told Georgiana Burne-Jones, Kipling's aunt, that he wished to see

[3] 'The Work of art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility' in Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings of Walter Benjamin*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott and others (4 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1996-2003), iv, 255.
[4] NLI MS 30158. Burne-Jones remained one of Yeats's favourite painters.

'barbarism once more flooding the world, and real feeling and passions, however rudimentary, taking the place of our wretched hypocrisies.' Morris probably shaped Yeats's own reviewing terminology. In December 1888 the latter passed on the great man's compliments to Douglas Hyde, and two months later credited Todhunter's *The Banshee and other Poems*, for the benefit of his American readers, with 'a wild and pungent Celtic flavor.'[5] Furthermore, if *Oisin* attempted a heroic register, the medieval Ireland depicted in the prose fictions Yeats would publish in Henley's *Observer* is at times a brutally violent place, reminiscent of Kipling's Frontier (both men, for example, describe grisly crucifixions).[6] This side of Yeats's oeuvre tended to be overlooked by reviewers, perhaps because Kipling's reputation for brutality and barbarism was already so dominant—a tendency that, like so much related to each poet's peculiar genius, was imputed to his own personality. 'He is far happier with Afghan homicides and old ford-watchers,' deduced Andrew Lang in 1889, two months before actually meeting Kipling, 'than with the flirts and fribbles of the hills.'

> His "black men" (as Macaulay would have called them) are excellent men, full of courage, cunning, revenge, and with points of honour of their own. We are more in sympathy with their ancient semi-barbarism than with the inexpensive rank and second-hand fashion of Simla.'

Lang was perceptive too of Kipling's precursors, citing the roguish gamblers and prospectors of Bret Harte—another dweller at 'the fringes of alien civilizations', now made good in metropolitan Britain.[7] The most over-read of bookmen, he notes that India was by no means novel literary material. The likes of Bithia Mary Croker (daughter of a Protestant clergyman, she had grown up a few miles from Hyde in Roscommon), had already rendered India 'a bore' with their 'tediously provincial' scenes of Anglo-Indian life. However, Kipling's fictions self-consciously ventured outside the banal pale of cantonment and civil lines. It is notable that while Yeats was seeking to reinvigorate the mellifluous 'faery' verse essayed in the 1870s by Allingham and O'Shaughnessy, and excise the comedy and sentiment from Irish antiquarian fiction, Kipling was undertaking a simultaneous renovation of the

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[5] Quoted in Beckson, *London in the 1890s*, p.xiv; Yeats, *Letters*, i 112; W.B. Yeats, *Letters to the New Island*, ed. George Bornstein and Hugh Witemeyer (London and Basingstoke, 1989), p.89.
[6] In 'The Crucifixion of the Outcast'—first published as 'A Crucifixion', *National Observer*, XI, 279 (24 Mar 1894), 479-81—and 'The Man Who Would Be King' (1888), respectively.
[7] Green (ed.), *Kipling: the Critical Heritage*, pp.44-5.

colonial genre. By 1891, Lang felt he could announce a trend. 'There has, indeed, arisen a taste for exotic literature: people have become alive to the strangeness and fascination of the world.'[8]

The description of Kipling as a visitor from the alien fringes fitted the author's own understanding of his role. In one of his London sketches, 'A Really Good Time', he informed the *Civil & Military's* knowing readership that he 'wrote stories, all about little pieces of India, carefully arranged and expurgated for the English public.'[9] Within a few years, these two sharply polarized audiences would give way to an open world of opportunity, of which the pirated *Plain Tales* at Yokohama had offered him a token (see p.112).[10] Although he would come to write and sell books worldwide, however, he retained the dutiful import-export mentality. Later in the decade, when Kipling more fully understood the many thresholds he had permeated, the American publisher F.N. Doubleday asked him to produce a foreword for a new collected edition. Rejoicing in an obscure mix of Indian and maritime idioms, Kipling cunningly chose to cast himself as an Arab merchant, instructing his *nakhoda* or sea captain (i.e. Doubleday) to safely pilot a *buggalow* laden with Eastern treasures to understocked Western marts. David Damrosch has called Kipling 'perhaps the first global writer in a modern sense'. He not only understood the implications of his mercantile role, but also incorporated it into the celebrity that he and his agents shrewdly husbanded.[11]

Yeats, too, conducted his own literary import trade with assiduous pragmatism. If this appeared at odds with his otherworldly persona, it bulked his private correspondence. He treated the minor poet Nora Hopper's plagiarism of Tynan with both levity and acumen in 1895. 'Her great lack is solidity & lucidity,' runs the original draft. 'However she is a fine recruit to our little regiment & can only help to foster a taste for our Celtic wares.' A year earlier, he had even used the brisk publisher's term 'local colour' to promote another such recruit, Nora Vynne, who had sent him 'a vigerus interesting Irish

[8] Ibid., p.71.
[9] Kipling, *Abaft the Funnel,* p.267.
[10] As Lockwood observed in a letter to Aunt Edith of 1890, 'it will be literally true that in one year this youngster will have had more said about his work, over a wider extent of the world's surface than some of the greatest of England's writers in their whole lives.' Quoted in Harry Ricketts, *The Unforgiving Minute: a Life of Rudyard Kipling* (London, 1999), pp.164-5.
[11] Rudyard Kipling, *Two Forewords* (Garden City, NY, 1935), pp.24-26; David Damrosch, *How to Read World Literature* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p.110.

story.'[12] In respect to his own product, he understood his volumes as complete articles, and lavished fussy attention on covers and artwork. Notably, shamrocks and green were prohibited. As George Bornstein has highlighted, WBY was highly aware of the meanings pregnant in the 'bibliographic codes' of book design and presentation. He was sensitized to this side of production by his work on Blake and association with Morris. In 1903, the foundation of Dun Emer (later Cuala) Press in Dublin gave him complete control (plus a *swadeshi* ethos), but even when Macmillan published him he engaged in close dialogue with artists like Charles Shannon and T. Sturge Moore over the cover design. The visual element, furthermore, aided in anchoring his work within the Irish landscape.[13] With his mutual Pre-Raphaelite background, Kipling took an even more painstaking approach, frequently pushing to select his own illustrators and once upbraiding one for undersizing an elephant's ear. Again the publisher was Macmillan and the agent, adept at keeping his many clients happy, A.P. Watt. Likewise, graphic expertise was still available at home. 'The illustrations are admirable,' noted a reviewer of Yeats's *The Secret Rose* in 1897. 'There are not many points of likeness between Mr. Yeats and Mr. Kipling; but each has a father who draws beautiful pictures for his son's books.'[14] Kipling went further, in fact, inking twenty-three sketches for the *Just So Stories* (1902) in his own Beardsley-esque style.

Translation is a useful paradigm to think about their parallel strategies for marketing their foreign wares. I use the word on various levels. *Poems* (1895), the first volume for which Yeats found himself with sufficient clout to direct production and artwork, also contained a glossary of Gaelic names and local references for the benefit of English readers. Only slightly more forgiving of Saxon naiveté, Kipling simply reined in his Hobson-Jobson usages after Mulvaney's speech in 'The Three Musketeers' baffled a London reviewer.[15] Those that remained were calculated to privilege the reader

[12] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 426, 366. Perhaps hesitant to imply that he was Colonel of this Celtic 'regiment', Yeats replaced it with 'group', and 'recruit' with 'new coming'.
[13] George Bornstein, 'Yeats and Romanticism' in Howes and Kelly (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to W.B. Yeats*, p.26.
[14] London, British Library MS 54896 (A.P. Watt to Frederick Macmillan, 15 June 1907); Jeffares (ed.), *Yeats: the Critical Heritage*, p.97. For further examples of their exacting standards as regards book production, see Yeats, *Letters*, i, 434 and Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 148.
[15] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 149; see the London *World*, XXXI, 788 (7 Aug 1889), 24. 'Pages in Waiting' found the story 'rather unintelligible to home-keeping Englishmen'.

without confusing him—'telling foreign words', as the 1920s critic Bonamy Dobrée termed them.[16] Less important for their own sake than for their impact on the text around them, they also indicated a more thorough stylistic effort at the adaptation of English to foreign environments, and thence the renovation of the literary register from the imperial margins. This same effort became particularly urgent for Yeats in December 1892, when Hyde inaugurated the National Literary Society in Dublin by heralding the 'de-Anglicization' of Ireland—a speech that would lead to the foundation of the Gaelic League the following year. Yeats, who would only ever possess a rudimentary grasp of Gaelic, made his case two weeks after Hyde's lecture. 'Can we not build up a national tradition, a national literature,' he asked the readers of *United Ireland*, 'by translating or retelling in English, which shall have an indefinable Irish quality of rythm [sic] and style, all that is best of the ancient literature?' American authors provided a precedent and model—a lesson Kipling had already learned from his boyhood craze for dialect writing. Yeats's argument went on to cite 'Walt Whitman, Thoreau, Bret Harte, and Cable' as proof of how English could be made parochially expressive for the needs of a colonist class, before in turn imparting renewed vigour to the mother tongue.[17] Though Yeats abandoned the use of dialect in prose after 1893 (see p.129, n.8), vernacular idiom continued to feature in his verse and, more importantly, was given renewed impetus by Synge and Joyce after they observed it in his drama.

Coterminous with this process of linguistic glossing and exposition was one of *cultural* translation. While Yeats rephrased Hyde's legends to give meaning to a modern polity, Kipling translated India in an effort to imaginatively integrate Britain with its Empire. Moreover, each man translated himself—both his work and personality—for the benefit of Anglo-Indians, Anglo-Irish, metropolitan bookmen, Americans and various other audiences. Cultural translation, as Chapter 4 began to suggest, also signified cultural renovation. Simon During has traced this process, whereby an anodyne industrial metropole imports shipments of 'subjective intensity' from one of its overseas dependencies, to the

[16] Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, p.4.

[17] Yeats, *Uncollected Prose*, i, 255. Kipling's devotion to Whitman (Ch.3) and Harte (Ch.1) has already been mentioned, though Yeats's appreciation for the latter appears to have been lukewarm (*Letters*, i, 273). Thoreau's *Walden* planted the original bean-rows of 'Innisfree' in its author's mind (*Autobiographies*, p.85). A particularly interesting choice of referent, George Washington Cable wrote stories about a distinctively liminal, ex-colonial caste: the Creoles of Louisiana. Kipling and an American woman weighed Cable's merits against those of Joel Chandler Harris in July 1889, on a visit to the 'Old Faithful' geyser at Yellowstone (*From Sea to Sea*, ii, 105).

eighteenth century (James MacPherson's ersatz *Works of Ossian* is a notable example, which Yeats boasted he had superseded).[18] By the fin-de-siècle, this established custom of translation was stimulated less by metropolitan desire than by needy anxiety, Morris's ill-tempered demand for barbaric passions alluding to the supposed onset of decadence. Seamus Deane has observed the post-Darwinian strain in this discourse, noting that all the 'theorists of racial degeneration' contemporary with Morris—Galton, Nordau, Lombroso—'shared with literary critics, poets and novelists the conviction that the decline of the West must be halted by some infusion or transfusion of energy from an "unspoiled" source.'[19]

The racial understanding of cultural life was certainly engrained in Yeats and Kipling's mindsets. We have already seen the compulsion to miscegenation and violent admixtures in 'Mohini Chatterjee' and the native monologues. Hybrid vigour arises literally from a transfusion in Kipling's 'Ballad of East and West'—

> They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on fire and fresh-cut sod,
> On the hilt and haft of the Khyber knife, and the Wondrous Names of God.[20]

—an oath followed by the gift of a child. What is more important to us, however, is that Kipling and Yeats comprehend their activities through this prevailing discourse. Their renovation of language and literary form is understood as a transfusion, a thorough-breeding. Its purity is guaranteed by its retrieval from a 'primal world', and it is universal because possessed of a 'barbarous truth' (Yeats used both phrases in his early reviews of Ferguson).[21] Reaching back to a place of primal origins, such a renewal was intended to strip away at one thrust the superficial accretions of society, as well as the corruptions of dissatisfactory contemporary literature. Both men had already deplored the introverted

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[18] Simon During, 'Postcolonialism and Globalization: towards a Historicization of their Inter-relation', *Cultural Studies* XIV, 3 (July, 2000), 401. For Yeats's pleasure at hearing his own *Wanderings of Oisin* praised over MacPherson's purported translations of the heroic bard, see *Letters*, i, 141-2.

[19] Seamus Deane, 'Introduction' in Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson and Edward W. Said, *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* (Minneapolis, 1990), p.12.

[20] Kipling, *Complete Verse*, p.189.

[21] Yeats, *Uncollected Prose*, i, 90, 87. Yeats ascribed the latter phrase to 'Spencer', identified by his editor John P. Frayne as Herbert Spencer, who discussed the folk beliefs of primitive man in his *Principles of Sociology*. The phrase is actually from Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (I, vi, 12—where Una is rescued from Sansloy by the 'salvage nation'). In fact, Herbert Spencer was bitterly opposed to what he regarded as the 're-barbarization' of society through literature that 'reeks of violence.' Kipling, 'in whose writings one-tenth of nominal Christianity is joined with nine-tenths of real paganism,' was his chief culprit. The growth of civilization would establish eternal peace, he argued, a theory regarded by both Kipling and Yeats as highly dubious. See Herbert Spencer, *Facts and Comments* (London, 1902), p.131.

enfeeblement of metropolitan writing, Yeats latching more dogmatically onto the dominance of the realist novel of society—George Eliot became a particular pet-hate during his art school years. Over the coming years they would experiment with the novel itself, attempt a strange fiction of psychic and occult phenomena, and deepen their understanding of 'romance' before reaffirming their commitment to lyricism. But the *modus operandi* through which Yeats first established himself in London, and whose importance for Kipling has been overlooked, was folklore.

Folklore: Enchantment and Vernacular Language, 1887-1891

As James Pethica has pointed out, when Yeats met Synge and Lady Gregory in 1896 his reputation was still chiefly that of a folklorist, who had put in weary hours in the British Museum reading room annotating and anthologizing the gleanings of Georgian antiquaries like Thomas Crofton Croker.[22] In his own lifetime, Lady Wilde had published pseudonymous nationalist verse while carrying on the respectable, if niche, tradition which Yeats now made his vehicle. Echoing the oeuvre of 'Speranza' (whom he met before encountering her son), the *Boston Pilot* published his fustian 'How Ferencz Renyi Kept Silent' on 6 August 1887.[23] Five days later, Yeats arrived in Sligo from London and grasped his first chance to map, over a physical landscape, the corpus of Catholic peasant lore he had delved among O'Leary's books in Dublin. It was, furthermore, a personally redolent landscape—this was the same visit (see p.26) when he struggled to shake off the coils of 'the old snake' reverie. Because it allowed Yeats to entwine his poetic celebrity more closely with this Gaelic cultural frontier, as important as the folktales themselves was the actual process of gathering them. The lyrics that intersperse his folkloric publications emerged from this hobbyist practice of cottage-calling. After duly pumping some family acquaintances and local characters, he thus enclosed in a letter to Tynan some 'trivial verses the first fruits of my fairy huntings'. This was 'The Fairy Doctor', a piece of

[22] James Pethica, 'Yeats, folklore, and Irish legend' in Howes and Kelly (eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to W.B. Yeats*, p.129.

[23] The poem equates Ireland with another discontented partner in an unequal union: Hungary under the Habsburgs. The same analogy would more famously be taken up by Arthur Griffith, founder of Sinn Féin.

juvenilia that deploys as both noun and verb the word which would be most overused by his log-rollers over the coming years: 'glamour.'[24]

Yeats used the word to denote magical bewitchment ('glamoured by fairies'). To reviewers it likewise meant enchantment, but in an aesthetic or 'auratic' sense. It implied the re-enchantment of the jaded metropolitan imagination, sundered both from nature and history by the modern process of rationalization that Max Weber, another contemporary, described first as the 'iron cage' and later as *entzauberung* (disenchantment). Hence it was a term less in keeping with Dublin than with London critics, who in Arnoldian fashion prefixed it as 'Irish', 'Gaelic' or most commonly 'Celtic glamour'.[25] The flow and—as Yeats hoped—the eventual ebb of the rational spirit, therefore, and the geographic thresholds across which its tides ran, characterized his understanding of his role and, in more practical terms, of the literary market for *glamour*. 'Fairies are not popular this side of the water, are considered unscientific,' he glumly reported in March 1888, one month after returning from his Sligo visit. However, this perhaps only reflected his initial reluctance to accept Ernest Rhys's commission for an anthology of Irish fable.[26] Appearing the following September, *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* was in fact cordially received, and provided valuable income in a straitened month. During the intervening summer, Yeats lectured on 'West of Ireland Folklore' to the Southwark Irish Literary Society—his first step towards managing pockets of organized Celticism in the capital. Over the coming years, he would continue to establish his authority on the Irish supernatural ('Fairies Ghosts Banshees &c') with *Irish Faerie Tales* (1892) and *The Celtic Twilight* (1893).[27] Each strengthened his position as a translator, reporting from localized concentrations of enchantment. 'A little north of the town of Sligo, on the southern side of Ben Bulben', is a characteristic opening line for the *Observer* pieces that made up the latter volume.[28]

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[24] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 33-34.
[25] 'Hackneyed or not,' an anonymous reviewer confessed in 1897, 'there is only one word which describes Mr. Yeats's stories.' Attempts to define 'Celtic glamour' were typically vague, though Francis Thompson picked up on its uncanny, psychic quality—a racial memory that could only be intuited, not rationally understood. 'It is an inhuman beauty,' he wrote in 1899, 'a haunting of something remote, intangible.' Ezra Pound finally dismissed the phrase in 1914, reproving the many inauthentic 'pseudo-glamours' which had followed upon Yeats's coat-tails. Jeffares (ed.), *Yeats: the Critical Heritage*, pp.94, 106, 188.
[26] Ibid., i, 53
[27] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 76-79; Yeats, *Letters*, i, 79.
[28] The first line of 'Kidnappers' in W.B. Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight* (London, 1893), p.93.

It is this positioning that most markedly contrasts his purposes with those of his antiquarian predecessors, who wrote principally for the educated Protestant class of Dublin and Cork, and that makes his activities more comparable to Kipling's. As Colin Graham has shown, Yeats made use of his obituary essays on Ferguson (see p.61) not only to appropriate the Trinity Unionist for nationalism, but also for cultural difference and anti-modernity. Far from cleansing his style of metropolitan influence, Ferguson had sought to validate Irish myth by translating it into a recognizably English, Tennysonian poetic mode. Ferguson resented the notion of Ireland as Celtic fringe, a frontier marginal to England, conceiving it instead as twinned with the metropole and playing an active role in the greater Empire. He could not have countenanced the oppositional and evangelical ethos of the Celtic 'Revival', nor the manner in which Yeats imaginatively identified with strongholds of enchantment like India. Ferguson was very careful about his use of the word 'primitive'—used for Ireland it signifies ancient vitality, for India social backwardness.[29] By contrast, primitive and barbarous become, for Yeats, terms of emphasis through which he could promote his 'Celtic wares' in an alienated metropolitan market. More importantly, we shall see later how the same terms enabled him to identify imperial authors like Kipling and Stevenson as allies against Victorian science, positivism and philanthropic sentiment. The West of Ireland, as it would be for Synge, was a 'primeval' place for which the habitual analogy was Oriental society, as described by writers like Kipling. 'The red dresses of the women who cluster round the fire on their stools give a glow of almost Eastern richness,' is one of Synge's observations from *The Aran Islands*, the journal in which he casts 'primitive' dignity in direct confrontation with 'mechanical' modernity. The privilege of his two years' stay was to drown out the 'tawdry medley' of urban life, and attend instead to 'rude and beautiful poetry that is filled with the oldest passions in the world.'[30]

Keeping in mind the paradigm of translation, what did pockets of exoticism do for the two poets linguistically? If he could import Celtic glamour as a tonic for urban disenchantment, Yeats's own 'subjective intensity' could only emerge once he had undone the somewhat artificial spells of his

[29] Colin Graham, *Ideologies of Epic: Nation, Empire and Victorian epic poetry* (Manchester, 1998), pp.109, 117.
[30] Synge, *Collected Plays and Poems*, pp.262, 293, 303, 311.

metropolitan precursors. As he was evidently aware, 'The Fairy Doctor' still relies on the Tennysonian archaisms of 'foregather', 'wold' and 'rushy mere.' Yeats continued to conceive the remedy to his artistic dissatisfaction in visual terms. A fortnight after arriving back in London, he began to write of 'the web of thoughts' hemming in his intellectual sympathies. 'I wish to brake through it, to see the world again.'[31] The application of windy light and Atlantic horizon to the 'hardening' of his still often bookish verse was how he described the benefits of sojourns in the Irish West. What was in practice a linguistic process, however, owed much also to the demotic speech and idiom encountered during folklore expeditions. 'The Stolen Child', 'The Man who Dreamed of Faeryland', and other poems that emerged from these researches, were accompanied by the poeticized monologues, anecdotes and passionate outbursts of Yeats's peasant interlocutors. 'The Meditation of the Old Fisherman' (1886), discussed in Chapter 2, was followed in 1889 by 'The Ballad of Moll Magee' and the following year by 'The Ballad of Father Gilligan'. Through their lexical bareness and direct imagery, each contributed in its turn to the development of that 'indefinable Irish quality' with which Yeats aimed to renovate English writing. Most striking was 'The Lamentation of the Old Pensioner', which Yeats claimed as 'a translation into verse of the very words of an old Wicklow peasant'.

> The road-side trees keep murmuring—
> Ah, wherefore murmur ye
> As in the old days long gone by
> Green oak and poplar tree!
> The well-known faces are all gone,
> And the fret is on me.[32]

Drawn from actual speech rather than Victorian precursors, 'ye' and 'fret' are comparable to Kipling's attempt to convey Indian speech through subtle archaism in 'What the People Said'. Written three years beforehand, Kipling's poem shares the Pensioner's subdued rhyme and 'primitive' sense of unmeasured time (a theme that, in Yeats's stark revision of 1925, would come to signify for him, likewise, the irrelevance of political upheaval).

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[31] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 48.
[32] Yeats, *Variorum Poems*, pp.799, 131. It was, in fact, a translation at third hand: the original peasant was described to Yeats by George Russell.

He sent the Mahratta spear
As He sendeth the rain,
And the *Mlech*, in the fated year,
Broke the spear in twain,
And was broken in turn. Who knows
How our Lords make strife?
It is good that the young wheat grows
For the bread is Life.[33]

Generally, however, Kipling did not permit the Indian vernacular idiom to shape and simplify his verse. Instead, he peppered existing forms with local terminology. Native monologues from his poetic oeuvre, such as 'The Letter of Halim the Potter' and 'The Vision of Hamid Ali' (1885) are rendered in blank verse, while the Anglo-Indian melodies he promoted through the *Pioneer* (see p.75) are typically parodies from the Home canon. It was only through marching song and barrack-speech that he was able, at the end of his Indian years, to break the influence of Browning and give vent to vigorous, hybrid voices.[34]

He did permit alien accents to endow his English with stately diction and allusive richness in his prose, however, especially when dealing with folktales and—through frame narratives—with the storytellers who recite them. As outlined in Chapter 3, Lockwood Kipling had long supplemented his museum work with the curatorship of language, using animals (in *Beast and Man in India*) as an index for vernacular idiom, whose 'indefinable quality' he sought to convey to English readers. Both father and son, moreover, would have been aware of the young but established folkloric tradition in north India. A fellow Punjab-wallah who also departed India in 1889, Flora Annie Steel gathered many local tales, publishing them first in the *Indian Antiquary*, a Bombay periodical, and later in the *Wide-Awake Stories* (1884) and subsequent volumes. Lockwood illustrated her *Tales of the Punjab told by the People* in 1894, a copy of which can be found in his son's library, alongside several other compilations of regional lore.[35] By no means unrelated are the Irish fabular travelogues housed on adjoining shelves, such as Stephen Gwynn's tramping 'pilgrimage' *The Fair Hills of Ireland*.[36]

[33] Kipling, *Complete Verse*, p.54. *Mlech* = foreigner (i.e. European). In Yeats's revision, the old pensioner observes apathetically that 'lads are making pikes again / For some conspiracy'.
[34] Kipling, *Early Verse*, pp.269-74. See also 'The Raiyat at Home' (p.225), which incorporates various Hindi words into a parody of Burns.
[35] Specifically Charles Swynnerton, *Romantic Tales from the Punjâb* (London: Archibald Constable, 1903); Lepel Griffin, *The Rajas of the Punjab* (London: Trübner & Co., 1873); Walter Skeat, *Fables & Folk-tales from*

Steel's subtitle 'told by the People' may have been prompted by *Being Stories of Mine Own People*, Kipling's subtitle for the first major volume of fiction he issued after leaving India, *Life's Handicap* (1891).[37] Unlike *Plain Tales* or the punning *In Black and White*, the collection does not make clear who the revered People are. Instead, the nostalgically possessive phrase embraces the entire population of this medley of unrelated stories. Kipling's preface locates both homespun fabularity and graceful vernacular speech, however, within an enclosed pocket of enchantment—one of the charmed spaces that are so characteristic of his Indian fiction. This magic circle was some years in gestation. In October 1887, while Yeats was interviewing villagers in Sligo, Kipling published a column that, among other things, described a small Hindu monastery on the outskirts of Lahore called Chajju Bhagat's Chubára, a place 'possessed with the spirit of peace'. Its 'mazy gathering of tombs and cloister walks' cropped up again eighteen months later, on his return journey to London, in comparison with a Japanese temple.[38] By the time Kipling compiled *Life's Handicap*, the Chubára commemorated one Dhunni Bhagat, had become a syncretic space where Hindu, Sikh and Muslim reclined together under tall *pipal* trees, and was also the home of one of Kipling's fictionalized informants. Gobind, an aged itinerant storyteller, spends the preface scoffing at the western craving for novelty and objective realism: 'a tale that is told is a true tale as long as the telling lasts.' 'The poor are the best of tale-tellers,' he adds, in a Yeatsian touch, 'for they must lay their ear to the ground every night.'[39]

Because he could only infer its playful meaning, Bonamy Dobrée cited *chubára* as a particularly 'telling' foreign word. But the sanctified speech of Gobind—effectively the bawdy ford-keeper from 'In Flood Time' rendered chastely universal—went beyond exotic tokens. It pushed Kipling's understanding of re-enchanted language to a new level, later explored in characters like the Delhi

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an Eastern Forest (Cambridge: CUP, 1901). The last concerns Malaysia. There are also numerous drier works on Punjabi industry, agriculture and criminal justice.

[36] The Sligo chapter naturally cites Gwynn's friend Yeats, who has woven local names and associations into the 'shimmering fabric of his verses'. Stephen Gwynn, *The Fair Hills of Ireland* (London, 1906), pp.2, 151. Furthermore, in the collection of Kipling's surviving daughter Elsie (it may have belonged to her father) was a copy of Synge's *In Wicklow, West Kerry and Connemara* (1911), illustrated by Jack B. Yeats.

[37] *Mine Own People* was originally intended as the book's full title, until Kipling realized it had already been taken by another author. Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 35.

[38] Kipling, *From Sea to Sea*, ii, 383, i, 342. The first article, 'Hunting a Miracle', was originally published in the *Civil & Military Gazette*, 10 Oct 1887.

[39] Kipling, *Collected Short Stories*, ii, 245.

storyteller sketched in *Egypt of the Magicians*, the frame narrator of 'A *Sahibs'* War' and the old pensioner who gives an account of the Mutiny in *Kim* (again, this Yeatsian figure signifies political quiescence). The creole lingo Dobrée found so cunning may, in fact, have been merely a trick picked up from his adolescent French reading. As Emily Apter has pointed out, it was first Gautier and then Pierre Loti who 'discovered the trick of dousing their prose with foreign loan words to impart local colour and induce *dépaysment.*'[40] But Kipling's demotic commitment made his technique more sophisticated. It was because his translations were vocal rather than textual, aiming to capture the tang and cadence of vernacular conversation, that he was credited with cultural authenticity.

As if to underline his unique qualities, he had implicitly mocked the conventions of 'faithful' translation in the satires 'Certain Maxims of Hafiz' and 'The Rupaiyat of Omar Kal'vin'—both from *Departmental Ditties* (1886)—which aped the stylistic tics of some recent fads cribbed from the Asian canon.[41] Kipling had already followed his father in valuing the living oral tradition over the ossified classical past, exalted as India's residual essence by scholars like Friedrich Max Müller (the 'solar myth' to which Kipling occasionally refers was not only a joke against globetrotters unprepared for the Indian heat, but also a dig at Müller's writings on sun-worship).[42] Now he set out to thwart all such rival interpreters, even turning against childhood favourites. 'We'll smash Arnold into his own lights of Asia yet,' he wrote to Edmonia Hill in September 1889, before laying into the current exponent of Iranian poetry, Justin Huntly McCarthy. McCarthy had just published a prose translation of Omar Khayyam, and had also stimulated a fashion for Hafiz. He 'pretends to understand Persian', Kipling complained to Hill. His animus was really piqued, however, by the Liberal strain in Asian scholarship—the translator and his father were both Home Rule MPs. Kipling dined with them on the 20th of September, McCarthy Senior ('the white headed incarnation of insincerity') retelling dubious anecdotes while the son talked 'cheap orientalism'.[43]

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[40] Emily Apter, *The Translation Zone: a New Comparative Literature* (Princeton and Oxford, 2006), p.105.
[41] Kipling, *Complete Verse*, pp.49, 19. The 'Rupaiyat' lampoons Sir Auckland Colvin's financial policy in the style of Fitzgerald. The 'Maxims' are satires on Anglo-Indian morality, e.g.: 'Does the woodpecker flit round the young ferash? Does the grass clothe a new-built wall? / Is she under thirty, the woman who holds a boy in her thrall?'
[42] The 'solar myth' features in Kipling's poems 'Pagett, M.P.' and 'Giffen's Debt', in addition to the story 'The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin'.
[43] Kipling, *Letters*, i, 373, 371.

That Yeats also quarrelled with McCarthy points to interesting correlations, at the precise point where his and Kipling's folkloric projects seem to run at cross-purposes. Yeats's Indian poems are set in the same Hindu 'Golden Age' delineated by Müller and disregarded by Kipling—later, it was favoured by Indian nationalists attempting to unify their country around an essentialized history.[44] Like Müller, he looked upon contemporary India as polluted by modernity, whereas Kipling—responding to this fear—strove to harmoniously interpenetrate the colonial 'iron cage' with what he saw as a society in flux. In respect to Irish folklore, by contrast, Yeats rebuffed textual scholarship. In a manner comparable to Kipling, he decried anthropologists who would impiously rationalize and categorize a living tradition. Chief among these was his short-lived patron Alfred Nutt, founder of *The Folk-lore Journal*. His wish to defy Nutt was why he long insisted, with gradual concessions, that his stories of village ghosts were literally true—the truth of the peasant held legitimacy over that of the 'scientist'.[45]

If Yeats claimed to be tapping an authentic source, however, the act of translating folklore incorporated for Yeats considerable artistic license (hence his unconcern at styling himself the inheritor of the fraudulent MacPherson).[46] Because the genre itself needed to be overhauled before it could reinvigorate the metropolitan imagination, Yeats sought to harden its accustomed imagery with enchantment drawn from a quite different sphere. In a review of his play *The Countess Cathleen* in September 1892, Le Gallienne ventured that Yeats's descriptions of the soul-bartering demons 'had heightened the significance of the country side faerie with the spiritual terror of conception evidently caught from his theosophy.'[47] In the service of Celtic truth, then, Yeats had introduced elements of his Indian researches. As with Kipling, this blend of authenticity and artifice brought him into conflict with the dryasdust McCarthy, who wrote on Irish language and literature as well as Persian. Both he and his father were guardians of the lingering Young Irelandism that obstructed Yeats's efforts to shake up the Dublin literary establishment. 'Spiritual terror' and Theosophy were hardly to their taste.

[44] His conceptions would be reinforced by the Hindu divines with whom he would consort in future, and would inform his suggested amendments to the English translation of Tagore's *Gitanjali*—an exercise that would briefly revive the lustrous Nineties style he had done his best to rough-hew.
[45] Pethica, 'Yeats, folklore, and Irish legend', p.129; Yeats, *Letters*, i, 373.
[46] After completing research for *Fairy and Folk Tales*, Yeats set about mining the collated material for poetic subjects. In turn, he would incorporate his lyrics in the anthology. See *Letters*, i, 88.
[47] Richard Le Gallienne, *Retrospective Reviews: a Literary Log* (London, 1896), p.171.

Appropriately enough, McCarthy published his translations of Omar and Hafiz with the despised Nutt, while the pair's Young Ireland credentials tallied with their objectionable, anti-Parnellite politics. The father led the walkout of Irish members against their beleaguered 'Chief' in December 1890 (the attendant turmoil will be discussed, in relation to Kipling, in the final section of this chapter). Worse, in the same month that Le Gallienne praised his radical Theosophic imagery, Yeats was upbraided by McCarthy Jnr. in the anti-Parnellite *Sunday Sun* for claiming the mantle of Davis, Mangan and Ferguson. The young poet issued a curt reply in *United Ireland*—the leading Parnellite journal.[48] Too liberal in Kipling's eyes, too conservative in Yeats's, the McCarthys' politics fed into the same common quarrel over folkloric legitimacy.

Lockwood Kipling's intimate knowledge of the vernacular idiom allowed his son to circumvent the Sanskrit canon and its Liberal scholars, claiming authentic knowledge of a country where he commanded no written language. In a similar fashion, folklore-gathering allowed Yeats both to dodge Gaelicists who might criticize his inability to read heroic texts, and to best the urbane defenders of nationalist pieties by making a direct claim on 'the book of the people'. It is no coincidence that both men, at this time, boasted of sourcing their materials from some unverifiable informant—whether 'the People of Castleisland, Kerry' or 'from priests in the Chubára' and 'Jiwun Singh the carpenter'.[49] Besides these manoeuvres, the attempt to achieve authenticity through artificiality points to what Kipling and Yeats most stood to gain, for their own art, from folk-stories. Neither poet was ever fully immersed in folklore-gathering for its own sake. Kipling was more interested in writing his own stories than replicating the thoroughness of Steel, while Yeats's career as a folklorist would cease in 1902.[50] But their dabbling did imprint enduringly, on their creative minds, the idea of fabularity.

Fin de siècle folklorists sought a cultural space where narrative did not speak merely to the alienated individual reader, but sustained the daily communication of a collective. Because the pursuit was tireless and inconclusive, its momentary fruits are presented as moments of restful listening around

[48] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 315.
[49] The original subtitle for 'The Ballad of Father Gilligan' was 'A Legend told by the People of Castleisland, Kerry'. This have been intended to deflect charges of plagiarism by another poet, Tristram St Martin (see Yeats, *Letters*, ii, 292); Kipling, *Collected Short Stories*, ii, 245.
[50] He would, however, contribute to the separate sphere of heroic legend through his emerging drama.

the enchanted space of a rustic inglenook. The hearth is the centre of gravity for Irish folkloric writing, from Hyde's volume *Beside the Fire* to the *Irish Fireside*, a journal to which Yeats contributed some early lyrics. In 1891 he published the juvenile 'In the Firelight', in which the familiar trope of withdrawal and 'dreaming' is lent imaginative backbone by the cottage setting.

Come and dream of kings and kingdoms,
  Cooking chestnuts on the bars –
Round us the white roads are endless,
  Mournful under mournful stars.

Whisper lest we too may sadden,
  Round us herds of shadows steal –
Care not if beyond the shadows
  Flieth Fortune's furious wheel.

Kingdoms rising, kingdoms falling,
  Bowing nations, plumèd wars –
Weigh them in an hour of dreaming,
  Cooking chestnuts on the bars.[51]

Standing at a crossroads of endless highways, the hearthside becomes here the terminus of many individual journeys, a place where time is compressed and the illusions of the minute are burned up in purifying flames. As discussed in the previous chapter, 'dreams' of the past again dissolve before the more deliberate, oracular activity of 'dreaming'—the dreamer himself supine and detached, yet also 'weighing' his options. Besides these preoccupations, the jumpy stanzas and prefrabricated Victorianisms ('whisper lest we too may sadden') are reminiscent too of Kipling's juvenilia. He chose the same stanza form for his own mature vision of the world swirling about the embers, though iambs in place of trochees strike a more sombre note.

How can I answer which is best
   Of all the fires that burn?
I have been too often host or guest
   At every fire in turn.

How can I turn from any fire,
   On any man's hearthstone?
I know the wonder and desire
   That went to build my own![52]

[51] Yeats, *Variorum Poems*, p.737.
[52] Kipling, *Complete Verse*, p.67.

Composed as the dedication to his 1907 *Collected Verse*, 'The Fires' is an elegy for travel among his 'own people' at a stage when the reclusive Kipling spent much of his time immured within Bateman's. The collected oeuvre is earnestly justified on the basis of this community. It is apposite that Yeats should have prefaced his first major volume in a similar fashion. The first of many poems of friendship, 'To Some I have Talked with by the Fire' heads *Poems* of 1895. In the complete canon, it reinforces the claims of the neighbouring 'To Ireland in the Coming Times'.

Earnestness mingled with scepticism, the fin de siècle legacy, was nonetheless plainly present amidst these celebrations of communal narrative. Kipling's fables, circumscribed with conscious irony, are very much stories for a culture that no longer puts faith in the truth of stories. Both poets were aware that the more ardent the pursuit of authenticity, the more fundamentally artificial the exercise of story-hunting became. Artifice need not necessarily, however, exclude the authentic. 'Mine Own People' is a fabular community, a polity sustained by its narrators, and it is easy at this point to detect a fallacy: the sustaining narrator is Kipling himself. The community is thus merely *fabulous*, an overdetermined attribute of Kipling's imagined India—true only 'as long as the telling lasts'. Gobind's assertive phrase, however, cannot be so easily dismissed. 'Mine own people' is not only an imagined community, but an imagined audience. The act of Kipling's telling summons it into being.

As both he and Yeats grew more adept at the process of bringing images of intense reality before the eyes of a disenchanted readership, they began to understand the operation inversely. The readership they summoned into being is expected to ratify the imagery they bring before it. At least, this is how Yeats retrospectively betrayed himself. 'Nations, races, and individual men,' he wrote in his *Autobiographies*, 'are united by an image, or bundle of related images'. He cites the 'imaginative stories' which marry the peasantry 'to rock and hill'. Despite its earthy credibility, however, this 'mythology' is not an organic development. It is rather a compensating dream contrived by the united genius of music, speech and dance.[53] Characteristically, he located the model for such a *gesamtkunstwerk* of united design in 'the pure nations of the East'—in this case Japan, the country that Kipling also regarded as a ritualized kingdom of art. Drawing on a favourite art-historical legend,

[53] What Yeats calls 'the applied arts of literature' are being rediscovered by his generation 'for the work's sake', he adds in a Kiplingesque formulation.

Yeats went against his nationalist lectures of the 1890s by suggesting that the cart of art must precede the horse of the nation. More alarmingly, he implied it could also be a runaway cart. 'Perhaps even these images,' Yeats notes with ominous post-war hindsight, 'once *created* and *associated* with river and mountain, might move of themselves and with some powerful, even turbulent life, like those painted horses that trampled the rice-fields of Japan.'[54]

It is the power of narrative that, thus attracting them, effects a subtle change in Yeats and Kipling's attitude towards the demotic sphere of enchantment. As translators, their work is premised on cultural authenticity, but as romancers in their own right their concern is with the evasive truth of art. The political projects that they were steadily shaping would depend on both techniques. The tale-teller of the *Life's Handicap* preface, Gobind, also conducts a framed narrative later in the volume, in which he relates to a small boy the well-known parable of Ganesh catching a money-lender by the heel—a story presumably retrieved from Kipling's Punjabi storehouse. The sage-like narrator wears a 'vast tattered quilt of many colours' from which, upon concluding the tale, he tears a yard to shield the underclothed boy from the autumn night. It is a pleasing image of divestment that Yeats would use twenty years later, in 'The Coat', to describe his own oeuvre, 'Covered with embroideries / Out of old mythologies / From heel to throat' (with pleasing circularity, he may have adopted the trope from a separate Indian source, Tagore).[55] It is a gesture both Yeats and Kipling rehearse emphatically but also, as will be seen, repeatedly—suggesting that the act of demasking is only a transitional phase in ongoing cycles of costumed performance. As the *Observer's* columnist had suggested three months before Kipling's collection was published, the modern individual's need to invent himself by donning mismatched scraps of the auratic past (the 'philomythic tendency') was, indeed, life's handicap.

It was, at least in part, self-consciousness of their own Gobind-like roles in the philomythic metropole that prompted the two poets to attempt an entirely different mode to that of folklore. The novel, more specifically the short novel, was the dominant literary format of the era. But the clash

[54] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.167. My italics.
[55] Ibid., ii, 452; Yeats, *Variorum Poems*, p.320. R. Johnson has suggested that the image for this poem of 1912 may have been adopted from *Gitanjali*, a preface for which Yeats composed in the same year. See R. Johnson, 'Juan Ramón Jiménez, Rabindranath Tagore and "La Poesia Desunda"', *Modern Language Review*, LX, 4 (October, 1965), 241.

between objective description, subjective veiled autobiography, and wider goals proved problematic. The resulting minor works are interesting not only for their contemporaneity, but because novelistic fiction itself was currently subject to vigorous debate concerning the value of artistic truth.

A Novel Experiment, 1888-1891

The isolation or individuation of the poet that Henley seemed, sometimes reluctantly, to represent was mirrored in the shifting postures of the late Victorian novelist. Yeats's revulsion from the humanitarianism and secular ethics of George Eliot was triggered by his own aesthetic preferences ('She has morals but no religion', he had told a friend in 1886).[56] But his reaction was also symptomatic of wider dissatisfaction with books that set out to embrace society as an omnibus embraces its passengers. George Gissing felt that his generation of novelists were breaking with an established compact. The strength of Dickens's critique of political folly or social injustice was that it lay within the framework of a shared ideology. But proponents of the New Realism, Gissing wrote in 'The Place of Realism in Fiction' adopted a combative attitude to the public. Their artistic integrity directed them to offend and shock, rather than appeal for sympathy and reform.[57] Influenced by the detached narrative voice of the French naturalists, they presented their often provocative subject matter baldly, without judgement and without addressing the reader.

If Gissing, Arthur Morrison and Thomas Hardy introduced a form of purist discipline and method to the bloated novel, the oenophile bookman George Saintsbury observed a separate tendency shaping itself during the late 1880s: 'the strong turn of the tide towards the romance, as distinguished from the novel proper.'[58] For the advocates of 'romance' fiction, this shift in the *zeitgeist* was indeed a wider sea-change, the manifestation of a readership out of temper with more than just literature. The key figure was Henley's old sparring-partner Robert Louis Stevenson, who corresponded with both Kipling and Yeats after decamping to Tahiti. Fifteen years their senior, in 1884 Stevenson had published 'A Humble Remonstrance' to Henry James's definition of the novelist's task as one of all-

[56] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 8.
[57] George Gissing and others, 'The Place of Realism in Fiction: a Discussion' in Eleanor McNees (ed.),*The Development of the Novel: literary sources & documents (3 vols., Mountfield, East Sussex, 2006)*, ii, 339-340.
[58] George Saintsbury, *The Later Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh and London, 1907), p.127.

receptive mimesis. Descriptive verbosity and profuse detail were, rather, a decadent agglomeration upon the core mechanics of narrative. Stevenson had already précised this argument in 'A Note on Realism', published in 1883 under Henley's editorship of *The Magazine of Art*, and his critical language tallies closely with his friend's writing on Courbet's paintings. Fiction was fundamentally artifice, a matter of selection and emphasis, and Truth attainable by rhetoric. Literature's most valuable attribute therefore was its 'plastic part', the capacity 'to embody character, thought, or emotion in some act or attitude that shall be remarkably striking to the mind's eye.' These last quotations are from a third essay, 'A Gossip on Romance', Stevenson's most persuasive defence of a form we read 'not for eloquence or character or thought, but for some quality of the brute incident.' Expanding on his anthropologically-tinged discussion of children's fiction (see p.20), Stevenson grounded romance in the needful behavioural trope whereby humans philomythically perform their mundane tasks to the accompaniment of a fanciful inner narrative. By resonating with these inarticulate imaginations, great creative writing achieves 'the apotheosis of the day-dreams of common men.'[59] Receptive to both these creative strands, Kipling oscillated adeptly between a particularly cynical vein of New Realism and an incipient talent—that was variously termed idealist or romantic—for imprinting on the mind's eye the sort of universalizing symbol he had begun to comprehend on his East Asian journey. Perceiving the dichotomy, Andrew Lang divided Kipling's oeuvre along racial lines. 'The seamy side of Anglo-Indian life' was dissected in all its Zolaesque meanness, while the native monologues and supernatural tales were 'revelations' attained through 'brute force' and 'certain vision'.[60]

The contemporary debate surrounding the realist novel and its successors attests to an unprecedented parley between authors weighing the methods and theory of their craft.[61] This, in turn, reflects the rapid growth in fictional and lyrical output enabled by the popular periodicals in whose pages these critical debates unfolded. The introduction of high-speed American presses saw their numbers explode, making viable a career pursued principally in short fiction—or, for the jaded inmates of New

[59] Stevenson, *R.L. Stevenson on Fiction*, pp.67, 56, 53.
[60] Green (ed.), *Kipling: the Critical Heritage*, pp.72-4.
[61] John Olmsted notes that the 1880s and 1890s witnessed more discussion devoted to the art of writing than the preceding fifty years. See *A Victorian Art of Fiction: Essays on the Novel in British Periodicals 1870-1900* (New York and London, 1979), p.xiv.

Grub Street, occasional verse and hack reviewing. Shrewd litterateurs knew where to place their merchandise to best effect, Yeats soon catching up with Kipling's grasp of the international reach of modern industrial publishing, and keeping his family afloat over the next decade with a vast turnover of critical articles distributed on both sides of the Atlantic. The novel, however, continued to exert a certain attraction, founded both on profit and prestige, and the periodicals also facilitated a new kind of novel. The stately three-volume editions once institutionalized by the circulating libraries were now being swept aside by slim, inexpensive, easily exportable books, brought to the public's notice by magazine advertisements and boomed by reviewers either loyal to the author or pliable to the publisher.[62]

Within a year of entering this rapidly evolving market, first Yeats and then Kipling decided to try their hand at this unaccustomed mode. Kipling had begun assembling *Mother Maturin* in India, but this it seems was more a treasury of Lahori anecdote and vice, mined for subsequent stories, than 'a built book.' 'In the come-and-go of family talk,' he remembered in *Something of Myself*, there was often discussion as to whether I could write a "real novel". The Father thought that the setting of my work and life would be against it, and Time justified him.' Affectionately excluding his 'nakedly picaresque' masterpiece *Kim* from the running, the unsuccessful attempt Kipling alludes to here is 1890's *The Light that Failed.*[63] What in Lockwood's view made extended narratives unconducive to his son's daemon—the challenge of illustrating India in its diversity, countervailing trends in literature, or his unsettled and roaming lifestyle? The admission is significant, because it explicitly connects Kipling's work with his life in terms of time and place, and connects them moreover to a habitual mode: the short format. Novels were not attuned to his otherwise versatile genius, and they did not serve his aims. Yeats, by a different route, was also to attempt and abandon long fiction. Prevaricating and revising what he begun in 1888, in 1891 he published *John Sherman* and never permitted its reissue except, with reluctance, for inclusion in a *Collected Works* of 1908.[64] His unfinished second novel, *The Speckled Bird*, never saw the press. Why should this be the case?

[62] Margaret D. Stetz, 'Publishing industries and practices' in Marshall (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*, pp.127-8.
[63] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, pp.120-1.
[64] Yeats, *John Sherman and Dhoya*, p.xxviii.

Examined in depth, this episode sheds light on the literary position both men hoped to attain and—grappling with the inherent falsehood of their *modus operandi*—on how they formulated their personal artistic standards.

What, firstly, did they hope to achieve by the venture? Reappraising his early fictions for the 1908 *Collected Works*, Yeats explained in a highly astrological preface that they were written under the malefic influence of Saturn, the planet that forces one to face up to responsibilities, to straighten one's tie and make money.[65] Finances were tight but JBY, firmly committed to evading burdensome commitments, was determined that his son should remain—however industrious—a gentleman dilettante and not a hired pen. When, in 1887, the poet chose struggling bohemianism over a tempting sub-editorship proffered by a solicitous Bedford Park neighbour, JBY expressed his relief with a remunerative proposal for the approaching summer.

> My father suggested that I should write a story and, partly in London and partly in Sligo, where I stayed with my uncle George Pollexfen, I wrote Dhoya, a fantastic tale of the heroic age. My father was dissatisfied and said he meant a story with real people, and I began John Sherman, putting into it my memory of Sligo and my longing for it.[66]

This undisguised disappointment undoubtedly piqued Yeats's ongoing variance with the direction of his father's painting, but he submitted to the advice and, when not redrafting the mythic narrative of *Oisin*, set his mind at the close of that nostalgic Sligo summer to 'real people'. Although he postponed actual composition to the spring of 1888, once underway he seems to have substantially warmed to the task. Hitherto his letters had referred to *John Sherman* as his new 'romance' of 'latter day Ireland', latter day denoting the eighteenth century heyday of the folklorists he was researching for Nutt and Rhys at the British Museum. But his decision to shift the setting to his own time was accompanied by a preference for contemporary terminology. In mid-May it became 'my story', and variously a 'long' or 'short' story thereafter. In keeping with the tone of brisk self-possession (tempered with Theosophical gossip) that he adopted with John O'Leary in October, the lengthening manuscript was now a 'novel or novelette.' Once safely finished, he revealed how personal had been the gestation of

[65] Ibid., p.1.
[66] Yeats, *Memoirs*, p.31.

this work of character rather than of plot. 'There is more of myself in it than in any thing I have done.'[67]

What Yeats was learning from this exercise is suggested by an interesting congruence of terms in two of many letters to Tynan, who remained his principal literary confidante for the first five years in London. In March 1888 he made one of his periodic complaints for the excessively numinous, yearning, escapist quality of his faery poetry: 'I hope some day to alter that and write poetry of insight and knowledge.' Three months later he updated her on *Sherman's* progress: 'it is rather a curious production for me—full of observation and worldly wisdom or what pretends to be such.'[68] The work was external, mimetic, objective: a work of realism. But it also reflects, as Foster pinpoints, 'the obsession with shaping his life which began to preoccupy him in the late 1880s.'[69] 'My story' is very much Yeats's own story, viewed from the outside and framed discursively—the 'dread self' exorcized and transposed onto a new, open canvas.

The novel is heavily autobiographical, but not literally so. Rather it is a dramatization of its author's own dilemmas, with the two male characters embodying what he would later term antithetical sides of his personality. The action opens with a difference of opinion exchanged on the bridge at Ballah, overlooking a harbour pregnant with voyage. The Ball- prefix is generic to Irish place-names, but Yeats's pen-name for Sligo also recalls Blake's Beulah, the zone of innocence antedating experience. John Sherman is a benign jack o' dreams who wishes only to idle his time away fishing and gardening in this Edenic locale. William Howard is a bookish, gregarious and rather superior curate starved of urban sophistication, who repeatedly lambasts his friend for his hobbledehoy and artless provinciality. At these points he uses a tone, as William M. Murphy has pointed out, highly reminiscent of JBY roasting his wife's Sligo relatives.[70] When his uncle places him in a desultory clerkship in London, however, Sherman's extended boyhood is cut short and he decamps by cattle-steamer to a poky life in Hammersmith, close to the Yeatses' real home in Bedford Park.

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[67] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 36, 69, 104, 245-6.
[68] Ibid., i, 55, 75.
[69] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 68.
[70] William M. Murphy, 'William Butler Yeats's *John Sherman*: an Irish Poet's Declaration of Independence', *Irish University Review*, IX, 1 (Spring, 1979), 106.

Unlike *Dhoya* and the first draft of *Oisin*, *Sherman* was written in the metropolis and Yeats told O'Leary that its governing '*motif*' was 'hatred of London.'[71] The finest passages in the novel evoke Sherman's yearning for the lost garden and river of youth, on his long walks by the Thames at Chiswick or in the City streets near his office. The trickling window display that planted the germ of 'Innisfree' is the most well-known of several melancholy *déjà vus*, but it is the visual apprehension of resonant imagery that is most striking.

> The grey corner of a cloud slanting its rain upon Cheapside called to mind by some remote suggestion the clouds rushing and falling in cloven surf on the seaward steep of a mountain north of Ballah. A certain street-corner made him remember an angle of the Ballah fish-market. At night a lantern, marking where the road was fenced off for mending, made him think of a tinker's cart, with its swing-can of burning coals, that used to stop on market days at the corner of Peter's Lane...[72]

What initially promises salvation is an engagement with the vivacious art-lover Margaret Leland. Margaret is imagined as the wayward child of Rossetti's demimondain generation (her mother calls her 'romantic', and lays the blame on a velvet-wearing uncle who eloped with a drunken Italian countess). As the initial charm wears off, it becomes apparent that Sherman is too plain a fixture to match her 'curious and vagrant' tastes, which juxtapose medievalist tapestries, Japanese vases, artificial flowers and stuffed birds. Decadent and artificial, Margaret exhibits the witless ardour of the Nineties when she emerges from an afternoon with Thomas à Kempis and feels impelled to become 'a theosophist or a socialist, or go and join the Catholic Church, or do something.'[73] Knowing intuitively where his heart truly lies, Sherman invites Howard to stay in the unconscious hope that the urbane cleric will take his fiancée off his hands. The seduction accomplished, he posts for Ballah and marries a patient and maidish childhood sweetheart who bears a somewhat insulting resemblance to Katharine Tynan.

Down to individual roads, buildings and walking routes, the descriptions of Ballah correspond very closely to Sligo geography—a realistic rather than legendary geography, based on Martin's Street and the Imperial Hotel rather than Pooldoy or Lug na Gall, and rather overburdened with exacting details. Only a novel could embrace such copious context, while the format also permits a traffic and

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[71] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 110.
[72] Yeats, *John Sherman and Dhoya*, p.56.
[73] Ibid., pp.25-6, 62.

confrontation with the despised metropolis. Sherman's choice represents, indeed, the conquest of a metropolitan genre—unlike Trollope's Phineas Finn, this Irish hero declines to make his fortune in England, and to Howard's accusation that he is 'vegetating' in Ballah he responds 'no, I am seeing the world'. In cities men are closeted within their own invidious social circle, whereas in Ballah 'one chats with the whole world in a day's walk'—echoes of Thoreau, but also of Kipling's brotherly wayfarers on the road of life.[74] The book amounts to laying claim to an identity, an identity which Yeats set about making sure that Irish reviewers should acknowledge. It is a very specific, precarious strand of Irishness, however, as he privately explained in a letter to Tynan.

> I have an ambition to be taken as an Irish novelist and not as an English or cosmepolitan one choosing Ireland as a background. I studied my characters in Ireland & described a typical Irish feeling in Sherman's devotion to Ballah. A West of Ireland feeling I might almost say for like that of Allingham and Ballyshannon it is local rather than national. Sherman belonged like Allingham to the small gentry who in the West at any rate love their native places without perhaps loving Ireland. They do not travel & are shut off from England by the whole breadth of Ireland with the result that they are forced to make their native town their world.[75]

It is a nuanced and candid portrait of a colonist caste which, because cut off from metropolitan support, seems all the more to merit the mantle of authenticity. The claim advanced by *Sherman*, shorn of cultural archaeology, is nakedly personal and contemporary, its 'background' filled in by minute details gravely invested with the 'Celtic devotion' of the perceiver. When a long journey, appropriately enough, brings about the crisis point in Sherman's narrative ('one of those dangerous moments when the sense of personal identity is shaken'), the colours leach out and familiar scenes become 'phantasmal and without meaning.' After this visual disorientation is corrected, with Sherman stepping out of a dark night towards the lighted window of a now explicitly maternal Mary Carton, the homecoming is understood as a triumph of the real over the illusions that beset him overseas.[76]

Yeats worked out this equation for Tynan in December 1888, now tentatively criticizing her work rather than bemoaning his own. 'We should make poems on the familiar landscapes we love not the strange and rare and glittering scenes we wonder at—these latter are the landscapes of Art, the rouge

[74] Ibid., p.9.
[75] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 274-5.
[76] Yeats, *John Sherman and Dhoya*, 42, 46-7, 78.

of nature.'[77] That month Yeats finished his first draft of *John Sherman*, along with what is really the lyric distillation of his novel: 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree.' But at Henley's house, in September, he had met a man of very different but no less persuasive opinions. Oscar Wilde invited the younger émigré to spend Christmas in Chelsea, and after dinner read to him from the manuscript of *The Decay of Lying*.[78] The insouciant essay, sparkling with aphorism, was a denunciation of realist fiction. Like the censorious moralists, Wilde wrinkles his nose at Parisian squalor, but he also baits Haggard for the simple pedantry of corroborating all his factual information with redundant personal reminiscence, and Francis Marion Crawford for 'immolat[ing] himself on the altar of local colour.' All are weighed down with the same inelegant clutter of detail deplored by Stevenson in 'A Note on Realism', but even the mercurial Scotsman's recent *The Black Arrow* stands guilty of 'robbing a story of its reality by trying to make it too true.'[79] In place of veracity, Wilde presents artful deception as serious sport and social grace. More than this, a grandiose fabrication approaches the nature of a revelatory truth: 'what is a fine lie? Simply that which is its own evidence.' Further claims of growing audacity lead Wilde on to his choicest *bon mot*: 'Truth is entirely and absolutely a matter of style.'[80]

His impatience with *Silas Marner* at art school would have made Yeats's a receptive ear ('I never met a George Elliotite who had either imagination of spirit enough for a good lie)'. He was also impressed by Wilde's flawless poise. The message that truth lay with the creative artist and not the reductive scientist was a potential maxim not only for Yeats's poetic craft, but also for his deliberate crafting of a persona. With a touch of tribute, he expressed envy of men who became 'mythological' in their lifetimes. Wilde candidly replied 'I think a man should invent his own myth.'[81] But the Tite Street house, with its all-white décor and Whistler etchings, also stirred unease (if only in hindsight, perhaps). Wilde may have discarded the peacock-blue and Pre-Raphaelite hangings popular with Margaret Leland, but a sense of inauthenticity lingered around the Irishman's voguish transformation. 'I remember thinking that the perfect harmony of his life there, with his beautiful wife and his two

[77] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 119.
[78] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 80-1.
[79] Oscar Wilde, *Intentions* (London, 1909), pp.8-10; Stevenson, *R.L. Stevenson on Fiction*, p.67.
[80] Wilde, *Intentions*, pp.6, 27.
[81] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 8; Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 81. Yeats evidently perceived that Wilde's performative genius sprang from his own position as a threshold figure. He later remembered Wilde as 'a provincial like myself' (NLI MS 30158).

young children, suggested some deliberate artistic composition.'[82] Wilde famously put his genius into his life—to have put his life into his art would have been, according *The Decay of Lying*, a sacrilege. If Yeats absorbed the lesson, then, he could not fully countenance it. A month after his Christmas dinner with Oscar and Constance, he restated his contention with Tynan's verse to an aspiring poet in County Down. Returning her manuscript, he counselled her with Pollexfen pragmatism to draw her subject from Irish landscape and legend. 'It helps origonality and makes one's verses sincere, and gives one less numerous compeditors. Besides one should love best what is nearest and most interwoven with ones life.'[83]

While Yeats was in Chelsea, Christmas in India brought an unwelcome present to Lockwood and Alice Kipling. Without prior warning, the *Pioneer's* seasonal special carried 'Baa Baa Black Sheep', a bitter exposé of Lorne Lodge, Southsea. It was Kipling's most autobiographical undertaking to date, but when he re-appraised the volume in which it appeared in the *Athenaeum* two years later, he singled it out for censure. The other stories in *Wee Willie Winkie* were commendable, but this item was 'not true to life.'[84] This would appear to be an admission, as he no doubt conceded to his parents at their own Christmas dinner in 1888, that he had taken an insensitive artistic license by exaggerating the torments of the Holloway household. But when not dealing with such personal matters, he measured 'truth to life' by a quite different set of criteria. The story that followed 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' in the volume made no pretence of accuracy or likelihood. 'The Drums of the Fore and Aft' also concerns two children, drummer-boys who through a series of improbable accidents lead the charge of a British column through an Afghan gorge. In circumstance the tale is a naked yarn, the gossip of bazaar, clubhouse or mess-table on which the attentive Kipling delighted to eavesdrop.[85] The truth of those stories is a capitalized Truth, the Truth he often equated with his fickle goddess, Romance. It is also the Truth Wilde capitalized when he wanted to add subtler meanings to the ironic truisms of *The Decay of Lying*.

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[82] Yeats, *Autobiographies,* p.127.
[83] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 131.
[84] Quoted in Charles Carrington, *Rudyard Kipling: his Life and Work* (London, 1978), p.142.
[85] From John Fraser's (*Sixty Years in Uniform*, p.145) somewhat vague claim that he 'knew the small boy Kipling immortalized' in the tale, it seems likely that the story emerged from mess-talk with the Northumberlands.

As in Wilde's essay, Kipling's liars are adepts in an ancient social ritual. His Anglo-Indian vignettes often valorize the slick and seedy whopper-merchant loafing in the club veranda or 'abaft the funnel', just as Yeats viewed the metropolitan dandy holding court in the Savile Club as a mythological being: both are personalities of artifice.[86] The very human parables they pass off as fibs and fairytales are 'true fakes', a phrase coined by Barbara Spackman to describe many artefacts of the fin de siècle.[87] In his most acerbic *Civil & Military* sketches, Kipling portrays himself as brazenly exploiting what John Butler Yeats termed the 'elephantine naiveté' of the insular Saxon: : 'if I tell them yarns, they say: "How true! How true!" If I try to present the truth, they say: "What superb imagination!"'[88] Behind the bravado, however, Kipling was developing firm convictions as to the gulf separating literature's shamming charlatans from its earnest liars, the counterfeit knock-off from the mannerist *tour de force*.[89] He even shared Wilde's surprising admiration for Charles Reade's mammoth historical romance *The Cloister and the Hearth.* If it had been in his power to craft an antique three-decker, he confessed at the end of *Something of Myself*, he would have modelled it on that tireless victory of style over substance.[90] We have already noted how authorial detachment and impersonality, characteristic of the 'New Realism', is curiously heightened by the intercession of the wry, languid Kipling-narrator. Through this idle town gossip we get all the scandal of Lahore and Simla at second-hand, reading plain tales that are deftly plausible and yet plainly—if we take the narrator at his boast—pink gin fabrications. As with all the best things in Kipling, these stories are about being *shown* something. Sleight of hand or trick of light: this is why the hero he chose to explore his artistic philosophy is a painter. All his preoccupations with colour, line and shadow coalesce in *The Light that Failed*, but as a meditation on verisimilitude it is—like 'Baa Baa Black Sheep'—problematized by Kipling's renewed effort to dispense with his trademark narrator, and dramatize his own perspective in the protagonist.

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[86] See, for example, '"The Biggest Liar in Asia" (by One Who Knows Him)', *Civil & Military Gazette*, 7 Nov 1887.
[87] Barbara Spackman, 'Interversions' in Liz Constable and others (eds.), *Perennial Decay: On the Aesthetics and Politics of Decadence* (Philadelphia, 1999), p.37.
[88] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 3; Kipling, 'A Death in the Camp', *Abaft the Funnel*, p.264.
[89] Kipling would later explicitly identify storytelling with counterfeiting in 'The Coiner' (1931), a poem which describes how Shakespeare extracts the rudiments of *The Tempest* from some raving ex-castaways (*Complete Verse*, p.643). The playwright alchemizes the base metal of their drunken fish story, and pays them in real gold.
[90] Wilde, *Intentions*, p.16; Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p.121.

'Hurry up your novel and become rich', Kipling was urged by A.P. Watt, the adroit Scot whom he had hired as his literary agent in late 1889.[91] Watt was referring to *Mother Maturin*, but in February 1890 a chance encounter near his childhood haunts in Earl's Court re-opened another chapter of Kipling's secretive personality. He had crossed paths with Flo Garrard, the art student he had hoped to marry before he was given his marching orders for India, but who had never wholeheartedly responded to his advances. Following her in May to her atelier in Paris, he discovered why: she had taken a female fellow-student as her lover. Through eleven weeks of summer Kipling took an unusual step, setting aside nearly all other projects to work exclusively on his new book.[92]

The Light that Failed is a tragedy of two love-stories. Maisie is a New Woman who would rather concentrate on her Whistler-style painting and her red-haired housemate than marry Dick Heldar, whom she callously pumps for brushwork tips. The doomed hero represents an extreme dilation of Kipling's best and worst characteristics: a self-reliant vagabond who has tramp-steamed through half the world; but also headstrong, aggressive, cynical and possessed by a drive to succeed bordering on misanthropy. This gradually morphs into embittered misogyny, as devotion to his *belle dame sans merci* drains him of his ability to perform work (Kipling's unfailing sacrament of sanity). His impotence manifests itself as incipient blindness, mitigated only by the final acknowledgement that the true love of his life was his neglected but faithful comrade Torpenhow.

For Dick, Kipling chose a profession that perfectly emblematized his newfound role as London's magic-lantern conjuror of tropical intensity. He is a war artist, and Torpenhow a special correspondent at the front. Lockwood had contacts in this novel and risky trade, but the closest analogy is supplied by Torpenhow himself. He compares his friend to Vasily Vereshchagin, the Russian painter who marched across Central Asia documenting the other side of the Great Game, and alternately thrilled and horrified St Petersburg by depicting both the valour of the Tsar's regiments and the savagery of the wars they fought. At their first meeting in the Sudan, Torpenhow distracts Dick from the earnest study of a field of shell-torn corpses.

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[91] Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.268.
[92] Ibid., pp.282-6.

> The young man produced more sketches. 'Row on a Chinese pig-boat,' said he sententiously, showing them one after another.—'Chief mate dirked by a comprador.—Junk ashore off Hakodate.—Somali muleteer being flogged.—Star-shell bursting over camp at Berbera.—Slave-dhow being chased round Tajurrah Bay.—Soldier lying dead in the moonlight outside Suakin,—throat cut by Fuzzies.'[93]

Dick has trained in France, but in keeping with his author's self-image his real schooling has been in the University of the East, seeing 'cities and men.' After ten years, he achieves metropolitan fame by mediating for the British public a rather nasty little war—the Mahdist revolt of 1885—that achieved celebrity courtesy of the awesome demise of General Gordon. Uncharacteristically for Kipling, this was a subject for which he could rely on no first-hand knowledge, but only the tissue of simplification and distortion which, it is repeatedly implied, constitutes newspaper reportage. Dick's painting, however, does not rely on historical veracity for its truth. After taking rooms in a loathsomely foggy London where he can no longer draw from life, Dick produces 'true fakes'—studio productions capturing the intensity of warfare. It isn't long, however, before *undisciplined* virtuosity and Fleet Street mandarins lead him into a profitable line in fake fakes. That is, sanitized and sentimental lithographs for the popular press. The betrayal of 'holy, sacred Art' is finally committed when Dick touches up the haggard features of a dying rifleman into a sober, shiny-booted paragon on the orders of an ignorant editor, who rejects the original painting as 'brutal and coarse and violent.'[94]

His Last Shot is an emblem of Kipling's writing at its pared-down extremity: pure impression pregnant with unarticulated narrative—work that 'lives', as he was fond of saying, because it isolates and accentuates Stevenson's 'quality of the brute incident'. 'Brutal' is a word closely aligned in the novel with 'real', and 'brute' is the word that best describes Dick. He is brutish in his manners and actions but consequently brutal in his honesty, and hence is rescued from decadent artificiality by attaining the criterion of art denoted by the recurrent watchword discussed in the previous chapter. Surpassing all elegance and technique, Dick has 'the conviction that nails the work to the wall.' When, blind and rejected by Maisie, he undertakes his heroic search for Torpenhow back in the Sudan, it signifies—like John Sherman's return to his true love in Ballah—the rediscovery of identity. London is dismissed with a phrase later made famous by T.S. Eliot: 'strange unreal city.'[95]

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[93] Rudyard Kipling, *The Light that Failed* (London, 1922), p.20.
[94] Ibid., p.49.
[95] Kipling, *The Light that Failed*, pp.212, 281.

Where this leaves Wilde, and where it leaves Edward Burne-Jones, is ambiguous. One of Kipling's most helpful recent admirers had been Mowbray Morris, editor of the solidly bourgeois *Macmillan's Magazine*. No relation of the socialist William, Morris cordially despised Kipling's uncle. That a 'true fake' is half-way to an outright symbolist painting is proved when Dick undertakes his magnum opus, a cackling *Melancolia* that generically resembles G.F. Watts's allegorical *Hope*, or Uncle Ned's unfinished *The Triumph of Love*. The painting exploits a 'French trick' to make the tilted head of its female subject even more grotesque in its raucous abandon, but we never discover what impact this sinister last laugh of the nineteenth century will make on Dick's complacent public. The work is destroyed (by its spiteful model), the shock of which breaks the spell of Dick's own melancholy and draws him back to the sunlit reality that originally nurtured his work. He has sinned against the artistic credo that Kipling formulated in his letters of 1890, undoubtedly in reaction to the same aesthetes that he ridiculed in London sketches for the *Civil & Military*. Methodist in temperament but Islamic in articulation, the odd and sententious allegory he used to advise a fellow-writer in June states that inspiration comes from Allah—that is, from outside the artist, who must watch carefully and await its advent. Only the impious attribute their masterpieces to the intercession of another god, 'Djinnius.'[96]

Sin in Allah's eyes was sacrilege in Wilde's, who postulated that life and nature imitated art, and behaviour to the contrary constituted 'the true decadence.' But authenticity and artifice, as has already been suggested, were not mutually exclusive camps. The symbolist *Melancolia* remains Dick's masterpiece, and recalls the dark fantasy and arabesque lines of Kipling's own habitual sketching. More compellingly, Wilde also produced a mysterious *conte* at this stage concerning degradation, homosexuality and the artist in society, in which a forlorn soul is recovered by the defacement of a hideous portrait. In an ironic coincidence, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was also published in July 1890 in *Lippincott's*, the same magazine that carried *The Light that Failed* six months later. As happened more than once, a possible rapprochement with someone whom Kipling instinctively distrusted was spoiled by a spasm in literary politics. Henley had decided to turn against his erstwhile

[96] Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 14-16, plate 7. The allegory involves a magic coffee-pot fêted by the beau monde of the bazaar for turning coffee into wine. Kipling makes his meaning clearer with an accompanying cartoon, in which the coffee-pot slopes away from a minareted skyline and, with Machiavellian countenance, follows a sign reading 'To London 7000 miles'.

house-guest and set Whibley, his most dogged sub-editor, to write a notoriously scathing review containing a barefaced allusion to a recent sex scandal. Assuming the entire 'Regatta' to be against him, Wilde selected Kipling for a counter-blast. Targeting his foreign birth and disreputable former trade, Wilde characterized Kipling as the most naive, provincial, and artless of bad liars. 'One feels as if one were seated under a palm-tree reading life by superb flashes of vulgarity...The mere lack of style in the storyteller gives an odd journalistic realism to what he tells us.'[97] Kipling kept quiet, but resented the hauteur of University wit. 'It's just the same,' he complained to the Cambridge don Oscar Browning, 'as saying of a man in a club: "Oh yes—but *is* he quite a—quite a gentleman y'know?"' He was evidently beginning to relish the Henleyan renegade attitude to the critical establishment this implied, though the loss of Wilde as a fellow-traveller left Henley himself remorseful for his intemperance. 'I told my lads to attack him,' Yeats portrays him reminiscing, 'and yet we might have fought under his banner.'[98]

Wilde's snobbery is that of a literary élite barricading Parnassus against commercial populism—itself something with which Henley could certainly have sympathized. More importantly, however, Wilde's aphoristic critique was fundamentally lazy. That it disguised several possible points of agreement between himself and his antagonist was made clear by Kipling's next critical slating. Mowbray Morris hated Edward Burne-Jones both for his Liberal politics and for same aesthetic reasons he, as Macmillan's reader, later gave when refusing to recommend Yeats for publication. Work 'so unreal, unhuman and insincere', he wrote in his report, would never be found 'to have any permanent value.'[99] Despite his kinship with 'the Good Jones', initially Morris had enthusiastically printed Kipling's manful border ballads. Awakened to the *Plain Tales,* however, and offended by the new novel, Morris now savagely turned against the upstart in the *Quarterly.* Echoing Wilde, Morris deplored the vulgarity and brutality of Kipling's trenchant New Realism, calling him a

[97] Oscar Wilde, 'The True Function and Value of Criticism', *Nineteenth Century,* XXVIII, 163 (Sept, 1890), 455.
[98] Kipling, *Letters,* ii, 24; Yeats, *Autobiographies,* p.125.
[99] Quoted in Charles Morgan, *The House of Macmillan, 1843-1943* (London, 1944), p.220. Morris goes on to specifically compare Yeats's worthlessness as a poet with Burne-Jones's worthlessness as a painter, and Maeterlinck's as a dramatist.

'photographer'. But whereas Wilde had objected to them as artistic defects, to Morris they were immoral.[100] *The Light That Failed* is, in the latter's reading, a Decadent text.

Leaping to his protégé's defence, Henley realized immediately that Morris was merely repeating with Kipling the same 'desperate onslaught' he had visited two months beforehand on Hardy (first rejecting *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* for *Macmillan's*, before rubbishing it in the *Quarterly*). Like Hardy, Kipling had dealt brazenly with sex but retained a Balzacian ironic detachment, provoking rather than colluding with his readership. But in Kipling's case, Henley also detected that 'realism' was a stalking-horse for 'romance'—Dick's blindness, Morris implied, was Kipling's unwitting admission that his uncle's symbolic art was introspective and barren. Ever since it had snuffed out Keats in 1818, the High Tory *Quarterly* had always scowled at the individualizing tendency in English Romanticism. Morris's critique was fundamentally Arnoldian or, as Henley preferred to call it, 'sentimental': Kipling had sight but no vision, his mind receptive but not penetrative, and therefore he could establish no intellectual sympathy with his atomized modern readers.[101]

This moralistic, Zola-baiting, pretentiously Classical article could hardly have been palatable to Wilde. The personal damage done, we cannot know what Wilde would have thought of Kipling's non-realist fictions. Romantic fictions of the imperial world, such as those published by Rider Haggard in the 1880s, shared with Aesthetic fiction (*Marius the Epicurean*, for example) a disdain for claustophobic bourgeois life. As Stephen Arata has argued, underlying this bias was a reactionary, anti-mimetic impetus, asserting the separation of art from life. This was Stevenson's intent when he contradicted, in 'A Humble Remonstrance', James's postulate that art competes with reality, and it is a contention echoed by *The Decay of Lying*. Arata illustrates his point with a fin de siècle red herring: 'more and more do [men and women] long to be brought face to face with Beauty, and stretch out their arms towards that vision of the Perfect, which we only see in books and dreams'—not Wilde or Yeats, but Rider Haggard. Construing realist fiction not as a commentary on the world's ills but as a symptom of it, such a viewpoint extols 'lost worlds of innocence and certainty by returning literature

[100] 'Mr. Rudyard Kipling's *Tales*', *Quarterly Review*, CLXXV, 349 (Jul, 1892), 132-161. Given the similarity in argument and style to his malediction upon Hardy, I believe I can reliably attribute this article to Morris.
[101] 'The Bugbear of Realism', *National Observer* VIII, 192 (23 Jul 1892), 235-6. Stylistically again, Kipling's defender is almost certainly Henley.

to an original "purity"'—a renovation Aesthetic authors conceived in religious terms, but defined by romancers anthropologically, as the recovery of more authentic forms of social life.[102] To use Wilde's terms, the envisioned renaissance would eliminate works of 'unimaginative realism' in favour of 'imaginative reality'. Effectively if not consciously, as we will see, it would be in pursuit of this goal that Kipling would make his retort to Mowbray Morris.

Dick's choice to abandon painting and make his life—or, rather, his death—the crowning masterpiece is really the most Aesthetic of gestures, and hence bears comparison with Kipling's piquant comments on the truth of lying. Perhaps, therefore, Dick's flight from the *Melancolia* should not be read as the humbling come-down of sequestered genius, but rather as Kipling's metatextual rejection of what is by this point a grim, somewhat attenuated and considerably confused realist novel. Autobiography strained through an allegory of art: like the ill-omened painting it, too, has been extracted rather painfully from within its creator. The Sudan passages are vivid and chromatic, but personal discomfort emerges in awkward dialogue and implausible plot devices (abruptly retreating from otherwise deftly insinuated lesbianism, Kipling has Maisie's remorseful companion tumble out an absurd confession of love for her rival Dick). *John Sherman* suffers similar infelicities. Like Fand's adultery with the legendary hero Cuchulain (later staged by Yeats in *The Only Jealousy of Emer*), it reads well enough as a myth. In realist terms, however, the disposal of the seductress is achieved (in the absence of a sorcerer) by a stratagem psychologically incongruent with the guileless Sherman. The author was left surprised by the duplicity of his own creation. 'The hero turned out a bad character and so I did not try to sell the story any where,' he informed Tynan. 'I am in hopes he may reform.'

Yet Yeats had 'gained greatly from my experiment in novel writing'.[103] So had Kipling from his. Still in search of a distinctive voice, they had embodied their dilemmas and spun out their inchoate convictions on a long thread of sequential prose. Although the male cast of *The Light that Failed* belong to a breed for whom Yeats had inherited his father's contempt, both novels in fact are making a claim to—among other things—a seat on Parnassus high above the intransigence of journalism.

[102] Stephen Arata, 'Realism' in Marshall (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*, p.183. Haggard advertised his genre specifically as an escape from the solitary 'toil and emptiness and vexation of our competitive existence'. See 'About Fiction', *Contemporary Review*, LI, (February, 1887), 173-4.
[103] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 162.

Both concern heroes who are self-divided, vagrant and meandering, and who in their shiftless exile are tempted by female characters associated with a frivolous and rootless art (Dick accuses Maisie of shirking line and form, and masking her imprecision with impressionistic flourish).[104] This precipitates a crisis of identity, resolved by an awakening from troubled dreams which is consummated in a geographic homecoming. Dick's flight back to the Sudan is the less felicitous, Kipling's assertion that his hero's home is the world muffled by a lingering unease with cosmopolitan rootlessness.

It is, indeed, in the moment of resolution that the ill fit of both poets' novelistic tailoring starts to show. Novels, at least as these two late Victorians conceived them, demand an ending. Antinomies must be reconciled, vacillation and ambiguity straitened to a moral choice. Both heroes anchor their rediscovered selves in a specific place (Dick in the most final and literal sense), but in this they behave most unlike their creators. Kipling was a studio artist, so to speak, not a man of action, and Yeats had no genuine intention of marrying Katharine Tynan, certainly not of returning permanently to Ireland. In shadowy contrast to the clear sunlight and purity of each novel's closing pages, earlier scenes indicate that creativity sprouts from interstitial crannies harbouring hybrid natures. Appropriately, in both cases genius bodies forth its imaginings into the vacuum of a moving vehicle. In a bizarre flashback, Dick splashes his juvenile *pièce de resistance* (like the *Melancolia*, also freighted with a gothic symbolism) across the bulkhead of a South Seas cargo-ship betwixt illicit trysts with a 'Negroid-Jewess-Cuban' siren. Less colourfully, Sherman's liminal moment arrives during the journey that was to define Yeats's career. Stepping dazed from the Holyhead boat train he finds himself 'at that marchland between waking and dreaming where our thoughts begin to have a life of their own—the region where art is nurtured and inspiration born.'[105] With some reluctance, Yeats continued to lead a cosmopolitan existence, and in this condition objective fiction was not the expedient mode in which to stake claims for his Irishness. Ireland's chief realist George Moore, like Joyce after him, had emigrated in his early twenties to Paris and trained in the same atelier as Flo

[104] Kipling, *The Light that Failed*, p.79.
[105] Ibid., p.131; Yeats, *John Sherman and Dhoya*, p.47.

Garrard. It would have been with mixed feelings that Yeats read *United Ireland's* comment that he had 'fashioned his style after the serious Russian model'.[106]

The realist novel had problematized Yeats and Kipling's ongoing folkloric attempts to buttress claims for natural, authentic truth with unnatural artifice. It had also not served their ambitions to capture the philomythic book world, as reviews now indicated to Yeats. While the assiduous log-rolling had paid off, and *John Sherman* received almost entirely positive notices, the reviewers' preference was unmistakeably for *Dhoya*. Yeats had sat on both completed manuscripts until 1891, then stylistically hedged his bets and published both together, along with a curious 'Apology' written in the person of an Irish fairy. 'Ganconagh' discards the longer work, *Sherman*, 'because it deals with dull persons and the world's affairs, but the second has to do with my own people'. Since the novelette, like Kipling's London-bashing *Civil & Military* sketches, was something intended for circulation *at home*, there was now little motive to persist with sequels. The bellwether for metropolitan taste was Henley. On the strength of *Dhoya*, the *National Observer* and its successor the *New Review* published well over half of the similar legendary tales that were to comprise Yeats's fictional output for the rest of the decade.[107]

These legendary romances, collected in *The Secret Rose*, spoke a cultural dialect that was comprehensible in London and Dublin. Its text could travel with a lightness the realist novel—too copious, too explicit, too didactic—could not attain. *Sherman*, in particular, exercised a palpable design upon the reader that could easily have been reversed and turned back upon Yeats by his enemies. Discussing *The Wanderings of Oisin* in relation to Ferguson, Colin Graham has argued that the heroic poem was too inflexible a mode in which to address either disputatious Ireland or a multifarious, asymmetric Empire. Although Yeats, like Stevenson, repeatedly deploys 'epic' to describe forceful or sublime effects, the actual epic form implies a historical monologue that cannot withstand querying inconsistencies.[108] Inherently dialogic, the novel can instead incorporate multiple perspectives. It would be a very different sort of novel from *John Sherman*, however, that could tackle

[106] 'Two New Irish Books', *United Ireland*, XI, 534 (28 Nov 1891), 5.
[107] Yeats, *John Sherman and Dhoya*, pp.93, xxiv.
[108] Of Ferguson, for example, Yeats writes 'he has restored to our hills and rivers their epic interest' (*UP*, i, 90). Stevenson, who also repeats 'epic weight' as a term of praise, writes in 'A Gossip on Romance' that the 'plastic' carving of an 'indelible image' is 'the quality of epics' (Stevenson, *R.L. Stevenson on Fiction*, p.56).

Irish heterogeneity. Given their lyrical, autobiographic requirements, romance was politically, for Kipling as well as Yeats, a much more useful epistemology—founded on intuition and intimation, rather than objectivity or the polluting 'rhetoric' decried by the Rhymers' Club. Its suggestive advantages were adumbrated by the fairytale writer George MacDonald. His 1893 essay 'The Fantastic Imagination' disavowed writerly intent and authority, and proffered instead the tacit, allusive, evocative influence of the short romance.

> If a writer's aim be logical conviction, he must spare no logical pains, not merely to be understood, but to escape being misunderstood; where his object is to move by suggestion, to cause to imagine, then let him assail the soul of his reader as the wind assails an aeolian harp. If there be music in my reader, I would gladly wake it.[109]

If MacDonald's musical analogy equates romantic fiction with lyrical verse, this offers a clue as to why Kipling and Yeats originally attempted realist fiction. In his classic study *The Romantic Survival*, John Bayley described how Shelley's claim for poetry—legislative, universal, capable 'of bringing the whole soul of man into activity'—had been progressively usurped by the nineteenth century novel. It was the triumph of prose that caused such vacillation over ambiguous labels like 'dreamy', 'fantastic' and 'escape', and prompted poets from Tennyson onwards to downplay their offerings as 'verse', 'song' and 'medley' (as will be seen shortly, this likewise formed a significant element in Kipling's populist strategy, and was by no means eschewed by the often Olympian Yeats).[110]

This pattern helps to explain the direction that both poets' work would now take. Saintsbury's turn of the tide towards romance was, I would argue, at least in part an effort to reclaim lost ground via a highly artificial, poetic species of prose—cleansing realism of its descriptive excess while husbanding its universal grasp.[111] Interviewed before the premiere of one of his plays later in the decade, John Davidson defined 'Romance', capitalized, as a property pertaining to heightened drama. He 'believed

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[109] George MacDonald, *The Complete Fairy Tales*, ed. U.C. Knoepflmacher (London, 1999), p.10.

[110] John Bayley, *The Romantic Survival: a Study in Poetic Evolution* (London, 1957), pp.20-21. Throughout his career, Kipling insistently referred to his poetry as 'verse'. 'I am not a poet and never shall be,' Kipling professed in 1889 to his brief fiancée Caroline Taylor, 'but only a writer who varies fiction with verse.' Kipling, *Letters*, i, 379. The young Yeats similarly effaced himself when presenting 'these fitful Danaan rhymes' to his Irish audiences in 'To Some I have Talked with by the Fire'.

[111] The ejection from poetry of the discursive attributes of the novel, as advocated by the Rhymers, was an allied objective. Interestingly, the Browningite Kipling chose a very apposite analogy to satirize this Victorian tendency when visiting the Chautauqua Institution in upstate New York. He compared the Institution's overloaded museum to the first section of *Aurora Leigh*, 'ridiculous in its Victorian insistence on giving you useful information' (*Abaft the Funnel*, p.195).

Romance expressed essential reality and truth', reported his interlocutor, and 'appealed more to audiences than realism.' Romance did not merely signify moments of intensity on the London stage, the playwright added, but connoted intoxicating draughts of 'the wine of life'.[112] This grand claim betokened more than just Davidson's gutsy proclivities. Various critical voices were invoking the word to propound, according to their own lights, an impending transformation of society by art. Following a general trend, Kipling and Yeats would now set about addressing this metropolitan demand with a species of writing marked more for its 'plastic'—in Stevenson's terms—than mimetic qualities. What distinguished them, in particular, was their growing aspiration to reclaim the public realm through 'dreams'.

An 'Impossible Romance': Occultic Writing, 1891-94

Following the publication of *The Light that Failed*, Kipling began work on the stories that would comprise his 1893 volume *Many Inventions*. The title itself indicates a return to self-conscious yarn-spinning. The first three tales ('The Disturber of Traffic', 'A Conference of the Powers' and 'My Lord the Elephant') are told by frame narrators—respectively an old lighthouse-keeper, a subaltern known as 'The Infant', and Mulvaney and Ortheris. In the first two, moreover, the chief auditor is more clearly identified as a writer or journalist 'mining' material from another's personal experience. As the volume advances, the roles of faithful reporter and true-faker are then blurred by 'A Matter of Fact'. This queer mixture of the seedy with the surreal features three journalists, sloping by tramp-steamer from Cape Town to Southampton, who witness the demise of some blind kraken forced to the surface by an underwater volcano. Two years earlier, one of Kipling's Anglo-Indian appraisals of the literary metrople had featured a Wilde-esque dialogue between authors. 'If you are trammelled by the bitter, *bornée* truth', the Savile Club bravo warns the colonial newcomer, 'you are lost. You die the death of Zola. Invention is the only test of creation.'[113] The lecturee, of course, resentfully bucks this advice. But if Kipling refused to devalue the world's truth in 1889, he now juggled openly with the means of expressing it. When the American Keller discovers that no editor will credit his sea monster

[112] The interview is printed as a preface to *Godfrida: a Play in Four Acts* (New York and London, 1898), p.3.
[113] Kipling, 'A Really Good Time', *Abaft the Funnel*, p.269.

scoop, the narrator informs his disgusted brother-journalist that he intends to offer it to the public as an elegant 'lie'.

> ...for Truth is a naked lady, and if by accident she is drawn up from the bottom of the sea, it behoves a gentleman either to give her a print petticoat or to turn his face to the wall and vow that he did not see.[114]

Many Inventions also explores the idea that art might shadow forth mysteries that could not—or rather, should not—be exposed to the naked eye of reason. In the summer of 1891, Kipling produced three stories of a psychic or occultic nature, essaying themes to which he would more fully return during the traumatic aftermath of the Great War. In July, he published '"The Finest Story in the World"' in the *Contemporary Review*. A pedantic but calculating litterateur, resembling the narrator of James's *The Aspern Papers*, describes his campaign to extract the eponymous story from the memories of a callow admirer.[115] But whereas the 'Infant' subaltern in the previous year's 'Conference of the Powers' recounted the recent Burmese War, Charlie Mears's is a fragmented, fireside reverie of Viking raids intermixed with his own death in a Greek slave mutiny. With his subject unaware that he is recapitulating a palimpsest of past lives, the suave bookman consults works on metempsychosis, and looks forward to polishing a bona-fide 'jewel' which the public will think paste (excepting, perhaps, gullible Theosophists). He considers luring Charlie into the clutches of a mesmerist, and an unscrupulous Bengali acquaintance suggests mirror-gazing, before 'the Lords of Life and Death' intervene: the seer's power—like Dick Heldar's—is sapped by infatuation with a 'foolish' girl.[116]

Kipling seems at first merely out to debunk the occultic fads of a society that, he felt, had become too unaccustomed to death. As his biographer points out, however, these stories also emerged from personal demons—not only the frustrations of his sexual life, but also the psychotic episodes that had dogged him periodically since childhood.[117] His relief at their apparent lapse was registered in September by 'The Disturber of Traffic', a darkly comic story about the solitary madness of a

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[114] Kipling, *Collected Short Stories*, iii, 121.
[115] *The Aspern Papers* appeared in 1888. An early admirer of Kipling's, Henry James gave the bride away at his wedding in 1892.
[116] Kipling, *Collected Short Stories*, iii, 73, 82-85, 91.
[117] Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, pp.315-16. See Allen, *Kipling Sahib*, pp.170-1 for further details of Kipling's hallucinations in Lahore, presumably exacerbated by opium-taking.

lighthouse keeper in the Flores Straits. Although not as chillingly effective as some of his Gothic sketches of Anglo-Indian insanity, it is more experimental, partaking of what Edward Said called 'radical realism'.[118] Although, argued Said, the 'Orientalist' gaze aims to enumerate and categorize the East, its empirical, analytic mentality is perversely attracted to the irrational and emotive, the spiritual and nonhistorical. 'The Disturber of Traffic' demonstrates that oriental realism was fundamentally paranoiac. It was followed, in October, by a story in a quite different style. During the summer Alice's brother Henry had died prematurely in New York, and 'The Children of the Zodiac' reflects Kipling's fear that he too would succumb to the 'winnowing' maw of 'Cancer the Crab'. This was the flawed prototype of the uncanny 'dreamland' narrative that Kipling would realize much more evocatively, under the paranormal guidance of Arthur Conan Doyle, in 1895's 'The Brushwood Boy'. The story ends with the marriage of childhood playmates who knew each other not in their waking lives, but through a shared dream, in which they fled from Policeman Day 'into valleys of wonder and unreason', and sailed a clockwork ship to carved stone lily-pads labelled 'Hong Kong' and 'Java'.[119]

A cancelled passage in the 'Brushwood Boy' manuscript, in which a doctor tells the titular subaltern 'you've got two sides to your brain', suggests that the children signify the active, masculine side of Kipling's character seeking the union with its antithetic counterpart: feminine, creative and crypto-Eastern. For in the waking world, the girl turns out to be called Miriam.[120] Kipling had already used the Jewish name in the poem with which he headed 'The Disturber of Traffic' in 1891, and which sets a coda on his experiments of that summer. The speaker, Miriam Cohen, implores for 'a veil 'twixt us and Thee, dread Lord'—either the myths of canonical religion, or the rouge of art—'lest we should hear too clear, too clear / And unto madness see!' Although imitation is unlikely, the other consequences of her unmediated vision are markedly Yeatsian in imagery. 'Lest we should feel the

[118] See, for example, the doppelganger story 'The Dream of Duncan Parrenness' or 'At the End of the Passage', in which a district officer succumbs to delirium brought on by heat-apoplexy. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978), p.72.
[119] Kipling, *Collected Short Stories*, iii, 239, 486-7.
[120] The cancelled passage is reproduced by Lycett in *Rudyard Kipling*, p.377.

straining skies / O'ertrod by trampling stars' comes in the second stanza and, in the third, 'lest we should dream what Dream awaits / The Soul escaped alone.'[121]

If Kipling had decided that Yeats's 'compensating dream' was to be a necessary illusion, however, the intensification of the latter's own occult life during the summer and autumn of 1891 confirmed him in his Shelleyan intent to rend aside Truth's veil. While the *Contemporary's* readers were weighing the merits of '"The Finest Story in the World"' in July, Yeats went into County Down to holiday with his Theosophical schoolmate Charles Johnston, now returned from India. Little spiritual enquiry seems to have ensued, and certainly no folklore, but only 'a good out-o-door life with little of the mind in it'—a rest cure Kipling himself might have prescribed.[122] In August, however, he was summoned to Dublin by Maud Gonne. She had dreamed that they had been, in a past life, brother and sister sold into slavery in Arabia. Though he seems at this point to have swallowed her first refusal of marriage, he spent the month composing the unpublished 'Rosy Cross Lyrics' to her, a group supplemented several months later by 'Cycles Ago'. If its lugubrious Swinburnian lines are vaguely reminiscent of Kipling, the poetic indiscipline and theme of sexual longing perpetuated in future lives relate more nearly to the poem Kipling had chosen to head his reincarnative story: Henley's 'Or Ever the Nightly Years were gone'. By now, Yeats was staying with George Russell in a Theosophist lodging house, and it was here that Gonne came in October with the news that her son (by the French anarchist Lucien Millevoye) had died of meningitis. Perhaps irresponsibly, AE assented to her desperate enquiries on transmigration and, two years later, she and Millevoye conceived their second child beside the tomb of their first. Later in the month, just as Kipling's 'Children of the Zodiac' was appearing in *Harper's*, Yeats made his own astrological preparations in London for Gonne's initiation into the Golden Dawn. On her return to Dublin, her would-be spiritual guide and soon-to-be political collaborator charged Russell to 'keep her from forgetting me & Occultism'.[123]

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[121] Kipling, 'The Prayer of Miriam Cohen', *Complete Verse*, p.501. Compare, for example, Yeats's 'all dishevelled wandering stars' from 'Who Goes with Fergus?' (1892: *Variorum Poems*, p.126) and 'When shall the stars be blown about the sky, / Like sparks blown out of a smithy, and die?' ('The Secret Rose', 1896: *Variorum Poems*, p.170). With 'The Soul escaped alone', compare Yeats's description of the ghostly 'dreaming back' in 1912's 'The Cold Heaven' (*Variorum Poems*, p.316).

[122] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 260.

[123] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 114-117; Yeats, *Letters*, i, 266.

This was an extraordinary year for both poets. As they swerved between elation and the black dog, sexual urges had been represented first by blindness and then by visionary dynamism. Furthermore, the power of art coalesced with political tumult—the massed funeral of Parnell had amplified the tense, mournful exchanges in Russell's lodgings. The transformative impulse that was emerging from these fervent vacillations, most importantly, was denoted by the ever-broadening label of Romance. When *Many Inventions* was published in 1893, Kipling prefaced it with a dedication 'To the True Romance'. Though he threatens at first to reprise the awkwardly heroic style of the Balestier dedication, Kipling's muse is no longer a soaring male spirit, but an evasive female essence. While he pursues her, moreover, with all the clanking clobber of the knight-errant (setting his 'lance above mischance'), his quarry is no chivalric *roman*, but the whole of Art as he now conceived her. Echoing 'Miriam Cohen', her prerogative is to mediate revealed truth.

> A veil to draw 'twixt God His Law
> And Man's infirmity
> A shadow kind to dumb and blind
> The shambles where we die...

Going further, this 'Romance' mercifully intercepts man's overreaching ambitions, and sublimates his passions into artefacts of adversity.[124] It is, perhaps, the most robust statement of art's tragic dimensions by an author who is now most often read for the divine comedy of *Kim*. As Kipling acknowledges in the two framing stanzas, he can only see this female antithesis 'in dreams', and will not 'know' her until after death. In any case, the purpose of the chase is frustration. 'Oh, hit or miss, what little 'tis, / My lady is not there!', ends the poem—or, as Yeats would write thirty years later, 'Man is in love and loves what vanishes'.[125] Several other lines are attuned to Yeats's sentiments. Kipling casts doubt on the self-sufficiency of rationalism ('Pure Wisdom hath no certain path') and even, with a Blakean flourish, attributes religious formations to compensating artistry: 'Oh 'twas certes at Thy decrees / We fashioned Heaven and Hell!' In a trope that was by now becoming familiar, moreover, the humble initiate of Romance is said to remain a 'child until he die.' Lastly,

[124] Kipling had been warming up this chivalric motif for some time. It was foreshadowed by two juvenilia of 1882: 'The Quest' and 'Our Lady of Many Dreams' (*Early Verse*, pp.120, 131-3). The pattern continued, in India, with 'To the Unknown Goddess' and the 'L'envoi' to *Departmental Ditties* (*Complete Verse*, pp.18, 66).
[125] Yeats, 'Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen', *Variorum Poems*, pp.429-30.

while a recognizably democratic impulse pervades this poem, in which both poet and reader are co-religionists, Kipling's contempt for those who see mundanity transfigured, yet remain unmoved, manifested itself more openly in 1894's 'The Miracles'. Once again, a hero roams the world for a femininized ideal, at whose consummation 'little folk of little soul / Rose up to buy and sell again.' It was a flash of the hieratic strain he shared with Yeats. Assuming a protective role toward Gonne, the latter had made the first of many such obloquies on 'the folk who are buying and selling' in 1892.[126]

Hyperbolic yet measured, eschewing the garrulously long lines of the Balestier elegy for elegantly-turned quatrains, 'To the True Romance' can help us to see why intellectuals would embrace the titular concept not only as an artistic nostrum, but as a means to bring about Wilde's 'imaginative reality'.[127] Although the redoubtable Lang declared that 'Romance is permanent' in 1904, he more frequently sounded its clarion as a desperate rearguard action against creeping disenchantment.[128] In his essay 'The Supernatural in Fiction', he was perhaps the first critic to designate paranormal or occultic writing as an offshoot of the Romance revival, which he identified as a protest against the 'mapping' and 'weighing' of the world.

> I can believe that an impossible romance, if the right man wrote it in the right mood, might still win us from the newspapers, and the stories of shabby love, and cheap remorses, and commonplace failures.

Lang specifically championed Kipling as a fabulist of transformative power, possessing what Northrop Frye would later identify as romance's salvational quality.[129] Although he also mocked its pretensions, Lang attributed this same quality to the Celtic movement. 'Really Celtic', he wrote of *The Secret Rose* stories in 1897, 'are Mr. Yeats's tales in prose … In these we meet genius as obvious and undeniable as that of Mr. Kipling, if less popular in appeal.'[130] It appears that in Yeats's own mind, too, chivalric legend, contemporary (often imperial) adventures, and the fairytales and folklore on which Lang himself was an acknowledged authority, were connected through a quasi-religious

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[126] Kipling, *Complete Verse*, p.73; Yeats, 'The Pity of Love', *Variorum Poems*, p.119.
[127] Among Kipling's poems it was, for example, the novelist Mary Ward's favourite. She felt it exemplified his ability to transfigure reality with 'the higher imagination'. Mrs Humphry Ward, *A Writer's Recollections* (London, 1918), p.360.
[128] Roger Lancelyn Green, *Andrew Lang: a Critical Biography* (Leicester, 1946), p.217.
[129] Andrew Lang, *Adventures among Books* (London, 1905), p.280; see Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: a Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), p.15.
[130] Quoted in Green, *Andrew Lang*, p.173.

sense of redeeming narrative. *The Speckled Bird* was originally planned as a 'tale of romance and treasure', based perhaps on Yeats's reading of Stevenson or *The Prisoner of Zenda*—or more probably, justifying Stevenson's own arguments, on the swashbuckling daydreams that he continued to tell himself into adulthood.[131] The eventual draft more closely equated religious experience with devotees of the secular scripture. Bringing him a copy of the *Morte d'Arthur*, John Hearne introduces his son to '"the holy church of romance, which should be to you and me all that the holy church of theology is to our servants."'[132] Evidently, 'To the True Romance' would have been understood within this redemptive discourse. As a confession made to Art rather than to God, its credo of artifice contrasts markedly with slightly earlier poems in which Kipling calls upon Allah to attest to the truthfulness of his representations.[133]

In his recent *Realism's Empire*, Geoffrey Baxter has more fully explored Said's understanding of realist fiction as an instrument of metropolitan understanding that cracks under the strain of representing the foreign.[134] He draws particularly on the work of John McClure who, addressing himself specifically to the 1890s romance revival, linked its development to imperial anxiety, dissent from the rational 'civilizing mission', and efforts to re-enchant constricted spaces. *Kim* and *Heart of Darkness*, which describes Marlow's childhood resentment at watching the blank gulfs of Africa invaded by cartographers' pencil-marks, are exemplary of this 'late imperial romance'. Again, Rider Haggard provides an apposite and suggestive quotation. 'Where will the romance writers of future generations find a safe and secret place,' he asked in 1894, 'unknown to the pestilent accuracy of the geographer?'[135] Recalling Yeats's 'shadowed, limited place, such as children love', Haggard's plea hints at the correlation between Morris's wish for primitive barbarism, and the craving for childlike

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[131] Yeats, *The Speckled Bird*, p.xiv (the phrase is William M. Murphy's). From his comments on Anthony Hope's novel of 1894, it appears Yeats regarded Stevenson as the foremost practitioner of modern romance (Yeats, *Letters*, i, 420).
Resembling JBY's description of the infant Kipling (see p.120), Yeats describes himself absent-mindedly 'telling myself some schoolboy romance' on several occasions in *Autobiographies*. See, for example, p.259, where this behaviour induces a vision in one of Mathers's clairvoyant servants.

[132] Yeats, *The Speckled Bird*, p.8.

[133] See, for example, 1891's '"My New-Cut Ashlar"' (*Complete Verse*, p.411).

[134] Geoffrey Baker, *Realism's Empire: Empiricism and Enchantment in the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (Columbus, 2009), p.208. Citing Trollope's *Phineas Finn* and Balzac's *La Peau de Chagrin*, Baker bases his argument on the infiltration of realist novels by romance tropes from Ireland and the East. His key critical touchstone is Fredric Jameson, who referred in *The Political Unconscious* to the West's 'longing for magic and providential mystery'.

[135] John A. McClure, *Late Imperial Romance* (London, 1994), pp.8-11, 14.

innocence visible in a poem like 'Innisfree'—the speaker of which, like Marlow, has been distracted by a window display in crowded Fleet Street.

The connection between Romance and the Empire also helps to explain the extraordinary tone of secular evangelism in which the imperial project was often described in the periodical press, especially after the Conservative victory in 1895 had installed Chamberlain in the Colonial Office. Reflecting on the broad church of the Rhymers' Club at the beginning of the decade, Arthur Waugh found in hindsight that uniting 'the rapt visionary' with 'the eager realist' had been a conviction that Victorian tradition 'must be broken with and the contemporary world interpreted in the light of some burning new idea.'[136] By 1900, a detached observer for the *Scottish Review* could say with certainty what this idea was: 'we are all imperialists now'. Explaining that this 'gregarious idea ... is a compound of realism and mysticism', the article then attributes it not to Chamberlain's procunsuls, but to literary inspiration. The claim is faintly mocking, and the subsequent analysis of Henley openly satiric. However, the author bases Kipling's undeniable influence on a potent mix of 'intense, frequently grotesque, and occasionally repellent realism' with a pragmatic mysticism which is ascribed partly to Carlyle's cult of manfulness, but mostly to his Wesleyan ancestry.[137]

Kipling recognized this dour influence, of which he was now reminded by his London relatives, not without humour. 'The pulpit streak in me was bound to show,' he once told his uncle Fred MacDonald, who had followed Alice's father into the ministry.[138] As he describes the months of early 1890 in *Something of Myself*, however, the Methodist sensibility contributed more to his growing political objectives than a knack for sonorous propaganda. To begin with, a whisky-sodden *lion comique* he had brought up to his rooms from Gatti's expressed some 'sound views on art' that lodged in his memory. 'Knockin' 'em' was easy enough, ventured the performer, and 'puttin' it across' the audience came next. 'But, outside o' *that*, a man wants something to lay *hold* of.' Kipling was still

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[136] Arthur Waugh, *Tradition and Change* (London, 1919), p.100.
[137] 'The Literary Inspiration of Imperialism', *Scottish Review*, XXXV (April, 1900), 262-3, 275, 277. See also Dixon Scott's article, mentioned in the previous chapter. It identifies Kipling's achievement as a democratization of Romanticism's claim to transformative power. Ordinary clerks, drapers and joiners find, in him, 'hints of strange forces and powers and constant reminders of something unimaginable beyond; they experience that delicious commotion of the blood we call romance' (*Kipling: the Critical Heritage*, p.311).
[138] This anecdote is reported in Coulson Kernahan, *"Nothing Quite like Kipling had Happened Before": some Little Memories of a Great Man* (London, 1944), p.57.

pondering what might provide such a handle for his overheated rhetoric in May, when his mother visited and put into his head the line that would, in many ways, define the rest of his career: 'what should they know of England who only England know?'[139] According to Kipling's record, the subsequent conversations with Alice and Lockwood 'exposed' his half-formed notion of moulding—'not directly but by implication'—the public vision of Greater Britain, just as Dickens had shaped the bourgeois identity of Little Britain. His recollection of setting about this ministry in the insular capital's dirty streets blends all the diverse elements that would be progressively distilled during 1891—re-enchantment, the occultic sensibility, and the power of visionary 'dreaming'.

> The lurch and surge of the old horse-drawn buses made a luxurious cradle for such ruminations. Bit by bit, my original notion grew into a vast, vague conspectus—Army and Navy Stores List if you like—of the whole sweep and meaning of things and effort and origins throughout the Empire. I visualized it, as I do most ideas, in the shape of a semi-circle of buildings and temples projecting into a sea—of dreams. At any rate, after I had got it straight in my head, I felt there need be no more "knockin' 'em" in the abstract.[140]

While Kipling passed by the Cheshire Cheese on the top deck of the Fleet Street omnibus, Yeats was aspiring to a similarly all-embracing, revolutionary imagination.[141] Compare this passage from his own memoirs, in which he reneges on his youthful ambitions but defends the renegade, antithetical dreaming of the 1890s:

> I was always planning some great gesture, putting the whole world into one scale of the balance and my soul into the other and imagining that the whole world somehow kicked the beam. More than thirty years have passed and I have seen no forcible young man of letters brave the metropolis without some like stimulant.[142]

The attempt he describes to constitute 'an infallible Church of poetic tradition' out of 'a fardel of stories' signified, as with Kipling, a project to frame modern mythologies.

The passage also recalls the Irish 'strong condiments' which, as we saw in Chapter 5, Yeats felt elevated him above the languid Rhymers. Though retrospective, his language is thus suggestive of how entwisted his desire for overmastering artistry was now becoming with the stimulants of politics.

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[139] *Something of Myself*, p.46; 'The English Flag', *Complete Verse*, p.178.
[140] *Something of Myself*, pp.47-48.
[141] Conceiving somewhat different goals from Kipling, for example, in February 1890 Yeats foresaw the undoing of materialist Victorian culture. Empirical proof of the existence of the soul, he wrote, 'would bring down the who[le] thing—crash'. See *Letters*, i, 212.
[142] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, pp.115, 140.

As the next section will explore, imperial ambivalence would not prevent Yeats and Kipling's political viewpoints colliding on the Irish Question. Nevertheless, their occultic qualities highlight a shared technique of political dreaming. Kipling's experience in 1890-1 demonstrated that neo-Romance, broadly defined, could recover the universalizing mandate that the realist novel had usurped from Shelley's poetic generation. Thus it would offer him the basis on which to answer Mowbray Morris's Arnoldian critique. More importantly however, for both poets it was political objectives that finally enabled the masterful, penetrative vision of which the disgruntled *Quarterly* had always found the Romantic poets lacking. If this Olympian mindset can be said to represent the elite, high art expression of Yeats and Kipling's political projects, then what did their popular strategies have in common? Could the two, moreover, be reconciled?

Bardism, Balladry and Politics

If their covert ambitions were visualized in transcendent terms, the practical politics of Kipling and Yeats was often grubby, laborious, factional and controversialist—especially when it involved Ireland. Both men exhibited a relish for newspaper feuds, and the former Indian journalist was particularly unscrupulous. En route to that decisive reunion in the spring of 1890, Lockwood wrote from Suez of what he had learned in the press of his son's activities. 'I see that the plectrum you wield had twanged a mighty big string with a vast vibration.'[143] '"Cleared"' was a satirical ballad occasioned by the finding of a Special Commission, in February, that evidence linking Parnell to the 1882 Phoenix Park assassinations had been forged. The *Times*, which had originally sponsored the allegations, understandably declined to print these scurrilous verses. Opportunely rescued from Kipling's wastebasket, however, by the *Observer's* owner Robert Fitzroy Bell, they cemented his friendship with the pugnacious Henley. Printed anonymously, their authorship was nonetheless soon broadcast in the wider press. For columnists like 'Chit-Chat', a literary gossip employed by the *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, they were further proof of the nationality of Mulvaney's creator.

> That Mr. Rudyard Kipling has Irish blood in his veins is almost certain, or his intuition must be almost miraculous. That he has an Irishman's love for a faction fight may be gathered from the political verse

[143] Sussex MS 38/1/7.

> which has been appearing for some time in various newspapers, and which can only be attributed to one pen.[144]

Such attributions do not seem so fanciful, when we realize that the ballad is spoken by a loyalist farmer or soldier, sarcastically railing against the disreputable Parliamentarians who 'guard our honour'. Indeed, the 'patriot distressed' was originally Mulvaney himself, before Henley prudently excised Kipling's erring Oirishisms. The speaker, however, is more than just a convenient mouthpiece. His charging the Land League with the inciting misuse of language ('the "bhoys" get drunk on rhetoric, and madden at a word'), reflects Kipling's lifelong suspicion of slippery politicians. Poets are the only honest voices in public life, is the pessimistic implication, which excuses their own intemperate speech.[145] '"Cleared"' could even be read, as Owen Dudley Edwards has suggested, as 'a somewhat anti-*English* poem'. Working-class Irish imperialism, or even the vigour of eighteenth-century rebels born too early for the imperial identity, provided a mask in which to arraign metropolitan stupidity and decadence. It was a pattern that originated in Kipling's schoolboy trio (two 'colonial', and one born in Leitrim), who had fancied themselves United Irishmen and sang 'The Wearing of the Green' to provoke their masters.[146] It was why his bookshelves house Stephen Gwynn's *Robert Emmet: a Historical Romance* near a biography of Sir Edward Carson, and it would emerge again with treasonous vituperation during the Ulster Crisis the latter precipitated.[147]

In the 1890s, Kipling's Irish identification would prompt an excessive interest in conspiracy and fund-raising among American Fenians (loyalist soldiers hoodwink one such in 'The Mutiny of the Mavericks'), to whom the young Yeats affected an attitude of Jacobin realpolitik. 'A spy has no rights', he wrote of a Chicago murder in July 1889, probably intending to shock Tynan.[148] He never genuinely advocated revolutionary violence, but it would have confirmed his worst suspicions of Edward Dowden, JBY's old friend, to know the cue he had taken from Kipling's hawkish reputation. In early 1893 the Trinity professor—soon to become Yeats's preferred target for newspaper squibs—requested Swinburne, Alfred Austin and Kipling to write songs for Unionists. The latter supposedly

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[144] *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 27 Mar 1890.
[145] Kipling, *Complete Verse*, pp.182-83.
[146] Owen Dudley Edwards, 'Kipling and the Irish', *LRB*, X, 3 (February, 1988), 22-23. The Celtic rebel posture was accentuated in *Stalky & Co.*, in which Mr King resents M'Turk's 'Hibernian sneer'.
[147] Both volumes can be seen, along with Gwynn's *Fair Hills of Ireland*, in Kipling's study at Bateman's.
[148] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 168.

prevaricated but, with sinister foresight, wrote back that Dowden's constituency '"needed drilling a damned sight more than doggerel!"'[149] By that point, Irish politics had become smoulderingly fractious. The point of focus and intensity, Parnell himself, had departed the scene. Deserted by most of his MPs in late 1890, when his affair with a married woman was confirmed in court, within a year he was dead of a heart attack. *United Ireland* carried Yeats's 'Mourn—and then Onward!', distinguished only by its characteristic portrait of the Chief as a proud, solitary and implacable embodiment of will, 'who from his lonely station / Has moulded the hard years'.[150] Though he would later claim that Parnell's death diverted intellectual effort into cultural nationalism, this enterprise was no less political. Yeats's aforementioned literary disputes with McCarthy and others were frequently embittered by the Parnellite split, a fissure that would not be healed for a decade. By 1895 he had become a familiar figure in the Dublin lists, taking frequent aim at the cumbersome Dowden and his 'scholastic—perhaps I should say school room—ideals', and happy to be himself the subject of caricature. 'We want to start a new contraversy,' he wrote to a publisher as his current row with Dowden was still boiling, 'in continuation of the present one'.[151]

If the gritty factionalism of practical politics seems to betray exalted claims for authority premised on majestic dreams, the two can be reconciled within the broader patterns of fin de siècle thought delineated by Terry Eagleton. In an essay classic for its unhinged torrent of insight, Eagleton explores a persistent, vacillating interplay in 1890s writing between the corporeal and the spiritual. Though they crave social transformation or religious transcendence, he observes, contemporary intellects from Gerard Manley Hopkins to Edward Carpenter pursue their goal by reverently espousing the real and sensual. These impulses have typically been regarded as variant trends. For writers seeking to recast the poetic lexicon, language had to 'either be violently returned *à la* Hopkins to the freshness of the

[149] 'My reply was that the two were not incompatible,' Dowden remembered to Edmund Gosse in October 1912, though hindsight makes this doubtful (the Ulster Covenant had been signed in late September). His balladic enterprise proved unsuccessful—Swinburne's virulent no-popery verses would have been unpalatable to Castle Catholics. See *Letters of Edward Dowden*, p.383. Kipling was a Covenant signatory, and it has been suggested (though without any substantive evidence) that he personally donated to the war-chest of the Ulster Volunteers. See Lycett, p.538.

The 1893 date for Dowden's enterprise is apparent from Swinburne's reply. See *The Swinburne Letters*, ed. Cecil Y. Lang (6 vols., New Haven, 1962), vi, 58.

[150] Yeats, *Variorum Poems*, p.738.

[151] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 437-8.

material world', or 'cut loose from such materiality altogether and floated off into some incorporeal realm.' Eagleton argues, however, that the two trends constitute a dialectic, seeking mutually to span a gap left by the discredited concept of a consistent, whole and rational consciousness. Far from rejecting positivist modes of thought, the fin de siècle instead attempts to carry them forward in the absence of their central tenet. Thus on one side of the coin, the scientific precision of a Pater or Henry James endeavours to snatch out of the unfolding train of consciousness a 'hard, gemlike' article of certain reality. On the obverse side, G.B. Shaw's *élan vital*, Hegelian historic *geist*, and Theosophical spiritualism aim to supply a mystic universal destiny in place of discredited social and economic teleologies. 'The dream of the *fin de siècle* is to pass without mediation from the concrete to the cosmic, linked as the two realms are in their resistance to that analytic rationality which is the sign of social alienation.'[152]

Both tendencies represent a 'flight to the real', a craving to grasp things directly and comprehensively instead of handling them in abstract. Symbols like Kipling's pagoda and, later, Yeats's tower are symptomatic—resolute and yet revelatory, their actuality and their symbolic qualities are both overemphasized. Clearly, this urgent interplay fed itself to a large degree on 'subjective intensity' imported from abroad. Eagleton goes on to extend his dialectic of mystic and concrete into a mirroring of universality by particularity. Lastly, the dyad becomes an interchange of the airily spiritual with rough-and-tumble politics. Besant, Yeats, Carpenter and Wilde all oscillate, without any sense of incongruity, from austere rites and high aesthetics to industrial action, Irish political meetings, and socialism. 'Everywhere in the *fin de siècle*, we suspect that politics and deep subjectivity are sides of the same coin'—this insight seems particularly pertinent to Yeats, a poet who justified his political interventions by invoking 'the love I lived, the dream I knew'. Yeats, of course, was particularly vocal in rejecting rhetoric and partisan credos. However, this was conjoint with his desire for the general overthrow of rationalist smugness, of which idealistic and humanitarian politics formed a significant part.[153] For reactionaries like Kipling and Yeats, as well as radicals like Carpenter, politics itself had to be transcended. As Eagleton suggests, however, perhaps the

[152] Terry Eagleton, 'The Flight to the Real' in Ledger and McCracken (eds.), *Cultural Politics*, pp.14-18.
[153] As a contemporary illustration, think how the ideals of utilitarian government, liberal economics, heroic paternalism and evangelical Christianity are exposed as masks of greed and power in Conrad's *Nostromo*.

transcendence of politics is 'its most devious incarnation'.[154] The lacunae in his argument in fact strengthen it. Many late Victorians sought to enhance poetry's 'political efficacy', from Tory poetasters like Austin to left journalists like Bruce Glasier.[155] But even if we are partially misled by their own masterful self-portraits, it remains tempting to attribute greater long-term influence to those who, like Yeats and Kipling, operated 'not directly but by implication'.

Political energies were drawn towards both these polarized varieties of 'Truth'—towards both the promise of a transcendent destiny, and to the justifying basis of native authenticity. The loosely-defined mode of Romance, as we have seen, was a conveniently nimble vehicle for such oscillations. As a genre, it has been characterized by what Northrop Frye termed a 'powerful polarizing tendency', that propels the reader directly between the idyllic, childish garden of innocence and the underground, internalized 'night world' of separation, solitude, pain and adventure.[156] One last range of literary experiments concerns us here, however: poetry, or rather song, as a collective activity. The methods Kipling and Yeats adopt for their political interventions are heterogeneous and often variant. Comparison, however, enables us to perceive traits that may be less accentuated in one man than the other, but which are none the less important. The lyric, covertly autobiographical bias in Kipling, that goes so frequently unremarked, can be recognized as the sublimation of his more voluble and overt political work. Equally, an element within Yeats's poetic that is thrown into relief through juxtaposition with Kipling was the desire to be popularly sung.

In its desperate pursuit of authenticity, Eagleton points out, the 1890s became among other things the decade par excellence for 'artistic slumming'. While an amusing letter from Gray's Inn requesting Uncle Ned to vouch for his relative as 'a desirable tenant' suggests that Kipling initially considered the sort of gentlemanly bachelor's lodgings coveted by the Rhymers, he settled deliberately on Villiers Street, then 'primitive and passionate in its habits'. 'My business at present,' he told a correspondent in March 1890, 'is to get into touch with the common folk here'.[157] He was by no

[154] Ibid., p.20.
[155] Anne Janowitz, 'William Morris and the dialectic of romanticism' in Ledger and McCracken (eds.), *Cultural Politics*, p.164.
[156] Frye, *Secular Scripture*, p.53.
[157] Sussex MS 18/1; *Something of Myself*, p.42; Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 10.

means the first poet to investigate the music halls. Symons at one stage attended the *Alhambra* compulsively, drawn to its 'barbarous, intoxicating' and 'violent animality'—not exactly what Morris had meant by savage vigour.[158] Frequenting the halls was an urbane fad and, potentially, an antithetical cultural position, but only Kipling paid serious attention to their 'swinging, urging, dinging' mode of song. He sketched his methods in an uncollected story of January 1890, 'My Great and Only'. In one of his most devoted personal fantasies of true-fakery, the narrator haunts sawdusty venues from Lambeth to Bermondsey in search of 'the springs that move masses'. Once he has grasped his 'Message', he smuggles his own bawdy broadside onto the playbill of a West End hall, and secures the 'Perfect Felicity' of hearing the chorus echoed fourfold by a rapturous crowd. It is echoed again, by the Cockney soldier Ortheris in '"Love-o'-women"', as though the song had entered the fragmentary memory of music hall legend.[159]

Yeats, by contrast, loathed the patter and rouge of the music hall. If Kipling and Symons revelled in its Barnum freakishness, to the Celtic Revival it was a pantomime of authentic balladry, signalling proletarianization. 'We have a poetry of the people,' he asserted in an early review of 1886, 'altogether different to those vulgar ballads of modern England, that I sometimes fear will invade us.' Later, in his essay 'Nationality and Imperialism', George Russell also warned that 'the song of the London music halls' was drowning out the music of faery, inducing 'a moral leprosy, a vulgarity of mind' by cutting the peasantry off from its own past.[160] As David Lloyd has pointed out, this quarrel with modern pollution would always trouble Revivalist attempts to harness the honesty and raw emotion of demotic song. Balladry was too heteroglossic, and too urban, a field of activity. Traditional forms were decaying in the countryside, while genres mingled and diversified in the industrial slums—an arena where the ventriloquistic Kipling sensed an opportunity, but which Yeats could only regard with dismay.

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[158] *The Memoirs of Arthur Symons: Life and Art in the 1890s*, ed. Karl Beckson (University Park, 1977), p.109.
[159] *Abaft the Funnel*, pp.297, 302-304; Ortheris's singing is pointed out in Roger Lancelyn Green, 'Readers' Guide to "My Great and Only"', *Kipling Journal*, XXX, 145 (March, 1963), 17-20.
[160] Yeats, 'The Poetry of R.D. Joyce', *Uncollected Prose*, i, 108; AE (George Russell), 'Nationality and Imperialism', pp.19-20. From his boyhood, Yeats also recalls Sligo teenagers sailing round the coast to sample the lewd delights of the music hall in Ballina (*Autobiographies*, p.87).

These overriding concerns, more than Yeats's own adolescent moroseness, dictated that efforts at country ballad like 'Down by the Salley Gardens' (1888) should be wistfully chaste. Yeats appears to have rejected the third stanza from his folk source, in which the poem's unlucky lover calls for money, liquor and 'a fine girl on my knee'—it would not be until he voiced Crazy Jane that Yeats would embrace the smutty side of demotic idiom relished in 'My Great and Only'[161]. If Yeats's ideal of unalienated, communal song was necessarily rural, however, the need to be legitimated by popular recitation was just as strong. When writing on Tagore, he repeatedly referred to how the Bengali poet's songs rang out from farmers as they hoed the red earth.[162] The Anglo-Irish composer C.V. Stanford, later a friend of Kipling's, wanted to set 'Down by the Salley Gardens' to music in 1892, but one of Yeats's fondest boasts, made in 1935, was that a setting was used by troops of the Free State Army 'without knowing that the march was first published with words of mine, words that are now folklore.'[163] As demonstrated by the ill-advised Blueshirts marching songs he produced one year before this remark, the melding of verbal stricture with regimental discipline was something that appealed to Yeats as much as it did to his Anglo-Indian contemporary.[164] Ironically enough, while avoiding politics in a BBC broadcast of 1936, he cited Kipling's 'A St Helena Lullaby' and 'The Looking-Glass' as examples—alongside Hardy and Housman—of his generation's effort to transcend 'rhetoric' by imitating old ballads.[165]

It would be too great a digression to discuss here the many varieties of poem issued under the guise of 'ballad' since 1765, when Bishop Percy recorded vanishing snatches of country song in his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. 'Durat opus vatum' (the labour of bards lives on) snakes under the harp on its frontispiece, testifying to the concept that poetry might derive its vitality from popular

[161] This third stanza from the original folk song, which Yeats supposedly heard from an old woman in Sligo, is transcribed in Michael B. Yeats, 'W.B. Yeats and Irish Folk Song', *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, XXX, 2 (June, 1966), 158.
[162] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.181. See also a transcription of a speech in honour of Tagore, made by Yeats at the Trocadero Restaurant on 10 Jul 1912, in Dasgupta (ed.), *Rabindranath Tagore and William Butler Yeats*, pp.12-13.
[163] Yeats, letters, i, 337. C.V. Stanford reported Tennyson's approval to Kipling (see p.133, n.18), and later congratulated Elgar on his settings of Kipling's poems. In 1900 he turned against Yeats for his opposition to Queen Victoria's visit to Dublin. Jeremy Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford: Man and Musician* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), pp.350, 368; Yeats, *Letters*, to Dorothy Wellesley, 25 Sept 1935 (accessed through Past Masters).
[164] Kipling noted with pleasure (*Something of Myself*, p.116) that troopships in the Great War bellowed not only with songs like 'Gunga Din', but with racy fabrications attributed to himself.
[165] Yeats, 'Modern Poetry', *Essays & Introductions*, p.497.

recitation. It is evident that Kipling and Yeats developed in one of those periodic spells when critical voices, like Wordsworth and Coleridge in 1798, assert that the poetic register must re-immerse itself in the wellspring of vernacular song. They were both more sincere and more successful than many practitioners of this doctrine—Wilde boasted that he was 'out-Henleying Kipling' when at work on *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, an imitative confection that is more Ancient Mariner than Danny Deever.[166] Current also, in the literary climate of their youth, was an ideal of felicitous musicality. Kipling and Yeats hummed or chanted as they composed, a habit for which Swinburne was also known, and a curious one given that both men were reportedly tone-deaf.[167] What is distinctive and shared in their responses specifically, however, was twofold: firstly, their mutual realization that what was often called popular song was merely an ersatz substitute favoured by the predominant classes who had 'unlearned the unwritten tradition', as Yeats put it in an essay of 1901.[168] Secondly, both were drawn strongly to the problematic figure of the bard himself.

In one of his final *From Sea to Sea* letters, at the conclusion of a trans-imperial journey Home, Kipling had predicted that 'there must be born a poet who shall give the English *the* song of their own, own country—which is to say, of about half the world.' Alluding—perhaps unconsciously—to the grizzled *topos* of Morris, this 'greatest poem' would constitute 'The Saga of the Anglo-Saxon all round the earth.'[169] This flagrant piece of self-promotion anticipates, mistakenly, what Kipling would learn in the metropole. His saga would not be historic, but balladic; not an epic monologue, but a heteroglossic songbook anthologizing the diverse rhythms of the Empire.

The place of the saga-singer in this multivocal arrangement, however, is uncertain. The assorted philomythic experiments of the early 1890s, some more successful than others, continued to circle around the self-fashioned literary role discussed in Chapter 5. If Kipling and Yeats increasingly

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[166] *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Merlin Holland and Rupert Hart-Davis (London, 2000), p.916.
[167] In a 1904 essay, Symons wrote that Yeats was attempting to 'return to the natural chant out of which verse was evolved.' See Arthur Symons, *Selected Writings*, ed. Roger Holdsworth (Manchester, 1989), p.15. Kay Robinson, Kipling's editor in India, recalled that he 'always conceived his verses in that way—as a tune'. See E. Kay Robinson, 'Rudyard Kipling as Journalist', *Literature*, IV, 74 (18 Mar 1899), 285.
[168] Yeats, 'What is "Popular Poetry"?', *Essays & Introductions*, p.6. Writing to the psychologist William James in August 1896, Kipling contrasted the 'incident and colour' implied by the 'melodramatic' speech used by 'men of the trades' with the shrunken ambit of middle-class life. 'We, the *bourgeosie* [sic], became inarticulate or inept.' Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 249.
[169] Kipling, *From Sea to Sea*, ii, 172.

understood this role as communal and vatic, how would they remain solitary dreamer's critiquing society from the eccentric verge? For Yeats in particular, the pursuit of rural authenticity was perhaps principally a subjective process, a search for a more authentic tone of personal utterance. In *The Last Minstrels*, however, Ronald Schuchard has suggested that bardism's public aspect was, in fact, in dialectic with the private.[170] The personal reinforces the communal, the bardic role serving as a vehicle both for inward, artistic self-realization as well as outward, social transformation. But as Eagleton notes, however, the individual consciousness remained a potential site of tension. Would a changed human subject in turn bring about new social relations? Or did society need, through some revolution—as various Victorian malcontents posited—to be made fit for a new, enlightened, generation?[171] Yeats, like Kipling, would steadily lose track of 'the people' as his career proceeded. Instead, he would become less preoccupied with folklore or demotic language, than with the solitary, vagabonding figure of the outcast bard, often railing against an inadequate world. It reflected the anxieties of a condition both men aspired to and which, by the late 1890s, they began to attain: that of authority.

[170] Schuchard, *Last Minstrels*, p.26.
[171] Eagleton, 'The Flight to the Real', p.21.

7. Authority, 1896-1906

> I am so glad to see what a power in the land your boy is becoming.
>
> - Lord Dufferin to Alice Kipling, 16 July 1895.[1]

> At that time he was all dreams and all gentleness. The combative tendencies came to him later: such things are apt to develop in Ireland if one is a maker, as they used to call the creative artist long ago.
>
> - Katharine Tynan, on Yeats in the late 1880s.[2]

In the period from 1887 to 1895, I have sought to bring to light artistic and political connections, submerged in our subsequent readings of the period, between two poets whose trajectories converge, intertwine and yet never fully meet. To finally see this convergence at its narrowest, made all the more pronounced by the violent split that immediately followed, we need to look at their thirties. In these years Kipling and Yeats established themselves as figures of public influence—unofficial and controversial laureates. By the end of the decade, these political commitments would divide them irrevocably, with Kipling's briefly ascendant cause undergoing bitter setbacks and steady marginalization. More significantly for literary history, this see-sawing of political fortunes was mirrored by a similar rebalancing of reputations. To the rancour of these years, therefore, can be traced the canonical division and opposition that has so long disguised all that these two poets share in common.

Early in the 1890s, Kipling and Yeats could be equally palatable to men like Dowson and Johnson. If not often equated, they were certainly grouped on the same page. The approbation they received from critics like Lang, and the distaste they attracted from Mowbray Morris, was expressed in the same critical terms. But by the end of the decade readers felt obliged to choose between them, positioning them as rivals before the poets themselves had become aware of their rivalry. As suggested in earlier chapters, this partisanship owed its umbrage to the as yet unfilled vacuum left by the departure of the Victorian sage. As Ford Madox Ford wrote in his essay 'The Passing of the Great Figure', men like Tennyson 'implied the possibility of a coherent and encompassing point of view—not the partial

[1] Sussex MS 38/18/1. The Irish peer and diplomat had been Viceroy for most of Kipling's journalistic career in India.
[2] Tynan, *Twenty-Five Years*, pp.143-44.

glimpse of the specialist, but the wide and comprehensive vision of a moral prophet'.[3] The two young writers did not wish to don that mantle in all its hoariness, but in time they rose to the role that was expected of them.[4] As already mentioned, moreover, the adulation they received took on an associative dimension. This was particularly the case with Kipling, in whose honour male clubs were formed at Cornell and Yale. When he visited Oxford in May 1897, Balliol undergraduates cheered him so loudly that the Master's voice was drowned out.[5] It was commonplace to observe that the 1890s literary world was characterized by splintered and jealous groups. What was really being sought, however, was less association than leadership—not a church but a high priest. 'I was puzzled by culture being cut up into sections that were not even sects,' recalled G.K. Chesterton with typically ecclesiastic logic. 'The prophet was not really a commander of the faithful because there was no faith; and as for the doubt, it was equally common to all the rival groups of the age'. As Chesterton moves directly on from these comments on Nineties heterodoxy to his friendship with the Yeats family, however, he gives away the precise basis for Yeats and Kipling's fulfilment of the hieratic role. If the intellectual climate was disputatious, 'the images of imaginative men are indisputable'.[6] In Theosophy and Freemasonry, each man had supplied his strong need—despite the absence of any conventional belief in God—for the lodges, secret knowledge, and other trappings of incipient religion. Going further, from 1897 onward Yeats was fervently occupied with attempting to establish a Celtic Mystical Order on a castellated island in Lough Key.[7] Consciously or not, this training propelled them towards the vatic role in secular life for which, in time, they were to be both venerated and satirized.

The 'pulpit streak', as Kipling referred to his Old Testament sensibility, was becoming a matter of timing as well as of tone, applied to serve specific political contingencies. In September 1895 he attempted to deflect a debate on colonial contributions to the naval budget with 'The Native-Born', the first of many poems to appear in *The Times*. If he adopted a balladic mode for this song of

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[3] Quoted in Michael Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: a Study of English Literary Doctrine 1908-1922* (Cambridge, 1984), p.52.

[4] More so than Yeats, Kipling adopted an iconoclastic attitude to Victorian statesmen and men of letters. Terming Pater a 'master of prose', he nonetheless compared him to a talking ape after a dinner in 1889 (*Letters*, i, 372). More vengeful was his satire 'The Adoration of the Mage' on the prelatic reverence of Gladstone (*Abaft the Funnel*, p.257).

[5] Kipling, *Writings on Writing*, p.xxv.

[6] G.K. Chesterton, *Autobiography* (London, 1936), pp.284-5.

[7] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 196-7.

collective imperial identity, his Home audience was admonished in December with a chanting, dismal liturgy. Setting Britain on guard against an unnamed foe—presumably Germany or America—'Hymn before Action' exhibited the Wesleyan blend of militancy and mysticism highlighted by the *Scottish Review's* writer a few years later (see p.211). His best known poem in this mode, striking a more plaintive note of redemption, arrived eighteen months later. Wearied of the nationalist and personal animosity he had faced in the United States (his brother-in-law had supposedly threatened to shoot him), and increasingly attracted by metropolitan politics, in 1896 he made permanent his summer return to Britain. Settled alongside the Burne-Joneses at Rottingdean on the South Coast, he composed 'Recessional' in the tinselly wake of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, reproaching a complacent burgherdom 'drunk with sight of power'. Invoking self-restraint, duty, 'the Law', and above all cultural memory ('lest we forget', runs the refrain), the poem also conceives civilization as something to be maintained by watchful custody—an authoritarian theme that Yeats would expound even more forcibly than Kipling over the coming decades.[8] The *Times* editor Moberly Bell congratulated Kipling on having waited for 'just the right psychological moment' to silence the chorus of patriotic penny whistles with his jeremiad, while his literary agent enthused that the poem had crowned him 'Laureate de facto'.[9] Yeats, who himself contracted with Watt three years later, could not yet attain such stature, and his pursuit of authority currently centred more on the theatrical plans he was maturing with Gregory than on poetry. Drama would enable him to reconcile 'the enterprise of art and the need to preach,' as his biographer points out, 'enabling him thereby to purchase a claim on Irishness'.[10] Nonetheless, for all its otherworldliness, the prognostic occultism of *The Wing Among the Reeds* also carries an implicit claim to personal magnetism and authority, in a more sinister world than Yeats had hitherto imagined. If Kipling dwelt on the ominous ruins of 'Nineveh and Tyre', two poems of 1896—'The Secret Rose' and 'The Valley of the Black Pig'—betray Yeats's own, ecstatic foreboding of world war. Indeed, he had followed news of the Venezuela

[8] Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, pp.380-2; Kipling, *Complete Verse*, p.262. Yeats's attitudes to the use of violence, in the maintenance of society, were also more equivocal. Despite Kipling's undoubted fascination for arms and combat, 'Recessional' explicitly warns against a society that fetishizes weaponry.
[9] Sussex MS 22/49.
[10] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 214.

Crisis (the trigger for 'Hymn before Action') as anxiously as Kipling. 'Has the magical armageddon begun at last?' he wrote, only half-ironically, to the actress Florence Farr.[11]

Yeats would evolve a slippery technique in his public engagements, enabling him to strike tones of both high seriousness and piquant cynicism, and to behave as a politician while disavowing politics. Witholding comment until that opportune moment, his instinct for 'knowing how things would look to people afterwards' would later astonish his wife.[12] However much publicity Kipling accrued in the summer of 1897, therefore, the deployment of 'Recessional' was shrewdly Yeatsian, engaging in the forefront of debate from a backstage vantage. Disdaining to write a Jubilee ode in March, in July Kipling had instead written the antidote to Jubilee odes. The actual post of Poet Laureate, which he twice declined, would have hobbled this deft manoeuvring. The stodgy incumbent, moreover, aroused his utter contempt. 'I sat next table to Austen [sic], within four places of him and the little runt acted his piece', he gossiped after a banquet in May. 'I felt hot and indignant all over.' Kipling may have been expected to sympathize with his counterpart's politics.[13] In December 1895, Alfred Austin had dashed off an intemperate paean to the abortive Transvaal raid of Leander Starr Jameson (Kipling heartily supported this ploy by Chamberlain and Cecil Rhodes to destabilize the Boer Republics). But his was the master propagandist's distaste for a soapbox evangelist. Neither he nor Yeats would assert themselves as '*acknowledged* legislators', in the manner of Pound and his circle fifteen years later.[14] If they took an antithetical stance to their societies, their method was subtler, Kipling discountenancing 'patriotic rot' as fiercely as Yeats inveighed against Young Ireland rhetoric. According to a much-quoted adage, Ireland after the fall of Parnell in 1891 was like 'soft wax' which Yeats intended to remould. Kipling's metaphor was more pathological. 'You don't want to preach Imperialism', he told a journalist who had invited him to edit a new gung-ho magazine. 'It has to be sweated into the system or injected hypodermically'.[15]

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[11] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 477.
[12] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, xxvi.
[13] 'I believe I'm the sole, solitary, single and only "poet" who isn't writing a Jubilee Ode this year', Kipling told a correspondent in March 1897. 'There will be a ghastly crop of 'em.' Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 296-7.
[14] My italics. Pound's phrase is quoted in Levenson, *Genealogy of Modernism*, p.217.
[15] Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 137; Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.199; Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.383. Published by the Liberal Unionist newsman and politician Henry Norman, the magazine eventually appeared as *The World's Work and Play*.

As third parties observed, the pursuit of political authority periodically threatened to disrupt both men's poetic development. In 1892, John Butler Yeats had speculated that his son might stand for Parliament. Though it would be 'a hindrance to Willie's proper work', JBY suspected 'the glory & publicity' might prove hard to resist. The orchestration of several Irish literary societies and their attendant 'controversies' had honed his public speaking, a skill Kipling now began to develop at London dinners. He appeared to be justifying Carrie's fears that, on returning to Britain, he would 'sacrifice his literary career' to proconsular politics.[16] What strikingly links Yeats and Kipling's political approaches, however, is less their passion than their ambivalence. For the rest of their careers, both men would oscillate between cunning reserve and hysterical outburst. Despite their skirmishing incursions into rhetoric, moreover, both habitually distrusted constitutional politicians. Parnell's demise and eventual succession by the pragmatic, conciliating John Redmond had drained the romance from any electoral ambitions Yeats may have held.[17] In future he approved only leaders, like Kevin O'Higgins, who shared the Chief's heroic defects: proud, uncompromising, ruthless and solitary—never more alone than when haranguing and mastering a turbulent crowd. Also cast in a tragic mould, Kipling's own hubristic idol was a tongue-tied visionary most alone when—by his own admission—contemplating the annexation of the stars. 'I mistrust politicians when they eat with literary men,' he wrote after co-chairing with Arthur Balfour in December 1896. Two months later, however, he was eagerly running up to town to dine with Rhodes when the Cape premier came to London to answer a parliamentary enquiry on his role in the Jameson Raid (his reprieve was brokered by Yeats and Kipling's old friend George Wyndham, now dubbed 'Member for South Africa'). Immensely influential on the poet, the man fond of asking "what's your dream?" was also one of the few with whom he ever enjoyed real intimacy.[18]

This identification with authoritarian personalities clearly ties in with both poets' growing anti-democratic bias. Prolonged residence 'in the land where "everything goes"' had cemented Kipling's

[16] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 128; Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 319; Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.393.
[17] Satirical obstructionism characterized Yeats's legislative role as a Free State Senator. What he achieved was, like Kipling's official orchestration of national mourning after the Great War, achieved in the background.
[18] Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 279, 292-4, 301; Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.395-6. The first year back in Britain was one of Kipling's intensely social phases. Lord Curzon, another Tory with 'forward' policies, was acquired at a party in May.

convictions, and he did not cavil at telling Americans that their popular principal was 'an ungetatable Fetish' and—a word of similar significance for Yeats (see p.164)—'*maya*'. More significantly, intrinsic to ordered governance in their minds was the maintenance of literary standards and hierarchies. Appropriately, it was to Henley that Kipling had made, from Vermont, an only half-ironic confession of literary Blimpism.

> I believe in the critic, right or wrong so long as there is a critic and a canon. I believe in the *Saturday Review*, the *Spectator*, the *Athenæum* and *all* the Quarterlies. I believe in Mudie, in the British Nation, in Mrs Grundy, in the Young Person, and in everything else that sits on the head of talent without form or rule.

Echoing the Rhymers' preoccupations at the Cheshire Cheese, he went on to advocate 'everything that Doctor Johnson said about anybody' and—more prudishly—'all things that have authority and decency to back 'em'.[19] Yeats, whose neo-Fenian statements would shortly peak alongside his infatuation with Gonne, would not own political dictums of this stamp for some years. But he shared—albeit in less deliberately philistine terms—the conservative, canonic mentality. In 1897, movements were made towards an English Academy of Letters, with Yeats and Kipling both touted as members. Though these proposals would not bear fruit for another decade, discussion of this elite may well have stimulated parallel disputes, in the press, which now brought to the fore all that the two poets shared, and that would soon divide them.[20]

Convergence and Division in the Critical Press, 1897-99

The interlinked trends in which each had partaken during the early 1890s was favourably acknowledged when Yeats drew a comparison between the Celtic revival and imperial romance. Satisfying what was becoming a keenly technical interest in the military, Kipling spent the early summer of 1897 aboard the cruiser *HMS Pelorus* as she rounded the west coast of Ireland, finally glimpsing the country that was never quite absent from his political imagination.[21] Whether he spared

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[19] Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 112, 116-17.

[20] Thwaite, *Edmund Gosse*, p.453, 460-1. The 'Academic Committee', as it came to be known, finally formed in 1910. Though he had declined to participate, Kipling was evidently assumed to be a member, appearing with Yeats in Beerbohm's caricature of 1913.

[21] The pseudo-Celtic identity persisted, complicated by a racialized fear of Irish nationalism. In January 1898 he sportively told a well-read young girl that he was half a Macdonald, but during his near-fatal pneumonia in

a thought for Yeats, then with Gregory's circle in Galway planning his theatre, is unlikely. But in a review of *Spiritual Tales* by 'Miss Fiona Macleod'[22] a month beforehand, Yeats had identified him—and the recently deceased Stevenson—as artistic fellow-travellers. The Victorian age, Yeats's article pronounced, with its rationalism, naturalism and 'vehement … gospels' was no more. A new, general movement was afoot, of which Celticism was evidently to be the spearhead. Its watchwords were 'passion', 'beauty' and 'imagination', its mission 'to recover' ancient patterns of emotion and beauty. Stevenson's 'romances', the fairytale anthologies compiled by Lang and others, and 'Mr Kipling, with his delight in the colour and spectacle of barbarous life ... are but among the most obvious of the signs of change'.[23] That Kipling could also follow the faery path of the stolen child seems less improbable given that he was now known increasingly as the creator of Mowgli. Though Kipling's fantasy boys ultimately return to the human world of mundane commitments (rather than fleeing like Yeats's to the isle of youth), the animals' spell-like farewell at the close of *The Second Jungle Book* bestows on the man-child a charmed, auratic perception to face the world in after-years.

> In the dawns when thou shalt wake
> To the toil thou canst not break,
> Heartsick for the Jungle's sake:
> Wood and Water, Wind and Tree,
> Wisdom, Strength, and Courtesy,
> Jungle-Favour go with thee![24]

Yeats does not praise Kipling, however, for rehearsing the now established gesture of infantile recapitulation into the mindset of primitive societies. 'Fiona Macleod' has infiltrated the spirit of peasant life with feminine sympathy, while the imperial romancers have instead written 'as men write', observing savagery 'with the keen eyes' of a 'critical land'. Perhaps unconsciously, Yeats has set up an unfavourable contrast, along Arnold's racialized lines, between Saxon intellect and Celtic intuition. As Marjorie Howes has argued, while Kipling is apparently introduced as a mere foil to the object of Yeats's circumspect log-rolling, the reviewer aligns himself implicitly with the objective and

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March 1899 babbled deliriously about escaping Ireland in a ship owned by the Rothschilds (Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, pp.410, 423).

[22] A pseudonym of William Sharp, co-editor of *Lyra Celtica* (see p.31, n.12).

[23] Yeats, *Uncollected Prose*, ii, 42-43.

[24] Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Books*, ed. W.W. Robson (Oxford, 1998), p.325. A family resemblance may be noted with the lines from 'The Stolen Child' quoted on p.64.

universal vision associated with the two male writers. Though submersion of her identity within the popular ethic is Macleod's strength, it also marks the limitations of her Celtic character when contrasted with Kipling and Stevenson, standing aloof, conscious of their own powerful artifice.[25] It is important to bear in mind Yeats's readership. Addressing a London audience in 1897, Kipling and Stevenson could be presented, alongside the Celtic Revival, as another wing of the 'neo-remantic' avant garde sweeping in from the barbaric and passionate colonial margins. This would not wash in sceptical Dublin.[26] Nonetheless, seen in the light of Yeats's campaign to 'harden' his own verse, the review betrays his increasing approval for the Arnoldian values he still supposedly decried—a turn toward authority made ironically piquant by his failure to realize that 'Fiona' was the Hebridean alter ego of a male (and Unionist) colleague. Though it undergirt all his claims to native legitimacy, Kipling too would silence the sympathetic imagination when striving for a legislative voice.

Despite this apparent entente, as their respective reputations grew critics began to co-opt both Kipling and Yeats as figureheads in their own aesthetic quarrels. Seven months after his Macleod review, Yeats lectured to the Society of Arts on 'The Celtic Movement'. Doubting that recourse to myth and fable could effect wholesale cultural renewal, and denying the practicality of Yeats's uncompromisingly anti-modern stance, a reporter for the *Pall Mall Gazette* expressed his preference for the 'energetic' Kipling. 'The highest poetry is fed on facts, not on dreams.'[27] Though Yeats himself had insisted as early as 1892 (though addressing an Irish audience) on 'a literature of energy and youth', metropolitan critics persisted in setting him and his projects at odds with those of his Anglo-Indian contemporary. Hoisting the rival ensign in June 1899, 'Claudius Clear' (William Robertson Nicoll, editor of the *Bookman*) dismissed Kipling's poetry as hollow rhetoric doomed to fade with the empire it served, whereas Yeats's immortal verse would live eternally 'with love and sorrow and death'. Praising Yeats's latest volume, *The Wind Among the Reeds*, Nicoll went on to

[25] Marjorie Howes, *Yeats's Nations: Gender, Class, and Irishness* (Cambridge, 1996) pp.40-42.

[26] In August 1898, for example, Yeats adopted a quite different strategy to legitimate Johnson's Irish-themed poetry for the readers of Dublin's conservative *Daily Express*. He contrasted 'the little school of contemporary Irish poets' and its devotion to the 'spiritual life', with the Saxon materialism of William Watson, John Davidson, Arthur Symons (Yeats hints, despite their friendship, at his rakish lifestyle), and Kipling (who is 'interested in the glory of the world'). See *Uncollected Prose*, ii, 116.

[27] 'The Celtic Movement', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7 Dec 1897. The reporter cites Kipling's 'McAndrew's Hymn' (published in *Scribner's* in December 1894), in which a Scottish engineer calls for 'a man like Robbie Burns to sing the Song o' Steam' (*Complete Verse*, p.99).

insist that 'Aedh wishes for the Cloths of Heaven' was 'worth all the poetry Mr Kipling has ever written or ever will write, and … those who do not see this saying to be true will never understand at all in any proper way what poetry is'.[28]

The outburst triggered a newspaper row from which Yeats, with a relish for controversy that was sharpening in these years, assiduously pasted cuttings into an album now held by the National Library of Ireland. Besides Yeats's evident interest, the value of these often pettifogging squibs lies not in their critical insight but in the very repetitiveness of their logic.[29] They represent a contest to mould the literary canon for the new century, with Yeats and Kipling's respective cheerleaders calling out the same argument. Both parties insist that their man is breaking new ground and precipitating a cultural renovation, whilst the other author is a product of the corruption and vulgar decadence of the Victorian age. One columnist asserted that Yeats would soon have 'secured a place amongst the classics', quipping that the dryasdusts of a century hence would idly browse the British Museum for obscure ephemera from the pen that authored 'Mandalay'. Letter-writers were swift to join in, the *Academy* of 17 June merrily echoing its reader's overblown naval metaphor.

> We have received a long letter from a correspondent who, while confessing that he sails under Mr. W.B. Yeats's colour himself, objects to any comparison between writers so dissimilar as his hero and Mr. Kipling. We cannot print his letter, but there is room for the confession of faith with which it ends: 'Give me Mr. Yeats's new treatment of the old forms of poesy—the sun, the moon, and the stars, the day and the night, and his impossible mystical women. Give me these, and you may send the whole fleet of Mr. Kipling's ironclads to the bottom; spike all his guns and dip his colours, his eternal Union Jack.

The dispute raged on regardless of queries as to its basic validity. The *Spectator* of 8 July held its nose at the increasingly partisan remarks being exchanged, lamenting that Yeats 'has friends who are not content with proclaiming that he ranks with Shakespeare, but must at the same time declare that Mr. Kipling is inferior to Tupper.' Another small notice from this month is baldly titled 'Kipling versus Yeats'.

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[28] 'Rambling Remarks', *British Weekly*, XXVI, 657 (1 Jun 1899), 125.

[29] The date and periodical from which the ensuing quotations originate is not always clear, but all can be found in NLI MS 12145. This scrapbook is inscribed 'WB Yeats / His Book / 18 Woburn Place', but the addition of Lady Gregory's name suggests she must have collected some of the many clippings. Exhibiting a marked pro-Yeats bias, those dealing with the Robertson Nicoll controversy have been diligently harvested. They include even such tiny citations as this: 'And, when all is said, Mr. Kipling is nearly as good a poet as Mr. William Allan, even if he never quite invades silences inhabited by Mr. W.B. Yeats.'

By the autumn, the periodicals called time on a dustup in which, significantly, the purported combatants never themselves entered the ring. One commentator ascribed the entire premise—a comparison of 'gin with mutton'—to the contemporary craving for novelty. The setting up of Kipling and Yeats as figureheads of opposed trends persisted in critical writing, however, gaining traction in North America after it had become outmoded in Britain. In 1905 Horatio Sheafe Krans, one of the first scholars to undertake doctoral research on Yeats, contrasted Irish 'lyrical phantasy' with the 'hard, flashy and materialistic' Kipling. As for many of Krans's British contemporaries, the two poets were straw men in the ongoing quarrel between commercial populism and the learned coterie—one seeking 'too eagerly to catch the ear of the crowd' while the other 'address[es] himself to a cult' that appreciates his 'exacting artistic conscience'.[30] For the academic Pelham Edgar meanwhile, writing in the Montreal *University Magazine* three years later, the contest was between urban realism (Kipling's 'kettledrums in the street') and sylvan idealism (Yeats's 'flute in the hushed forest').[31]

This dispute is less significant for any insight it offers into common ground between the poets, than for contributing to the obstruction of our understanding of them. By promoting Kipling and Yeats in a narrow, instrumental fashion, well-meaning allies did them a critical disservice.[32] More striking is the way that, despite accusations of log-rolling (and log-jamming), most belligerents appear to have had no prejudicial personal connection to either man. Most importantly, the poets' obvious dissimilarity only served to intensify the squabble. Comparison was never the object in a discussion that was not really about poetic worth, but concerned rather the position of authority for which each author was implicitly competing. This preoccupation with figureheads betrays a yearning for a laureate or even prophet, clutching Arthur Waugh's 'burning new idea' (see p.211), and fully exhibits the contemporary obsession with schools, dogmas and the drawing of canonical divisions described by

[30] Horatio Sheafe Krans, *William Butler Yeats and the Irish Literary Revival* (London, 1905), pp.107-8. That Krans's comparison was termed a 'crying sin' by the *Bookman*, whose editor had initiated the original row, gives some idea of how canonically distinct the figures of Kipling and Yeats had started to become during the political tumult of the ensuing six years. *Bookman*, XXVIII, 164 (May, 1905), 70.

[31] Green (ed.), *Kipling: the Critical Heritage*, p.29.

[32] For example, only three days after Yeats had expressed admiration for Stevenson in the Fiona Macleod review, George Moore set out to prove that Yeats possessed a grasp of the mystery of art far superior to the Scottish romancer: 'Romantic! He's about as romantic as Voltaire' (*Daily Chronicle*, 24 April 1897). In the same month, the cranky Edgar Jepson lampooned his erstwhile friends at the Rhymers' Club by championing, against the insipid Celtic Revival, a 'Norse Renascence' consisting of Kipling, Henley, Nietzsche and Ibsen. The latter's realistic drama was distrusted by Yeats and utterly loathed by Kipling. *To-morrow*, III, 5 (May, 1897), 276.

Chesterton. Lastly, it becomes increasingly clear that this battle of the books was merely the steam rising from a political controversy that reached boiling point in late 1899. Counting the casualties in his December column 'Poetry of the Year', Le Gallienne adopted one of his capricious stances that so neatly illustrate the stylistic restlessness of the decade. 'Nothing has haunted me so much', he announced, as Kipling's 'The Absent-Minded Beggar'. Set to music by Arthur Sullivan, the poem had already raised fifty thousand pounds for the dependents of volunteers for the Boer War, which had begun in October. 'This, very seriously speaking, is an evidence of the continued power of poetry in the modern world.'[33]

Many onetime admirers that now seem unlikely only turned against Kipling in the last year of the 1890s, in response to 'The White Man's Burden' (published in November 1898 following the American annexation of the Philippines) and to his conduct during the South African War. Israel Zangwill, the Jewish writer who coined the term 'melting pot', was Kipling's foremost advocate for the post of Poet Laureate in 1892. By 1910 he termed him 'Poet Laureate to the devil'.[34] Furthermore, the case of William Robertson Nicoll, who initiated the newspaper row, is symptomatic of how political enmity carved an enduring fissure through the allied discourses that had bound Yeats and Kipling's respective oeuvres together during the preceding decade. The veteran editor had handed the latter a favourable review in the *British Weekly*, a nonconformist paper, in 1893. Nicoll was a Scottish Free Churchmen, drawn strongly toward Christian mysticism and symbology. As fond as Kipling of Old Testament exegesis, he dwelt particularly on his subject's religious sensibility, grounded in authoritative justice and his all-governing concept of Law: 'he believes in God—the great and terrible God.' Nicoll evidently admired Kipling then for the same reasons he later celebrated Yeats—spiritual vistas and an austere idealism. 'I think Kipling reaches the things which can hardly be put into words,'

[33] *Weekly Sun*, 9 Dec 1899. 'The Absent-Minded Beggar' appeared in the *Daily Mail* on 31 October 1899, before its musical premiere at The Alhambra on 13 November. It is difficult to imagine now the all-pervasiveness of this poem and its 'pay—pay—pay' refrain, which Kipling was to find so nauseatingly immortal. Mark Twain remarked that the 'clarion-peal' of its lines 'thrilled the world'. See Byron Farwell, *The Great Boer War* (London, 1976), p.54.

[34] Beckson, *London in the 1890s*, p.105; Zangwill, *War for the World*, p.219. Kipling had met Zangwill in the summer of 1893 and heralded him 'a born critic' (Kipling, *Letters*, ii, 171). See Kernahan, *Nothing Quite like Kipling*, p.53 for the deterioration of their relationship.

Nicoll told a correspondent, 'but which, as the mystics teach us, nourish the soul.'[35] It was what he and other lapsed disciples perceived as Kipling's betrayal of artistic ideals and convictions, by his indulging in worldly, impure politics and crass propaganda, that triggered their violent reaction against him. I sought to demonstrate in my previous chapters that Kipling's appeal to Nineties readers amounted to more than masculine vigour dispelling decadent torpor, but instead bespoke conviction and transcendence dispelling incertainty and materialist mundanity. Imperial politics now drove apart Yeats and Kipling's booming reputations. What remains to be shown is how, in spite of the personal enmity introduced to their relationship by the South African conflict and its wider aftershocks, they continued to shadow one another more closely than ever.

The Anglo-Boer War and its Aftermath, 1899-1906

The month before Kipling published 'Recessional', the Jubilee had given Yeats his own, haunting acquaintance with the manipulation of popular sentiment. In May 1897 he declined an invitation from the playwright Alice Milligan to speak at a nationalist meeting, protesting that it would 'introduce a stream of alien ideas into my mind which will spoil my work'.[36] Answering Gonne's summons a month later, however, on Jubilee Day he attended her first speech before a mass-meeting in Dublin. In a short-lived collaboration with the Socialist leader James Connolly, she led a procession through the streets headed by a black hearse with 'British Empire' emblazoned on the coffin. When rioting and window-smashing ensued, in which two hundred were injured and one woman killed following a police baton charge, Yeats infuriated Gonne by confining her within the safety of the National Club. In his *Autobiographies*, he appropriately chose to describe this night and the agitations that followed in a series of fragmentary vignettes: Gonne exulting in the violence 'with her laughing head thrown back', and the coffin tumbling into the Liffey, while Yeats himself began morosely to 'count the linking in the chain of responsibility... and wonder if any link there is from my workshop'.

This episode thus later furnished the opening motif for his somewhat self-important narrative of political remorse. At the time, however, he was humiliated by Gonne's suggestion that he should keep

[35] 'Rudyard Kipling', *British Weekly*, XIV, 347 (22 Jun 1893), 129; Quoted in T.H. Darlow, *William Robertson Nicoll: Life and Letters* (London, 1925), p.403.
[36] Yeats, *Letters*, ii, 102.

away from 'the *outer* side of politics'. He sought to compensate, in the spring, with a series of fiery speeches in connection with his chairmanship of a commemoration committee for the 1798 Rising, espousing extremist solutions not in line with his private views.[37] Such bursts of Fenian brimstone were targeted not merely at Gonne, of course. Ahead of the Irish Literary Theatre's inauguration in May 1899, they were also designed to raise his profile and ward off sardonic attacks from Pádraig Pearse, educationalist and later Easter martyr, and of Arthur Griffith's new paper the *United Irishman*. With his opening night contribution, *The Countess Cathleen*, Yeats was accused of pursuing his own decadent, Wagnerian experiments instead of the national cause, and of slandering the Irish peasant. More sensationally, the play was labelled blasphemous by the ex-M.P. and rusty loose cannon Frank Hugh O'Donnell.

In this same month, Yeats's attempts to simultaneously reinforce his poetic authority and Irishness begin to incorporate rebuttals of Kipling. Clapping one hand on the English literary canon, and rousing the gallery with the other, he told a Dublin lecture audience that Shakespeare had been 'no Rudyard Kipling.'[38] These public rebukes took on a more personal antipathy after the long-awaited war broke in October, with Gonne organizing pro-Boer meetings in the rooms of the Celtic Literary Society. The South African conflict changed the temper of Irish politics, allowing anti-imperialism to become an entrenched part of mainstream discourse, when the general expectation remained that Ireland would accede to Dominion status. For Unionists, it furnished an opportunity to orchestrate performances of loyalty. For physical-force nationalists, it was a proxy war. Pearse's future fellow-martyr John MacBride led the Transvaal Brigade at the Battle of Colenso in December, where Irish pro-Boers fought off the Connaught Rangers and Dublin Fusiliers. Gonne, who would marry MacBride three years later, aimed to counter the War Office's shamrock propaganda and reduce Irish enlistment. Her efforts peaked in July 1900, when she corralled thirty thousand children into a Dublin park to forswear Queen Victoria's recent state visit. Though he initially dismissed such events as 'irrelevant for me', her perennially unsuccessful suitor Yeats was inevitably drawn into this cultural

[37] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.277; Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 179-81, 196.
[38] Ibid., 220-1; Yeats, *Letters*, ii, 407 n.1. This jab at a man who had almost died from pneumonia (and lost his eldest daughter) the month before was unkind, but also apposite. Ten months later Kipling was breezily compared to Shakespeare during a dinner, attended by Sir Alfred Milner and Lord Roberts, given in his honour at Bloemfontein (Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.439).

conflict. Kipling, who by this point had been personally active in the theatre of war, was an obvious target. During the Christmas celebrations of 1900 at Tillyra Castle, Galway, Yeats and the mischievous Moore cajoled their dramatic collaborator Edward Martyn into a publicity stunt. Outraging his landlord friends in the Kildare Street Club, Martyn struck two songs off his bandmaster's list: 'God Save the Queen' and 'The Absent-Minded Beggar'. Lady Gregory, formerly unwilling to castigate the Empire her husband had served, now openly rejoined in the press.[39]

How had Kipling's profile come to elide so completely with the royal bogey that he himself had once faintly ridiculed as 'the Widow of Windsor'? He had arrived in Cape Town in February 1900, greeted with a ready welcome in a military set-up dominated by old India hands like Lord Roberts and Robert Baden-Powell, and with eager applause by his rank and file fanbase. Following a jaunty contribution to army newspaper the *Friend* (the occasion, all too appropriately, was St Patrick's Day), he was asked to join the editorial staff and thus adopted the duties of active propagandism. He was now in frenetic spirits, the Australian poet 'Banjo' Paterson describing him as 'a sort of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' who could 'put off the toga of the politician and put on the mantle of the author' to suit the turn of conversation. He returned to Britain with renewed determination to belabour a recalcitrant public, and press home the division in liberal opinion.[40] If the war had galvanized cultural politics in Dublin, in London it had forced an asymmetric split across the literary world—at its most jagged in leftist circles, with Shaw persuading a narrow majority of Fabians to back the forced opening of the Boer states to liberal enterprise. Since Aunt Georgie's socialism was not of the free trade variety, the campaign had struck a chisel too into the Macdonald family's papered cracks. If Kipling fired a cannon from the Rottingdean cliffs in May to celebrate the fall of Mafeking, she later appropriated his pulpit streak by hanging a reproving Old Testament verse outside her home (he was consequently obliged to come to her aid against a jingo mob).[41]

If the war had triggered a political split in the literary world, objections to Kipling were also premised within the artistic concerns and discourses of the fin de siècle. His more detached, snobbish

[39] Yeats, *Letters*, ii, 454, 505 n.1.
[40] Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, pp.435, 437-40.
[41] 'We have killed and also taken possession' (adapted from Kings 21:19). Angela Thirkell, *Three Houses* (London, 1986), p.80. Uncle Ned, who had once suggested that Kipling's friend Dr Jameson should be horse-whipped, had mercifully died in 1898 (Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.395).

critics merely reiterated the earlier darts of Oscar Wilde, terming him an inspired journalist. Gregory bandied as much with the old Anglo-Indian poet Sir Alfred Lyall in the early months of the war: 'talked of dreams... Of Kipling, Sir. A says he has gone down very low with "Pay, pay, pay"—& will lose his poetic reputation, tho' "Recessional" saves it still.'[42] More importantly, erstwhile admirers like Nicoll and Zangwill began to frame Kipling's offence as a betrayal of the cause of art. His old acquaintance George Meredith termed him a 'Mob-orator' who had personified Britain as 'a slattern with a furious jingle' in a dull poem on Australian federalization in January 1901.[43] George Gissing had originally admired him for these very demotic qualities. 'No man since Burns has set the vulgar speech to such irresistible melody,' he had written in 1896, 'Kipling is a fine strong fellow.' But whereas Kipling had previously voiced his Villiers Street milieu in a participatory and egalitarian spirit, now Gissing loathed him for turning his position to a crudely pedagogic advantage—whether in his somewhat threadbare recruiting poems, or in the 'vulgar & bestial' *Stalky & Co.* of 1899.[44] It is oddly appropriate that this collection of boarding school 'tracts', as Kipling himself unashamedly called them, should have attracted the most contemporary opprobrium among all his productions. Kipling had spoken, as few others succeeded, to a late Victorian readership preoccupied with childhood innocence and visionary wonder, and the three 'hideous little men', as Robert Buchanan reviled them, betrayed that ideal.[45] Buchanan and Gissing would undoubtedly have been horrified to learn that Kipling was now forming, at Rottingdean, a rifle club for local youths.

Though his picaresque masterpiece *Kim* would shortly rescue the opinion of friends like Henry James, the intertwining themes of propagandism, politicking and fantasized boyhood during these years unsalvageably muddied his name in critical circles. In the coming decade, it would become *de rigueur* to derogate the man his caricaturing nemesis Max Beerbohm dubbed 'idol of the market-

[42] Lady Augusta Gregory, *Lady Gregory's Diaries 1892-1902*, ed. James Pethica (Gerrards Cross, 1996), p.230. Ironically, Lyall later 'wonders why a gr poetic voice has not come from Ireland', to which Gregory explains 'the break in its literature caused by change in the language'. Given Yeats's recent Fenian profile, perhaps she thought it best not to advertise him to her old imperial friends.
[43] George Meredith, *The Letters of George Meredith*, ed. C.L. Cline (3 vols., Oxford, 1970), iii, 1370.
[44] George Gissing, *The Collected Letters of George Gissing*, ed. Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young & Pierre Coustillas (9 vols., Athens, Ohio, 1995), vi, 193, vii, 412. J.S. Bratton has argued that Kipling lost the 'truly communal voice' of the *Barrack-Room Ballads* when he tried to reprise their style during the war, in her study *The Victorian Popular Ballad* (London, 1975), p.77.
[45] Green (ed.), *Kipling: the Critical Heritage*, p.245. This was in Buchanan's now famous essay 'The Voice of the Hooligan'.

place', and Irish commentators were loath to hold fire.[46] With his most revolutionary poetry yet to appear, Yeats would go on to occupy an Olympian position among a modernist intelligentsia that seldom recognized Kipling as an antecedent. To juxtapose the two contemporaries became, subsequently, a counter-intuitive line of thinking. To return this thesis to the episode with which it began, therefore, what can Yeats's trenchant remarks of 1903 reveal about his submerged relationship with Kipling during the preceding years?

[46] David Cecil, *Max* (London, 1964), p.139.

8. Conclusion: the Last Romantics

'Ten years ago Kipling mattered greatly to men of letters'—it was muck-raking copy the savvy journalist himself could not have refused. When Yeats stepped off the boat in New York in November 1903, he spoke to the press in the confidence that critical opinion, now bifurcated by a political controversy, was swinging in his favour. Now empowered to mould opinion himself in an impressionable environment, Yeats deftly marginalizes his contemporary. Kipling is excluded from the nascent canon, characterized as a retrograde throwback to the departed century and its obsolete values. Given his experience with newspaper 'controversies', it must be doubted how unguarded his joke was about Kipling's mortal, as well as canonical demise. It may only have been for Gregory's benefit that he described his 'struggle of ten minutes' with the *Sun's* reporter.

> Inspite of her promise I expect to see printed in large black letters "Yeats desires Kiplings death"... I had been painfully judicious for days, as the reporters had been Irish & asked about Ireland but this woman asked about general literature & I was off my guard.[1]

This offhand assassination introduces a strangely personal vindictiveness into discussion of a supposed stranger. More broadly, the American lecture tour Yeats was now embarking on signalled a major step up on his long climb to a position of authority. On 28 December, he was entertained at the White House by Theodore Roosevelt, with whom Kipling had enjoyed a prickly friendship since 1895 (he had advised him to stay out of politics, and become a colonial administrator in America's new Pacific empire). Given that Yeats was now formulating a new poetic characterized by masculinity and 'salt', it was appropriate that he should now meet one of the *par exemple* strong, solitary, conflicted men to whom both he and Kipling found themselves repeatedly drawn. It is also an ironic comment on the two poets' changing fortunes that this was the very month in which Kipling finally fell out with the rough-riding President. While Roosevelt, already an admirer of the Celtic revival and especially of Gregory, played up his bullishly Anglophobic, pro-Irish and democratic credentials, Kipling and Jameson were sitting in a Cape Town hotel lamenting the amoral opportunism of his 'big stick' policy

[1] Yeats, *Letters*, iii, 467.

in Latin America. 'The President's message makes me feel like thirty cents as a raider,' the latter supposedly commented on learning how Roosevelt had staged a coup d'état to ensure control of the Panama Canal. The publisher F.N. Doubleday acted as go-between, witnessing both Roosevelt's fury at hearing this anecdote and, several weeks later, Kipling depositing the President's remonstrance into the grate.[2] He would repeat this act of erasure and isolation, in the years beyond this study's range, many times over.

The New York reporter noted an 'unexpected hesitancy' in Yeats, who may now have preferred to obscure linkages between his growth as a poet and that of his—until recently—putative fellow-traveller. Combined with the latter's critical taciturnity and later mutilation of his own biographic record, statements such as Yeats's interview—or their readers—have conspired to seal a historical silence over the contemporaneity and mutuality of onetime colleagues. A hint of what had linked, and continued to link them as writers can be extracted however from Yeats's final, arch dismissal. 'His might have been a very great name indeed,' he told the reporter, 'but he has made what Dante calls "the great refusal"—the refusal to be himself.' Kipling, perversely, has not only injured art but betrayed his own artist's soul into damnation. This judgment on the basis of *sincerity*, however, seems somewhat off-beam coming from a man dogmatically preoccupied with fleeing from his 'dread self' toward an antithetical mask, and a visionary determined to overcome inadequate reality with the 'compensating dream'. The remark was perhaps shaped for his audience. He would coin the latter phrase during his second American tour a decade later, but in 1903 Yeats's mode of address still took its cue from his early *Boston Pilot* articles. Presenting himself as the natural product of picturesque, anti-modern Ireland logically dovetailed with repudiating the poet who shared with him the traits of the fin de siècle '*unnatural* genius'. He joked about the Kipling gaffe with another interviewer a week later, before explaining why an author cannot claim the right, like Maeterlinck, to invent his own symbols. Instead should emulate Wagner by drawing 'from things that have been in the very blood of Europe for centuries.'[3] This was only a partial statement of his artistic credo. In *Aglavaine et*

[2] Foster, *W.B. Yeats*, i, 308; F.N. Doubleday, *The Memoirs of a Publisher* (Garden City, NY, 1972), pp.162-3.
[3] Kate Carew, 'W.B. Yeats', *The World* (New York), 22 Nov 1903. The interview also incorporates a brief biography that serves to certify Yeats's Irishness. As was usual in such cases (see p.35), Yeats is inaccurately described as growing up in Sligo.

Sélysette, Maeterlinck had chosen the tower as an emblem of the individual's spiritual nature—a symbolic trope for which Yeats, who first used it in his play *Deirdre* (1907), is now much better known.

'Conviction', rather than sincerity, had always held greater weight with both poets. The allusion to Dante concerns the Vestibule of Hell, wherein are incarcerated Pontius Pilate and other weakling souls who permitted evil to come about through their own indecision.[4] For contemporary readers, it can be read as the destination of morally equivocating politicians. The real sting of Yeats's remark lies, though, in the sinners' ironic punishment. Condemned to pursue an indistinct banner along circular levels, the indignity of this scourged mob could be construed as a satire on Kipling's behaviour in South Africa. His contemporary had come to represent the fate Yeats did not wish to overtake himself—that of the mountebank orator ruled by what he would call *hysterica passio*, the mania of the minute. Unlike Kipling, who appeared to have abandoned the chary, standoffish reflection exemplified by 'Recessional', Yeats remained concerned to instigate controversy without being drawn into its verbal whirlpool.[5] As Graham Hough has argued, his early misgivings about Henley's poetry—and, by extension, of Henley's circle—coincided with his strictures against Young Ireland rhetoric. On the other hand, he never played to the gallery more avidly than when denouncing Kipling.

Yeats's attitudes to rhetoric grew more complicated, and more conflicted in the course of his deepening political participation, but Kipling's 'great refusal' would remain for him a cautionary tale of a poet who had trod beyond the pale. Joseph Hone relates one anecdote from Milan in 1925, when an old friend made the poet admit that Hardy had his 'moments'. 'And Kipling? Yeats raised his hand episcopally. "That, no."'[6] Such repudiation always betrayed, however, their underlying proximity—and highlighted the thin and awkward line between sincere 'truth' and 'True' conviction. 'Do not our newspapers,' he had written in an early appeal against Dublin's rhetorical hysteria, 'with their daily

[4] In Canto III of the *Inferno*. Eliot alludes to the same image with his crowd flowing over London Bridge in *The Waste Land*.
[5] In December 1893, for example, he fenced with Alice Milligan in the pages of *United Ireland*: 'I did not say the man of letters should keep out of politics, but I remember the examples of Hugo, and Milton, and Dante ... [he should] keep rhetoric, or the tendency to think of his audience rather than of the Perfect and the True, out of his writing' (*Letters*, i, 371). I quote from this same dispute in the next paragraph.
[6] Joseph Hone, *W.B. Yeats*, p.371.

tide of written oratory, make us cry out, "O God, if this be sincerity, give us a little insincerity, a little of the self-possession, of the self-mastery that go to a conscious lie."' It was the same conclusion to which his contemporary had come, also in 1893, with *Many Inventions*: effective art was a 'conscious lie'. If Kipling represented the risk of self-deception, therefore, it is strangely apposite that in his last years Yeats should have come to replicate the sin of his contemporary, briefly seduced by the fascistic Blueshirts and writing, as Hough comments, 'almost jingo political verse.'[7]

The unsatisfactory settlement of the Boer War in 1902 was followed, for Kipling, by further political disappointments. The landslide Liberal election victory of 1906 closed the imperial proconsuls' window of opportunity and, though of course not evident at the time, initiated Kipling's own steady progress to the political margins. Canonically, he was now increasingly classed with the previous century, while Yeats would pioneer radical new trends. As their trajectories diverged into counterposed reputations, and very different social circles, the two poets nonetheless continued to unconsciously shadow one another. They would continue to discursively 'meet without knowing', in Foucault's phrase, for the rest of their lives. As I have sought to show throughout this thesis, their echoes can usually be traced to their earlier, shared milieu. They continued to value heroic, decisive action over passive thought—'Character isolated by a deed / To engross the present and dominate memory', as Yeats described his theatrical aims. Propelled by a late Victorian impulse to make society *fit* for poetic ideals, they equated literary influence with the force of action.[8] Both remained preoccupied, likewise, with the approach of some doomsday reckoning. Absorbing in his late twenties Mathers's conviction that occultic awakening would be mirrored by social revolution, Yeats closely eyed the same signs for the times to which Kipling pegged his hawkish calls for armed preparedness: first the Venezuela Crisis (as already mentioned), then the Spanish-American war (occasion for 'The White Man's Burden'), and at last South Africa (which Kipling dubbed a 'first-class dress-parade for Armageddon').[9]

These intertwined concerns would attain their brutal vortex in events that fall into the remit of a longer study. In 1915 Kipling's son John was killed at Loos, and the following year Yeats looked on

[7] Yeats, *Letters*, i, 373; Hough, *Last Romantics*, p.218.
[8] In 'The Circus Animals' Desertion' (*Variorum Poems*, p.630).
[9] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.259; Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.435.

as rebellion erupted in Ireland. They were thus forcefully confronted with the violence for which they had long adopted an attitude of, at best, ambiguous *realpolitik*, and at worst of sinister fascination. Remorseful enumeration of the dragon's teeth they had sown would become a prominent poetic motif in the 1920s and 1930s. Though public roles awaited each in the Peace, moreover, their vatic qualities were now turned to morose doomsaying, and a grim sense of cyclical history. 'The Tribe', as Kipling had described his bardic audience in the idealistic spirit of the Nineties, would become the hapless horde 'wiped off its icefield' amidst the compromised outcomes of 1919. Yeats too would learn what it meant 'To write for my own race / And the reality', as he wrote a few years beforehand, when the hegemonic authority to which he had aspired began to slip into the shopworn hands of the despised petty bourgeoisie.[10] Ironically, during the 1910s the two poets took a somewhat overdetermined solace in each other's country of origin. Yeats's collaboration with Tagore held for him a bardic pre-eminence and cultural coherence unattainable in Ireland, while Kipling—averting a jaundiced gaze from Indian politics—rallied to the Empire's last redoubt in unionist Ulster. As discussed in Chapter 2, they had pursued the exquisite reality of childhood zones with the sensitivity of exiles. Now, the strange, reclusive homes they created for themselves within quiet valleys in Galway and Sussex became hermeneutic capsules, housing not so much worldly memories as the ornamental record of their inner, imaginative lives.

'Romantic Ireland's dead and gone, / It's with O'Leary, in the grave'', Yeats wrote with bitter retrospection in 1913.[11] This thesis has not been able to explore the full ramifications of Yeats and Kipling's Romantic qualities. While it has examined their preoccupation with vision, childish imagination and landscapes of origin, and their attraction to fabularity and 'true fakery', it has not been possible to do full justice to their religious heterodoxy, demotic politics and pursuit of authority. By tracing their early entanglement within these discourses, however, it has foreshadowed the tragic and violent outcomes to which they were mutually drawn. Laying the foundations for this future work, moreover, I have attempted to suggest reasons for the sense of finality that overtakes their

[10] Respectively in 'The Gods of the Copybook Headings' (Kipling, *Complete Verse*, p.657), and 'The Fisherman' (Yeats, *Variorum Poems*, 347). For Kipling's notion of writing for 'the Tribe', see for example *A Book of Words*, p.6.
[11] 'September, 1913', *Variorum Poems*, p.289.

careers in the Romantic tradition. This is partly self-conscious. In 'The Fabulists', Kipling prophesied the impossibility of fantasy—and the obsolescence of the imaginative poet—after 'the groaning guns' of the Great War had done their work.

> When each man's life all imaged life outruns,
> What man shall pleasure in imaginings?[12]

More famously, in 1931 Yeats elegized himself and his colleagues as 'the last romantics'—the last to lay demotic claim on 'what poets name / The book of the people'.[13] Whatever follows is illegitimate.

For younger critical voices, on the other hand, the Romantic legacy and its attenuation suggested a line to be drawn under both his and Kipling's chequered careers. They were charged not merely with insincerity, but with bad faith or even conscious duplicity. In 1911, E.M. Forster wrote to Malcolm Darling of the wickedness of instilling in children identities based on national difference. 'Kipling and all that school know it's an untruth at the bottom of their hearts—as untrue as it is unloveable. But, for the sake of patriotism, they lie.' Forster had long resented Kipling, but he also noted in his commonplace book that Yeats was a 'dishonest bard'—an opinion echoed by Robert Graves and by W.H. Auden, who told Stephen Spender that Yeats's poems 'make me whore after lies'.[14] When Yeats died in 1939, three years after Kipling, Auden produced an elegy that vouchsafes both men the forgiveness of Time.[15] It is a somewhat bathetic commemoration, with a credo ('poetry makes nothing happen') with which both the deceased would have thoroughly disagreed. But it reflects a chaste appetite that many came to share following a second world war. Few poets would now advocate a career so powerfully devoted to the level of artifice to which Yeats had confessed in one of his last poems: 'Players and painted stage took all my love / And not those things that they were emblems of.'

In this restoring of the discursive foundations, my principal aim has remained to bring Kipling and Yeats back into critical contemporaneity. At the centenary of their births in 1965, Cyril Connolly

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[12] Kipling, *Complete Verse*, p.442.
[13] 'Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931', *Variorum Poems*, pp.491-2.
[14] E.M. Forster, *Selected Letters of E.M. Forster*, Mary Lago and P.N. Furbank (London, 1983), p.123; E.M. Forster, *Commonplace Book*, ed. Philip Gardner (London, 1985), p.234; Humphrey Carpenter, *W.H. Auden: a Biography* (London, 1981), p.416.
[15] 'Time that with this strange excuse / Pardoned Kipling and his views, / And will pardon Paul Claudel, / Pardons him for writing well.' Mendelson, *The English Auden*, p.242. Auden later removed these verses.

remarked on how his and Auden's generation had witnessed one man eclipsed, in the literary pantheon, by the other.

> It is significant that Yeats was born in the same year as Kipling. Who could foretell, when both attained their half-century in 1915, the reversal of fortune which would relegate the universally-acknowledged laureate (in prose and verse) of the world's greatest empire to semi-oblivion when his hundred was up, while the long-haired floppy-tied survivor of the Celtic Twilight, the last Pre-Raphaelite 'companion of the Cheshire Cheese' who refused to write a war-poem, would have amassed a twenty-page bibliography... solely of books about him since 1950?[16]

While Yeats's subsequent pre-eminence has been by no means unjustified, we must remember that the two authors were often perceived in their lifetimes—especially by overseas observers, including Nobel judges—as *the* two major representatives of British poetry. They interacted obliquely, but no less potently, within a cultural nexus that I have sought to reanimate through their comparison. Politically moreover, their discursive intersections make it increasingly clear why imperial and anti-colonial movements should echo one another. 'We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric,' wrote Yeats, 'but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry'. Yeats's quarrel with Kipling, and Kipling's with Ireland, certainly produced rancorous rhetoric, but their subjective poetry often effected the continuation of politics by other means.[17]

Lastly, their reintroduction makes it possible to better understand the development of a tradition which, despite their own sense of finality, reached only the end of a phase with Yeats and Kipling's departure. For their canonical opposition has not prevented their complementary influence on more recent Romantic poets. Questioned by a French research student in 1992, Ted Hughes recalled three great literary 'shocks' that moulded him as child: firstly, folklore and mythology; and secondly, Kipling's animal world and 'pounding rhythms'. Lastly, synthesizing these and providing a model for their unitary expression, came Yeats. Like the fervid, fin de siècle readers before him, Hughes found he had gained an artistic cipher for 'the whole thing'.[18] The statement is a tribute to poets who sought to revive, in their oeuvres, a totality originally aspired to by Romantic poetry. Relinquished by precursors like Tennyson and Arnold, they sought to retrieve this legacy of Wordsworth and Blake, only to eventually contribute, instead, to the fragmented modernism of Joyce and Eliot. Through

[16] Cyril Connolly, *The Evening Colonnade* (London, 1973), p.244.
[17] W.B. Yeats, *Mythologies* (New York, 1969), p.331.
[18] Ted Hughes, *Letters of Ted Hughes*, ed. Christopher Reid (London, 2007), pp.624-5.

parallel re-appraisal of these two poets who bore, not without reluctance and despite their antipathies, the unacknowledged fruits of late Victorian literature, we can continue to uncover the obscured continuities of the fin de siècle.

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10. Appendix: Parallel Chronology

Kipling

1865, Dec: born in Bombay.
1871, Oct: left with his sister at Lorne Lodge, Southsea for six years.
1877, Dec: the 'night gets into [his] head' for the first time. He has begun to write.
1877, Jan: enrols at the United Services College, Westward Ho!, Devon.
1882, Oct: returns to India, begins work at *Civil & Military Gazette*, Lahore.
1885, Apr: reports from Rawalpindi Durbar, a vast military review attended by Afghan Emir.
1886, Apr: joins Masonic Lodge at Lahore.
1886, Jun: *Departmental Ditties*.
1887, Nov: Transferred to the *Pioneer* of Allahabad. Sent on tour of Rajputana.
1888, Jan: *Plain Tales from the Hills.*
1888, Dec: 'Baa Baa, Black Sheep' appears in *Pioneer* Christmas supplement.
1889, Mar: leaves Calcutta for London, via Burma, Penang, Hong Kong, Japan and U.S.A.
1889, Oct: reaches London, lodges at Villiers Street, Strand. Makes contacts at Savile Club. Writes ten anti-London satires for the *CMG.*
1889, c. Nov: hires A.P. Watt as literary agent. Befriends Wolcott Balestier and sister Carrie.
1890, Jan: mental breakdown.
1890, Feb: Parnell Commission, 'Cleared'.
1890, c. March: meets W.E. Henley, who begins publishing *Barrack-Room Ballads* in the *Scots* (later *National*) *Observer*.
1890, May: sees Flo Garrard in Paris. Writes *The Light that Failed*, which appears in *Lippincott's Magazine*, Jan 1891.
1891, Jul-Oct: writes three stories of a psychic or occultic nature.
1891, Aug: *Life's Handicap.* Sea voyage. Visits Cape Town, New Zealand and Australia before returning to Lahore for Christmas.
1891, Dec: departs at news of Wolcott's death. He will never see India again.
1892, Jan: 'Tomlinson' mocks literary London.
1892, Feb: moves to U.S.A. after marrying Carrie Balestier in London.
1892, May: *Barrack-Room Ballads and Other Verses.* Positive review from Lionel Johnson.
1892, Jul: slated by Mowbray Morris in *Quarterly*.
1893, Jun: *Many Inventions*.

Yeats

1865, Jun: born in Dublin.
1867: JBY gives up law for painting, moves family to London. Summers are spent in Sligo.
1872, Jul - 1874, Nov: in Sligo with mother and siblings.
1877, Jan: starts at Godolphin School, London.
1881, Winter: family moves to Howth, near Dublin. Land War erodes JBY's income.
1884, May: Enrols at Metropolitan School of Art, Dublin, meets George Russell (AE).
1885, Jun: helps found Dublin Hermetic Society (from 1886, Theosophical Society).
1885, Nov: Contemporary Club forms. Meets John O'Leary.
1886, Jun: *Mosada* is first published book.
1887, Apr: returns to London (family moves to Bedford Park in Jan 1888).
1887, Jul: dines with William Morris.
1887, Aug: first 'fairy huntings' in Sligo. Impeded by 'that old snake—revery'.
1888, c. Aug: starts to call on W.E. Henley.
1888, Sept: *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*.
1888, Oct: finishes draft of *John Sherman*. Is published with *Dhoya* in Sept 1891.
1888, Dec: Christmas dinner with Oscar Wilde, who reads to him a draft of *The Decay of Lying*. Writes 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree'.
1889, Jan: *The Wanderings of Oisin and other Poems*. Meets Maud Gonne.
1889, Mar: Henley greets him as 'A New Irish Poet' in the *Observer*.
1890, early: co-founds the Rhymers Club.
1890, Mar: joins Golden Dawn.
1891, Aug: Gonne tells him they were related in a past life. Writes 'Rosy Cross Lyrics'.
1891, Oct: death of Parnell and of Gonne's son. Yeats initiates her into Golden Dawn.
1892, May: co-founds London Irish Literary Societ and National Literary Society (Dublin) in August.
1892, Sept: *The Countess Cathleen and Various Legends and Lyrics*. Championed by Lionel Johnso in *The Academy*.
1892, Dec: Douglas Hyde addresses National Litea Society on 'De-Anglicizing Ireland'.
1893, Apr: first of the *Secret Rose* stories, 'The Heart of the Spring', appears in *Observer*

1893, Aug: custom-designed house, *Naulakha*, is completed in Brattleboro, Vermont.
1894, May: *The Jungle Book*.
1895, Dec: Jameson Raid in Transvaal.
1896, Sept: returns to Britain following quarrel with brother-in-law. Live first at Torquay, then Rottingdean near the Burne-Joneses.
1896, Oct: *The Seven Seas* (poetry).
1897, Feb: dines with Cecil Rhodes in London.
1897, Jul: aboard *HMS Pelorus* off west coast of Ireland. 'Recessional' published in *Times*.
1898, Jan: winters in South Africa. Sees much of Rhodes and Milner.
1898, Sept: *The Day's Work*
1899, Mar: in New York, survives attack of pneumonia which kills his eldest daughter.
1899, Oct: outbreak of Boer War. 'The Absent-Minded Beggar'. *Stalky & Co.*
1900, Jan: to Cape Town. Spends next eight winters in South Africa.
1900, Mar-Apr: joins staff of *Friend* newspaper at Bloemfontein.
1901, Oct: *Kim*.
1902, May: Boer War ends. Acquires Bateman's. Writes 'The Song of the Wise Children'.
1903, Oct: *The Five Nations* (poetry).
1906, Feb: landslide Liberal election victory.
1907, Oct: first *Collected Verse*.
1907, Nov: first English-language recipient of Nobel Prize in Literature.

1893, Jul: Hyde forms Gaelic League.
1893, Dec: *The Celtic Twilight*.
1895, Oct: *Poems*.
1896, Jan: the *Savoy* is launched.
1896, Feb: takes lodgings at Woburn Buildings.
1896, Aug: meets Gregory in Galway.
1896, Dec: begins *The Speckled Bird*. (the novel is abandoned in 1903).
1897, May: compliments Kipling in press.
1897, Jun: watches Gonne incite Dublin riot on Jubilee Day.
1897, Jul: makes theatrical plans in Galway.
1899, Apr: *The Wind Among the Reeds.*
1899, May: *The Countess Cathleen* launches Irish Literary Theatre. Mocks Kipling in lecture.
1899, Jun-Dec: collects clippings from Kipling vs Yeats controversy started by William R. Nicoll.
1899, Nov: Gonne sets up Boer Franco-Irish Committee.
1900, Dec: persuades Edward Martyn to forbid performance of 'The Absent-Minded Beggar'.
1902, Jun: launches new art of verse singing with the 'psaltery' in London.
1903, Feb: Gonne marries John MacBride.
1903, Nov-Dec: first American lecture tour.
1907, Jan: hectors Abbey audience at premiere of Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World.*
1908, Sept-Dec: first *Collected Works.*
1923, Nov: second English-language recipient of Nobel Prize in Literature.