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JUSTIFIED BY IMPLICATION: THE IMPERIAL THEME IN THREE STORIES BY KIPLING

THE THREE WORKS to be examined here are products of Kipling's early, middle, and late career. "The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin" (1887, *Plain Tales from the Hills*), "The Bridge-Builders" (1893, *The Day's Work*), and "The Church that was at Antioch" (1929, *Limits and Renewals*) deal neither explicitly nor primarily with the justification of imperial power. Instead, they speak in turn of the role of speculative reason and the feasibility of its use in everyday affairs, of the paradox of the frailty of man's works and the strength of his soul, and of love's refusal to be contained within sectarian boundaries. The "message" of each story could be derived from those outlines, but within these works there remains—by implication—the theme of the justification of empire.

The situations with which the three stories deal have their imperial implications and they give rise not only to the principal subjects of the stories, but to further ones which deal with the motives for bearing the imperial burden. Viewing these sub-themes, the reader moves from a consideration of justification of empire by faith, to justification by works, to justification by love. This will emerge from the analysis of both the central theme and the imperial implications of each story.¹

In "The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin", the opening paragraph declares that the work is "a Tract"; like many of the *Plain Tales*, it is more an anecdote with a richly-worked background than a short story. The leading figure does not so much develop as find himself picked up and moved to a new space on the board. One explanation for the author's terming it a tract (for why pick on this particular Plain Tale?) may be the explicit moral of the story. Yet if the story is a tract, this need not imply that the events are improbable, or that the moral can be separated from the character.

An acquaintance with such thinkers as Comte and Spencer convinced McGoggin that "men had no souls, and there was no God and no hereafter,

and that you must worry along somehow for the good of Humanity".² However satisfactory such a creed may be in the urban centres of the West, it is not quite pertinent to conditions in India, where simpler theories, which place a God (to Whom everyone is accountable) at the head of affairs, hold sway. If the chain of command fails to converge with the chain of being, then the whole show of administration, service, and responsibility is meaningless, and this simply cannot be.

A fanatic Scot who resembles his creator in having Wesleyan preachers for grandfathers on both sides, McGoggin ceaselessly proselytizes his creed in the Club. His highly scrupulous conscience compels him to apply his logical and hortatory powers to every problem, however slight, arising out of his Assistant Commissionership. A man can not go on forever gnawing at every aspect of every order he is given, and McGoggin suffers a breakdown, an aphasia involving a months-long loss of control over speech and memory. He learns to take shorter views, to realize that henceforth to obey is best. Life has shown him how little he knows about his own reason and sensibility.

"Aurelian McGoggin" is about the familiar theme of the dream of reason as monstrous, about the impossibility of devoting our rational faculties to a consideration of every aspect of every issue. It also asserts that in certain situations, even in certain life-styles, the reason is best put aside, since simple faith can be far less treacherous. The obscurantism of such beliefs should not blind us to their importance, particularly when it is considered how little the self resembles what we think it to be. The instability of the rational personality, the easy availability of madness, is a persistent theme in Kipling, linking such diverse works as "In the Matter of a Private" (*Soldiers Three*), "In the Same Boat" and "Mary Postgate" (both in *A Diversity of Creatures*). However such a theme may upset a contemporary critic,³ "Aurelian McGoggin" is interesting if only as one of the earliest appearances in Kipling of this concept of personality-as-unstable.

But what has all this to do with empire? Toward the beginning of the story, in describing the difficulty of breeding a strain of humanism hardy enough for the tropics, the author employs an imperial analogy:

Life, in India, is not long enough to waste in proving that there is no one in particular at the head of affairs. For this reason. The Deputy is above the Assistant, the Commissioner above the Deputy, the Lieutenant-Governor above the Commissioner, and the Viceroy above all four, under the orders of the Secretary of State, who is responsible to the Empress. If the Empress be not

responsible to her Maker—if there is no Maker for her to be responsible to—the entire system of Our administration must be wrong. Which is manifestly impossible.

This invocation of hierarchy is an ironic statement in part, but it anticipates one to be made years later at the conclusion of “Her Majesty’s Servants” (*The Jungle Books*). There it is an evocation of the strength of the *raj*, where everyone has a place and all efforts strive toward the same goal. This hierarchy, an Indian officer tells an Afghan chief, explains why the Empress of India gives orders and the Amir of Afghanistan takes them. Strength is a matter of order rather than of bigger guns. This irony which plays along the surface of the litany in “Aurelian McGoggin” is more complex than at first appears. The irony that the entire cumbersome, articulated structure of society is founded upon the bubble of an hypothesis is undercut by the insight that in no other way can society keep going. Assuming that particular society to be good (and the story’s universe of discourse admits of no other view), then the joke is on those who refuse to swallow the hypothesis but still participate in the activities of the society, or even, as does the civil servant McGoggin, uphold that society.

“Consequences”, the story immediately preceding “Aurelian McGoggin” in *Plain Tales* (recall that the author himself arranged the order of the stories in the collected editions), informs us that “the first glimpse of the naked machinery of the Great Indian Government, stripped of its casings, and lacquer, and paint, and guard-rails, impresses even the most stupid man”. The imperial implications of this are as obvious as they are obscurantist. Theirs not to reason why, the constituents of the Empire are to swallow its activities whole and leave to higher powers any accounting and rationalizing. Each man is to get on with his job, for there lies the proof for the rightness of what he is doing. The administration is there, it is a fact, and the healthiest response to facts is to live with them and allow those better gifted for speculation to attempt to explain them. But even such gifted people should realize that, as there are forces and motives within their own souls which hit back sharply when looked into, so also are there similar phenomena in society. No one could run a postal station with the vegetables produced by such an ethic, and it is this sort of thinking which characterizes the compulsive bureaucrat (such as Eichmann).

The imperial officer must soldier on and leave the accounting to others because the structure he supports is ultimately a fragile one incapable of sur-

viving much speculative shaking. The work done—in McGoggin's case, the administration of justice—is of obvious benefit. The question of its larger implications can not be settled by the man on the spot because he has too much to do. There is too much of "humanity—raw, brown, naked humanity—with nothing between it and the blazing sky, and only the used-up, over-handled earth underfoot", as McGoggin finds out, for him to be able to think his way through every human problem he comes across. This does not mean that his work fails to make sense, but that he does not have the opportunity to justify it on a level of speculative reason. One justifies the *raj* by faith, faith that someone, somewhere, has thought everything out and totted up the system in a moral ledger. It is a faith in the day-by-day good which assumes that on such a scale the various day-by-day and long-range evils can be cancelled out. It is a frame of mind congenial to governors, no matter what their rank.

The literature of imperialism is filled with panegyrics to the men on the spot. However, the English liberals who appear in "The Enlightenments of Pagett, M.P."⁴ or "Little Foxes" (*Actions and Reactions*) are not the butt of criticism merely because they have little knowledge of the spot. Their chief qualification for this role as target lies in their insistence upon imposing speculative theories and grand moralities on situations unsuited to judgment in the light of eternity. Like McGoggin, they represent an Evangelical conscience secularized and scrupulous. W. H. Auden, indirectly pardoning Kipling for his views, has somewhere noted that if we devoted the time and effort to talking about our motives and hopes that Bernard Shaw's characters do, the world would stop running in twenty-four hours. This is one way of phrasing the message of "Aurelian McGoggin".

To repeat, the notion is obscurantist, but not evasive. It is an acceptance—too hearty an acceptance—of a fact of life. It may be useful in this context to recall another examination by implication of the *raj*, though one carried out in a far different spirit. Did *A Passage to India* set forth any final answers as to what India was or what it needed? Was not its liberalism overwhelmed by that "blazing sky" and that "used-up, over-handled earth underfoot"? The Anglo-Indian officials were easily caught and pilloried, even Indians were seen to have certain defects of character, and the novel concluded on what must have been an exasperating note to the doctrinaires of its time. For the problem of human communication and contact had been seen to be insoluble, and the imperial problem viewed within this wider context. Kipling and Forster scarcely agree about the *raj*,⁵ but both find

India a place which stubbornly resists rational explanation or response. Forster does not justify the Empire through faith or anything else, yet the only hope for Fielding and Aziz remains in their faith in the possibility of human communion somewhere, sometime. They too will soldier on in that belief. The imperial implications of "Aurelian McGoggin" compose a justification of empire by faith, but a faith possessing a greater nobility and necessity than may at first appear.

The notion of an empire's fragility was peripheral to "Aurelian McGoggin", however much it illuminated the story's central concern. "The Bridge-Builders" includes this theme with its greater one—the paradox of the brevity of human achievement and the cumulative strength of that frail effort. Briefly, the story tells of the anxieties suffered by the engineer Findlayson (his Christian name is never given, a common enough Kipling practice) when the flooding Ganges threatens to destroy the not-quite-completed bridge he is building. After taking opium as a stimulant and febrifuge, he and Peroo, a native foreman, witness a debate among the Hindu pantheon on the implications of the bridge. The Gods allow the bridge to stand, though it restricts the river, for they know that like any work of man the bridge will soon pass. But the Gods are also told by one of their number that the technological culture whose characteristic products are railways and steel bridges is a culture forgetful of the Gods and increasingly invulnerable to their weapons. Thus the tale concludes on a note of what Nietzsche termed "Gotzendammerung", a twilight of the idols which leaves man the frail survivor.

So bald an abstract of the story conceals its richness. But before describing any of this, it would be well to glance at the theme of the frailty of human hopes and achievements as it appears elsewhere in Kipling. "The Bridge-Builders" contains a laconic sentence by Ganesh, god of success, in which he dismisses the alarmist complaints of Mother Gunga [Ganges] by putting man in perspective: "Let the dirt dig in the dirt if it pleases the dirt." This sense of the transitory nature of human effort recalls one of the finest songs from *Puck of Pook's Hill*:

Cities and Thrones and Powers
Stand in Time's eye,
Almost as long as flowers,
Which daily die. . . .

This feeling of transience appears at first to be out of place in a story

so typical of Kipling's work tales. For "The Bridge-Builders" is one of those pieces rich in technical lore and vocabulary. Some of the bridge-building and construction details encountered are revetments, truss, lattice-girder, spile-pier, spurs, T-plate, borrow pit, caps of stone, and cribs. The vocabulary is not indigestible jargon punctuating a great deal of shop talk. It is central to the atmosphere of the story as it demonstrates that the events take place in a job-oriented universe contrasting sharply with the universe in which the debating Gods dwell. As the reader of "M'Andrew's Hymn" would expect, this concentration upon technical matters embodies a vision not only of the way in which technology might be humanized, but also of how deep an expression of humanity it in fact is. When it is remembered how very recently literary intellectuals and artists as a group have begun to discover that the humane society need not be agrarian, and that industrialism demands a finer, more elaborate response than second-hand mutterings about dark Satanic mills, the peculiar genius of Kipling becomes all the more apparent.

Thus the second paragraph of the story, too lengthy for quotation, is replete with such terms as those listed above. It is a paragraph of very clear, very technical description of just what sort of bridge the Kashi Bridge of Findlayson is. Yet this catalogue of "borrow-pits", "footpath-stanchions", and "fire-pots" concludes with a picture of tons of stone being dumped along the banks of the Ganges "to hold the river in place". The audacity, the essential humanity of the enterprise revealed in such a phrase! As if man could really hold a river in place; yet the attempt to do such a thing, and the technology making possible such an attempt, can be seen as expressions of man at his noblest. Does not the phrase about holding the river in place reveal that the duel between Findlayson and the Ganges began with the struggle between Achilles and Scamander? And is it not worth celebrating the technology that brought that dream into reality?

Kipling begins to convey the symbolic nature of the Kashi Bridge by observing that, in supervising their large community of workers, Findlayson and Hitchcock had overseen "drought, sanitation, finance; birth, wedding, burial, and riot in the village of twenty warring castes; argument, expostulation, persuasion and the blank despair that a man goes to bed upon, thankful that his rifle is all in pieces in the gun-case." Findlayson runs a little empire, and the situation is a Kipling version of India under the *raj*: a community engaged in a great public work under the supervision of a tough, self-sacrificing administrative élite who live in and for their work. The use of bridge-building to symbolize all this recalls the mechanical metaphor for the *raj* cited earlier

from "Consequences". No matter what happens to the projectors during the project, the work goes on.

In its opening sentence, the story begins its ambiguous presentation of the Chief Engineer with its disclosure that he expected at least a C.I.E. (the sort of solid but middling gong that was awarded to John Lockwood Kipling), and dreamed of a C.S.I. There is nothing wrong with ordinary ambitions, but they are held by a man doing extraordinary work. Findlayson's pride must be balanced alongside his demanding, ultimately successful labours. Despite an error in judgment (assuming that too much has not been read into his foreman's remark about the greater safety of a suspension bridge), he has much to be proud of. But it is best that men lack too intense an appreciation of such facts about themselves.

While aware of the passing nature of man's works, the Gods are not wholly contemptuous either of the Kashi Bridge or of the other hardware with which the *raj* has dotted India. Even as Mother Gunga laments the discomfort caused her by the bridge, as well as her inability to do much about it, Ganesh observes how the spread of prosperity across the land through the works of the *raj* has provided him with a new host of worshippers, "for all the towns are drawn together by the fire carriage [railway], and the money comes and goes swiftly. . . ." Other gods have been well served by the trains bearing new pilgrims to their shrines. Some Gods are pleased by the hard side of technology: Kali the Destroyer rejoices in the advent of speedy travel, for now the carriers of plague roam far and wide. Had the divinities of the Nile been holding a council, they could have rejoiced at how the extensive irrigation works of the British also promoted the proliferation of the bilharzia bacillus, whose effects are the curse of Egypt. There is something in public works for every god, and even the complaining Mother Gunga must admit to having her share of the spoils as the fire-carriages bear more expiring pilgrims to the holy waters of the Ganges.

What of the *raj* as a whole? Has it been demonstrated to be a feeble, worthless effort because it is doomed to eventual distinction? If human effort is merely the dirt digging in the dirt, why bother to dig? These despairing questions are answered by the story itself during the heavenly debate and through the personal debate of the foreman, Peroo, over the necessity for religion. As may be expected of a gathering of the Hindu Gods, the debate is fully humanized, Mother Gunga's plea for divine intervention being denied on the shrewd, prudential grounds outlined above—the *raj* cannot last forever, and its technology benefits the Gods. The end of the gathering is enlivened

by the appearance of Krishna, the god of love in his traditional avatar as a young man, who brings news from the human world. These notes from underground reveal that man grows slowly indifferent to the Gods and increasingly conscious of his own powers. Kali, ever intent on the shortest way with dissenters, has her plans to educate man through destruction rejected as out of date. Punishment can no longer work; man should have been cursed sooner. As men measure time, it will be long before the Gods return to being local deities invoked by peasants and hunters. But the day is coming; it is not a question of first in beauty being first in might, but of the first being last.

Kipling is not hailing the opening stages of a Steam Intellect Society's Utopia, but only showing that the Gods will decay. The spirit of an Edward Bellamy has nothing to do with this story, for the future is not its great concern. The future is not considered except in terms of its lack of gods. The Western style of life has boomed both prosperity and plague; whatever good the new society brings will also have evil in its train. But the *raj's* activities are not mere busy-work. For the story is an artful apology for empire: it assumes that no other agency for progress exists, and that the bridge-builders with all they bring from beyond the seas are training their future native successors. Put in another fashion, that bridge over the abyss between the ape and the Overman, as Nietzsche put it, or between the old, god-dependent native and the new, free man could only have been built by those beneficent rulers who pass their time labouring for the good of others.

A number of mines lurk beneath the surface of this sort of imperial justification. The matter of the suspension bridge is not a mine, but a warning left by the author. It is not a radical challenge to the *raj*, but a counsel that the administration must improve its techniques if it is to survive. This sort of criticism never questions the *raj* in itself. The real mines are the unacknowledged implications of a justification by works. The assumption that peace, prosperity, and good government justify alien rule can be (and was) answered by the equally tenable assumption that it is better to govern oneself not wisely than to be ruled by another too well. Of even greater significance is the fact that technology is colour-blind. The techniques associated with an industrial society require the mastery of a body of knowledge and the imposition of collective discipline rather than the laying-on of a halo of authority. There is nothing sacred about a Chief Engineer, no mystique attached to a mastery in that profession. Kipling's distaste for flannelled fools at the wickets, for gentlemen amateurs who couldn't be bothered learning their jobs, and his fondness for the experts, the Sons of Martha, under-

mines his imperial justification. Rule by gentlemen amateurs can be justified (and has been in Britain until very recently) on the basis of an aura, a charisma of leadership, which surrounds the man born to rule.⁶ A natural ruler, according to such a theory, has a certain style in which such things as speech habits, "manners", and attitudes toward sex and money play a prominent part. The making of such a style is rarely explicit and rational. It is only the outsiders wanting in who have to go about things consciously and cold-bloodedly. Imperial power achieves stability only if it possesses this sort of authority, this mystical paternalism glorified in "The Tomb of His Ancestors", a story appearing in the same volume as "The Bridge-Builders".

Kipling's fondness for experts, however, has made expertise the ultimate sanction of the *raj*. The reader knows that Findlayson is an engineer, the inventor of the Findlayson truss and the Findlayson bolted shoe, a "player" and not a "gentleman". Hitchcock is the "all-round man" who runs the labourers' camp and looks after the flogging. Assuming that he represents the traditional imperial-authority figure, it is also true that he is an engineer, and an expert subordinate to Findlayson. The Empire seems to be an affair of experts rather than of gentlemen-amateurs. This is an orthodox view of the Empire according to the Kipling canon: most of his stories deal with experts and professionals, military and civil. This sense of professionalism has its drawbacks as an imperial myth, for an empire is at the mercy of whatever better sets of experts appears. An empire based on expertise can be challenged on a technical, factual level, a far better battle-ground for the nationalist than the mystical level. Perhaps the author desired to point out the weakness of expertise? If so, then he unfortunately did this in a story leaving no alternative to expertise but futility. Either the Empire is justified by its works and their effect upon living conditions or it is merely the dirt digging in the dirt. "The Bridge-Builders" contains a justification of empire which holds a warning about administrative backwardness. It is also a story whose unconsidered implications reveal the weakness inherent in any pragmatic justification of an imperial role.

"The Church that was at Antioch", as noted above, is an account of love and self-sacrifice and the refusal of these virtues to be trapped within religious barriers. Despite the seemingly ethereal nature of such a theme, the story provides what is from a mythical viewpoint the most effective of apologies for empire to be found in Kipling. In this tale, to put it bluntly, God becomes an Imperialist.

Valens, a young officer of the Roman police in Antioch during the opening half of the First Century, saves the nascent Christian community from a Jewish persecution, and is murdered for his pains. The overriding concern of the story, with its epigraph from Paul's Letter to the Galatians, is the relationship between love and law. It shares with Galatians a conviction that it is love which redeems and justifies law.

The laws of Rome, Mithras, Christ, and Moses strive against each other throughout the story, and an even older law—*lex talionis*—lies behind all of them. Valens' killer is the brother of a brigand killed in self-defence in a skirmish on the road to Antioch. The Roman repelled the first attempt at vengeance and forgave the man, trusting to end the cycle. But obviously the counsels of Christ and Mithras exert power over few men, and the vengeance of a frustrated Jewish community ties in with the hatred of an outlaw in the removal of Valens. For Peter and Paul, the noble Roman dies like a Christian in forgiving his enemies because "they don't know what they are doing".

Before the imperial implications of the story, the role of law must be considered. It would seem that what is usually considered to be the Kipling idea of the Law—the stern daughter of the voice of God croaking "Obey!"—has been discarded in favour of a rule-less love. But the Law in Kipling rests upon certain unavoidable facts of life: that betrayal is unwise because it breeds further betrayal, that the violation of group *mores* brings discomfort and punishment, that boasting often reveals a frame of mind ripe for defeat, that the hasty and intemperate rarely succeed as most men interpret success, and that any independent spirit will be sooner or later forced into some sort of accommodation with the doctrines of his tribe. Stripped of all its poetry, this is what the Law is about, though one need not—as did H. G. Wells in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*—see it as a code fit only for clever apes. Kipling's Law deals with the basic conditions of life, with the way that the men who survive run their affairs rather than with specific recommendations. The poem on "The Law of the Jungle" (*Second Jungle Book*) has specific commands about sharing the kill, leading the pack, and so on, but this is the Law as its subjects translate it into their particular needs. Whatever may have been that Law which the lesser breeds of "Recessional" both lacked and were outside of, the author never got around to making it as specific as the regulations governing wolf-packs. The Law is a matter of myth rather than of ideology, a poetic model for man's experience which humanizes (that is, gives a rationale and order to) certain immutable aspects of our lives.

The various laws in "The Church that was at Antioch" are specific

value-systems which *at their best* become reconciled in love. But this reconciliation takes place within a specific context emphasizing that Law found elsewhere in Kipling. The story is an imperial one, dealing with the Roman *raj* in Syria. Sergius the Prefect is akin to Gallio of Acts xviii, whom Kipling made to say that "touching your clamour of 'conscience sake', I care for none of these things" ("Gallio's Song", *Actions and Reactions*). Such Romans as these are interested only in keeping an order and peace which they feel to be the basic conditions for any widespread opportunity to speculate on the role which love might play in human existence. That the Empire offers the sole chance for the continuation of this peace and order is their basic premise. Whatever personal sympathy he may have for the threatened Christian, Valens correctly replies to Paul's probing of his attitude toward them by remarking that his sole concern is the maintenance of order in his own ward. The imperial factor may then appear as a neutral one, intent only upon insuring that religious differences do not disturb the peace. Sergius does not wish to see the Christians "'stampeded into what can be made to look like political crime'", because he recalls how "'one of our Governors . . . down-coast'" attempted to buy peace by turning a Jewish prisoner over to his own religious Establishment. The attempt was unsuccessful. Whatever Sergius' motives—love of men or love of order—the resulting actions are identical.

Leaving aside for the moment the question of the compatibility between the claims of love and those of the civil order, we should consider the question of the neutrality of the imperial background. That background is a vivid one, and the imperial presence becomes most evident in one of the story's climactic moments, the damping-down of a threatened anti-Christian riot. The detail-work of the scene is lavished upon the Imperial Police as they clear a way through a touchy crowd:

[The Mounted Police's] wise little grey Arabs sidled, passaged, shouldered, and nosed softly into the mob, as though they wanted petting, while the trumpets deafened the narrow street. An open square, near by, eased the pressure before long. Here the Patrol broke into fours, and gridironed it, saluting the images of the Gods at each corner and in the centre. People stopped, as usual, to watch how cleverly the incense was cast down over the withers into the spouting cressets; children reached up to pat horses which they said they knew. . . .

Following this crowd-calming musical ride, the rescued Apostles walking with Valens can hear "the trumpets of the Night Horse saluting some statue of a

Caesar." The Empire is not a neutral background, but the organism whose activities and agents provide the framework for the story.

One should beware of caricature: there is more to this vision of empire than the "Support your local police" mentality. The best way of getting at this ideal empire is to recall an earlier idealization, that of Edward Gibbon. It is now a commonplace that in those splendid volumes which form the Roman Empire's most enduring cenotaph, Gibbon has captured the giants of the time in so far as they resembled eighteenth-century English gentlemen. And thus the Emperor Julian emerges as a paladin of Deism rather than as a devotee of Eastern mystery cults and a patron of dubious magicians. Many have seen in this phenomenon evidence of the absence of the historical sense, that awareness of the difference, the *pastness* of the past stamped upon the mind of the West by Sir Walter Scott. Yet history, if it is to be a humanist discipline, must also strive to acquaint its audience with the enduring nature of certain attitudes and problems and the extent (if any) to which they may be applied to present difficulties. If Gibbon's fat, thick square volumes display greater insight into the nature of neo-classicism than of classicism, this only serves to impress upon us the overpowering need of every age to define itself in terms of the past and to rummage ruthlessly there in order to discover that reassurance of sempiternity craved by every era.

For this reason the Roman Empire of Kipling is governed by the same men who ran his British Empire—dry, unillusioned steady men who never lose that Horatian calm when the heavens are falling. Horace was, after all, the author's favourite classical poet, and the story "Regulus" (*A Diversity of Creatures*) exhibits that side of Horace which so appealed to Kipling: the writer of the Roman Odes, those marmoreal works which nonetheless glow with a passion and moral seriousness so often denied this now-underrated artist. Literature surrenders its myths reluctantly, and this Horatian ideal becomes the Kipling reality of empire.

This Roman dream resembles the British dream, just as the Romans speak like British officers of crack regiments. They do this not by chance, but in order to emphasize the continuity of the problems of keeping a calm, rational stance in a turbulent, hysterical world. The Roman officers are God-like and Gibbonian in their detachment from the controversies simmering about them. Not that a Roman officer would have in actuality immersed himself in the endless mystical disputations of the East—"What is truth?," said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer—but Valens betrays an inability to comprehend fanaticism of any sort. This does not fit the Tacitean

record of the insane, bitter political feudings which occupied the Roman governing classes. It was no accident that the intrigues of the Imperial Court captured the imagination of the greatest of Jacobean dramatists, for that feverish Rome bears no superficial resemblance to the heated, overwrought Italy of Marston and Webster. This is no more the Rome of Kipling than of Gibbon. The Romans of the former author reflect his ideal of empire in their magisterial detachment from a world in a perpetual process of going mad. It is this sane detachment which makes Valens and Sergius policemen of so special a type, and which idealizes the imperial process into something beyond simple repression.

Kipling's imperial justification does not seek to imply that the Roman and British Empires were global love-feasts. Nor is the story set in the Middle East to provide covert justification for the new empire that Britain acquired there during the Great War. The dynamic presence of the imperial factor ensures, however, that the story embodies the vision that not only is there room for love within the Empire, but that Imperial service provides one means by which love may be concretized in specific acts. There is nothing in an Imperial officer's situation that would conflict with his love for good men and his distaste for evildoers. Surely this reiteration of the cry of Browning's David that "All's love, yet all's Law" is as effective a justification as can be formulated of an empire or of any power structure. In this myth, power and scrupulosity, strength and justice, have been reconciled. This reconciliation is assisted by the distancing required by the story's setting, for the modern reader can view a dead empire in a dispassionate manner that is denied to a living one. This reconciliation has taken place within an atmosphere of the most potent myth of the West and the religion produced by that myth, an unmistakable reinforcement of the story's message. A critic who chose to see in this another instance of a cynical imperialist use of Christianity would be too hasty. The fabric of this story is too much of a piece to be anything other than a vision. It is not really a Tract with a Message, but a view of how life and empire ideally could be. This idealizing, however, does not exclude implications of a specific and concrete sort. It is difficult to imagine an imperialist disgruntled or a nationalist quite at ease with "The Church that was at Antioch".

The movement of imperial justification—through faith, works, and love—as treated here is a sub-surface one. It is a matter of the implications of three widely disparate stories. Technically, the stories display an increasing complexity of structure gained through a deepening of character and a greater use

of myth and symbol. "The Bridge-Builders", for example, works technical jargon into an illumination of the particular style of life that the story conveys. "The Church that was at Antioch" builds upon the Christian sensibility⁷ it shares with its audience to play out a secular drama within a religious framework granting the action a far greater resonance than it would ordinarily possess. Compared with the after-dinner anecdote of "The Conversion of Aurlian McGoggin", a whole new artistic universe has been put before the reader of the later stories.

The imperial implications also develop a greater complexity as the reader witnesses a process of increasing dissatisfaction on the part of the greatest of imperial mythographers with the more concrete modes of justifying empire. The first two stories do so with what may be called a realist mystique. That is to say, they are in the end a mystique, but one based on observable fact: that one's job is demanding but beneficial, that the things one is building are beneficial. The mystique comes when these facts are magnified to include the entire imperial picture; these undoubted goods are assumed by the believer to be the true, the real paradigm of imperial activities. The third story begins with a mystique of the Empire as a place where love can happen best and never ceases to idealize.

The stories treated here move from a blunt soldiering-on despite the mess involved, to a mystical faith in the day's work and its concrete results, to a myth wherein the powers governing the neglected life before death acquire the mantle of those governing the time after. An empire is spiritualized, and this is underlined by Paul's references to the coming Christian victory. That that victory was a resounding defeat, that the spiritual became complaisant, that political powers have done largely as they pleased with a supine Christianity, does not detract from the seamless, the effectiveness of the myth as presented. But as a myth, as a way of looking at life, the doctrine of soldiering-on makes a great deal more sense to most men—particularly men of the stamp of Kipling's heroes—than a canonization of the police force. The myth of "The Church that was at Antioch" appears so pretentious, so strained.

It is always tempting to see in this development of the theme of imperial justification some sort of model of the imperial idea: the justification by faith recalling Disraeli's evocation of the splendours of empire, the justification by works reflected in the Chamberlainite view of the Empire as a vast estate to be improved, with the justification by love—that is, that the Empire provides an oasis of peace in which the highest moral values can flourish—a moral rationale perpetually backing up the more pragmatic concepts of the imperial

idea. But this is obviously strained. What can be said is that this development reflects Kipling's increasing unease with pragmatic-mystical justifications of empire, doctrines which can be assailed on practical grounds, and the substitution of an idealism which could leave room for the actual exercise of power in almost any fashion since the idealism overlooked practically every concrete dilemma raised by the holding of imperial power. At a time when the European Empires had received a moral shaking from which they would never recover, a moralistic vision of empire, always to some degree present in Kipling, received its fullest expression.

As a purely literary matter, there is nothing illegitimate about a strategy which spiritualizes power through a careful selection of incident. No one protests that D. H. Lawrence spiritualizes all the good sex in his fiction; the debate is over whether it is done clumsily or otherwise in a specific instance. Can a vision stand the strain of the magnification imposed upon it by artistic expression? That is the relevant question. Unfortunately, it is difficult to discuss Kipling on this level, for the reading public remains more open on sexual than on imperial questions. Imperialism still has associated with it a number of dirty words—for example, paternalism, indirect rule, exploitation—which are shocking to many but admit of no substitutes. Seen objectively, the imperial myth, whatever its defects, emerging from "The Church that was at Antioch" is another proof of Professor J. I. M. Stewart's wisdom in including Kipling among the company of modern writers. For in that story we are faced with a characteristically modern enterprise—the attempt to spiritualize certain pervasive forces in a culture, the attempt to keep the characters "real" but their implications almost allegorical. This is the sort of thing Lawrence did so well. When the culture that produced Kipling and whose values he celebrated is not only dead but buried, the virtuosity of his enterprise will be admitted without apology. It is then that the ultimate value of that virtuosity can be judged fairly.⁸

NOTES

1. For an excellent examination of the manner in which a subordinate theme of this story supports the central one, see Paul Fussell, Jr., "Irony, Freemasonry, and Humane Ethics in Kipling's 'The Man Who Would be King'", *ELH*, XXV (Sept., 1958), 216-33.
2. The many editions of Kipling render useless any page references. The collected edition used in this study is the Bombay Edition (London: Macmillan, 1913-38).

3. Or at least one modern critic; see Boris Ford, "A Case for Kipling", *Scrutiny*, XI (Summer, 1942), 23-33.
4. This story is not found in all editions of Kipling. It is available in *In Black and White* of the Outward Bound Edition and in vol. XV of the Sussex Edition. It first appeared in the *Contemporary Review* for September, 1890.
5. For a remarkable essay on their technical similarities, see Marshall McLuhan, "Kipling and Forster", *Sewanee Review*, LII (1944), 332-43.
6. I owe this insight to Perry Anderson, "The Origins of the Present Crisis", *Towards Socialism* (London: Fontana, 1965), 32-3.
7. By such a term I do not imply *anima naturaliter Christiana*, but a consciousness that has been exposed at least to the Scriptures and the doctrines derived from them.
8. After completing this paper (August, 1967), I was informed that some of the points that I have made are also included in Professor Elliot L. Gilbert's doctoral dissertation and in his forthcoming book on Kipling.

PRISONER'S SONG

Gerald N. White

Through the slender window slanting above us
 The evening is visible like a Venetian canal
 Where a gondolier sings softly of freedom,
 Rippling the waves with a shaft of moonlight
 As he glides to the harbour where my hopes are moored.

But from this glimpse of nocturnal sky
 My life-term cellmate turns in despair;
 Bitterly calls it the River Styx.