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E.M. Forster's Lecture "Kipling's Poems": Negotiating the Modernist Shift from "the authoritarian stock-in-trade" to an Aristocratic Democracy

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In 1909, Forster delivered a scathing lecture about Rudyard Kipling, which outlines the political dangers implicit in Kipling's aesthetic. This introduction to the lecture briefly examines Forster's critique of Kipling's politics and aesthetic found in both the lecture and subsequent reviews of Kipling's work. Central to Forster's critique is his conviction that contemporary culture is and should be moving from authoritarian to democratic political systems. While Forster acknowledges Kipling's power and skill as a writer, he suggests that Kipling's aesthetic genius belongs to an earlier stage in the world's development, when authoritarian political models dominated. Within Forster's aristocratic democracy, Kipling's poetry is not only found wanting; it is politically debilitating and dangerous.

Keywords: E.M. Forster / Rudyard Kipling / democracy / "Kipling's Poems"

When C.D., the spokesman for the Nobel committee, penned the 1907 Nobel Lecture celebrating Rudyard Kipling's literary achievement, one gets the sense that he was strategically and willfully trying to antagonize those many intellectuals, like E.M. Forster, who found Kipling's work limited, vulgar, and even offensive. The contrast in perspectives is as striking as it is stark. While C.D. praises Kipling "as an imperialist, a citizen of a world-wide Empire," for drawing "tighter the bonds of union between England and her colonies" (292), Forster criticizes "Kipling's big vital empire," which "must have something to hit at," specifically foreigners, whom Kipling "regards as a sort of moral football, designed by providence for the purpose of keeping the Chosen Race in good condition." While C.D. celebrates Kipling's literature for keeping "a manly ideal before him: ever to be 'ready, ay ready at the call of duty' and then, when the appointed time comes, to 'go to God like a soldier'" (296), Forster derides Kipling's depiction of the "strong silent man, who says so little and feels so much," because he doubts "whether strong silent men feel anything at all." While C.D. lauds Kipling's "philosophy of life," which "is diffused with a piety characteristic of the Old Testament,

or rather perhaps of Puritan times, wholly devoid of pretentiousness or wordiness, based upon a conviction that ‘the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom’” (294), Forster denounces Kipling’s literature as rooted in a “Jehovah of the Thunders” religiosity, which offers “little encouragement for the pure in heart or the meek or the merciful.” And while C.D. affirms that Kipling had a “firm grasp of the true inwardness of all things Indian” (291), Forster faults Kipling for pushing the “inner life . . . far into the background and” bringing “material strength and material organisation to the front.”

Within a year or so after Kipling received the Nobel Prize for Literature, Forster delivered to the Weybridge Literary Society a lecture titled “Kipling’s Poems” (a 31-page handwritten manuscript that is housed in the King’s College Library at Cambridge University) about the merits and limitations of Kipling’s aesthetic. This was surely Forster’s attempt to question the Swedish Government’s judgment in honoring Kipling with such a prestigious award, for as Faith G. Norris claims, there were many intellectuals “in England and the United States who cast upon Rudyard Kipling a cold and critical eye and who obviously felt no enthusiasm about the announcement that the Swedish Academy had selected him as that year’s recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature” (14). That Forster’s lecture about Kipling is still unpublished is certainly a mystery, for as Rukun Advani rightly notes, it is “one of the most important (and certainly the most detailed) critical essays” Forster “ever wrote” (187). Mohammed Shaheen agrees, though he considers it valuable because it contains “Forster’s most extended views on imperialism and its politics” (31). As I will try to show in this brief introduction, “Kipling’s Poems” is crucial for understanding and appreciating some of Forster’s most important contributions to literary modernism as well as his development as a writer and a public intellectual.

Given Forster’s profound objections to Kipling’s views, it should come as no surprise that he opens the lecture with a detailed description of Max Beerbohm’s vicious caricature of the poet “in the act of carrying off the Nobel Prize.” Because Kipling had “won immense popularity” in the early twentieth century, not just in England, but all over the globe (C.D. 293), explicitly criticizing him would run the risk of alienating Forster’s suburban, middle-class audience.¹ Starting the lecture with Beerbohm’s caricature, therefore, enabled Forster to introduce a trenchant critique of Kipling and his work (“The caricaturist has put the case against Kipling”), while it simultaneously enabled him to distance himself from that critique (“unfairly if you like”). Significantly, Forster decided not to disclose the name of the caricaturist in the lecture—in the manuscript, he crossed out Beerbohm’s name twice. Forster offers an explanation for this editorial decision in his essay, “Notes on English Character.” The English, says Forster, take much delight in the slapstick humor found in the pages of *Punch*, but were “the middleclass Englishman” to see something really satirical, “a drawing by Max Beerbohm, for instance,” instead of using the caricature to examine the part of the English character that Beerbohm incisively critiques, “he would say to himself, ‘The fellow’s a bit of a crank,’ and pass on” (10). Put simply, the English are impervious to criticism, so if Forster were to enable the English to cast a critical eye on England’s then-favored

son, who seemingly embodied so much that was distinctively English, he realized that it was best not to mention Beerbohm by name.

Indeed, Forster, who sought in his writings to represent and effect a shift from an "authoritarian" to a democratic experience of human living, distinguishes the two models on the basis of the capacity for criticism. Because Kipling had internalized an authoritarian political model ("the authoritarian stock-in-trade," as Forster dubs such political systems in "What I Believe" [72]), he, for the most part, neither represents in his writings nor cultivates in his audience the critical faculty so central to what I will refer to as Forster's aristocratic democracy. In his essay, "What I Believe," Forster professes his allegiance to democracy, though it is only a two-thirds allegiance: "Two Cheers for Democracy: one because it admits variety and two because it permits criticism. Two cheers are quite enough: there is no occasion to give three" (70). Forster supplements democracy's lack with a modified aristocratic ideal: "Not an aristocracy of power, based upon rank and influence, but an aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky" (73). Central to the complex critique in this lecture is Forster's thoroughgoing rejection of the authoritarian political model that Kipling endorses, as well as Forster's desire to cultivate within his resistant, suburban, middle-class audience the critical faculty that would make possible the formation of an aristocratic democracy.

No doubt, overzealous postcolonial critics could use this lecture to detail Forster's blistering critique of British Imperialism, exposing how the "British Empire" consolidated its national identity by referring to itself as a "Chosen Race," examining how the English were indoctrinated with the belief "that the Anglo Saxon race is divinely appointed to govern the world," and how the "big vital empire" animalized "furriners" in order to justify "Smash[ing] 'em up." And there is good reason for developing such an interpretation, for we know that by 1907, with the publication of *The Longest Journey*, Forster was already thinking about the way the English were being manipulated into supporting "the Anglo-Saxon hegemony of the globe" (171). So a postcolonial critic, like Shaheen, is certainly right to read this lecture as an extensive critique of Imperialism. But this lecture is so much more than evidence to justify including Forster in the now in-camp of postcolonial critics. It is a document that discloses how a master rhetorician positions himself in relation to a resistant audience. How could Forster expose the political dangers of a Nobel Laureate like Kipling, who has just been honored by a knowing world tribunal and who embodies in his poetry what is understood to be best in the English character? In this lecture, more fundamental than his critique of the British Empire is Forster's desire to imagine the complex roles of the artist and the auditor within the context of an aristocratic democracy.

To activate within his audience the capacity for criticism and self-criticism so central to his aristocratic democracy, Forster not only had to eliminate the overt references to Beerbohm, but he also had to sing the praises of Kipling, the "nation's poet" (C.D. 294). C.D. provides an excellent starting point for understanding what Forster was up against in criticizing Kipling:

If Kipling is an idealist from an aesthetic point of view by reason of poetical intuition, he is so, too, from an ethical-religious standpoint by virtue of his sense of duty, which has its inspiration in a faith firmly rooted in conviction. He is acutely conscious of the truth that even the mightiest states would perish unless they rested upon the sure foundation in the citizens' hearts of a loyal observance of the law and a reasoned self-restraint. For Kipling, God is first and foremost Almighty Providence, termed in *Life's Handicap* a "Greet (sic) Overseer". The English as a nation can well appreciate these conceptions, and Kipling has become the nation's poet. (294)

In taking issue with Kipling, Forster would, for many English, be implicitly challenging a firmly established "ethical-religious standpoint," opposing "a loyal observance of the law," and perhaps renouncing "Almighty Providence." In other words, Kipling is beyond critique, because criticizing him would mean faulting unassailable virtues, virtues that Kipling had come to embody. Therefore, the "English as a nation" would have resisted criticizing either Kipling's aesthetic or his politics.

To incite his audience to question Kipling's status as a worthy recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature, therefore, Forster had to find subtle ways of undermining Kipling's credibility, and one strategy in this lecture was to portray the Nobel Laureate as a child. On the surface, Forster's comments in the child section with which he concludes the lecture are free of irony and critique. "When Kipling writes about children," Forster claims, "it is with a graciousness, a comfortableness, if I may coin the word, that we seldom find elsewhere." So skilled is Kipling as a writer of children's literature that Forster quips: "Perhaps he is half a child himself." Since Forster has been praising Kipling and children's literature in this section, it would seem that this comment is intended as a compliment — Kipling embodies a youthful spirit. But Forster's remark about Kipling as "half a child" is surely ambiguous, and it has occasioned two separate interpretations of this final section of the lecture. Advani basically reads the childhood section straight, as Forster's lighthearted but complimentary depiction of Kipling at his best (192–93), whereas Shaheen claims that "[w]hat Forster says about childhood poems is ironical" (39). If, however, we read the half-child comment alongside remarks Forster would later make in reviews of Kipling's work, we would be better stationed to determine whether Forster is being sincere or ironic.

Forster wrote two important reviews of Kipling's work, one of his *Letters of Travel* (1920) and one ("That Job's Done" iii) of his autobiography *Something of Myself* (1937). In both, Forster refers to Kipling as a child: "I have never felt sure that he grew up. Immaturity underlies both his imagination and his effrontery" ("That Job's Done" iii). In the 1920 review, which is aptly titled, "The Boy Who Never Grew Up," Forster claims that Kipling suffers from "arrested development," that despite his numerous experiences traveling and writing, he has "retained through it all the mentality of a boy scout." While these comments are certainly uncharitable, behind them is a more ominous concern: "Can an immature person be a great writer?" Forster asks ("That Job's Done" iii). Or, can a person, who "is a writer of great genius [but] whose equipment has never developed" ("Boy"), be considered a master of the written word? Forster's answer is as shocking as it is vicious:

Eternal Youth may be beautiful in theory, but it is most depressing in practice. The world, perforce, grows older, and we must grow old with it, or lose touch. Kipling has preferred to lose touch. He has clung to crudity and silliness as if they were the Gifts of God instead of the accidents of boyhood. He has never re-examined the catchwords of school. He continues whooping, and blustering, and tomahawking, and sniggering, and throwing up his cap for the Chosen Race; and in consequence he cuts a curious figure against the shambles of Amritsar. ("Boy")

As the world matures, so too must the artist's vision, and if the artist fails to mature with the world into adulthood, there is a serious danger that he or she will lose touch with the world. And for Forster, losing touch could lead to political atrocity, the Amritsar massacre in this case. But this begs the question: How could a theory of "Eternal Youth" translate into the "practice" of a political massacre? Forster begins to formulate an answer to this question in his Kipling lecture.

For Forster, it is the chosen people mentality, which dominates faith-based cultures, that creates the psychological conditions for political atrocities to occur, and as Forster claims in his essay, "What I Believe," "this is an age of faith" (67). According to Forster, Kipling perfectly embodies the chosen people mentality, so "[t]hose who believe that the Anglo Saxon race is divinely appointed to govern the world will rejoice when he expresses their belief worthily" ("Kipling's Poems"). But such an idealized conception of one's personal or national identity slips all too readily into first semiotic and then physical violence. In his subtle reflections on the socio-political agenda implicit in *The Jungle Book*, Forster outlines how Kipling's chosen-people philosophy plays itself out on the Imperial world stage:

Kipling's big vital empire must *do* something, it must have something to hit at, else were its vitality in vain. Fortunately there are the foreigners, whom he regards as a sort of moral football, designed by providence for the purpose of keeping the Chosen Race in good condition. Smash 'em up. Smash up the Gentiles. They're sure to be plotting against us, if only we could understand their beastly lingo. Teach them that we are the chosen race and that they aren't, that we have the Law and they haven't, that we are the real Jungle Folk and they the gibbering monkeys who carried away Mowgli for a little, but were afterwards slain in their thousands by Bagheera and Kaa. ("Kipling's Poems")

The Chosen Race is special because it has privileged epistemological access to the Law. Within this framework, Great Britain, which stands beneath the "awful Hand" of the "God of our fathers," holds "Dominion" over the "lesser breeds," who are "without the Law," as Kipling claims in his famous and oft-anthologized poem "Recessional." Instead of engaging in an adult-like critique of a self- and nation-aggrandizing philosophy or interrogating the potential political dangers implicit in this ethos, Kipling publishes fiction, according to Forster, that inspires his audience to follow his adolescent lead in "throwing up his cap for the Chosen Race."

With regard to Forster's claim that Kipling "cuts a curious figure against the shambles of Amritsar," what Forster is suggesting is that Kipling's chosen people ("the Chosen Race") philosophy (a childlike philosophy that belongs to a world that was in an adolescent stage of development) has, in part, created the structure

of mind necessary to incite General Dyer and his fifty riflemen to fire 1,650 rounds into a crowd of more than 20,000 unarmed Indians (Sayer 130–31). Like Derek Sayer, who has written a brilliant essay arguing that the Amritsar massacre reflects a widespread mentality about the foreign other in England, Forster seeks to locate the precipitating cause of the atrocity in the psychology of the citizens of the Empire. Unlike Sayer, however, who concludes that the “maintenance of order” (131), a discourse of morality and duty, and the conviction that Indians are children, created the ethos that obligated Dyer and his men to take such brutal action, Forster isolates the chosen people mentality, which enables the “Chosen Race” to stratify humanness on the basis of a people’s epistemological capacity to access the Law, justifies divesting “lesser breeds” of personal and political autonomy in the name of God and justice, and removes the prohibition against killing by reducing the non-chosen to Lawless animals (“gibbering monkeys”). For Forster, Kipling, as the “nation’s poet,” best represents the chosen people mentality endemic in England, but he is also one of the unacknowledged legislators of such an anti-democratic ethos.

According to Forster, and this is one of the central ideas running throughout the lecture, Kipling ultimately subscribes to a pre-democratic view of knowledge, which compelled him to produce literature that used sometimes subtle, sometimes overt strategies to coerce his readers into accepting debilitating and oppressive roles within the body politic. Moreover, this pre-democratic view of knowledge led him to develop an aesthetic that, instead of empowering readers to become more humane, critical, and independent, subtly disempowered them by strategically manipulating them into not thinking. Put simply, as “an Imperial prophet” (“Boy”), Kipling’s aesthetic task is to drag us into accepting his position. After all, Kipling embodies the God-mandated Law, so his aesthetic must subserve his divinely inspired political agenda. And for Forster, it is Kipling’s tendency to lay epistemological claim to some spiritual, mystical, and non-empirical Truth that makes him so out of touch with the contemporary world and so politically dangerous. Forster expresses this view directly in his 1937 review. After outlining what he considers the most important acts of the intellect, which include “digesting, comparing, generalising, [and] deducing,” Forster explicitly states that what “puts me off Kipling” is his propensity to deflect questioning and critique through an appeal to “mysticism.” Despite the surface injustices present throughout the world, there is ultimately a providential design governing human lives and world events, a grand synthesis that ultimately rights the world’s seemingly political wrongs. And Kipling “promises us that the synthesis we desire does indeed exist: the Divine Overseer shall synthesise; the God of the Things as They Are shall in good time reveal to His workmen how they fit into His scheme” (“That Job’s Done” iii). For Forster, such an appeal to mysticism not only insults the intellectual integrity of the reader, it also undermines the basic principles of an aristocratic democracy. Forster first developed this political critique of Kipling’s mysticism in the 1909 lecture.

In his discussion of *Kim*, Forster explicitly claims that Kipling has the gift of mysticism, but he also asserts that mysticism may be “a mistake”:

Mysticism may be a mistake but no one will deny this—that if once a man shows traces of it, those traces must be carefully scanned by all who are trying to understand him. To have felt, if only for a moment, that this visible world is an illusion, to have conceived, however faintly, that the real is the unseen, to have had even a passing desire for the One is at once to be marked off from all who have not thus felt, thus conceived, thus desired.

Mysticism may have value for a person within the confines of his or her private experience, but it cannot, for Forster, play a role within the body politic. This is the case, because mysticism sets the knower off ("to be marked off") from the rest of the world, thus making knowledge accessible only to a chosen few instead of the democratic all. If mysticism has any value, it will not and cannot be within the context of an aristocratic democracy, because the world is maturing beyond the epistemological and political exclusivity of authoritarian systems, so if the artist would keep pace with the world, he or she must politically disavow mysticism.

And yet, Forster recognizes that Kipling's mysticism was in part the basis of his aesthetic genius and appeal. It is important to note at this point that Forster considered Kipling a "great writer" ("That Job's Done" iii), "a great artist" ("That Job's Done" iii), and "a writer of great genius" ("Boy"). In the lecture, when discussing Kipling's power as a poet, Forster specifies why Kipling cannot be classified as a fake: "Words that move the reader so deeply, that have an almost physical effect upon him, cannot be words of a charlatan." On the surface, this high praise contradicts the scathing critique I have been developing throughout this introduction. But for Forster, there are different facets of genius, so that a person could be a poetic genius but an intellectual simpleton, and with regard to Kipling, this is precisely the problem. Moreover, what constitutes a genius will change from age to age. For instance, within an authoritarian political system, Kipling's genius would be ideal, because his aesthetic task would be to communicate the culture's mystical Truths and to inspire his readers to live in accord with those Truths. But within the context of an aristocratic democracy, the aesthetic objective is to activate the critical faculty of the audience and not to communicate Truth. This explains why Forster considers Kipling so dangerous. He has the poetic skill to seduce his readers, but this is a skill suited for an earlier age, within the context of an authoritarian political system, and not for the twentieth century, which Forster thought and hoped was shifting towards a post-authoritarian democracy.

Therefore, in the lecture, Forster consistently makes crucial distinctions in order to clarify in what sense Kipling is "a writer of great genius" and in what sense he is aesthetically, intellectually, and politically "immature." For instance, after singing Kipling's praises as a writer full of vitality, Forster makes an important qualification: "Vitality, before it attracts us, must be plus something—plus intellect, plus beauty, plus goodness." Kipling may possess the virtue of vitality, but that is not enough to qualify him as a capable poet within the context of an aristocratic democracy. A well-rounded genius would possess the virtues of vitality, intellect, beauty, and goodness. Indeed, an artist who only possesses one of these virtues

would actually be a political menace, and in the case of Kipling, Forster considers his vitality one of his greatest dangers, because it is so seductive.

But in “Kipling’s Poems,” Forster does not just fault the Nobel Laureate; he also places blame on an uncritical audience. Throughout the lecture, Forster engages in a complex form of analysis, one moment celebrating Kipling’s one-sided genius but the next moment exposing his many-sided dangers and flaws, while simultaneously inviting his audience to think critically about the way Kipling subtly manipulates and disarms his most vulnerable readers. Let me briefly discuss Forster’s subtle engagement with his audience, which he identifies as “We middle classes.” After claiming that vitality is not enough to be a great writer in the full sense of the phrase, Forster states: “To admire Kipling simply *because* he is alive would be a grave mistake.” To underscore how dangerous Kipling’s vital aesthetic is, Forster directly addresses the audience in the next sentence with the first person plural: “In this mistake we are very likely to fall.” The life of England’s comfortable middle classes “is so sheltered, so safe, [. . . and] so protected” that they are easily seduced by Kiplingesque tales of leading “a lawless roving life somewhere east of Suez,” or of being “[a]rmed with a sword instead of an umbrella, and a revolver instead of a tram ticket,” and of meeting “some other strong man face to face and of course” getting “the best of him.” Such indulgent flights of fancy may be entertaining, but they have the negative effect of blinding readers to “Kipling’s own danger.”

The problem here is two-fold. The adventure-starved, middle-class audience desires swashbuckling tales that vicariously satisfy their yearning for power and dominance, so they all-too-willingly digest Kipling’s fiction, without questioning its political content or aesthetic value. Second, Kipling preys upon middle-class vulnerabilities, feeding them fantastical fictions that not only discourage critical analysis, but actually block out alternative ways of thinking—in Kipling’s poems, Forster says, “one side [of a question] is given, nor while we read do we remember that another may exist.” For these reasons, Forster describes Kipling’s fiction as “highly didactic.” Within a political context, Kipling’s orientation towards his subject matter becomes dangerously excessive: “Now to approach the British Empire in such a spirit is to ensure Jingoism.” So it should come as no surprise that Forster, when reading the Nobel Laureate’s poetry, feels that Kipling “is bullying us to assent to something of which we do not approve” or “dragging us into a position which isn’t ours.” Indeed, Forster even claims that Kipling’s verse has the power to take “us in a snare that cannot fail.” Given Kipling’s seductive power, he can easily ensnare “us” all, Forster observes, so when reading his poetry, being merely attentive to his “own danger” is not enough; “we,” as aspiring critical and independent agents within an aristocratic democracy, must cultivate the critical faculty to question the value and legitimacy of his politics and aesthetic.

As these introductory remarks indicate, this lecture provides invaluable insights into many aspects of Forster’s thinking and methods: his political and aesthetic orientation, his rhetorical strategies to engage a resistant audience, his rejection of authoritarian political systems, his commitment to an aristocratic democracy, his understanding of his audience’s responsibility as readers, his blistering critique of

Imperialism, and his particular grasp of Kipling's work, among many other things. But it is also an important record documenting a seismic shift central to modernism, a shift that exposed the politically and aesthetically irreconcilable approaches of an aristocratic democracy and an authoritarian political system, and how such a shift necessitated a radical redefinition of a reader's responsibility, the concept of genius, the function of the artist, and much more.

* * *

When editing and annotating this lecture, I had to make a few executive decisions, which, in the interest of full disclosure, are important to mention. Reading Forster's handwriting is no easy task, and while I have made every effort possible to decipher Forster's words, there were still moments when I was not totally certain. There are two separate types of indecipherability. The first relates to passages Forster quotes from Kipling's works, and let me supply an example to illustrate my editorial method. To date, Shaheen has done the most extensive analysis of this lecture, and in the course of his interpretation, he quotes many passages. Here is how one quoted passage in his book reads:

Teach them that we are the chosen race and they are not, [*crossed out*: smash them up of course] that we have the law, and they haven't, that we are the real Jund Folk and they are the gibbering monkey who carried away Mawgli for a little, but there were afterwards slain in their thousands by Bagleese and Kao. (48)

Now here is how my version of the same passage reads:

Teach them that we are the chosen race and that they aren't, that we have the Law and they haven't, that we are the real Jungle Folk and they the gibbering monkeys who carried away Mowgli for a little, but were afterwards slain in their thousands by Bagheera and Kaa.

There are some major discrepancies between the two passages. I do not see how Shaheen was able to get "Jund Folk" out of "Jungle Folk," for Forster's writing seemed clear to me at this point, but I can see how he got Kao instead of Kaa, for Forster's writing here is not entirely clear. Despite the ambiguous writing, I have transcribed the word as "Kaa" because Forster is clearly referring to the "Kaa's Hunting" chapter of *The Jungle Book*. I have made an editorial decision to provide the correct names, even when the writing was somewhat indecipherable. Indeed, throughout the edited lecture, I have checked all of the Kipling quotations, and I have altered some passages accordingly. There were also some quoted passages with words that I simply could not read, so I had to consult the primary source in order to supply the right words.

The second type of indecipherability relates to Forster's commentary about Kipling's work. Using a magnifying glass, cross-checking the manuscript by consulting Forster's mother's transcription of the lecture (which is also housed at King's College Library), poring over illegible words, reviewing those words with the King's College Archivist—these were just a few things I had to do to ensure

that I was transcribing the lecture exactly. But it is still possible that I mis-read or mis-transcribed a few words. I hope this is not the case, but in all editorial humility, it is a possibility that I must acknowledge.

In the manuscript, Forster frequently quotes from or refers to poems without mentioning the titles. Most of these poems I have been able to identify with certainty, but there were three that were not entirely clear. To indicate my own uncertainty, I have mentioned in the notes that a particular reference is probably such and such a poem, but I acknowledge that Forster could have had another poem in mind. For the reader's benefit, I have included in the lecture the page numbers from the King's College handwritten manuscript. I have also retained Foster's English spelling, but I have added italics and quotation marks to indicate the titles of poems, short stories, and novels.

Finally, there is a dating controversy about this manuscript. Shaheen notes that the manuscript is described in the catalogue at the King's College Library as a paper delivered to the Weybridge Literary Society in 1910 (31). Shaheen, however, follows B.J. Kirkpatrick, who gives a 1913 date for the lecture in *A Bibliography of E.M. Forster*. But internal evidence suggests that the lecture was actually delivered in late 1908 or early 1909. Forster begins the lecture by claiming: "A few years ago I went to an amusing exhibition of caricatures." As I mention in a note to the lecture, Forster is conflating three separate Beerbohm exhibitions (1904, 1907, and 1908) at this point. Therefore, the "few years" reference cannot be used to date the manuscript. However, since Forster specifically mentions the Nobel Award caricature, which Beerbohm produced in December 1907 and exhibited in April 1908, we can infer that the lecture had to be delivered, at the earliest, in the summer of 1908.

But there are two other references in the manuscript that can be used to date the manuscript. First, Forster mentions "letters" that Kipling "published last spring in *The Morning Post*." These letters, Forster claims, "scarcely read like the words of a sane man." Only in the spring of 1908 did Kipling publish a number of letters in *The Morning Post*. Moreover, the 1908 letters fit Forster's description, for they are very difficult to follow. On the basis of Forster's "last spring" comment, the latest the lecture could have been delivered would be the spring of 1909. There is another reference within the lecture to confirm the 1909 date. When discussing Kipling's powerful portrayal of England's military personnel, Forster shares an experience he had with a soldier:

Last year I traveled with a soldier who cried without ceasing between Weybridge and Waterloo: 'Aldane's sold the Army. 'E 'as. 'E 'as. Don't tell me 'e 'asn't sold the army. 'E did not give us the name of the purchaser, nor did we ask for it. To have said 'the fur-riners' would have been almost too 'ard on 'Aldane, who is after all an Henglishman.

Richard Burdon Haldane was a Liberal Member of Parliament, who was Minister of War (1905–12). He instituted major military reforms that reduced spending considerably. One of those reforms was the introduction of the Officer Training Corps, a program established throughout England after 1907 and that significantly reduced the size of full-time military personnel. In England, many soldiers felt

that Haldane's reforms compromised the military, which explains why the soldier claims that Haldane "sold the army." The two specific references ("last year" and "last spring") to 1908 suggest that Forster was delivering this lecture in 1909.

Note

1. In *E.M. Forster and the Politics of Imperialism*, Mohammed Shaheen discusses "Forster's dilemma" in presenting a critique of the Nobel Laureate to "a public already allured by Kipling" (32).

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