

explorations



Explorations: A Journal of Language and Literature

A Tale of Two Imperial Poems: Rudyard Kipling's "McAndrew's Hymn" and "The *Mary Gloster*"

DOI: 10.25167/EXP13.23.11.4

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Abstract. The present article analyzes Rudyard Kipling's "McAndrew's Hymn" and "The *Mary Gloster*," two poems which, since their book publication in *The Seven Seas* (1896), have been traditionally paired but more seldom jointly discussed at great length. Building upon previous scholarship on Kipling's companion pieces, this article revisits them through the lenses of mobility and progress, focusing on the monologists' anxieties about different forms of mobility-related progress and bringing their imperial subtext to the fore. The article argues that, taken together, the two halves of Kipling's verse diptych illustrate a work ethos which appears to be subtly connected to empire-building and maintenance.

Key words: Rudyard Kipling, dramatic monologue, mobility, progress, empire

Introduction

In a letter dated 15th December 1895, Rudyard Kipling (1990–2004, 2:163) informed Henry James of the ongoing composition of "a companion set of verses" to "McAndrew's Hymn." First published in the American *Scribner's Magazine* the previous year, and then reprinted in other periodicals across the English-speaking world, such as the New Zealand newspaper *The Evening Star* on 12th January 1895, this earlier poem had already proved to be quite rewarding, for it had been applauded by Admiral George Melville, Chief of the Navy Bureau of Steam Engineering (Kipling 1990–2004, 2:163–164), and would continue to be praised by Charles Eliot Norton, Lafcadio Hearn, John Hepburn Millar and Edward Dowden, among many others (Green 1971, 173, 189, 199, 211, 263–264 and 267). However, "McAndrew's Hymn" only remained a standalone dramatic monologue until 30th October 1896, when it was collected with its companion piece "The *Mary Gloster*" in *The Seven Seas*, "the new volume" of which Kipling had promised to send James a "copy" in the same letter (1990–2004, 2:163) and which was now out in print simultaneously in London and New York (Richards 2010, 1:91–94),

Explorations: A Journal of Language and Literature, 11 (2023), pp. 28-42

soon to become “an immediate success both in sales and in critical praise” (Birkenhead 1978, 172).

Once printed in the same book, though separated by twenty in-between poems – or seventeen in the American edition (Richards 2010, 1:91–94) – “McAndrew’s Hymn” and “The *Mary Gloster*” formed a poetic pair whose parts unequivocally cross-reference each other:

Third on the *Mary Gloster* then, and first that night in Hell!
(Kipling 2013b, line 78)

But I gave McAndrew a copy in case of dying – or not.
And so you’ll write to McAndrew, he’s Chief of the Maori Line;
They’ll give him leave, if you ask ’em and say it’s business o’ mine.
I built three boats for the Maoris, an’ very well pleased they were,
An’ I’ve known Mac since the ’Fifties, and Mac knew me – and her.
After the first stroke warned me I sent him the money to keep
Against the time you’d claim it, committin’ your dad to the deep;
For you are the son o’ my body, and Mac was my oldest friend,
I’ve never asked ’im to dinner, but he’ll see it out to the end.
Stiff-necked Glasgow beggar! I’ve heard he’s prayed for my soul,
But he couldn’t lie if you paid him, and he’d starve before he stole!
He’ll take the *Mary* in ballast – you’ll find her a lively ship;
.....
And Mac’ll pay you the money as soon as the bubbles break!
Five thousand for six weeks’ cruising, the staunchest freighter afloat,
And Mac he’ll give you your bonus the minute I’m out o’ the boat!
He’ll take you round to Macassar, and you’ll come back alone;
He knows what I want o’ the *Mary* I’ll do what I please with my own.
.....
And Mac’ll take her in ballast – an’ she trims best by the head. . . .
(Kipling 2013c, lines 130–141, 150–154 and 180)

In light of the textual bridge erected by these cross-references, although the two dramatic monologues did not appear sequentially, readers could hardly fail to establish a retrospective connection between “The *Mary Gloster*” and its correlating earlier poem in the same collection, which it had hitherto been impossible to interpret as the first half of a verse diptych. Commentators were actually quick to point out the textual connection between “McAndrew’s Hymn” and “The *Mary Gloster*.” One of the first reviewers of *The Seven Seas* did so when writing that they are “pieces in a manner linked together” (“Books of the Day” 1896), soon to be followed by another who identified them as patriotic “dramatic romances – as Browning would have called them” (“*The Seven Seas*” 1896). Similarly treating Kipling’s companion pieces as a Browningsque couple, subsequent critics have frequently commented upon “McAndrew’s Hymn” and “The *Mary Gloster*” together, if only to acknowledge their shared indebtedness to Robert Browning’s dramatic monologues (e.g. Carrington 1970a [1955], 264; Karlin 2019, 14; Mallett 2003, 13; Weygandt 1939, 109), with some readers identifying specific Browning sources for one or both (e.g. Byron 2003, 94; Carrington 1970b, 11; Johnson 1975, 10–

12; Kipling 2013d, 182; Knoepflmacher 2012, 618; Montefiore 2007, 116; Ricketts 1999, 211; Yeats 1951, 6). Admittedly, numerous exceptions to, or variations of, so usual a coupling exist within Kipling criticism and editing. These certainly include a number of occasions when the attention has been focused on either “McAndrew’s Hymn” or “The *Mary Gloster*,” separately or exclusively¹, and the less common pairings of one of the two poems with another Kipling text (e.g. Crichton-Miller 1947; Monroe 1936, 33–35; Montefiore 2014; Sertoli 1977, 182). The editions of Kipling’s works in which only one companion piece has been included also deviate from the typical coupling (e.g. Kipling 1970, 200–205; Kipling 1993, 59–67; Kipling 2004, 61–66; Kipling 2013d, 182–187). Nevertheless, it has long been the practice – encouraged by the texts themselves as well as justified and begun by their author – for “McAndrew’s Hymn” and “The *Mary Gloster*” to be paired by critics in commentaries of different lengths and depths² and by editors in anthologies of Kipling’s poetry (e.g. Kipling 1941, 57–65 and 66–75; Kipling 1992, 52–58 and 58–63; Kipling 2016, 52–62 and 63–73), collections of his major works (e.g. Kipling 1999, 453–460 and 460–466) and thematic selections where they could be expected to appear, such as Andrew Lycett’s *Kipling and the Sea* (Kipling 2014, 16–21 and 22–27).

Building upon previous scholarship, the present article will equally discuss Kipling’s “celebratory sea poems” (Keating 1994, 108) as a verse diptych, with a view to reassessing them through the interrelated lenses of mobility, progress and empire. Even as it follows the common critical practice of approaching “McAndrew’s Hymn” and “The *Mary Gloster*” as companion pieces, this article will significantly differ from many previous responses to these textually interconnected poems in that it will analyze both of them more in depth than has usually be done. Whereas he excludes them from his discussion of poetry written by “the laureate of empire” in the 1890s, Robert H. MacDonald (1994, 149–150) acknowledges that “they contain important qualifications of Kipling’s imperial position.” Thus, joining the effort of several commentators who have tried to tease out the relationship of either “McAndrew’s Hymn” or “The *Mary Gloster*” to the British Empire (e.g. Cherry 1996 [1959]; Hughes 2010, 126; Lycett 2014, xiv; Parry 1992, 72; Ricketts 2011, 116; Scragg 2015, 18–19 and 24–25; Sussman 2009, 88), the article will foreground the monologists’ different preoccupations with mobility-related progressions and similarly suggest that the two halves of this verse diptych, wherein the British Empire is ostensibly not “the burden of the song” (Brooks and Faulkner 1996, 1), subtly elaborate upon the concept of “empire,” which, however, appears to be understood more in ethic (McAndrew) and economic (Gloster) than military or political terms. In other words, whereas none of the two companion pieces seem to qualify as jingoist, this article will argue for the presence of an imperial subtext in both of them.

¹ See e.g. Annis 2003, 9; Butterworth 1957; Byron 2003, 94–95; Cherry 1996 [1959], 44–47; Crook 1989, 156–157; Crook 1996; Davies and Trivizas 2002, 157; Davies 2003, 34; Elwell 1943; Hughes 2010, 125–126; Jones 2001, xxi; Le Brocq 1956, 9; Lycett 1999; Macaree 1985; MacKenzie 2011, 167; Page 1984, 170; Ricketts 2011, 116; Scragg 2015; Seymour-Smith 1989, 137–149; Sussman 2009, 88–89; Wilson 2001.

² See e.g. Allen 1929, 25; Crooks 2013, 29–46; Davies 2011, 56–57; Gilmour 2002, 108–109; Harrison 1982, 135–137; Harvey 1946; Keating 1994, 108–110; Le Gallienne 1900, 52–58; Lycett 2014, xiv–xv; Montefiore 2007, 115–116; Montefiore 2014, 95 and 100–106; Parry 1992, 72; Rigby 2015; Snell 1995, 202–204; Witt 1970, 8; Young 1927, 25. However, just like most of the sources cited in the previous footnote, the majority of these commentaries do not provide sustained close-readings of Kipling’s companion pieces.

Mobility and Progress

As T. S. Eliot (1941, 13) conveniently put it, “McAndrew’s Hymn” represents “the success of failure,” while “The *Mary Gloster*” exemplifies “the failure of success.” Eliot’s chiasmic expressions aptly suggest that the two companion pieces are diametrically opposites if observed through the binary lens of success/failure. Admittedly, they are counterparts in more than one sense. This becomes quite apparent as soon as they are reconsidered through another binarism, namely that of mobility/immobility.

“McAndrew’s Hymn” foregrounds movement in several ways. An experienced voyager, the eponymous reciter, “The man that counts, wi’ all his runs, one million mile o’ sea” (Kipling 2013b, line 33), is physically on the move aboard a ship that has got approximately “two thousand” passengers every year (line 90). His “engines,” he reveals at the beginning of his monologue, are “slam-bangin’ home again” “after ninety days o’ race an’ rack an’ strain” at sea (lines 9–10). As remarked by Daniel Karlin, “the working of the engine, which we hear and feel in Kipling’s masterful deployment of the rhythm of the grand old ‘fourteener,’ is played against the working of McAndrew’s memory” (Kipling 1999, 659). “[T]he Chief Engineer of a ... liner that makes round trips from the UK to New Zealand via the Cape of Good Hope, and back via Cape Horn” (Wilson 2013), McAndrew spends the night-time middle watch (Kipling 2013b, lines 8 and 184) mainly reminiscing about his previous trips, “his explorations of Gay Street, Hong Kong, and Grant Road, Bombay, and the many places he has seen on his journeys, from Ushant to the Barrier Reef, Cape Town to Wellington, Java to the Torres Strait, Kerguelen (a rock in the Indian Ocean) to Borneo” (MacKenzie 2011, 167).

While dwelling on its speaker’s physical mobility in the present and in the past, the poem also registers the swift movements of his mind. As already noted, the debt of “McAndrew’s Hymn” and “The *Mary Gloster*” to Browning’s dramatic monologues has long been acknowledged, with critics still broadly agreeing that Kipling’s companion pieces are quintessential instances of the poetic genre in which Browning excelled (e.g. Karlin 2019, 14; Knoepfmacher 2012, 618; Montefiore 2014, 100). In fact, “McAndrew’s Hymn” more precisely fits Gregory Tate’s definition of Browning’s “travel monologues” or “dramatic travelogues,” which relate both “geographical and psychological voyages” as they “are voiced by speakers who are physically on the move, travelling from place to place just as their minds shift from thought to thought” (Tate 2014, 185–186). Moreover, as an instance of “the poetry of Steam” (Eliot 1941, 14), McAndrew’s recitation qualifies as a form of “steam of consciousness,” a phrase which has been coined by Alf Seegert (2009) to describe the narrative mode in Charles Dickens’s “A Flight” (1851) but which may be used to refer to Kipling’s hymn to steam-powered mobility as well³. Originally applied to the “first-person, phenomenological mode” in Dickens’s piece, which “refer[s] directly to the mental and emotional phenomena that spontaneously arise for him on his railway journey” (Seegert 2009, 92), the label of “steam of consciousness” may well be attached to McAndrew’s “travel monologue” or “dramatic travelogue,” as the following passage evinces:

³ I would like to thank Małgorzata Nitka for pointing out Alf Seegert’s essay to me.

Ye mind my first typhoon?

It schoughed the skipper on his way to jock wi' the saloon.
 Three feet were on the stokehold floor – just slappin' to an' fro –
 An' cast me on a furnace-door. *I have the marks to show.*
Marks! I ha' marks o' more than burns – deep in my soul an' black,
 An' times like this, when things go smooth, my wickudness comes back.
 The sins o' four-and-forty years, all up an' down the seas,
 Clack an' repeat like valves half-fed. . . .
 (Kipling 2013b, lines 35–42, emphasis mine)

Here, McAndrew's train of thought rapidly shifts from one memory (i.e. his "first typhoon") to the next (i.e. "The sins o' four-and-forty years") through a mental association between the "marks" of burns and those of the sins that he committed "up an' down the seas." Thus, "McAndrew's Hymn" couples the treatment of its reciter's past and present mobility with "the expression of the changes and movements of its speaker's mind" (Tate 2014, 186).

Despite equally recalling his previous trips (e.g. "Over the world" and "to the Clyde" [Kipling 2013c, lines 23 and 46]), the speaker of "The *Mary Gloster*" differs from that of "McAndrew's Hymn" in that Sir Anthony Gloster is physically immobile at the moment of his recitation. If McAndrew's addressees include not only the "Lord" or "God" (e.g. Kipling 2013b, lines 1, 3, 18, 34–35, 46, 59, 77, 85, 132–133, 151 and 173), but also his crewmembers (i.e. the "*Oiler*" [line 134] and "*Ferguson*" [line 186]), the auditor of Gloster's deathbed speech is his son Dick, who, while not completely silent, ultimately remains "unheard by the reader, since [his] interventions and responses . . . are sometimes implied by the speaker's words" (Byron 2003, 20):

Dick, it's your daddy, dying; you've got to listen to him!
Good for a fortnight, am I? The doctor told you? He lied.
 I shall go under by morning.
 (Kipling 2013c, lines 2–4, emphasis mine)

Critics have repeatedly highlighted the points of similarity between Gloster and the speaker in Browning's "The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St Praxed's Church." "Like Browning's bishop," Glennis Byron (2003, 94) writes, "he is issuing instructions concerning his burial: he wants his corpse to be placed in the *Mary Gloster*, the ship named after his wife, and then that ship to be sunk in the Macassar Straits, where Mary died." In spite of his physical immobility, then, Gloster plans one last trip, a "wedding-trip" (Kipling 2013c, line 142) which he imagines as a post-mortem honeymoon.

In other words, although McAndrew and Gloster share a common experience of mobility in the past, they interestingly differ in their relationship to movement in the present and in the future. Whereas the former is on the move while speaking, the whole purpose of the latter's monologue is ensuring that he will be able to make one last trip after his impending death. Notwithstanding these differences, both texts center on mobility at the same time as they display the movements of the mind of their respective utterers.

Understood as a form of figurative movement and thus tightly connected to the binary categories of mobility and immobility, progress is arguably another useful lens through

which the complementarity of Kipling's companion pieces may be highlighted, as various types and conceptions of progress are pondered and championed by the two speakers. In "McAndrew's Hymn," the career advancement of the eponymous reciter, "the auld Fleet Engineer / That started as a boiler-whelp" (Kipling 2013b, lines 24–25), is intertwined with technological progress as he recalls the days "when steam and he were low" (line 25):

*I mind the time we used to serve a broken pipe wi' tow!
Ten pound was all the pressure then – Eh! Eh! – a man wad drive;
An' here, our workin' gauges give one hunder sixty-five!
We're creepin' on wi' each new rig – less weight an' larger power;
There'll be the loco-boiler next an' thirty mile an hour!
Thirty an' more.
(lines 26–31)*

However, professional growth is not the only form of personal development which McAndrew values. If technological improvements appear evident to him, the same does not apply to his own progression: "What I ha' seen since ocean-steam began / Leaves me na doot for the machine: but what about the man?" (lines 31–32). Pondering over this question in the following lines, he identifies a series of moments of regression as he muses about both his physical and spiritual mobility. The thought of the literal distance covered in his previous trips ("Four time the span from earth to moon" [line 34]) leads him to reflect upon the figurative distance separating him from God: "How far, O Lord, from Thee / That wast beside him night and day?" (lines 34–35). Likewise, the thought of the bodily "marks o' ... burns" (line 39) dating back to the day of his "first typhoon" (line 35) makes him think of the spiritual marks "deep in [his] soul an' black" (line 39), his "trespasses" (line 42) and false "steps" (line 46).

The interconnections between physical mobility and spiritual regression could not be stronger in McAndrew's memory of succumbing to temptation in the tropics. As E. M. Forster (2007 [1909], 22) observed in his 1909 lecture on "Kipling's Poems," at some point in his youth, "McAndrew ... is tempted to let civilisation slip, and to drowse away his life in some tropic island." Starting from line 49, the speaker remembers committing his "crownin' sin" (Kipling 2013b, line 49) on his first voyage to "the Tropics" (line 51) at the age of "four-and-twenty" (line 50), by which he means "The Sin against the Holy Ghost" (line 75), as he began worshipping instead a pagan "Leevin' God, / That does not kipper souls for sport or break a life in jest, / But swells the ripenin' coconuts an' ripens the woman's breast" (lines 68–70). Interestingly, the voice which mysteriously tempts him, "statin' eevidential facts beyon' all argument" (line 62), is first exoticized as "a land-breeze ca', / Milk-warm wi' breath o' spice an' bloom" (lines 59–60), and then characterized as a more uncanny "ghostly whisper" (line 61). Edenic and hedonic though the setting may seem at first, with its "new fruits, new smells, new air" (line 51), young McAndrew's turns out to be an infernal encounter: "How could I tell – blind-fou wi' sun – the Deil was lurkin' there?" (line 52); "Thou knowest, Lord, I fell – / Third on the *Mary Gloster* then, and first that night in Hell!" (lines 77–78). While the implications of this ideologically charged episode from McAndrew's youth will be examined in the following section, where it will be reread in relation to his newly found creed ("Law, Orrder, Duty an' Restraint, Obedience, Discipline!") [line 167]), it is worth mentioning here that he

establishes the same potentially dangerous connection between travel and spiritual regression with regards to others, too, when he mixes technological and spiritual metaphors to describe the passengers aboard his liner as “souls” (lines 90 and 92) whom he ferries “fra’ port to port” (line 92), but who may still “steam from Grace to Wrath – to sin by folly led” (line 94), just as he did when aged twenty-four.

If McAndrew’s and his passengers’ trips are fraught with the danger of spiritual regression, Gloster’s self-celebratory narrative of progress is both stimulated and tarnished by the anxious thought of the interruption of his and his family’s development, which is primarily conceived in economic and social terms. Very much unlike McAndrew, who appears uninterested in profit and recognition (lines 110–129), the shipping magnate Gloster, “a ruthlessly self-made man who, having started as an ordinary seaman, is now the owner of a huge shipping line, foundries and shipyards” (Davies 2011, 56), proudly takes stock of his economic and social progress in front of his son before beginning to relate his rags-to-riches story:

And you’ll wish you held my record before it comes to your turn.
 Not counting the Line and the Foundry, the Yards and the village, too,
 I’ve made myself and a million; but I’m damned if I made you.
 Master at two-and-twenty, and married at twenty-three –
 Ten thousand men on the pay-roll, and forty freighters at sea!
 Fifty years between ’em, and every year of it fight,
 And now I’m Sir Anthony Gloster, dying, a baronite:
 For I lunched with His Royal ’Ighness – what was it the papers had?
 “Not the least of our merchant-princes.”
 (Kipling 2013c, lines 6–14)

Presenting progress as the result of not always fair competition with the others, he also acknowledges the role played by his wife in it:

I didn’t begin with askings. *I* took my job and *I* stuck;
 And *I* took the chances they wouldn’t, an’ now they’re calling it luck.
 Lord, what boats *I*’ve handled – rotten and leaky and old –
 Ran ’em, or – opened the bilge-cock, precisely as *I* was told.
 Grub that ’ud bind you crazy, and crews that ’ud turn you grey,
 And a big fat lump of insurance to cover the risk on the way.
 The others they dursn’t do it; they said they valued their life
 (They’ve served me since as skippers). *I* went and *I* took my wife.
 Over the world *I* drove ’em, married at twenty-three,
 And your mother saving the money and making a man of me.
I was content to be master, but she said there was better behind;
 She took the chances *I* wouldn’t, and *I* followed your mother blind.
 She egged me to borrow the money, an’ she helped me to clear the loan,
 When we bought half-shares in a cheap ’un and hoisted a flag of our own.
 (lines 15–28)

As these lines imply, the growth of Gloster’s economic empire (“the business grew” [line 43]) ultimately rests upon his unscrupulousness. “On his way up, he has cut many

corners, being willing to sabotage ships for the insurance and take the credit – not to mention the income – for his dead partner’s plans for a rolling mill, clearing a sixty percent profit on naval contracts” (Davies 2011, 56). Indeed, whereas McAndrew “couldn’t lie if you paid him, and he’d starve before he stole” (line 140), Gloster proves ready to do both in order to expand his empire, stealing as he does the ideas of his late business partner McCullough:

Then came the armour-contracts, but that was M’Cullough’s side;
 He was always best in the Foundry, but better, perhaps, he died.
 I went through his private papers; the notes was plainer than print;
 And I’m no fool to finish if a man’ll give me a hint.
 (I remember his widow was angry.) So I saw what his drawings meant,
 And I started the six-inch rollers, and it paid me sixty per cent.
 (lines 61–66)

In contrast to McAndrew, who is deeply concerned with his “marks o’ more than burns” (Kipling 2013b, line 39), Gloster has no qualms about his own morally questionable actions. Though aware of having “got his ‘million’ and baronetcy by fraud and deceit,” he “is unrepentant” (Scragg 2015, 24).

And yet, some sort of anxiety does surface in Gloster’s recitation. His narrative is tragically marked by multiple deaths, which are repeatedly mentioned and include his wife Mary’s (“she died in Macassar Straits” [Kipling 2013c, line 32]; “she died in the *Mary Gloster*” [line 36]), his business partner McCullough’s (“he died in the ‘Sixties” [line 52]; “he died” [line 62]) and eventually his own (“it’s your daddy, dying” [line 2]; “I shall go under by morning” [line 4]; “I’m Sir Anthony Gloster, dying” [line 12]; “I’m dying to-night” [line 52]). As his other obsessive repetitions suggest, what greatly distresses him is the realization that, upon his death, his ancestral and economic empire will also crumble: “So there isn’t even a grandchild, an’ the Gloster family’s done” (line 81); “if you have no child, / It all comes back to the business” (lines 89–90); “There isn’t even a grandchild, and the Gloster family’s done” (line 159). On the verge of his death, then, he is less worried by the memory of his wrongdoings, which, on the contrary, he even justifies by recourse to the Bible (“And they asked me how I did it, and I gave ’em the Scripture text, / ‘You keep your light so shining a little in front o’ the next!’” [lines 57–58])⁴, than by “the lack of a grandchild and Dickie’s lack of interest in the company” (Scragg 2015, 24), which produce the certainty that neither his ancestry nor his family business will be carried on after his imminent demise.

To recap, this section has compared and contrasted “McAndrew’s Hymn” and “The *Mary Gloster*” as seen through the lenses of mobility and progress. Both McAndrew and Gloster express their anxieties about variously conceived forms of progress (i.e. spiritual progression for McAndrew; economic, social and genealogical advancements for Gloster), which are positively or negatively connected to mobility. If Gloster’s economic empire and the resulting social ascent of his entire family depend on shipbuilding, McAndrew’s own spiritual progression seems hampered by his trip to the tropics. Further

⁴ On Gloster’s “torrent of self-justifying, uxorious Biblical allusions,” see Scragg 2015, 27–28.

exploring the ideological implications of some of the passages already discussed thus far and expanding upon the significance of both old McAndrew's doctrine (Kipling 2013b, line 167) and Dick's shortcomings, the next section will make the case for reading Kipling's poetic pair as imperial.

Empire

Unlike other poems collected in *The Seven Seas*, a volume which is "preoccupied by the changing world context of empire at the end of the nineteenth century" (Parry 1992, 59) and accordingly "celebrates British imperialism" (Montefiore 2014, 95), "McAndrew's Hymn" and "The *Mary Gloster*" hardly qualify as "explicitly imperial, in the sense of either portraying the empire or lauding it" (Porter 2004, 176). Since neither of them openly refer to the British Empire as a political entity or represent the military effort required for its maintenance, they clearly differ from "A Song of the English," which Elleke Boehmer (2011, 21–22) has rightly taken as a representative example of "the jingo poem," and from the second series of barrack-room ballads which bookend the collection (Kipling 2013a, 1:320–329 and 419–463). And yet, critics have not failed to speculate about the imperialist subtext in Kipling's companion pieces, especially in "McAndrew's Hymn," which, in lines such as "Interdependence absolute, foreseen, ordained, decreed, / To work, Ye'll note, at any tilt an' every rate o' speed" (Kipling 2013b, lines 160–161), appears to proclaim his author's own understanding of imperialist ideology as essentially embodied by "men devoted to burdensome tasks under difficult conditions without much assistance or any immediate hope of reward, working for impersonal ends" (Kipling 1990–2004, 4:574).

As early as 1896, "McAndrew's Hymn" was defined as a "rough and long-winded" poem which epitomizes "the guiding themes" of Kipling's oeuvre, namely "Force, Imperial England, and Romance" ("A Poet of the People" 1896). According to multiple commentators, the British Empire seems to provide more than a picturesque backdrop for McAndrew's recollections and reflections on the move, at least in those points where the ideological "assumptions" (Hughes 2010, 125) of the Empire appear to underpin the monologist's words and actions. In Linda K. Hughes's view, for example, the British imperialist outlook is "subtly evoked ... in the casual ease with which the globe is mapped in relation to Britain at the center" (Hughes 2010, 125–126) in the following lines: "Or make Kerguelen under sail – three jiggers burned wi' smoke! / An' home again – the Rio run" (Kipling 2013b, lines 101–102). Whereas Eric Stokes (1972, 96) interprets the opening line as indicative of Kipling's "sense of the mortality of empire," Herbert Sussman is quite emphatic in his reading of an imperialist subtext in McAndrew's disciplined behavior. "Like that of the marine engine," he writes, "the engineer's behavior is regular and reliable, unobserved yet crucial to the knitting together of the colonies. The engineer carries out what appeared to Kipling and to the British the divine mission of empire as he oversees the travel of 'average fifteen hunder souls safe-borne fra' port to port'" (Sussman 2009, 88). As remarked by Sussman (1968, 202) elsewhere, a similar analogy is drawn in a later Kipling poem, "The Secret of the Machines" (1911):

“The Secret of the Machines,” as celebrated in the poem of that name, is that the machine can function in rigid compliance to the law, unencumbered by human emotion; the verse could equally well celebrate Kipling’s ideal colonial officer:
 But remember, please, the Law by which we live,
 We are not built to comprehend a lie,
 We can neither love nor pity nor forgive.
 If you make a slip in handling us you die!

Others have interpreted McAndrew not only as a discreet supervisor, but also as a “servant of empire” (Hughes 2010, 118), “the kind of doer who kept the wheels of empire turning” (Ricketts 2011, 116), “someone whose unsung exploits ensured that the empire ran smoothly” (Lycett 2014, xiv), often reading “the code of empire and imperial rule” (Hughes 2010, 126; see also Cherry 1996 [1959]; Parry 1992, 72) into the line where his work ethos is expressed: “Law, Orrder, Duty an’ Restraint, Obedience, Discipline!” (Kipling 2013b, line 167). In passages of “unconscious self-revelation” (Page 1984, 170) like this, where some would go so far as to claim that McAndrew voices “Kipling’s own views” (Keating 1994, 108) or “imperatives” (Davies 2011, 57), the speaker seems to play the role of the inadvertent imperialist ideologue. Although historians like Bernard Porter might take issue with similar speculative interpretations of supposedly “hidden imperial signals” (Porter 2004, 140), McAndrew’s moments of “absent-minded imperialism” (Porter 2004) may well be imputed to the typical two-voicedness of the Browningsque dramatic monologue (Crook 1996, 39; Karlin 2019, 18).

Old McAndrew’s ethos significantly seeks to overturn and remedy his errors of youth in the tropics (Kipling 2013b, lines 49–89), which amplifies the imperialist overtones carried by the self-reassuring expression of his new creed. Since it interweaves exotic adventure, occultism and atavism, McAndrew’s moment of perdition at the age of twenty-four qualifies as a poetic occurrence of the colonial trope of “going native” (Brantlinger 1988, 230) whose interpolation marks a turning point in his discovery of “a new religion of machinery” (Kipling 1993, 205). The insertion of this anecdote from his youth in which he yields to the temptation “to abandon his Scottish Presbyterian faith ... in favour of an undefined hedonistic paganism, superficially attractive but morally lax and responsible” (Kipling 1999, 660), paves the way for the ideological moment when, “taught by time” (Kipling 2013b, line 2), the now older and possibly wiser man presents his moral “lesson” as “lift[ed]” by his engines (line 166), perhaps unintentionally revealing his imperial anxiety at the same time as he swears religious obedience.

Gloster’s apprehension for the future of his family and his business has also been read as covertly political in light of the publication of his deathbed monologue within such an imperial collection as *The Seven Seas*. Interpreting “*The Mary Gloster*” with regards to the context in which the poem was written and to the macrotext in which it first appeared, Andrew Scragg (2015) has drawn an intriguing connection between the monologist’s particular anxiety about the downfall of his own entrepreneurial empire and a more general anxiety about a possible weakening of British imperial power in the last decade of the nineteenth century. More precisely, Scragg (2015, 18–19) suggests that, since they were composed at “a time when the British empire was facing new challenges from the increasingly restive Boers in South Africa, Germany’s expanding economy and imperial ambitions, and the rise of American industry,” the various texts collected in *The Seven Seas* “praise the achievements of the British empire but also, responding to external

threats, seek to inspire a new generation of imperialists to take up the challenge of maintaining British power,” as “Kipling exhorts the British people ... to retain the faith and fortitude of their fathers, lest the imperial dream crumble because of internal weakness.” Gloster’s recitation, Scragg goes on to argue, “plays a specific part in these exhortations” (19) because it ultimately implies that “if Britain were to maintain its economic position then the younger generation, like ... Dickie, would have to ... work to create and expand markets for trade” (25). Externally threatened by his impending death, Gloster’s economic empire is bound to collapse due to an internal peril, namely the ineptitude of Dick (“For you are the son o’ my body” [Kipling 2013c, line 137]), which his father bitterly resents, perhaps all the more so because of his awareness that he is also to blame for it (“I ought to ha’ sent you to sea – / But I stood you an education” [lines 71–72]; “You’re saved from soiling your fingers” [line 89]). If “McAndrew’s Hymn” and “The *Mary Gloster*” contribute to conveying “the imperial message of *The Seven Seas*” (Scragg 2015, 25), it is also by means of the generational contrast of old McAndrew’s covertly imperial work ethos with young Dick’s disdain for work, which, unlike other generation gaps, such as the one between Mary and her son’s wife (“Not like your mother, she isn’t” [Kipling 2013c, line 82]), may only be appreciated when the two poems are read as a diptych.

Conclusion

The present article has revisited Kipling’s “McAndrew’s Hymn” and “The *Mary Gloster*,” two poems which, in spite of being evidently textually interconnected, have rarely received sustained attention as a verse diptych. Reassessing both McAndrew’s and Gloster’s dramatic monologues through the lenses of mobility and progress, this article has built upon previous scholarship and contributed to teasing out the imperial implications of the two monologists’ different preoccupations. While emphasizing the ideological relation of this poetic pair to the British Empire, the article has necessarily overlooked other potentially interesting facets and passages in Kipling’s companion pieces. Future critical appraisals of these texts may well continue to approach them as a diptych but focus on different aspects and excerpts, or they may alternatively prioritize one of the two over the other and further explore it from a different perspective. For instance, since Kipling’s literary Scots has been comparatively more neglected than the other language varieties equally represented in both his poetry and his fiction, “McAndrew’s Hymn” could be usefully reread alongside not only other poems, such as “The Fall of Jock Gillespie” (1886), “Tomlinson” (1892) and “The Last Rhyme of True Thomas” (1894), but also the short stories ““Brugglesmith”” (1891) and ““Bread upon the Waters”” (1896), in an attempt to shed light on the aesthetic and ideological functions that the literary use of Scots seems to perform within Kipling’s multilingual output. Whether they are discussed jointly or separately, nonetheless, “McAndrew’s Hymn” and “The *Mary Gloster*” will hopefully be understood as imperial poems.

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