

Board(ing) Schools: Rudyard Kipling's young heroes

Patrícia Rodrigues

Centro de Estudos Anglisticos, Faculdade de Letras, Universidade de Lisboa
Escola Superior de Educação de Santarém

Teresa-Cláudia Tavares

Instituto de Estudos de Literatura e Tradição da Universidade Nova de Lisboa
Escola Superior de Educação de Santarém

Board(ing) Schools: Rudyard Kipling's young heroes

In 1900, Theodore Roosevelt considered Rudyard Kipling's novels *Stalky & Co.* (1899) and *Captains Courageous* (1897) side by side:

Captains Courageous describes in the liveliest way just what a boy should be and do. The hero is painted in the beginning as the spoiled, over-indulged child of wealthy parents, [yet because of an accident he is] forced to work hard among boys and men who are real boys and real men doing real work. The effect is invaluable. On the other hand, if one wishes to find types of boys to be avoided with utter dislike, one will find them in another story by Kipling, called *Stalky & Co.*, a story which ought never to have been written, for there is hardly a single form of meanness which it does not seem to extol, or of school mismanagement which it does not seem to applaud. (Roosevelt n.pg.)

Given the characteristics of Kipling's protagonists Stalky, Beetle, and M'Turk in *Stalky & Co.*, and Harvey Cheyne Junior and his sidekick friend Dan Troop in *Captain Courageous*, Roosevelt's comparison seems rather controversial — candid, even. What if one put together all the young men on stage in the two novels and examined them as embodiments of different aspects of maleness-to-be?

We will begin with Dan Troop, a secondary character in every way — and in fact by the end of the story this becomes his official identity: "I'm so's to be that kind o' animal called second mate this trip" (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* 156). Dan is the archetype of the Christian youth, and he behaves in a stereotypical way. Among all the boys under consideration here, he is the only who has a crush, albeit an unrequited one, on a girl. Furthermore, the qualities he reveals are more practical than

analytical, further reinforcing the secondary nature of his character. His social advancement occurs only because of his chance meeting with Harvey (see Ormond 2003). He is not the protagonist; instead, for most of the book, the reader is led to think that he is nothing more than the shadow of his father, Disko Troop, of whom we are told, “As has been said, when Disko thought of cod he thought as a cod; and by some long-tested mixture of instinct and experience” (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* 68). In this sense, Dan resembles an “Animal Boy” — the stereotype to which Mr. Brownell, a presumptuous teacher at *Stalky and Co.*’s school, assigns all students (Kipling, *Complete Stalky* 142). Yet, unlike his father, Dan is rational enough to understand that his father’s lifestyle is outdated, doomed:

In Dan’s rational perspective his father dwindles to a figure of pastoral, and it is no wonder that both Cheynes, father and son, end up by appropriating him. To add insult to injury, this does not take the form of Harvey Cheyne senior giving Dan his heart’s desire by setting him up in a new-fangled “haddock”, but of taking him out of the fishing industry altogether and transplanting him from the east to the west coast of America. (Karlin 21)

Dan longs to continue his ancestors’ activities while putting a new spin on them, having his own, more modern, fishing vessel. However, in the end it would seem that his life is determined by fate — yet, as every reader knows, in fiction fate translates as authorial intent. Kipling, in this way, covers up class issues and economical power differences. In fact, as Daniel Karlin observes, “Cheyne [Senior, Harvey’s millionaire father] places Dan in the shipping line he owns, and gives the line itself to Harvey as his graduation present. By doing so he determines their destiny (and, emblematically, that of America) in his, not Disko’s, image” (Karlin 21). By legitimising Dan’s submission to Harvey, Kipling disguises an act that is culturally binding. That submission will be instead seen as the fulfilment of a prophecy, the sign of a divine command:

“But one day he will be your master, Danny.”
 “That all?” said Dan, placidly. “He wun’t — not by a jugful”
 “Master!” said the cook, pointing to Harvey. “Man!” and he pointed to Dan.

“That’s news. Haow soon?” said Dan, with a laugh.
 “In some years, and I shall see it. Master and man — man
 and master.” (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* 58)

The black cook’s prophecy spurs Dan to foresee that he will only be able to escape his father’s fate at the price of giving up the freedom of being his own master, becoming instead an employee of a big company, a link in an industrial chain.¹ Even if interconnectivity is present in his new lifestyle, the characteristic anonymity of a large company will be dominant, and the only personal connection available to him will be the one-to-one relationship with his master Harvey. Dan, in becoming Harvey’s man, will be devoid, at least partially, of free will.²

There are, however, some similarities between the two boys of *Captain Courageous*, particularly in what concerns the role women will be allowed to play in their lives: a minor one. In Dan’s case, as Ormond puts it, Kipling’s conception of his mother’s character “is strictly stereotyped” (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* xxii). Dan’s mother remains in the background and seldom interferes with a man-to-be upbringing. In fact, Mrs. Troop is so emotionally restrained that Dan feels jealous of Constance Cheyne, Harvey’s mother, when his own mother “babies” (comforts) her, because “he had not been babied since he was six” (155).

¹ Leonee Ormond rightly points out that his father’s family name further connects Harvey with the oppressive traits of the capitalistic world, since “Cheyne (chain) is the ‘kinless’ self-made man of the mechanical future” (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* xvii). In addition, father and son are often physically compared to Native Indians: “Father and son were very much alike (...); With a touch of brown paint [Harvey] would have made up very picturesquely as a Red Indian of the story-books” (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* 140). “Cheyne” can also be read as “Cheyenne”. The capitalistic empire that Cheyne Senior rules is by all accounts a wild, fierce and ruthless one. As Sher Khan rules over the Jungle’s creatures before Mowgli’s coming of age, Cheyne too exercises dominating authority over the capitalistic Jungle.

² A “troop” is a military subordinate, and Dan lives up to his family name. He will be Harvey’s “man”. Therefore, he will possess a higher rank than the black cook. To be Harvey’s servant for his entire life will be the fate of the black cook, again by supernatural means. The “divine command” to serve Harvey will be transmitted by a dream. Kipling legitimises race hierarchies (hence, the “natural” Black submission to the White man) again using the supernatural as literary device.

In Harvey's case, it will be up to his father to exclude a family life that would include the mother: "You know as well as I do that I can't make anything of you if you don't act straight by me. I can handle you alone if you'll stay alone, but I don't pretend to manage both you and Mama. Life's too short, anyway" (139).

Harvey Senior forces him to choose between him and his mother. Kipling will write that father and son both feel to have discussed "business". Being the more experienced at bargaining, Harvey Cheyne Senior does not give Junior the possibility to compromise. He scares him by affirming that outside the male sphere life will be devoid of meaning and full of his mother's neurosis and panic: "It rests with you, Harve. You can take cover behind your mama, of course, and put her on to fussing about your nerves and your high-strungness and all that kind of poppycock" (139).

He further threatens to abandon him again, retreating to the role of distant breadwinner:

"Now you can go on from here," said Cheyne, slowly, "costing me between six or eight thousand a year till you're a voter. Well, we'll call you a man then. You can go right on from that, living on me to the tune of forty or fifty thousand, besides what your mother will give you, with a valet and a yacht or a fancy-ranch where you can pretend to raise trotting-stock and play cards with your own crowd." (*Captains Courageous* 141)

Harvey's sums it up: he either has an "Yacht and ranch and live on the old man, and — get behind Mama where there's trouble" (141) or, as his father says: "you come right in with me, my son" (41).

Yet, he will be forced to go to college. His reaction when knowing it is telling: "There's no sugar in my end of the deal", said Harvey. "Four years at college! Wish I'd chosen the valet and the yacht!" (144) He does not even mention his mother's company as part of "the deal". As to reinforce the idea that male complicity can only be done "at women's expenses", Kipling lets his readers know that both Harveys Cheynes "naturally" exclude Constance Cheyne from knowing anything about the conversation, thus avoiding conflict. In fact, Senior proved his ability to communicate, persuade and lead Junior, whilst at the same time demonstrated that his Mother did not deserve to receive honest, direct

adult feedback. Instead, his father notion of heterosexual relationship management is that his mother acquiescence can be bought:

As this was a business talk, there was no need for Harvey to tell his mother about it; and Cheyne naturally took the same point of view. But Mrs. Cheyne saw and feared, and was a little jealous. Her boy, who rode rough-shod over her, was gone, and in his stead reigned a keen-faced youth, abnormally silent, who addressed most of his conversation to his father. She understood it was business, and therefore a matter beyond her premises. If she had any doubts, they were resolved when Cheyne went to Boston and brought back a new diamond marquise ring. (144)

Harvey's metamorphosis, first through immersion in a male-only atmosphere then by mirroring his father behaviour, suggests that Kipling views masculinity as performance. *Captains Courageous* clearly states this idea, as seen in the following episode when the captain and members of the crew discuss Harvey's behaviour:

I'll lay my wage an' share't is more 'n half play-actin' to him, an' he consates himself he's a bowld mariner. Watch his little bit av a back now!"

— That's the way we all begin," said Tom Platt "The boys they make believe all the time till they've cheated 'emselves into bein men, an so till they die — pretendin an pretendin. I done it on the old Ohio, I know. Stood my first watch — harbour-watch — feelin' finer n Farragut. Dan's full o' the same kind o' notions. See 'em now, actin' to be genewine moss-backs every hair a rope-yarn an' blood Stockholm tar". (99)

If masculinity is, at least at first, the imitation of a role model, then the choice of role models becomes an important issue. Lionel Trilling, in his consideration of *Kim* (1901) and *Jungle Book* (1894), notably pointed out that both books "[are] full of wonderful fathers, all dedicated men in different ways, each representing a different possibility of existence; and the charm of each other is greater because the boy need not commit himself to one alone" (Trilling 122). In *Captains Courageous*, Dan is only his

father's son, but Harvey enjoys the privilege of having two fatherly figures: Dan's father, Disko, and his own. Disko, the captain of the ship that rescued Harvey, epitomises the muscular Christian of Victorian times: "The basic premise of Victorian Muscular Christianity was that participation in sport could contribute to the development of Christian morality, physical fitness, and 'manly' character" (Watson et al 1). Instead of team sports, all the tasks entailed by harsh life on board are supposed to turn the "barbarous energy" of Harvey's young body into some useful purpose, since "for Kipling, the barbarous energies of boyhood are valuable and ineradicable aspects of manliness; better to make use of them, as contemporary pedagogical theory suggested, than to condemn them" (Deane 139). Evidence that Harvey is still influenced by the muscular Christian ethos that Disko instilled in him is seen at the end of the *Captains Courageous*, when Dan and Harvey meet and the latter is riding a horse. Kipling shows him being physically active, as every muscular Christian should be — he is riding a horse. As Davies highlights, Christian muscularity was associated with the promotion of team sports aimed at "fostering religious observances alongside team sports and thus to provide a new form of social discipline for young working-class males" (Davies 70). Donald E. Hall corroborates this class-directed vision, observing that "a telling component of muscular Christianity [is the] calming and educating of the lower classes with the promise of rendering them "fit" for freedom" (Hall 47).

However, as Davies highlights, the promotion of team sports associated with Christian muscularity aimed at "fostering religious observances alongside team sports and thus to provide a new form of social discipline for young working-class males" (Davies 70). Donald E. Hall corroborates this class-directed vision, observing that "a telling component of muscular Christianity [is the] calming and educating of] the lower classes with the promise of rendering them "fit" for freedom" (Hall 47).

Yet, far from being a working-class male, Harvey is a millionaire's heir, so it comes as no surprise that Disko's teachings are appropriated by Harvey and transformed into a demonstration of class supremacy and association with American traditions. Horseback riding is a sport for the elite. Muscular Christianity is now a given for Harvey, Disko's permanent legacy; but Disko only acts *in loco parentis*. As noted before, Harvey is different from Dan in that he has two father figures and so does not have

to fully commit to only one. And, since far from being a working-class male, Harvey is a millionaire's heir, it comes as no surprise that Disko's teachings are transformed by Harvey into a demonstration of class supremacy and association with American traditions. Horseback riding is a sport for the elite. Besides a practical lesson on how to handle his mother, Harvey Cheyne Senior's contribution to his son's psychological formation is resourcefulness, or "stalkyness", if you will. In fact, the "twinkle" in Harvey's eyes is reminiscent of his father's own "twinkle": "Cheyne [Senior] slapped his leg and chuckled. This was going to be a boy after his own hungry heart. He had never seen precisely that twinkle in Harvey's eye before" (126).

What Harvey has in common with his father is resilience, the capacity to adjust. This translates into the urge to play pranks in revenge for adult abuse, as well as the intelligence to distinguish between those adults he can disobey (or take revenge against) and those he must be civil with. Indeed, the first thing Harvey does when he acquires sailing skills is to avenge, through a prank, his compromised self-respect:

Salters was not an amiable person (he esteemed it his business to keep the boys in order); and the first time Harvey, in fear and trembling, on a still day, managed to shin up to the main-truck (Dan was behind him ready to help), he esteemed it his duty to hang Salters's big sea-boots up there — a sight of shame and derision to the nearest schooner. With Disko, Harvey took no liberties; not even when the old man dropped direct orders, and treated him, like the rest of the crew, to "Don't you want to do so and so?" and "Guess you'd better," and so forth. There was something about the clean-shaven lips and the puckered corners of the eyes that was mightily sobering to young blood. (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* 72)

Harvey's response to Salters' keeping him in line is to bestow upon him the humiliating task of fetching his boots from the top of the main truck and to be mocked until he does so. Kipling's italicised "*duty*" highlights the fact that Harvey's prank is not motivated by a wish to inflict random suffering but intends to warn Salter of disagreeable consequences should he continue to pick on Harvey.

What the reader notices is Harvey's application of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"³ or, as the more erudite protagonists of *Stalky & Co.* would call it, the *Lex Talliones*: in fact, not only Harvey and the trio of *Stalky & Co.* but most of Kipling's major characters — such as Mowgli and Kim — share this view of retaliation as a code of justice. The relationships of *Stalky & Co.*'s trio with their colleagues and adults underline yet another parallel with the boys in *Captains Courageous*: as the quote above illustrates, Dan supports Harvey in the same way that Beetle and M'Turk support Stalky. In both works, the boys ally themselves against those who, from their point of view, deserve some sort of punishment; in *Stalky & Co.*, as in *Captains Courageous*, the boys' every ruse is intended to establish limits against oppression, a warning to peers and adults to not harm their interests.

Harvey also inherited from his father a sense of dignity and self-respect. If he is not treated according to his perceived vision of himself or if there is a chance of him losing a fight, Harvey lets his mischievous side — a malignant twinkle, so to speak — take over. When he first comes onto the fishermen's boat, he displays the same calculating behaviour he has shown since the beginning of the book. He first tries to manipulate the crew by appealing to their pity — a strategy he used with his mother — through exaggerating his shipwrecked condition; then by promising the captain financial rewards; and finally, by resorting to threats. He only calls an end to his power plays when all of these tactics have failed and he comes to the conclusion that "honesty is the best policy"⁴ and that he will perform as an "honest boy" until he has become one. However, Harvey's preference for such "honest behaviour" is portrayed as a rational choice, not as a duty. Indeed, part of Harvey's "training" from Disko is to restrain himself to fight "honestly" when his adversary is someone he respects, such as his new mate Dan: "Harvey was no match for Dan physically, but it says a great

³ According to the OED, this phrase is "[u]sed to refer to the belief that retaliation in kind is the appropriate way to deal with an offence or crime" (116).

⁴ According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs*, this saying means "honesty is to be recommended, even though in some people it is not an innate virtue but merely adopted as a practical way to behave" (154).

deal for his new training that he took his defeat and did not try to get even with his conqueror by underhand methods” (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* 94). The reason Harvey puts aside underhanded methods and embraces fair fighting, displaying muscular Christianity values, is a direct consequence of the training he received from Disko.

The training from his father, on the other hand, would most likely result in an opposite tactic, as shown in this episode which illustrates his father’s agenda and methods:

There was a war of rates among four Western railroads in which he was supposed to be interested; a devastating strike had developed in his lumber camps in Oregon, and the legislature of the State of California, which has no love for its makers, was preparing open war against him. Ordinarily he would have accepted battle ere it was offered, and have waged a pleasant and unscrupulous campaign. (117)

Kipling insists that vigilant fatherhood is needed to turn boys into citizens. Doom awaits emotionally lazy, workaholic fathers who prefer business to parental involvement, except in cases of a miracle, such as Harvey’s father experienced when he thought Harvey had died:

There had always lain a pleasant notion at the back of his head that, some day, when he had rounded off everything and the boy had left college, he would take his son to his heart and lead him into his possessions. Then that boy, he argued, as busy fathers do, would instantly become his companion, partner, and ally, and there would follow splendid years of great works carried out together — the old head backing the young fire. Now his boy was dead (...); he himself (...) hopeless, with no heart to meet his many enemies. (116)

As one of the passengers from the liner on which Harvey and his mother are travelling puts it: “Old man’s piling up the rocks. Don’t want to be disturbed, I guess. He’ll find out his error a few years from now” (3). Harvey’s father is aware his son’s character flaws are in part due to this neglect: “I guess it was my fault a good deal” (139). However, while accepting fathers can be partially at fault, Kipling underlines that a mother’s neuroticism is more to blame: “Constance Cheyne (...) is held to be largely

responsible for her son's failings (although it could be claimed that her husband's neglect is the real cause of both her neurasthenia and Harvey's brattishness)" (xxii).

Captains Courageous is a sort of a condensed *bildungsroman*: Harvey learns to execute orders, to submit himself, to give in. To put it simply, in the same way that Stalky, Beetle, and M^rTurk only yield to the Head of Coll., Harvey only yields to Disko, the captain, whom he respects; and to Harvey Cheyne Senior, whom he has learned to respect as well.

Captains Courageous is a book about a male world:

Following a pattern familiar in other works by Kipling (...), the boy Harvey reaches maturity through contact with other males, presented as contrasting father figures or teachers. (...)

Captains Courageous is not a novel for feminists. (xxi-ii)

Until his unwilling sea journey, Harvey had lived all his life with his mother. After his high-seas male-bonding experience, the practical learning that he gained will be followed by academic instruction at Stanford, coupled with a close connection with his father. Both learning environments share the characteristic of being male only.

In *Stalky & Co.*, as in *Captains Courageous*, the trope of the orphaned/abandoned/ lost child justifies the young heroes' lack of judgement, mischief-making and, most of all, transgressive behaviour in the sense of breaking the adult law. In a way, the near-total absence of biological fathers excuses these heroes on the grounds of lack of proper guidance and of "not knowing any better". As Jenny Holt points out, "although adolescence is, in many ways, a prelude to mature citizenship, adolescents are still often understood as being somehow essentially anti-social" (Holt 253). The tales that constitute *Stalky & Co.* are set in "one of the lesser public school designed for children of the colonial service" (Said 161). Such designation ("children of the colonial service") is a dubious one, suggesting some degree of social inequality connected with public service. Moreover, Said adds that other schools were "reserved for the upper echelons of the colonial elite" (*Ibid.*).

The "anti-social" behaviour of Kipling's *Stalky & Co.* boys can be seen as a way of protecting them from overwhelming adult responsibilities as family heads and colonial leaders: one cannot avoid remembering

Kipling's "white man's burden" (1899). But ultimately this behaviour cannot save them. Furthermore, "[a]lthough the boys may be willing to trade adult privileges in order to avoid the hypocrisy and banality of maturity; however, their bodies cannot cope" (Holt 205). Indeed, the data provided in the last chapter of *Stalky & Co.* is mostly a war casualties' list. Stalky's own exceptionality is highlighted by the fact that he, unlike all his fellowmen in the colonies, seems to thrive on distress. The title of Carole Scott's article, "Kipling's Combat Zones: Training Grounds in the Mowgli Stories, *Captains Courageous*, and *Stalky & Co.*," is self-explaining: Kipling aims to foster survival skills in his readers, and he regards courage and resourcefulness (*stalkiness*) as essential in the jungle, in boarding schools, on the wide sea, or in the arena of big business.⁵

No young hero in Kipling goes alone in the world. As observed before, all of them have symbolical fathers or brothers to support them. The trio of *Stalky & Co.* (Beetle, Stalky, and M'Turk) is one of several we find in Kipling's *oeuvre*: in *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906) and *Rewards and Fairies* (1910) we encounter the trios of the Norman stories (De Aquilla, Hugh, and Richard) and of the Roman stories (Parnesius, Maximus, and Pertinax), and in *The Jungle Books* (1894, 1895) we find another important trio (Bagheera, Baloo, and Kaa); in the properly named *Soldiers Three* and in *Plain Tales from the Hills* the privates Learoyd, Mulvaney and Ortheris.

Juliet McMaster observes that Kipling's Indian upbringing acquainted him with not only the Christian but also the Hindu divine trinity⁶, as "the archetype appears in the Hindu world picture too, in which Siva as Power, Vishnu as Love, and Brahma as Knowledge provide a parallel with the Christian Trinity" (McMaster 93). According to McMaster, the Holy Spirit is the most unpredictable of the three symbolic embodiments. The fact

⁵ The suicide of the unnamed Boy protagonist of the cautionary tale "Thrown Away", *Plain Tales from the Hill* (1888), is an example of what, according to Kipling, will happen if males start adult life unprepared.

⁶ Any reader of "*Baa Baa, Black Sheep*" will recall that the first "grievous sin" of little Punch is to draw on Hindu mythological narratives to explain to Judy the story of the Creation.

that a snake — considered the architect of Evil in Christian tradition — represents it in Mowgli tales warns us about the complexity of such parallels: “Kaa opposes the monkeys, the forces of ignorance, not by strength, like Baloo, nor by passionate, ineffective devotion, like Bagheera, but by a hypnotic dance that establishes mastery over the minds of his victims. Like the Holy Spirit to humanity, Kaa moves in mysterious ways” (97). Keeping such reservations in mind, and following McMaster’s line of thought, we will attempt to attribute the trinity characteristics to the elements of the *Stalky & Co.*’s trio.

At a first glance, Stalky embodies power, leadership, or perhaps wisdom. As Kipling explains at the beginning of the book, Corkran (Stalky) does not just possess stalkiness, he embodies stalkiness itself: “‘Stalky’, in their school vocabulary, meant clever, well-considered and wily, as applied to plans of action; and ‘stalkiness’ was the one virtue Corkran toiled after” (Kipling, *Complete Stalky* 13). The pranks carried out by the trio are, therefore, intended as show cases to explain to the reader what “stalkiness” in action is. The first chapter of the book is thus appropriately entitled “Stalky”. Along with his two sidekicks, and without ever being seen, Stalky frees some colleagues who had been locked up in a barn by justly offended peasants. Then the trio imprisons the peasants themselves. After being reminded that they are late, Stalky introduces himself to the peasants and pretends the three of them had been passing by when they heard the peasants’ cries. As a condition to free them, he requires them to write a note justifying their tardiness to school. Facing the suspicion of the peasants, Stalky reacts with insults, and succeeds in convincing those he has harmed that they owe him a favour.

In such a simple *vignette*, Kipling hints that Stalky is prepared for his role in a world arena ruled by “the messy imprecisions of history, the embattled negotiations and strategies of the disempowered, the militarisation of masculinity, the elision of women from political and economic power, the decisive foreclosures of ethnic violence and so on” (McClintock 66). Stalky uses the boarding school as a training ground to survive in such arena (Scott). He rehearses disguising himself, adjusting to each particular circumstance. Despite the fact that he boasts he is the most cunning of the trio, standing above the others as the undisputed leader, he also knows to play second when it will lead to a better outcome. We see this, for example,

when Dickson Quartus, the favourite of a difficult headmaster, leads a prank: "This is the first time to my knowledge that Stalky has ever played second-fiddle to any one" (Kipling, *Complete Stalky* 158). Stalky also rehearses his own impassibility, as the chapter "The Flag of Their Country" shows. His powerful need to control his body language is evident in the chapter "An Unsavoury Interlude" when he harshly reproaches Beetle's spontaneity, translating it into the inability to restrain himself in the face of provocation. The self-awareness of his superiority never abandons him:

'Well, that's awfully good of you,' said Stalky, 'but we happen to have a few rights of our own, too. You can't, just because you happen to be made prefects, haul up seniors and jaw'em on spec, like a house-master. *We* aren't fags, Carson. This kind of thing may do for Davies tertius, but it won't do for us'.
(270)

Fuelled by his experience in the practice of disguise at Coll. and by the European imperial certainty that he is always right and that revenge is possible after overcoming obstacles, Stalky's stalkiness unfolds in rather different ways. As Isabel Quigley notes, "[r]esourcefulness and ruthlessness are his two main qualities. A loner, in that he can be self-sufficient, he is very much a leader nonetheless, demanding obedience, knowing just what he wants and getting it" (Quigley 117). He displays hypocrisy, artfulness, perseverance, timing, sense of opportunity, intelligence, self-confidence and, last but not least, a lack of scruples. In the chapter "Slaves of the Lamp I" for example, Stalky provokes the local carrier, causing the man to throw stones at the window of the teacher responsible for temporarily banning the trio from their study room. There is no reference to any compensation for the carrier, who certainly suffered the consequences of his attack. Stalky's college years will foreseeably equip him to handle any obstacles put in his way in his future colonial assignments.

Some scholars have argued that Stalky "has never grown up" (Deane 139). Eternal youth being a God-like attribute, this brings to mind other fictional beings like Peter Pan and Kipling's Puck. The verse from *The White Man's Burden* — "half-devil and half-child" — which Kipling uses to describe "new-caught, sullen peoples" applies to Stalky as well. In a sense, then, he can be identified as one who despite being "European, imperial", displays "non-European, colonial" characteristics. The same

contradictory representations act upon this trajectory. The fact is that Stalky would be sent to India as “a lamb to the slaughter”,⁷ but instead earns himself a position of leadership next to the natives.

It follows that Stalky seems invulnerable and unique. As one of the characters says: “There is nobody like Stalky” (Kipling, *Complete Stalky* 296). Nevertheless, one may question the nature of Stalky’s power and that power itself. D. Randall asserts that:

Kipling’s imperial boys represent sites of contingency, subject positions in between opposed categories, in between formations of the subject encoded as ‘European, imperial’ and ‘non European, colonial’. Kipling’s boy-protagonists mediate and stage the relationship between ‘colonizer’ and ‘colonized’.
(Randall 3)

As an adolescent, Stalky is a subaltern; yet as a white European he belongs to the ruler’s class. If he is as convinced of his superiority as Kipling has him claim to be, this superiority only affirms itself when Stalky deals with Indian natives. Before that, in the chapter “The Flag of Their Country”, he shows us that his more pressing concerns are his anticipated sufferings at the hands of the Army Officers as a recruit. That is to say, he fears, most of all, “friendly fire”, even if symbolic. His future proves him right, as the reader learns that the biggest problems Stalky will face in India are the colonial bureaucratic system and the government’s lack of vision. He clashes with hierarchies and, most of all, seems to wish to be left alone with the natives to become a sort of pastoral king.⁸ If the idea of being an *Arcadian* ruler is only a possibility to Stalky, to M’Turk it has the reality of an ethnic identity.

Being Anglo-Irish makes M’Turk a true cultural hybrid; yet an intersectional approach warns us about the weight of tradition in him. He proudly defines himself, quoting Ruskin, as part of the “children of noble races trained by surrounding art” (Kipling, *Complete Stalky* 60). Passion

⁷ An idiom which means “a helpless victim” (*Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* 201).

⁸ Thus, succeeding where Dravot, the protagonist of “The Man Who Would be King” (1888), has failed.

is his main characteristic; in the trinity, he would obviously represent love. We see his passion for the past, seen, for example, in his fondness for Latin, a dead language. This can be associated with his passion for his ancestral estate:

[he] was treading again the barren purple mountains of the rainy West coast, where in his holidays he was viceroy of four thousand naked acres, only son of a three-hundred-year-old house, lord of a crazy fishing-boat, and the idol of his father's shiftless tenantry. It was the landed man speaking to his equal — deep calling to deep. (35)

He also reveals a passion for Ireland, the motherland. When emotional, for example, he remembers Irish nationalist songs such as “The Wearin’ o’ The Green” (37). His passion for art, artists and art criticism is also clear. For M’Turk, a person’s worth is judged through their aesthetic education — as revealed through their choices when it comes to their “surrounding art”. He passionately claims that one of the housemasters is:

(...) a Philistine, a basket-hanger. He wears a tartan tie. Ruskin says that any man who wears a tartan tie will, without doubt, be damned everlastingly.

(...) He has a china basket with blue ribbons and a pink kitten on it, hung up in his window to grow musk in. You know when I got all that old oak carvin’ out of Bideford Church, when they were restoring it (Ruskin says that any man who’ll restore a church is an unmitigated sweep), and stuck it up here with glue? Well, King came in and wanted to know whether we’d done it with a fret-saw! (62)

In the chapter “In Ambush”, we watch M’Turk’s reaction when faced with the undeserved slaughter of a vixen; much to his friend’s amazement, a “haughty, angular, nose-lifted” (34). M’Turk confronts an elderly respected colonel, treating him as an equal and thus playing the class card. His disdain and quick fury, with no concern for consequences, as well as the distance between discourse and the actual capacity for influence, are part of the straightforward gentlemanlike personality attributed to M’Turk. Assuming these same class traits are associated with the Irish stereotype, M’Turk, whenever anger takes hold of him, forgets the pre-teen condition of being bound to respect his elders, and adopts an adult aristocrat de-

meanour. He poses this way even with his colleagues, feigning indignation whenever it suits his purposes: “Are you surprised we don’t wish to associate with the House?” said M’Turk with dignity. ‘We’ve kept ourselves to ourselves in our study till we were turned out, and now we find ourselves let in for — for this sort of thing. It’s simply disgraceful” (106). In short, M’Turk uses “surrounding art”, decoration, and beautiful memories of the past as a protective bubble in which he and his two friends can live together. That bubble is Studio number 5.

As M’Turk loves Latin, so does Beetle love living languages, namely French and English. Beetle’s contribution to the bubble of Studio number 5 is a set of living authors, intellectual projects like such as college journal, and, ultimately, a sense of adventure connected to his prospective career as man of Letters. Like Stalky, Beetle shares the uncertainty of his own position in the trinity. Does he represent power or wisdom? As an alter-ego of Kipling, Beetle holds the ultimate power, as his final claim testifies: “Ain’t I responsible for the whole thing?” (296). *Stalky & Co.* itself is presented as a proof of Beetle’s skills as a fictional world-builder. Using Randall’s wording, Beetle encapsulates a rather contradictory identity, since he is simultaneously European and Colonial. Therefore, Beetle is supposed to have learned from childhood to suppress, for his own advantage, the signs of two cultures that neutralise each other. Teachers proved to be the perfect guinea pigs for exercising, as Stalky did, his talents of deception. Kipling tells us that Beetle is better than the other two at feigning innocence: “Beetle promptly went to his House-master and wished to know what right Harrison and Crane had reopened a matter already settled between him and his House-master. In injured innocence no boy excelled Beetle” (107).

The role that Beetle seems to play within the trio is to legitimise Stalky’s actions and M’Turk’s deep emotions: “‘Won’t there, just!’ said Beetle. ‘Look here. If he kissed her — which is our tack — he is a cynically immoral hog, and his conduct is blatant indecency. *Confer orationes Regis furiosissimi* when he collared me readin’ ‘Don Juan’” (266). He is also the one who furnishes the *rationale* for everything regarding College rules and duties with a sober and pragmatic eye: “Beetle inquired if he ‘need take this exam., sir, as I’m not goin’ up for anything” (238).

If elsewhere in the book *Stalky* blames Beetle for not being able to keep his composure when provoked, near the end of it the reader realises Beetle is able to keep his wits under control when dreams protect him:

King (...) never passed without witticisms. But brigades of Kings could not have ruffled Beetle that day.

'Aha! Enjoying the study of light literature, my friends,' said he, rubbing his hands. 'Common mathematics are not for such soaring minds as yours, are they?'

("One hundred a year," thought Beetle, smiling into vacancy.)

"Our open incompetence takes refuge in the flowery paths of inaccurate fiction. But a day of reckoning approaches, Beetle mine. (...) We shall see! We shall see!"

Still no sign from Beetle. He was on a steamer, his passage paid into the wide and wonderful world — a thousand leagues beyond Lundy Island.

King dropped him with a snarl. (261-262)

The trinity of power, wisdom, and love is inter-related with another trinity in the temporal axis of the Empire: past, present and future. *Stalky* lives the present to the fullest; Beetle dreams of the future; and M'Turk is obviously the one attracted to the pre-colonial past. It is no wonder that M'Turk longs for the past in the time the story is set: as "'White' colonies such as Ireland and Australia (...) were considered made up of inferior humans" (Said 162).

Another trinity emerges with regard to the spatial axis. First is Devon county, where the boys' *alma mater*, the Coll., is located and which they joyfully abandon after graduation: "Shove up and make room, you Collegers. You've all got to be back next term, with your 'Yes, Sir' and 'Oh, Sir,' and 'Please Sir'" (Kipling *Complete Stalky* 278). Second is M'Turk's Ireland, which we only know from his reminiscences: "M'Turk shivered and came out of dreams. The glory of his holiday estate had left him. He was a Colleger of the College, speaking English once more" (37). And third is Beetle's (and later, *Stalky's*) India: an India "full of Stalkies — Cheltenham and Haileybury and Marlborough chaps" (236).

Christian theology is not only about Holy Trinity, it is also about Father and Son mirroring each other "as actors in a cosmic drama that

simultaneously displaces and reinvigorates the myth of child-sacrifice” (Ulreich 427).⁹ Harvey Cheyne Junior must annihilate his former non-muscular Christian self in order to become Harvey Cheyne Senior ideal alter ego. But what is the nature of father son bonding in *Stalky & Co.*? How does a narrative structured around father and son bonding (*Captains Courageous*) connects with one structured around with a trio of near-equals?

“Education” is the key word. If *Captains Courageous* is about a boy being educated on fair play, the main intention of *Stalky & Co* is to educate thousands of English boys on *stalkiness*, i.e. unfair play. As Kipling wrote: “[t]here came to me an idea of beginning some tracts or parables on the education of the young. These, or reasons honestly beyond my control, turned themselves into a series of tales called *Stalky & Co*” (Kipling, *Something of Myself* 79). The trio’s daily life is fuelled and shaped by “adversial curriculum” learnings:

The environment of the school of *Stalky & Co.* developed many necessary skills, and some of them not through the formal curriculum (...), or indeed through the informal curriculum (...), nor even through the hidden curriculum (...). The school promoted skills through what the boys were required to do in order successfully to defy the school authorities, what we call the adversial curriculum. An essential feature of it is that students learn skills to achieve what they want to do anyway — in Kipling’s case, to smoke and read in the gorse and avoid school punishment. (Mackenzie 616)

Such learnings, as well as increasingly elaborated-pranking skills, enhance Beetle and M’Turk’s aesthetic education, which in turn enables them to

⁹ The connection between an ocean and the father sacrificing his son trope will be obvious to those familiar both with *Captains Courageous* and with Kipling’s poem “My boy Jack”. Even if the poem is responding to the death of 16-year-old sailor Jack Cornwell during the First World War, we must remember that Rudyard’s Kipling’s 17-year-old son, John, had initially wanted to join the Royal Navy too. Rejected by the armed forces because of his poor eyesight, nevertheless his father’s connections got him a commission in the infantry, only to be killed six weeks later, in an ironic twist of fate. Has Kipling’s son been sacrificed to his patriotism?

question their teachers' taste whether in regard to decoration (M'Turk) or to literature (Beetle). We are not given much information about Stalky's readings, as he seems to be the least intellectual of the three while simultaneously showing great aptitude for Mathematics.

For the three heroes of *Stalky & Co*, their colleagues are part of a majority to which they feel superior. They despise these fellow students because they are focused on the present and never contemplate life outside of the Coll.'s borders or beyond leaving school. Furthermore, this majority does not value the adversarial curriculum and chooses for role models teachers who, in the trio's eyes, turn the students into their own puppets. However, while they consider themselves as an elite in opposition to the masses, the trinity, as revealed by the book's very title, is not composed of equals. Beetle (considered Kipling's alter-ego) regards Stalky as a hero throughout, not only when Stalky was a 12-year old, but also as an adult. Thus, Kipling as an adult and the adult Beetle he describes envision themselves as a leader's entourage.

When it comes to the connection between reserved stoicism, leadership and *stalkiness*, there are some noticeable similarities between the two protagonists of the books under analysis. While speculative, it would be tempting to consider that Kipling only maintained Harvey's consistency as a character by bestowing upon him an awareness of the difference between, on the one hand, himself and Dan and, on the other hand, himself and the typical Stanford student. Such awareness may cause Harvey to appear, despite appearing extroverted, as mostly reserved during his education at Stanford. It is not important to speculate whether Harvey would be as reserved as Stalky, who rarely shares his thoughts and, even on those occasions when he does, only a select few. We can only consider that in Harvey's case, the friends he made at Stanford, his leadership skills, his intelligence, and his physical strength (earned during his time on the boat) will make his friends admire him in same way that Beetle and M'Turk admired Stalky.

Harvey's experience living in two completely distinct environments has made him somewhat of an "odd bird". His personality is the result of the synthesis of these two experiences, which makes finding someone with a similar character highly unlikely. Given that Kipling has bestowed on Harvey a brilliant mind, it follows that Harvey is aware of any likely

incomprehension that might arise. This awareness could, in turn, result in secretive behaviour, a hypothesis that seems likely when we remember that the fear of being misunderstood is a recurring theme in Kipling's protagonists.

The main difference between Dan, on the one hand, and Harvey, Stalky, M'Turk, and Beetle on the other, is that the former has a present biological father. It is significant that Disko, Dan's father, is the captain of the boat, exerting *pater familias* rights even within the boat itself. Are Harvey and the *Stalky & Co.* boys lost children, then? If one adopts a male-only perspective, this seems an undoubted conclusion. Until Harvey fell from the liner and was saved by the schooner, he lived with his mother, and Kipling is explicit about Harvey's effeminacy. When describing Harvey's previous rowing experience, Kipling writes that he rowed "in a lady-like fashion, on the Adirondack ponds" (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* 33). But, after training with Disko in the fishing boat and at Stanford, along with the renewed closeness with his father, Harvey becomes a master of men.

The issue with *Captains Courageous* is that what is suitable for an American might not be so for an Englishman. The American hero for Kipling is the businessman, who does not appear to be a hero in the English case. The American jungle is the prairie jungle crossed by the railways, or the ocean crossed by the merchant vessels. But what is required of all heroes, English or American, is the same: courage and artfulness.

Lionel Trilling's statement that multiple father figures expand the diversity of existential paths also applies to *Stalky & Co.* Like Disko functioned as Harvey's *in loco parentis*, so did the Head, the teachers King, Prout, and Gillette to the *Stalky & Co.*'s trio. Unlike Disko however, the teachers, if they had legal obligations and rights, had definitely, in turn, a responsibility. Their role was limited by the time each teacher could allot the students. Therefore, in a way, each teacher offers a specific (and "diluted") variety of the emotional investment of a parent. The House Masters are, of course, more intense; yet, even they are entitled by law to enjoy holidays and some free time. Hence the boys' repulse for the thought that the scarce time available to each would be reduced because of a teacher's marriage duties:

"(...) Huh!" said Beetle with a grunt. "They came here, an' they went away to get married. Jolly good riddance, too!"

"Doesn't our Beetle hold with matrimony?"

"No, Padre; don't make fun of me. I've met chaps in the holidays who've got married house-masters. It's perfectly awful! They have babies and teething and measles and all that sort of thing right bung in the school; and the masters' wives give tea-parties—tea-parties, Padre! —and ask the chaps to breakfast".

(Kipling, *Complete Stalky* 120)

Beetle dislike is two folded: on the one hand, babies are an eye-catcher, fragile, noisy, attention-seekers, and impossible to hurt without serious consequences; on the other hand, to be used to breakfasts and tea-parties in India is a survival's disadvantage. The master's wives are a corrupting influence:

"(...) That don't matter so much," said Stalky. "But the house-masters let their houses alone, and they leave everything to the prefects. Why, in one school, a chap told me, there were big baize doors and a passage about a mile long between the house and the master's house. They could do just what they pleased. (Kipling, *Complete Stalky* 120).

Stalky's indignant tone conceals some hidden jealousy which underlines the boys' fragile relationship with the Faculty and perhaps with their own families. Their attitude towards some teachers of Coll., — who are targets of the trio's pranks carried out under Stalky's leadership — illustrates defiance of the hierarchy through manipulation and deceit. However, unlike the expectations of a book starring teens and intended for teen readers, the trio invariably gets away with it, proving that crime pays.¹⁰ As *Stalky & Co.* comes to an end, we observe Stalky, Beetle, and M'Turk set off to their adult life and we learn that their experience at Coll. has prepared them for life as adults more than they would have ever imagined. Similarly, Harvey's learnings on the boat and at Stanford have prepared him to lead

¹⁰ But, in fact, that might not be the case. One interpretation of the book, in fact, could see the Head as being in control from start to finish.

the life he would have hoped for. *Captains Courageous* concludes with a meeting between Harvey and Dan. Harvey is near to graduating from Stanford—a prestigious university for the children of the wealthier echelons—and Dan will be second on a ship. The strong bond between the two after many years is intended to make the reader aware that Harvey’s experience on the boat not only made him athletic but also gave him an interior depth that sets him apart from his privileged college peers. This is shown through the noticeable distance between Harvey’s interests and his colleagues’. In fact, the interests and aims of Harvey’s peers are likely typical of any school boy’s: to perform well in sports and/or in classes and earn the esteem of teachers and/or colleagues. As such, these aims are similar to those that the “[d]irty little schoolboys” — the trio of *Stalky & Co.* — mock and take revenge on: “young but brilliantly clever boys, pets of the house-masters, too anxious for their dignity to care to come to open odds with the resourceful three” (Kipling *Complete Stalky* 260, 261). Harvey and Stalky are part of the happy few who have a Beetle to tell their stories.

Works Cited

- Ayto, John. *Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Davies, Andrews. “Young Gangs, Gender and Violence, 1870-1900.” *Everyday Violence in Britain, 1850-1950: Gender, Class and Violence in Britain, 1850-1950*. Ed. Shani D’Cruze. New York: Routledge, 2000. 70-85.
- Deane, Bradley. *Masculinity and the New Imperialism: Rewriting Manhood in British Popular Literature, 1870-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Hall, Donald E. *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Holt, Jenny. *Public School Literature, Civic Education and the Politics of Male Adolescence*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2008.
- Karlin, Daniel. “Captains Courageous and American Empire.” *Kipling Journal* 63.251 (Sept. 1989): 11-21.
- Kestner, Joseph A. *Masculinities in British adventure fiction, 1880-1915*. London, New York: Routledge, 2016.

- Kipling, Rudyard. *Captains Courageous*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999 (1897).
- _____. *The Complete Stalky & Co.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009 (1987).
- _____. *Something of Myself and Other Autobiographical Writings*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990 (1937).
- Lycett, Andrew. *Rudyard Kipling*. London: Phoenix, 2015.
- Mackenzie, Jim. "Stalky & Co.: the Adversarial Curriculum." *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 36.4 (2002): 610-620.
- McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- McMaster, Juliet. "The Trinity Archetype in *The Jungle Books* and *The Wizard of Oz*." *Children's Literature* 20. Ed. Francelia Butler, Barbara Rosen, and Judith A. Plotz. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999. 90-110.
- Ormond, Leone. "Captains Courageous: Introduction." *The Kipling Society: Reader's Guide*, 27 October 2003. http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/rg_courageous_intro.htm. Dec. 12, 2016.
- Quigly, Isabel. *The Heirs of Tom Brown: The English School Story*. London: Faber and Faber, 2009.
- Randall, D. *Kipling's Imperial Boy: Adolescence and Cultural Hybridity*. New York: Palgrave, 2000.
- Roosevelt, Theodore. "The American Boy." *Foundations Magazine*, 1900. <http://www.foundationsmag.com/americanboy-com.html>. Dec. 12, 2016.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage, 1994.
- Scott, Carole. "Kipling's Combat Zones: Training Grounds in the Mowgli Stories, *Captains Courageous*, and *Stalky & Co.*" *Children's Literature* 20. Ed. Francelia Butler, Barbara Rosen, and Judith A. Plotz. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999. 52-68.
- Speake, Jennifer, ed. *Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Trilling, Lionel. "Kipling." *The Liberal Imagination*. New York: NYRB Classics, 2008. 118-128.
- Ulreich, John C. "Isaac as the Lamb of God: A Hermeneutic Crux in the Re-reading of Jewish Texts." *Sacred Tropes: Tanakh, New Testament and*

Qur'an as Literature and Culture. Ed. Roberta Sterman Sabbath. Boston: Brill, 2009. 421-434.

Watson, Nick J., Stuart Weir Christians, and Stephen Friend. "The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond." *Journal of Religion and Society* 7 (2005): 1-21.

ABSTRACT

Rudyard Kipling's young male characters, namely Stalky (*Stalky & Co.*) and Harvey Cheyne Junior (*Captains Courageous*), whom he portrays with noticeable admiration, exhibit, on the one hand, circumspection, stoicism, leadership, and *stalkiness*, on the other hand, the absence of scruples in manipulating those acting *in loco parentis* to achieve their desired ends. This article aims to examine how these characters can shed light on one another, allowing for a better comprehension of them both. Furthermore, it will explore how the religious archetype of the trinity permeates *Stalky & Co.*'s composition of characters, and how muscular Christianity shapes *Captains Courageous*. Stalky and Harvey thrive in a masculine world, access to which requires leaving women behind, substituting them with brotherhoods or identification with the father. The perfect man, Kipling postulates, is the resourceful and courageous rule-bending Christian who is able to keep women and natives in a state of obedience.

KEYWORDS

Rudyard Kipling; *Stalky & Co.*; *Captains Courageous*; gender; muscular Christianity

RESUMO

As jovens personagens masculinas de Rudyard Kipling, nomeadamente Stalky (*Stalky & Co.*) e Harvey Cheyne Junior (*Captains Courageous*) que retrata com admiração perceptível, exibem, por um lado, circunspeção, estoicismo, liderança e astúcia (*stalkiness*) e, por outro, a ausência de escrúpulos em manipular aqueles que atuam *in loco parentis* para alcançar seus fins pretendidos. Este artigo tem por objetivo analisar como essas personagens se iluminam mutuamente, permitindo uma melhor compreensão dos dois. Além disso, o artigo pretende explorar como o arquétipo religiosos da trindade permeia a composição das personagens de *Stalky & Co.*, e como o cristianismo muscular influencia *Captains Courageous*.

Stalky e Harvey prosperam num mundo masculino, ao qual só têm acesso se deixarem as mulheres para trás, substituindo-as por irmandades ou por identificação com o pai. O homem perfeito que Kipling postula é o cristão engenhoso e corajoso que contorna as regras, e é capaz de manter as mulheres e os nativos em estado de obediência.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Rudyard Kipling; *Stalky & Co.*; *Captains Courageous*; gênero; Cristianismo musculoso
