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Contributions to issue 7 are warmly invited and should be sent to either of the editors listed above. The text should be submitted in MS WORD files in MHRA format. All contributions are subject to review by members of the Editorial Board.

Editorial Board

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Editorial

Almost all the essays in this issue are versions of papers first pre-sented at the 2008 Bergamo conference 'RLS 2008: European Stevenson', though this is only a selection from many excellent contributions. Other papers from Bergamo, on more specifi-cally 'European' links, have been collected and edited by Richard Ambrosini and Richard Dury to be published by Cambridge Scholars later this year as *European Stevenson,* and we owe thanks to Richard Dury and his colleagues at Bergamo for a splendid and obviously fruitful conference. Reviewed elsewhere in this issue, the volume *Robert Louis Stevenson and Joseph Conrad: Writers of Transition* (Texas Tech University Press, 2009), was derived from the Edinburgh RLS conference in 2004, just as selected papers from the 2002 conference at Gargnano were collected in the volume *Robert Louis Stevenson: Writer of Boundaries* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2006). And of course the essays in Volume 4 of this Journal in 2007 were taken from the Saranac conference of 2006. The impact of these RLS biennial conferences speaks for itself, and we look forward to the 6th iteration, 'Locating Stevenson', which will return to Stirling for 2010. The quality and value of such study, and the increasing critical interest in Stevenson could not be better signalled than by these markers, not to mention recent monographs by Julia Reid, Oliver S. Buckton and Glenda Norquay, and the major project which is the *New Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Robert Louis Stevenson* with Stephen Arata, Richard Dury and Penny Fielding as general editors. With this link in mind Penny Fielding has agreed to join the editorial board of the *Journal of Stevenson Studies*.

We can also announce the launch of the new Robert Louis Stevenson Website. The original site www.unibg.it/rls was found-ed by Professor Dury in December 1996 and is now enhanced by a new site, www.robert-louis-stephenson.org, professionally

designed and easier to navigate, incorporating wholly new sections, as well as all the invaluable bibliographical and critical material from the old format. The new sections will include full-text downloads of past issues of the *Journal of Stevenson Studies*, with electronic versions being available online two years after their appearance in print. With this in mind, we continue to discuss the possibility of doing without a print edition and the editors would welcome emails on whether you feel the journal would serve the Stevenson community effectively if it were to become an entirely electronic publication.

The new RLS website site has been redeveloped under the initiative of Professor Linda Dryden of the Centre for Literature and Writing (CLAW) at Edinburgh Napier University. The project has the support of the Universities of Stirling and Edinburgh, of literary trusts such as the Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature and the Writers' Museum of Edinburgh, and has been made possible by a generous project grant from the Carnegie Trust. Dr Hilary Grimes is the research assistant for the project and Callum Egan is the web designer. Professor Richard Dury is fully collaborating on the changeover and Professor David Benyon is offering his expertise on matters of design and usability.

New features of the site include pages devoted to each of Stevenson's texts, including plot synopses, downloadable full texts with page-turner facilities, and information about their publication and reception. Also included are biographical pages on Stevenson, and information on family, friends, and major authors who influenced him. Other pages will outline information about locations to visit for those wishing to follow in Stevenson's footsteps and links to tourist information. Details of RLS museums and libraries with significant Stevenson collections, links to useful Stevenson sites, and lists of bibliographies with brief synopses of critical works will also be available. Furthermore, the site will provide bibliographies listing the film, television, radio, play and other adaptations of Stevenson's works. The site also

contains a wealth of visual images associated with Stevenson, including unique material from the photograph albums the Stevenson family kept in Samoa, many of which have never been seen by the general public before. A *Schools* section will contain information and resources for school students, with reading packs from the City of Literature and a recommended reading list for young scholars. An *RLS Community* section will offer information about Stevenson societies throughout the world, the RLS Newsletter, and a forum where enthusiasts can discuss and contribute to Stevenson scholarship.

The academic community's engagement with Stevenson's writing continues to flourish as evidenced in the fully critical focus of the articles that follow, written by scholars operating from New York, Milan, Minnesota, Bordeaux, Boston, Tahiti, Bari, Bochum, London and Rome. The international dimension speaks for itself.

<div align="right">Linda Dryden, Richard Dury and Roderick Watson</div>

Acknowledgements

Mapping Stevenson's rhetorics of play

Matthew Kaiser

In December 1873, Robert Louis Stevenson and Sidney Colvin travelled to Monte Carlo in search of fun, a temporary distraction from their assorted health problems. Their holiday came to an abrupt end, however, when a man shot himself in the head at the gaming table in front of Colvin, having staked all his money and lost. Shaken, Stevenson and Colvin departed Monaco ahead of schedule, the Casino's aleatory ethos flecked, in their eyes, with blood.[1] The incident haunted Stevenson for a decade. Eventually, it found creative outlet in his triptych 'The Suicide Club' in *New Arabian Nights* (1882), which depicts – in a manner both absurd and macabre – a group of suicidal men engaged in a ritualistic game of chance, the winner of which receives a coveted death sentence. For good reason, Stevenson's writings are entangled in the minds of many readers with the concept of play. As Robert Crawford has recently argued, the logic of play is central to Stevenson's aesthetic of adventure and his sense of self, the seeds of which were planted, Crawford suggests, when Stevenson 'play[ed] truant as a teenage student in the open streets of Edinburgh'.[2] Throughout his career, Stevenson extolled – in his poetry, essays, and his novels for boys – the imaginative and ethical power of child play. One pictures him hunched over his map of Treasure Island with his stepson and 'playmate' Lloyd Osbourne, windowpanes streaked with rain, streams and harbours trickling from his pen.[3] Stevenson cultivated an infectious air of idleness: a 'revolutionary' resistance, as Stephen Arata puts it, to middle-class industriousness.[4] In his early Bohemian writings especially, Stevenson surveys the world from a promontory of irony. From his canoe in Belgium, from his toy cabin above

Calistoga, beside his asinine companion, Modestine, in moun-
tainous France, Stevenson imposes upon a rugged topography a
mischievous grid. Whether he plays alpinist, adventurer, or emi-
grant, he is cosmopolitan *flâneur*: languorous consumer of an
amusing and charming world. As the grisly incident in Monaco
reminds us, however, for all his lightheartedness, Stevenson had
a sober respect for the dark contours of play, for its inharmoni-
ous and potentially tragic dimensions. He understood that play
is not intrinsically liberatory, utopian, or for that matter happy.
In truth, Stevenson detected in play something profoundly
unsettling. He saw deep fissures beneath its mirth. That night in
Monte Carlo, he saw death.

Because play is such a protean concept in Western culture, it
is particularly prone to mystification, vulnerable to ideology. It
is easy to overlook the contradictions that structure it. To his
credit, Stevenson never did. He repeatedly and insistently draws
his reader's attention to them. He lowers himself cautiously into
play's bottomless caverns. He notes its pitfalls, the jagged edges,
its shifting terrain. In the pages that follow, I intend to bring into
relief some of these contradictions, to explore the unsettled nature
of the concept of play in Stevenson's writings. For Stevenson,
play captures and communicates the bewildering experience of
modernity: the quintessentially Victorian sensation of a world in
play. A world in play is not the same thing, of course, as a world
at play, which is how the Victorians depicted that apocryphal age
known as Merry England, a time when the omnipresence of play
was still satisfying, its expression enchanting. A world in play
means two things. First, it means a world in flux: an inconstant
condition, perpetual variation and unrest. But it also means a
world that throws itself headlong *into* play, where it constructs a
parallel universe, which displaces that world. The membranes of
play stretch to the point where they encircle all of existence, leav-
ing nothing outside. Play becomes the condition of modern life.
The world is reduced to the size of a game. Stevenson explores

the world *inside* play, locates modernity in the interstices of play: its frictional spaces, its jumbled folds. Stevenson demystifies play from within play. Like Dickens, Wilde, and other Victorian writers, Stevenson made play central to his life's work not because he viewed it nostalgically or idealistically as a cure for modern ills, but because he intuited the extent to which the world as we know it, our experience of modernity, is always-already *in* play. His playfulness is pragmatic, adaptive. The 'lesson of the world', Stevenson declares in *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881), is 'that dolls are stuffed with sawdust, and yet are excellent playthings'.[5] One must make the most of a world stuffed with sawdust. Rather than blindly embrace play, Stevenson searches gingerly for a foothold, a place to call home, in a slippery and imperfect concept from which no exit appears.

What follows is a map – a necessarily provisional map – of Stevensonian play, with its moving parts, its labyrinthine turns. My cartographical effort is inspired by veteran play theorist Brian Sutton-Smith, who recently brought a bit of cohesion to the fractious field of play studies – which attracts anthropologists, literary critics, philosophers, folklorists, primatologists, and psychologists among others – by identifying seven rhetorics of play that currently operate, often at cross-purposes, within this interdisciplinary field.[6] All seven of Sutton-Smith's academic rhetorics of play have correspondent precursors, not only in Stevenson's own rhetorics of play, but more generally in the quotidian discourses that delineate and structure nineteenth-century Western experience: from the ethic of competition that pervades the middle-class worldview, through the perceived therapeutic potential of recreational activities, to the political efficacy of festivals and holidays in the promotion of national identity. The rhetorical dissonance that marks play studies today is a rarefied echo, in my view, of nineteenth-century popular debates about the meaning and value of play as a central component of human experience. When it comes to the subject of play, Stevenson is

one of the more rhetorically profligate Victorian writers, regu-
larly invoking all seven rhetorics, sometimes within the same
text. Rather than specific types of play, the rhetorics that follow
– some of which I've taken the liberty of renaming – should be
understood as constellations of cultural and ideological assump-
tions about the function and value of play.

Play as competition

To play means *to contest*. Life is a rule-bound game – 'this game
of life', as Stevenson terms it – in which contestants compete
meritocratically for rewards, prestige, and authority.[7] Rather
than cooperative or autotelic, the will to play constitutes an
impulse – a masculine one in Stevenson's eyes – to be the best,
to gain power over oneself, over others, over one's environment.
To the young man on the threshold of adulthood, the 'world
appears', Stevenson suggests, 'a brave gymnasium, full of sea-
bathing, and horse exercise, and bracing, manly virtues'.[8] Sports,
athleticism, duels, agonistic tensions between men produce order
and hence justice, simultaneously unleashing and sublimating
violence. Like many Victorians, Stevenson, whose childhood love
of pirate and war games is well documented, is both attracted
to and repelled by this particular logic of play.[9] If villains are
motivated by a desire to crush their opponents, so too are the
heroes who defeat them. Competition is the disease from which
modern life suffers; competition is the only possible cure. Hence,
Jekyll characterises his moral and intellectual struggle against
Hyde as 'gymnastics'.[10] Like Darwin, Stevenson envisions the
natural world – a beach, an island, a boulder-strewn mountain-
side – as an arena in which men play a deadly game of survival.
The ancient Greeks might have detected airy nymphs stirring in
the branches of trees, but Stevenson senses the spirit of com-
petition blustering behind every bend. Describing his laborious
ascent of Mount Saint Helena in *The Silverado Squatters* (1884),
Stevenson recalls 'the athletic opposition of the wind', a tree fall-

ing in apparent premeditation, 'blocking the road'.[11]

   Stevenson is ambivalent about the efficacy of rules. Comparing literature in his essay on style to sport, and style to the rules of the game, Stevenson heaps praise upon the great literary 'athletes' 'Carlyle, Ruskin, Browning, and Tennyson', true masters of the game.[12] A wrestler of words, a successful writer must exhibit a graceful 'neatness', avoid 'meaningless' or extraneous movements.[13] '[T]o fail in this', Stevenson warns, 'is to swindle in the game'. And yet Stevenson insists just as fervently that obsession with rules, a sportive worldview, constricts the life of the mind and dehumanises players, winners as well as losers. Just as that great 'athlete' Ruskin detected in competition the 'vice of jealousy', implored his Victorian audience to look to their souls, for 'fox-hunting and cricketing will not carry you through the whole of this unendurably long mortal life', so Stevenson recoils at times from the middle-class 'race for six-penny pieces'.[14] 'The whole game of business is beggar my neighbour', he concludes, 'and though perhaps that game looks uglier when played at such close quarters and on so small a scale, it is none the more intrinsically inhumane for that.'[15] In his account of his Atlantic voyage in *The Amateur Emigrant* (1895), Stevenson describes in vivid detail the many games played by his fellow passengers 'to beguile the time', to militate against restlessness and tedium, to govern themselves.[16] In addition to a 'chess-board', a 'pack of cards', and 'dominoes', '[w]e had a regular daily competition to guess the vessel's progress'. Beneath all order, however, lurks the threat of violence. Eventually, Stevenson's fellow passengers reduce competition to its brutal essence, invent a new game, which the author 'refrain[s] from joining': 'The humour of the thing was to box a person's ears until he found out who had cuffed him.'

Play as self-creation

Rather than a contest with otherness, play is a self-directed activity: the 'art', to quote Stevenson, 'of living', an act of self-

cultivation, the optimization of self. ('Idlers', *Virginibus*, p. 56.) His loneliest rhetoric of play, it smacks of bittersweetness. For even when people play together, surrounded by company, they play alone, inwardly. The 'sulky' narrator of 'The Pavilion on the Links' (1882) presents himself as a spokesperson of sorts for this *ethos* of play, having dedicated his life to 'gipsying', to 'keep[ing] aloof', 'suffic[ing] for [his] own entertainment'.[17] More than work or pain or religious devotion, play – in the form of leisure, hobbies, pastimes, idleness, recreational pursuits – opens a window onto interiority, launches a voyage into self. Stevenson invokes this rhetoric, alongside others, as an antidote to soul-crushing competition, to a life lived always with one 'eye on the medal', as he characterises commercial modernity in 'An Apology for Idlers'. (*Virginibus*, p. 57.) Idleness is the conscious avoidance of contestation, a playful refusal to play the game: hence, it is perceived as 'an insult and a disenchantment for those who do.' (*Virginibus*, p. 53.) Rather than 'money-grubbing', Stevenson insists, '[t]here should be nothing so much a man's business as his amusements'.[18] Whereas ambitious people exist in 'a sort of dead-alive' state, mere shadows of 'vitality', idle people, steeped in self-consciousness, sport a 'catholic appetite and a strong sense of personal identity.' ('Idlers', *Virginibus*, p. 57.) Indeed, in 'Crabbed Age and Youth' Stevenson claims that the true aim of youth is not supremacy over others but preparation for 'the leisure of age'. (*Virginibus*, p. 47.) There is a danger attached, however, to the modern hobby of selfhood, which is pursued at the expense at times of community. For all his leisurely self-cultivation, Stevenson understands that this particular vision of play has its ethical limitations, contains a creeping, alienating narcissism. As Jekyll's 'secret pleasures' remind us, mere emphasis separates recreation from re-creation (*Strange Case*, p. 55). Monstrosity lurks within the self-fashioning *ethos* of the leisure class.

Play as subversion

Rather than a will to compete, or an autotelic impulse, play con-
stitutes a desire, essentially, to make mischief, to unleash foolish-
ness, profanity, and disorder. Play here becomes power's Other,
a potentially frightening yet seductive urge to rebel. Personified
for Stevenson by tricksters, free spirits, cheats, drunks, bullies
and cads, by his carnivalesque anti-hero François Villon in
'A Lodging for the Night', play deflates high-mindedness and
undermines respectability. Facing the prospect of freezing to
death in the 'frosty streets' of medieval Paris, Villon cares less
about the 'bottomless pit' that awaits him than the lost opportu-
nity for 'disorderly amusement' that death represents.[19] Mischief
undermines the orderliness necessary for healthy competition. It
brings industry to a halt. Whereas the idle man refuses to play the
game, the mischievous man (or child) actively subverts the game.
Nervously eyeing the banks of the Sambre River, which 'turned
so industriously to and fro among his little hills', Stevenson,
in *An Inland Voyage* (1878), warns his canoeing companion,
Walter Simpson, 'that boys were the most dangerous creatures;
and if once you began with them, it was safe to end in a shower of
stones.'[20] Hyde, too, who devotes his life to extralegal pleasures,
to 'foul play', epitomises this vision of play as subversive (*Strange
Case,* p. 33). Utterson counters the slippery Hyde by invoking the
rhetoric of play as competition, an ethic of fair play, threatening
to subject the ugly man-child to a game of hide-and-seek: '"If he
be Mr. Hyde," he had thought, "I shall be Mr. Seek."' (*Strange
Case*, p. 15.) Here Stevenson conceives of the tension between
reality principle and pleasure principle as ludic, a clash between
divergent play impulses: a reactive submission to rules and an
unquenchable thirst to break them. Stevenson associates the lat-
ter sensation with Dionysian transformation, inebriation. Hence,
'like wine', the 'potion' that produces Hyde triggers in Jekyll an
'incredibly sweet' and 'heady recklessness'. (*Strange Case*, p.
50.) Naughty schoolboy meets oenological Hyde in California, in

Stevenson's mischievous homage in *The Silverado Squatters* to Napa Valley wine: 'I am interested in all wines, and have been all my life, from the raisin wine that a schoolfellow kept secreted in his play-box up to my last discovery, those notable Valtellines, that once shone upon the board of Caesar.'[21]

Play as paideia

At its core is the sentimental notion, a truism today, that play is intrinsically productive and normative, that children and young animals learn, adapt, and develop through their play. Victorian proponents of this rhetoric viewed child play as an expression of futurity: a preparatory drive to acquire physical and cognitive skills. Nineteenth-century play theorist Alexander Chamberlain, for instance, even suggests at one point that the invisible hand of the Protestant work ethic directs the playing child, who is 'preparing day by day to take part in the real work of life which the coming years will bring'.[22] In his essay 'Child's Play', Stevenson repeatedly invokes this functionalist theory of play, claiming that boys 'anticipate' the 'business man's pleasure in method' – and that girls 'rehearse' 'the love of mothers' – 'in their play hours.' (*Virginibus*, p. 111.) Child play is essentially world-producing: 'In the child's world of dim sensation, play is all in all.' (*Virginibus*, p. 112.) If every child is like Robinson Crusoe, building civilization from scratch, inhabiting his own ludic island, then Crusoe is 'popular with youth' precisely because he is childlike: 'Crusoe was always at makeshifts, and had, in so many words, to *play* at a great variety of professions; and then the book is all about tools, and there is nothing that delights a child so much.' (*Virginibus*, p. 110.) Here the will to play is synonymous with the instinct to survive, the march toward modernity. In *The Amateur Emigrant*, Stevenson marvels at the newness of the United States, at the enormity of the challenge the young nation faces in preparing itself for the future. He invokes the rhetoric of play as paideia: 'it seems incredible', he muses, 'that life can go on with so few

properties, or the great child, man, find entertainment in so bare a play-room.'[23]

What makes this rhetoric so ideologically potent is that it masks its own normalizing violence. Naturalizing socialization, it presents the impetus to conform as its opposite: a spontaneous, autonomous, happy impulse within the child. Proponents of this rhetoric – including Friedrich Froebel, the inventor of Kindergarten – often metaphorise child play as a fruitful yet well-pruned garden: a central trope, of course, in Stevenson's children's poetry.[24] Consider, for instance, the opening stanza of Stevenson's 'The Unseen Playmate' (1885):

> When children are playing alone on the green,
> In comes the playmate that never was seen.
> When children are happy and lonely and good,
> The Friend of the Children comes out of the wood.[25]

It is a peculiar image. Solitude serves as 'playmate'; loneliness is 'friend'. If productive and 'good,' the solitary child soon discovers that he or she has the capacity to create a small society, which emerges simultaneously from the child's interiority and from the organic world around the child, from 'the green' and 'the wood.' Stevenson naturalises the socializing power of autonomous child play. The preparatory aspect of child play, its future trajectory, is even more apparent in his poem 'Looking Forward' (1885), in which the brutality of capitalist competition is both anticipated and diluted by the innocuous logic of play:

> When I am grown to man's estate
> I shall be very proud and great.
> And tell the other girls and boys
> Not to meddle with my toys.[26]

Play as imaginary
The rhetoric most cherished by those of us who work in literary studies, it fuels the liberatory claims – the assertions of theoreti-

cal or epistemological subversion – that we sometimes make on behalf of the concept of play. Stevenson invokes this Romantic rhetoric when he credits play with being the spur of thought, its fluctuating essence: that quality of literary language that makes it enchanting. Somewhat paradoxically, play becomes an assertion of creative agency, on the one hand, and an intuitive surrender, on the other, to the inexorable motion of the imagination. Stevenson locates the source of his literary impulse in his boyhood ability 'to make a plaything of imaginary series of events'; play is an act of imaginative submission, 'laying [one's] head in the grass, staring into the infinitesimal forest and seeing it grow populous with fairy armies.'[27] Literature draws us inexorably into a ludic world: microcosmic yet endless. It sweeps us into our minds. From his canoe on the Oise, Stevenson 'love[s]' 'to kiss [his] hand or wave [his] handkerchief to people [he] shall never see again, to play with possibility', linking himself imaginatively, like an author, to strangers, whose futures unfold in his mind.[28]

Ubiquitous in Stevenson's writings, the logic of ludic enchantment clashes with and tempers his other play rhetorics, in particular the logics of competition, subversion, and paideia. We've already observed how Stevenson invokes the rhetoric of play as subversion to describe California wine as a 'playful' 'American cocktail.'[29] He invokes the rhetoric of play as imaginary, however, to describe the craftsmanship of wine-makers: 'the wine', he insists, 'is bottled poetry'.[30] Wine tickles the imagination, then, as much as it threatens to roil polite society. Occasionally, Stevenson's attempts to suture together divergent rhetorics prove less graceful. Struggling to reconcile contradictory play logics, Stevenson characterises child play not only as an industrious expression of futurity, as we've seen, but as an imaginative escape from the adult world: an atavistic and 'morally rebellious' flight into 'a mythological epoch', into a parallel universe or charming 'cloudland'.[31] Thus, children step backward and forward at the same time, reaching for and simultaneously recoiling

from their futures. The playing child stands, Stevenson knows, on shifting sands.

Play as identity

Here the idea is that people play in order to connect with other people and experience a primal, intersubjective sense of belonging. '[W]hat religion knits people so closely', Stevenson muses in *An Inland Voyage*, 'as a common sport?'[32] This rhetoric underlies the socially cohesive logic of holiday, feast, public spectacle, and all forms of customary revelry. Though shrill at times in the nineteenth century, this decidedly antimodern rhetoric is usually accompanied by a twinge of nostalgia. When Alan Breck, for instance, loses his money in a card game to fellow Highlander, Cluny, in *Kidnapped* (1886), the victorious Cluny returns the money good-naturedly, insisting that 'it was all daffing', that the game was 'all nonsense', invoking the communitarian ethic of Merry Scotland.[33] Here the rhetoric of play as identity overrides middle-class competition, producing a politically potent but nonetheless ludic Scottish bond. Stevenson presents identificatory play as a moral and psychological corrective to the antisocial and potentially stultifying experience of modern selfhood. In *The Amateur Emigrant*, for instance, he describes the complex psychology of ship society: 'The children, I observed, were all in a band, and as thick as thieves at a fair, while their elders were still ceremoniously manoeuvring on the outskirts of acquaintance.'[34] The children's ludic sociality smacks of primitivism: 'The sea, the ship, and the seamen were soon as familiar as home to these half-conscious little ones.' Children see the world through the lens of holiday. As a result, they have relatively porous subjectivities. Travel has a tendency to trigger this intersubjective, indeed, generous sensation in Stevenson himself, rekindling the ludic expansiveness of his childhood. Hence, Calistoga has 'an atmosphere of holiday.'[35] Nothing spells 'the death of all holiday feeling', however, as 'the receipt of letters' 'on a journey', the

'tug' of professional responsibility, which makes one 'feel' like 'a
tethered bird.'[36]

Toward the end of his life, in its final South Pacific chapter,
Stevenson is drawn quite powerfully to this rhetoric, envision-
ing narrative art not so much as an expression of an individual
imagination but as a ludic spur of communitarian consciousness.
Watching the 'holiday' festivities on the Gilbert Islands in 1889,
where the locals gather 'like children' 'about a circus', Stevenson
is 'moved' at one point by the 'elaborate' intertwining motions
of Polynesian dancers, who tell ancient stories with their ges-
tures, transporting the spectator out of himself, 'lead[ing] on the
mind'.[37] The customary dance – which 'thrills' and 'subjugates' –
'has the essence of all art, an unexplored imminent significance.'
Stevenson, however, knows that he can never achieve Polynesian
identity. Like an anthropologist or tourist, he *plays* at being
Polynesian.

Play as fate

Rather than something we *do*, play is something that happens
to us. We are the playthings of the cosmos, the pawns of God,
of fortune, of ineffable forces beyond our powers of comprehen-
sion. Play humbles us. An exhilarating or horrifying sensation, it
reminds us of just how flimsy our knowledge and authority are in
the grand scheme of things. In 'Æs Triplex', Stevenson tells us a
chilling story about how 'the deified Caligula' 'encouraged a vast
concourse of holiday-makers on to his bridge over Baiæ bay; and
when they were in the height of their enjoyment, turned loose
the Prætorian guards', and had the revellers 'tossed into the sea'
for his own amusement. (*Virginibus*, p. 77.) Divine caprice, the
play of fate, proves more powerful in the end than the strong-
est bonds of revelry, intersubjective play. God laughs and 'man
and his merrymaking' 'tumble' 'in the dust.' (*Virginibus*, p. 76.)
The forces of cosmic caprice intoxicate Stevenson and make
him slightly queasy, attracting and repelling him. We see his

uneasiness in his depictions of gambling: in the deadly game of chance, for instance, at the centre of 'The Suicide Club'. With all the attractions of the 'Roman amphitheatre', the suicide game unmans even powerful Prince Florizel, who surrenders himself and hence his 'brave and loyal country' to the vicissitudes of chance, experiencing 'a certain joy' even 'in his alarms', as he 'gamble[s] away his future'.[38] Having chosen the fatal card, the ace of spades, which condemns him to death, a defiant Florizel struggles agonistically against fate, attempts to override one play logic with another by challenging the club's president to a duel, a contest of honour. Like a mountain climber or a skydiver, the Stevensonian adventurer teeters on the vertiginous cusp of chance, 'reckons his life as a thing to be dashingly used and cheerfully hazarded,' attempts through acts of daring to outplay death.[39] Eluding death – etymologically speaking, *outplaying* it – is possible, Stevenson insists, only when one stares unwaveringly into the ludic depths of the cosmos. In 'Forest Notes' (1876), for instance, Stevenson relates the story of an 'old stag' 'captured' in 'the woods of France' by a young Charles the Sixth.[40] On its hoary neck, the prince discovered a bronze collar engraved with the markings of a bygone Caesar. He 'stood aghast'. If the 'solemn wood could thus safeguard a tall stag' for centuries, Stevenson ponders, 'might not you also play hide-and-seek, in these groves, with all the pangs and trepidations of man's life, and elude Death, the mighty hunter, for more than the span of human years?'

We see the rhetoric of play as fate manifested on a more academic level in the nineteenth century in the flurry of interest in Heraclitus among classicists and philologists, who embraced the pre-Socratic notion of ludic flux that makes of time – to quote Heraclitus – 'a game' of creation and destruction 'played beautifully | by children.'[41] Stevenson, too, on occasion, associates child play with the ability of the cosmos to sweep us away. In *An Inland Voyage*, he watches children who live with their families

on canal boats play together in their 'impromptu hamlet', their rustic flotilla, just hours before the 'four winds' scatter the boats – and hence the playfellows – 'into all parts of France'.[42] Here child play reminds us of the fleetingness of life. In the end, we are objects of play, not agents. Tossed to and fro on the 'moving desert of seas', Stevenson invokes in *The Amateur Emigrant* the rhetoric of play as fate, meditating upon this 'unfathomable ocean', 'this waste': 'a playground for the stormy petrel', at home on the 'seas of space'.[43] Likewise, nature makes a toy of man. An unseen hand puts our lives in play, sends us tumbling into the abyss. Awakening one morning to the sublime monotony of Nebraska's endless plains outside the window of his rattling train, Stevenson is overwhelmed by 'this infinity': 'an empty sky, an empty earth; front and back, the line of railway stretched from horizon to horizon, like a cue across a billiard-board; on either hand, the green plain ran till it touched the skirts of heaven.'[44] In his bones, Stevenson knows that humankind – for all its self-congratulation – is behind the eight ball, as his American friends might say. And so, in a casino in Monte Carlo, a man shoots himself.

Stevenson discovers an entire world *in* play, tangled in its contradictory logics. That world is *the* world, the experience of modern life. Nothing – not suffering or work, not death itself – is intrinsically external to the phenomenon of play: a concept Stevenson describes in startlingly totalizing terms. Seven rhetorics of play: seven floor-to-ceiling mirrors – some cracked, some cloudy, some framed in gold – in a heptagonal room of intricate design. At the centre of this playspace, claustrophobic yet infinite, modernity stands transfixed, its glimpses catching glimpses of glimpses. If you prefer a number other than seven, add another wall, or three, or twenty. The structure is modular; the effect is the same. What is important to understand is that play triggers in Stevenson existential anxiety: endless unsettling reflections upon the condition of modern life. Thus, when Utterson and

Poole invade Jekyll's private 'cabinet', the emblem of modern subjectivity upon which they stumble is a 'cheval glass, into whose depths they looked with an involuntary horror'.[45] They see in the mirror 'the rosy glow playing on the roof, the fire sparkling in a hundred repetitions', 'their own pale and fearful countenances'. We must map these labyrinthine reflections.

The tension lies not between play and *unplay*, but *within* play, in the clash of its disparate logics. Play pulls children, for instance, in divergent directions: toward the productive futures for which they mimetically prepare and toward a primordial state of imaginative escape. In 'The Suicide Club', modern man, too, finds himself torn ludically between sheer luck, on the one hand, and his own sportive limberness, on the other, between a suicidal game of chance and a life-affirming contest of honour. What is adventure, in the end, but the intensification of the friction between chance and competition: the irrepressible urge to outplay the cosmos? Stevenson also situates art and literature on a ludic fault line: between the rule-boundness of form and the mischievous undecidability of language. A peripheral figure, such as Villon or the itinerant musicians in 'Providence and the Guitar', the Stevensonian artist feels simultaneously the lure of convention and the lure of the open road. Stevenson skilfully navigates among play rhetorics. At times, we catch him building bridges, acting as peacemaker, or referee. At times, he pits play against play. Or he rescues play from play in the name of play. Or he lauds a particular logic of play in one text that he excoriates in another. His views on play are themselves in play. In truth, we have just begun to explore this world of his. I present this crude and provisional map in the spirit of exploration.

NOTES

For a more detailed and expansive account of Brian Sutton-Smith's rhetorical approach to the study of play and how it applies to the broad context of Victorian studies, see my essay in the recent special issue of *New Literary History* devoted to play, edited by Herbert Tucker: "The World in Play: A Portrait of a Victorian Concept," in *NLH* 40 (Winter 2009): 105-129. My reading of Stevenson draws upon the paradigm articulated in that essay.

1   Stevenson describes the incident briefly in a letter to his cousin Robert dated 4 January 1874. See *Selected Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Ernest Mehew (New Haven: Yale Nota Bene, 1997), p. 70.

2   Robert Crawford, *Scotland's Books* (London: Penguin, 2007), p. 492.

3   Crawford, p. 496.

4   Stephen Arata, 'Stevenson, Morris, and the Value of Idleness,' in *Robert Louis Stevenson: Writer of Boundaries*, ed. by Richard Ambrosini and Richard Dury (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), p. 6.

5   Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Virginibus Puerisque II', in *Virginibus Puerisque and Other Papers* (New York: Elibron, 2006), p. 23.

6   See Brian Sutton-Smith, *The Ambiguity of Play* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

7   'Virginibus Puerisque II', in *Virginibus Puerisque*, p. 18, henceforth cited in the text.

8   'Dedication', in *Virginibus Puerisque*, p. 5.

9   Crawford, p. 496.

10   Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, ed. by Katherine Linehan (New York: Norton, 2003), p. 60, henceforth cited in the text.

11   Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Silverado Squatters* (Northridge, CA: Aegypan Press, 2005), pp. 36-37.

12   Robert Louis Stevenson, 'The Morality of the Profession of Letters', in *The Art of Writing* (McLean, VA: IndyPublish, 2001), p. 39.

13   'On Some Technical Elements of Style in Literature', in *The Art of*

Writing, pp. 7-8.

14 John Ruskin, 'Traffic,' in *Unto This Last and Other Writings*, ed. by Clive Wilmer (London: Penguin, 1985), p. 237; Stevenson, 'An Apology for Idlers', in *Virginibus Puerisque*, p. 53.

15 *The Silverado Squatters*, p. 48.

16 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes and The Amateur Emigrant*, ed. by Christopher MacLachlan (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 122.

17 *The Complete Stories of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Barry Menikoff (New York: The Modern Library, 2002), p. 137.

18 Robert Louis Stevenson, *An Inland Voyage* (Northridge, CA: Aegypan Press, 2005), p. 19.

19 *The Complete Stories*, p. 194.

20 *An Inland Voyage*, p. 27.

21 *The Silverado Squatters*, p. 19.

22 Alexander Francis Chamberlain, *The Child: A Study in the Evolution of Man* (London: Walter Scott, 1900), p. 25.

23 *The Amateur Emigrant*, p. 210.

24 See Friedrich Froebel, *The Education of Man*, trans. by W. N. Hailmann (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2005).

25 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Selected Poems*, ed. by Angus Calder (London: Penguin, 1998), p. 87.

26 *Selected Poems*, p. 69.

27 'My First Book', *The Art of Writing*, pp. 79, 83.

28 *An Inland Voyage*, p. 90.

29 *The Silverado Squatters*, p. 46.

30 *The Silverado Squatters*, p. 20.

31 'Child's Play', *Virginibus Puerisque*, pp. 114-15.

32 *An Inland Voyage*, p. 17.

33 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Kidnapped* (Toronto: Bantam, 1982), p. 164.

34 *The Amateur Emigrant*, p. 109.

35 *The Silverado Squatters*, p. 35.

36 *An Inland Voyage*, p. 83.

37 Robert Louis Stevenson, *In the South Seas*, ed. by Neil Rennie

(London: Penguin, 1998), pp. 189-91.

38 *The Complete Stories*, pp. 20, 25.

39 'Æs Triplex', *Virginibus Puerisque*, p. 80.

40 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Forest Notes', in *Further Memories* Tusitala Edition (London: Heinemann, 1924), XXX, p. 139-40.

41 Heraclitus, *Fragments*, trans. by Brooks Haxton (New York: Penguin, 2001), p. 51.

42 *An Inland Voyage*, p. 45.

43 *The Amateur Emigrant*, p. 114.

44 *The Amateur Emigrant*, p. 207.

45 *Strange Case*, p. 40.

To jump or not to jump: Stevenson's kidnapping of adventure

Nathalie Jaëck

> 'Here,' he would say, 'here's a dub for ye to jump, my Whiggie! I ken you're a fine jumper!'
>
> — Robert Louis Stevenson, *Kidnapped*, ch. 24

Kidnapped, published in the same year as *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, explores the same fundamental inner duality as Stevenson's mythical story: Alan Breck versus David Balfour, or the Highlands versus the Lowlands, Jacobites versus Whig Hanoverians, the dying feudal clan structure versus the modern industrialised kingdom – the two conflicting and intertwined impulses of Scotland's identity, in a time of historical mutation.[1] Yet David and Alan unexpectedly but compellingly present the reader with quite another type of duality: while romantic and courageous Alan is a dashing, indeed a heroic jumper, David, the unassuming first-person narrator, consistently cuts a rather poor figure when it comes to actual jumping, to the point that in times of quarrels, his clumsy jumps become an explicit and ironic bone of contention between the two friends.

Jumps can be marked as classical *topoi* of adventure stories, they constitute incidental moments of intensity, decisive moves and crucial episodes, they typically signal the beginning of adventure, accelerate the rhythm and concentrate the action, as much as they conjure up the necessary jubilatory ingredients of danger, imminence and disruption – pirates boarding ships, prisoners escaping, young girls eloping. Stevenson's adventure novels do not disprove the rule, and stage quite a number of

spectacular jumps and leaps, so much so that the recurrence of
the motif might help build an index of closeness to the adventure
genre: fourteen occurrences of 'leap' in *Kidnapped*, eighteen
occurrences in *The Dynamiter*, no fewer than thirty-one occur-
rences in *Catriona* – to be read against Jim Hawkins's staunch
and symptomatic refusal to jump in *Treasure Island*, despite the
doctor's eager solicitations:

> 'Jim,' the doctor interrupted, and his voice was quite
> changed, 'Jim, I can't have this. Whip over, and we'll run
> for it.'
>
> 'Doctor,' said I, 'I passed my word.'
>
> 'I know, I know,' he cried. 'We can't help that, Jim, now.
> I'll take it on my shoulders, holus bolus, blame and shame,
> my boy; but stay here, I cannot let you. Jump! One jump,
> and you're out, and we'll run for it like antelopes.'
>
> 'No,' I replied; 'you know right well you wouldn't do the
> thing yourself – neither you nor squire nor captain; and
> no more will I' (ch. 30)

In *Kidnapped*, Stevenson explicitly highlights, questions and
transposes the usually taken-for-granted motif of the jump, and
such mutation in the treatment of the jump exemplifies the muta-
tion of the adventure novel at the turn of the century: Stevenson
delineates the jump as a crucial and paradoxical theoretical
space, as a formal tool to illustrate the modernity of the adven-
ture novel, as a necessary break of continuity, as an opportunity
to stray from Zola's linear compactness and question French
naturalism, and as a dynamic incentive to stimulate the mutation
of the adventure novel that Stevenson argued for– thus seduc-
ing the French critics of the *NRF* into taking the audacious and

unexpected leap for adventure, to desert naturalism and elect British adventure writers in general and Stevenson in particular as desirable lines of literary escape.

There are indeed two very distinct types of jump in *Kidnapped*. On the one hand Alan, as a character, dutifully takes the conventional spectacular leaps in order to gratify the aficionados of Adventure, and thus takes the novel along the incidental and disruptive course that Stevenson favoured. On the other hand, I will argue that David's fragmented little bounces and unassuming half-jumps are not so deficient after all, and read as subversive attempts to displace, to deconstruct the genre: they trigger an essential literary mutation as it was best expressed by Jacques Rivière, followed by the whole of the NRF: 'L'aventure, c'est la forme de l'œuvre plutôt que sa matière'.[2] As he hesitates right in the middle of his jumps, he forces the reader to pause and focus on the formal use of the jump, to consider it not only as a necessary ingredient of Adventure, as contractual content, but as a dynamic form the structural characteristics of which can be imported in the form of the novel itself. It is above all as a narrator that David marks the jump as a crucial, problematic space: importing the jump as a form, as a break of continuity, he follows Jim's example and comes up with a narration that favours gaps, imminence, fragmentation, perpetual advent. Stuck in the middle of the river, 'upon the middle rock' – 'So there we stood, side by side upon a small rock slippery with spray, a far broader leap in front of us'[3] – adequately defining himself as 'betwixt and between' (p. 60), David does not refer to his political preference only, and does not only situate himself in the line of Scott's Waverleyian heroes: it is as one of Stevenson's first-person narrators that he elects the Middle as a favourite dynamic space of literary innovation,[4] certainly in between Whigs and Jacobites, but above all in between naturalism and modernism, in a neutral intensive opening, right in the middle of a jump from one literary system to another. David's physical misgivings thus contrast

with his being a very bold narrative jumper: he forces the readers to mind the gap, to explore it as an open space, as a tool for literary mutation.

To jump or not to jump: Alan versus David.

Alan is unquestionably characterised by his striking heroic jumps in *Kidnapped* – no fewer than three decisive and highly dangerous leaps, that in turn condition the course of the story. Unanticipated, totally heterogeneous, he enters in the middle of nowhere, and literally boards the story with a dashing jump. His thoroughly unexpected irruption on the *Covenant* jumpstarts a new track of adventure for David: his particularly intense jumping feat accelerates the story, he intervenes as a radical, as an emphatic incident,[5] as the essentially adventurous advent of the unexpected, illustrating Rivière's definition of adventure: 'L'aventure c'est ce qui advient, c'est-à-dire ce qui s'ajoute, ce qui arrive par-dessus le marché, ce qu'on n'attendait pas. Un roman d'aventure c'est le récit d'événements qui ne sont pas contenus les uns dans les autres'.[6] Whereas the collision proves deadly for the rest of the crew, Alan alone survives, thanks to a particularly intense jumping feat, and changes David's fate:

> At the moment of the blow, the stern had been thrown into the air, and the man (having his hands free, and for all he was encumbered with a frieze overcoat that came below his knees) had leaped up and caught hold of the brig's bowsprit. (p. 56)

During their flight in the heather, Alan once more pumps adrenaline in the story and defies death through a particularly hazardous double jump:

> Alan looked neither to the right nor to the left, but *jumped clean upon* the middle rock and fell there on his hands

and knees to check himself, for that rock was small and he might have pitched over on the far side. [. . .] Then, putting his hands to his mouth and his mouth to my ear, he shouted 'Hang or drown!' and turning his back upon me, *leaped over* the farther branch of the stream, and landed safe. (p. 137; italics added)

Finally, as the soldiers are close on their heels and threaten to catch up with them, Alan once more saves the day and jumps up a rock to provide them both with a safe shelter:

It was only at the third trial, and then by standing on my shoulders and leaping up with such force as I thought must have broken my collar-bone, that he secured a lodgement. (p. 138)

Alan thus intervenes in the story as a pure, autonomous event, as an improbable, random disruption, as 'a talisman against the naturalist credo'.[7] He embodies Stevenson's desire to break the causal linearity of naturalist narration: as a 'brute incident', he jumps lines of escape by diverting the smooth, planned course of the story, he himself generates a narrative jump, an unbridgeable gap, an interruption of continuity. In an article on Zola, James expressed the same desire as Stevenson to make narration less determined, less necessary and continuous than the naturalists had striven to build it: '*Vérité* marks the rigid straightness of his course from point to point. He had seen his horizon and his fixed goal from the first, and no cross-scent, no new distance, no blue gap in the hill to right or to left ever tempted him to stray' (James, p. 405). Alan intervenes in the narration precisely as a perpetual cross-scent, as a series of 'gaps in the hill', impeding the course of the narration, placing the story in an unstable state of constant happening, replacing causality by chance, and construction by circumstance. He brilliantly materialises the reason why the

French literary critics, converted by Marcel Schwob's introduc-
tion of Stevenson in France,[8] opted for adventure: 'owing to
realism and human logic, the French writers have exiled the
unexpected from the novel, and yet most of life is unexpected
[. . .]. Defoë, Fielding, Dickens, Stevenson had a passion for
adventure: they bathed their characters in it, as in a vividly col-
oured reagent'.[9] Alan definitely is one of those incidental charac-
ters that helped unsettle and derail the naturalist machinery: his
jumps efficiently break up and dissolve narrative linearity, and
explicitly mark out Stevenson's groundbreaking and dissident
choice of a discontinuous, random progression of the text.

   David is another, more complicated story: he visibly does not
quite measure up to Alan in terms of actual jumping, as the latter
is rather too prompt to underline, thus explicitly calling atten-
tion to the jump as a noteworthy space of discussion: '"Ye're not
very gleg at the jumping," said he' (p. 138), or even as a bone
of contention: '"Here," he would say, "here's a dub for ye to
jump, my Whiggie! I ken you're a fine jumper!"'(p. 172). Indeed,
whereas Alan steadily leaps *up*, jumps clean *upon*, leaps *over*,
David's jumps all seem to dysfunction, and to fall short of the
required level of excitement in adventure novels. As contrasted
with Alan's active bound onto the ship, David's jump out of the
wrecked *Covenant* amounts rather to a passive fall: 'at the sud-
den tilting of the ship I was cast clean over the bulwarks into the
sea' (p. 89), and a passive verb is once more resorted to when
David finally lands on the island: 'I was cast upon a little, bar-
ren isle, and cut off on every side by the salt sea' (p. 92). Later,
when it is time to leave the islet, the rescue is everything but
spectacular, the escape far from adventurous: when the laugh-
ing fishermen eventually manage to make him understand that
Earraid is not much of an island after all, and that the low tide
allows him to wade across 'a little trickle of water' (p. 89), David
pathetically hops back to his starting point, and his diminutive
backward bounces heavily contrast with Alan's ample forward

bounds: 'At that I turned tail upon their boat (where my adviser had once more begun to tee-hee with laughter) leaped back the way I had come, from one stone to another' (p. 98). Finally, the crucial episode of the river jump leaves David stranded on a rock, in the middle of the river, in a suspended half-jump. The first half of the jump is a kind of mechanical, reflex bound on the part of David, who instinctively follows Alan's impetus: 'I had scarce time to measure the distance or to understand the peril, before I had followed him, and he had caught and stopped me' (p.137). Nevertheless, whereas Alan, after a drink of brandy, leaps to the shore, daringly defying death, and thus scoring 'adventure marks', David cannot bring himself to complete the jump:

> When I saw where I was, there came on me a deadly sick-
> ness of fear, and I put my hand over my eyes. Alan took
> me and shook me; I saw he was speaking, but the roaring
> of the falls and the trouble of my mind prevented me from
> hearing; only I saw his face was red with anger, and that
> he stamped upon the rock. The same look showed me
> the water raging by, and the mist hanging in the air; and
> with that, I covered my eyes again and shuddered. [. . .]
> I was now alone upon the rock, which gave me the more
> room; the brandy was singing in my ears; I had this good
> example fresh before me, and just wit enough to see that
> if I did not leap at once, I should never leap at all. I bent
> low on my knees and flung myself forth, with that kind of
> anger of despair that has sometimes stood me instead of
> courage. Sure enough, it was but my hands that reached
> the full length; these slipped, caught again, slipped again;
> and I was sliddering back into the lynn, when Alan seized
> me, first by the hair, then by the collar, and with a great
> strain dragged me into safety. (p.137)

In a way that anticipates on Lord Jim's famous 'non-jump' in

Conrad's novel,[10] David's jump is a kind of missed jump, that is inscribed in the text mainly on the negative mode – 'if I did not leap at once, I should never leap at all' – and that is further undermined and dissolved by the self-disparaging synonym: 'I flung myself forth', a kind of reluctant, careless, half-conscious jump, that is only a success owing to Alan's intervention.

If the jump is such a mark of Stevenson's modernity, how come then that David, the first-person narrator, should be such a reluctant jumper, should grudge the reader his adventurous due, and consistently spoil these purple patches of adventure? It seems that David's attitude to jumps can be interpreted as the symptom of Stevenson's desire to inscribe the mutation of the adventure novel, by situating adventure not so much in the con-tents as in the form of the novel, by emptying the novel of actual adventurous events, and inventing a form that would internalise adventure. James had noted Stevenson's 'love of brave words as well as brave deeds', and indeed, David's reluctance to jump is to be read against his narrative ability to introduce in his account the formal jumps and gaps that he fails to deliver physically. David's case perfectly illustrates Ricardou's crucial inversion, and the very reason why Stevenson became a favourite among French literary critics: 'The narration is no longer the writing of an adventure, but the adventure of writing'.[11] David may not be very nimble at physical jumping, but he can be seen as Alan's literary version, as Alan's formal double – his problematisation of the space of the jump proving to be a literary asset, a way for Stevenson to formalise the jump, to import its specificities in the form of the narration itself.

A mutation of the adventure novel: David as Alan's formal alter ego.

Indeed, the dissolution of the motif of the jump triggers a further degradation, and David's failed, passive jump from the wrecked *Covenant* seems to bring about a more serious literary wreckage,

that of the 'old' conventional adventure novel. Stevenson seems to engage in an active, 'gleeful participation in subverting his own text',[12] as he gradually empties his novel of all the contractual ingredients of adventure. Despite David's insistent anchoring his text within the genre of the adventure novel – from the subtitle, 'Memoirs of the Adventures of David Balfour in the year 1751' onwards: 'I had left my adventure then and there' (p. 13), 'I began the most unhappy part of my adventures' (p. 91), 'tunes of my own south country that made me fain to be home from my adventures' (p. 144), 'as he thus moralised on my adventures' (p. 200) – and despite the fact that before the wreckage, the story is crammed full of classical *topoi* – an orphan boy taking the road, a villain in a mysterious derelict old mansion, an attempted murder, a kidnapping, blows on the head and further murders, an eventful boat journey in the claws of a mercenary crew – the wreckage and the pathetic jump mark the beginning of the end, the gradual falling apart of typical adventure: the deserted island that typically ranks high both in the hit list of adventure novels' favourites in general and of course in Stevenson's private system as well, proves to be a mock-island, that only highlights the ineligibility of David as a suitable hero. From then on, *Kidnapped* seems to conscientiously erase or downplay virtually all outstanding events: until the end, the novel will quite exclusively consist of a flight, only interrupted by a game of cards, a pipe contest, a pathetic quarrel and an aborted fight, that cannot exactly be seen as ideal adventurous events.

Action gives way to the account of the broken, random course of the two friends across the country, and the chapter titles, symptomatically repeating one another, quite contrary to the usual character of Adventure Novel chapter titles, inscribe the suspension of the action and the dissolution of events:

Chapter XX. The Flight in the Heather: The Rocks.

The title of Chapter XVIII, which reinterprets the action in exclusively literary terms, and evacuates contents in favour of form and language – 'I Talk with Alan in the Wood of Lettermore' – explicitly defines the exact nature of the second half of the novel. From the shipwreck onwards, *Kidnapped* is indeed the story of a wandering course as well as the story of a discourse, the metatextual story of Alan's and David's 'drifting[s]' (p. 219), or rollings (p. 200), or 'wandering[s]' (ibid.), and Stevenson's writing approaches Gilles Deleuze's definition: 'Ecrire n'est pas raconter ses souvenirs',[13] and 'Ecrire n'a rien à voir avec signifier, mais avec arpenter, carthographier, même des contrées à venir'.[14] As the ambivalent, nearly antiphrastic subtitle, 'Memoirs of the Adventures', suggests, *Kidnapped* could be seen as a kind of literary mutation in progress, from Memoirs to Adventure, that is to say from a retrospective, omniscient, distanced, continuous narration to prospective, broken, wandering writing, only able to follow the drifting course of the action itself. David's failure to jump is favourably compensated for by his ability to achieve a great literary jump, by his exploration of the gap as a crucial tool for literary mutation. Stevenson had indeed warned the readers from chapter I: just like Pip in *Great Expectations*, who sees language as a set of forms to be interpreted, as a game of cubes to be manipulated, David embarks on his adventure with forms as his only luggage, offered by Mr Campbell: 'The first, which is round, will likely please you best at the first off-go. [. . .] The

second, which is flat and square and written upon, will stand by you through life. [. . .] And as for the last, which is cubical, that'll see you, it my prayerful wish, into a better land.' (p. 10) This powerfully echoes Stevenson's claim, in 'A Humble Remonstrance', that 'A proposition of geometry does not compete with life; and a proposition of geometry is a fair and luminous parallel to a work of art'.[15] David's aim in *Kidnapped*, just like Jim's aim in *Treasure Island*, is thus *not* to jump, to push contents aside, and thus to embark the adventure novel on the journey to *formal* innovation.

David's formal gaps: Stevenson's creation of narrative discontinuity.

There remains to specify the stylistic ways in which David imports the gap into the form of the narration itself. In the very words of the trustworthy Mr Rankeillor, the whole of the account itself can indeed be considered as a kind of superlative gap, as an altogether missing space, that David needs to fill: '"The brig was lost on June the 27th," says he, looking in his book, "and we are now at August the 24th. Here is a considerable hiatus, Mr Balfour, of near upon 2 months"' (p. 197). The word 'hiatus' is bound to ring an intertextual bell: 'the great hiatus' is how specialists in the Sherlock Holmes stories named the gap between Holmes' suspended false jump down the Reichenbach Falls in 'The Final Problem', and his spectacular return in 'The Adventure of the Empty House', ten years later – another successful exploitation of the literary assets of the gap. In his own account for 'the hiatus', David clearly embeds the process, and comes up with a distinctly discontinuous, dashingly adventurous form of writing.

Though David, trying to don the typical clothes of the realist omniscient narrator, climbs 'on top of the hill' (p. 12) at the beginning of his adventures to get a panoptic view of the land and determine his course with precision, he can only manage 'a rough direction' (p. 12), and, not knowing where to go, to

randomly explore his environment, and literally write as he walks, randomly, with no specific aim in mind. His primary piece of advice to the reader is to read the text against a map, thus comforting the link between writing and exploring: 'The reader would do well to look at a map' (p. 77), and indeed, the course of David's narration is just as discontinuous as the reader's accidental, arbitrary itinerary, as unsure and unspecific as their direction: 'But for the details of our itinerary, I am all to seek; our way lying now by short cuts, now by great detours; our pace being so hurried; our time of journeying usually by night; and the names of such places as I asked and heard, being in the Gaelic tongue and the more easily forgotten' (p. 136). The juxtaposed structure of Alan's sentence, the semi-colons that build a series of independent clauses, the *ing*-forms that replace the structural, sentence-making role of a principal conjugated verb, all contribute to make the sentence an exact verbal reproduction of the dotted line Stevenson asked his cousin to trace across the physical map of Scotland to indicate their itinerary: 'On the large map, a red line is to show the wanderings of my hero after his shipwreck. It must be sometimes dotted to show uncertainty; sometimes full' (Stevenson, 'Note to Map', *Kidnapped*, p. xxiv). Just like the dotted line, David's account rarely is full, and the spaces between the full line grow wider and wider, for two crucial reasons.

On the one hand, David's partial knowledge, his surface view of things necessarily creates some gaps in his narration: in the same way as Jim falls asleep on the *Hispaniola* and thus misses crucial parts of the conversation between the pirates, David's raving fits and faintings during his fever, as well as his long illness – 'I had scarce lain down upon the bed before I fell into a kind of trance, in which I continued almost the whole time of our stay in the Cage' (p. 163); 'I lay bed-ridden for no more than a week' (p. 177) – prevent him from witnessing the whole of the action. Or it may also be that he arrives too late, or is pushed away from the central site of the action, as with the crucial murder of the Red Fox, that

leaves David and the reader with an unsolved mystery, with a textual blank. David's account thus replaces continuous linearity with narrative hops and bounces, in between a few linear spells: 'Sometimes I was broad awake and understood what passed; sometimes I only heard voices or men snoring, like the voice of a silly river' (p. 163). Stevenson thus tears wide gaps in his text, opens up the possibilities, leaving it to the imagination of the reader to fill in the blanks, to try and reconstitute the broken, dotted line of the narration. David often vacates the crucial position of the narrator, or rather constitutes it as a discontinuous space, obeying Stevenson's sacred rule: 'Jesus, there is but one art, to omit', as opposed to what he called the naturalists' 'insane pursuit of completion',[16] or 'heavy completeness': 'He [Zola] would leave nothing undeveloped' (Stevenson, *Selected Letters*, p. 234). A virtual space is thus created between reader and text, as great portions of the adventure are left unexplained: the gap is maintained between the text and its ultimate meaning, and these sporadic interruptions and discontinuities leave the text in a state of suspension more than actual suspense, since these gaps are not designed as prolepses to be filled at the end of the novel. They are built as irreducible, 'undecidable' opaque zones, that define the text as an unstable construct. They thus irredeemably dilate the textual space, and its incompleteness opens what Jankelevitch calls 'the formal cryptic element of adventure': 'son fascinant vertige vers le non-être, l'objet sans nom et mystérieux de notre intense curiosité'. [17] Suspense, a classical element of 19th-century fiction, an entirely linear process, built with the aim of producing a specific later effect, transforms into its modern version of suspension: like David's abortive jumps, his literary gaps are meant to be left open.

Eventually, at the end of the sentence in which he describes their broken itinerary, David comes to the essential reason why literature should make the choice of discontinuity over linearity and closure: he is not able to define his course with accuracy,

because language itself fails him: 'and the names of such places as I asked and heard, being in the Gaelic tongue and the more easily forgotten'. Indeed, in *Kidnapped*, language is marked as unable to provide the reader with a coherent, continuous, trans-parent version of reality: it is language itself that is recognised as fundamentally opaque, resisting immediate and trustworthy interpretation. In linguistic as well as historical terms, lowland David, speaking 'Scotch', finds himself 'betwixt and between', between the Gaelic tongue that he cannot understand, and that opens wide communication gaps between himself and the people he encounters, and the southern English accent, that presents his own language in the disguise of a strange, unfamiliar tongue. Repeatedly in the novel, Alan begs of his interlocutors that they should refrain from using Gaelic for David to understand – 'I will ask you to speak in Scotch' (p. 129), but the highland people have such a minimal mastery of English that conversation is constantly broken, difficult: 'With what little English he had' (p. 100); 'for she had no English' (p. 101).

On the other hand, David's overhearing the soldiers triggers a process of linguistic defamiliarisation, a sense of estrangement from his own 'correct', normative, 'right' mother tongue: 'It was in this way that I first heard the right English speech. [. . .] I was amazed at the clipping tones and the odd sing-song in which he spoke, and no less at that strange trick of dropping out the letter h' (p. 141). David never quite gets used to this 'right' version of his own tongue, to its phonetic and to its grammatical systems, and will maintain a sense of distance to its rules, a feeling of a lack of immediacy, of an empirical and approximate usage: 'indeed I have never grown used to it; nor yet altogether with the English grammar, as perhaps a very critical eye might here and there spy out in the memoirs' (p. 141). Indeed, in *Kidnapped*, language is never allowed to stabilise as a coherent, agreed-upon, transpar-ent system, as the ideal 'glasshouse' Zola deemed it to be: it is constantly incomplete, often amorphous, a perpetually evading

material.[18]

In Earraid, when mutual comprehension proves crucial, David can only get fragments, a dotted line indeed from the fishermen's elaborate and continuous line of speech, 'whattefer' here, 'tide' there:

> Then he stood up in the boat and addressed me a long while speaking fast and with many wavings of his hand. I told him I had no Gaelic; and at this he became very angry, and I began to suspect that he thought he was talking English. Listening very close, I caught the word 'whateffer' several times; but all the rest was Gaelic, and might have been Greek and Hebrew for me.
>
> 'Whatever,' said I, to show him I had caught a word.
>
> 'Yes, yes – yes, yes,' says he, and then he looked at the other men, as much as to say, 'I told you I spoke English,' and began again as hard as ever in the Gaelic.
>
> This time I picked out another word, 'tide'. Then I had a flash of hope. (p. 98)

'I began to suspect that he thought he was talking English': in this elaborate paradoxical statement, David highlights that in *Kidnapped*, everyone, not least the narrator, is a foreigner in his own tongue. Meaning is not an objective result of language, it is a performance, and the text becomes an active site for the production of meaning, through individual leaps among the stable dots – not even so stable after all, if all David can get is a faulty and extremely open 'whattefer'. There can be no objective text, Stevenson forcefully illustrates here, the gaps, or the blanks in the text making it clear that the meaning derived from a text is always virtual, arbitrary, transitory, that 'the meaning

of a literary text is no longer a definable entity but, if anything, a dynamic happening',[19] an effect to be experienced and temporarily achieved. David's hazardous jump from 'whattefer' to 'tide', along with the context of the fishermen waving hands, perfectly illustrate Iser's theory that 'the iconic signs of literature constitute an organization of signifiers which do not serve to designate a signified object, but instead designate instructions for the production of the signified'.[20]

As 'whattefer' brilliantly summarises, no reader is allowed to stabilise the text, meaning is always a decision made, and not a logical, compulsory consequence of an adequate, objective set of words. Indeed, even the bold physical jumper Alan, who we may have taken for a heroic remains of the 'older' adventure novel, teaches the same lesson to David: as he wants to pass on a call for help to John Breck, he reckons that he will simply need to have his silver button deposited on his window-sill, and from that Breck will be able, through an elaborate sequence of reasoning, to guess where they are hiding, and shortly turn up. David, awed by the seemingly ridiculous complexity of the process, proposes that they should quite simply write him an explicit request: '"Eh, man," said I, drolling with him a little, "you're very ingenious! But would it not be simpler for you to write him a few words in black and white?"' (p. 148), Alan makes it clear that there is no such thing as a few simple transitive words in black and white, or at least that these simple words collide against a necessary opacity – an opacity that is of course major in John Breck's case: 'It would be a sore job for John Breck to read it. He would have to go to school for two-three years; and it's possible we might be wearied waiting on him' (p. 148). His method forcefully asserts that meaning is always an elaborate, hazardous construction, that no one can rely on the supposed limpidity of language.

David's linguistic 'inbetweenness', his careful dislocation of the naturalist belief in the solidity of the langage as a system of communication, his insistence on its opacity illustrate Deleuze's defi-

nition of a writer as 'a foreigner in his own tongue': 'Nous devons être bilingue même en une seule langue, nous devons avoir une langue mineure à l'intérieur de notre langue, nous devons faire de notre propre langue un usage mineur. Le multilinguisme n'est pas seulement la possession de plusieurs systèmes dont chacun serait homogène en lui-même; c'est d'abord la ligne de fuite ou de variation qui affecte chaque système en l'empêchant d'être homogène'.[2] Nearly a century later, Gilles Deleuze indeed followed the *NRF* in their admiration of British late 19th-century writers, in a famous article titled 'De la supériorité de la littérature anglaise-américaine': according to him, these writers are remarkable for their defamiliarisation of language, for their ability to 'jump intervals, jump from one interval to another'.[22] David's use of language elects him as one of these most successful formal jumpers, who managed to deconstruct, to open up the seeming compactness of language and explore the dynamism of the gaps.

In the same way as David does not quite manage a single complete jump in *Kidnapped*, and falters in between, he does not achieve narrative closure either. *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* ends with a very dissident indefinite form and highlights the arbitrariness of the ending: 'I bring the story of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to *an* end'. In *Kidnapped*, Stevenson comes up even more with 'an end of sorts', with a fundamentally suspended ending. David's last sentence brings him to the brink of the final step of his adventure, to the crucial moment when all the drifting could finally get channeled into resolution: 'The hand of Providence brought me in my drifting to the very doors of the British Linen Company's bank' (p. 219). In a totally unexpected and disorienting way, David halts just there, and leaves the reader stranded just before 'the advent of the (final) event', right in the middle – the jump will remain suspended for six years, until the publication of *Catriona* in *Atalanta*, in 1892, the opening sentence of which takes up where David's narration

had ended in *Kidnapped* and eventually bridges the gap – with the notable exception of what happened within doors: 'The 25th day of August, 1751, about two in the afternoon, I, David Balfour, came forth of the British Linen Company, a porter attending me with a bag of money, and some of the chief of these merchants bowing me from their doors'.

Moreover, David does not have the final word, and the literary necessity of suspension is theorised by a totally heterogeneous, intrusive third-person narrator. In brackets, both inside and outside the novel, both a remainder and a literary agenda, his intervention reads like an unstable, unidentified textual object, like a textual window that opens onto a text-to-come. The anony-mous editor makes it clear that the ending is not the compulsory objective outcome of a narrative chain, but a matter of artistic decision, a matter of arbitrary and temporary 'inclination', thus highlighting the importance of form and artistic construction over realist mimesis: 'The present editor *inclines* for the time to say farewell to David' (p. 217). He settles the end of the text in a paradoxical state of permanent suspension – 'How Alan escaped *may* some day set forth' (p. 218; italics added) – of indeterminacy and antiphrasis: 'whatever befell them, it was not dishonour, and whatever failed them, they were not found wanting to themselves' (p. 219). It is the perfect liminal state of adventure,[23] in the intense present when the jump, or the text, is as yet a dynamic impulse, a possibility, a temptation.

Notes

1   Jean-Pierre Naugrette analyses in close detail the ambivalent duality of *Kidnapped* in the general context of Stevenson's other novels in *Robert Louis Stevenson. L'Aventure et son double* (Paris: Presses de l'Ecole Normale Supérieure, 1987), pp. 91-99.

2   Jacques Rivière, 'Le roman d'aventure', *Nouvelle Revue Française* (mai – juillet 1913); repr. *Le Roman d'Aventure* (Paris: Syrtes, 2000), p. 69.

3   Robert Louis Stevenson, *Kidnapped*, ed. by Donald McFarlan (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 137. All subsequent page references in the text will be to this edition.

4   Here we may remember 'Stevenson, writer of boundaries', subject of many of the essays in *Robert Louis Stevenson, Writer of Boundaries*, ed. by Richard Ambrosini and Richard Dury (Maddison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

5   The notion of 'incident', the idea that the form of a novel should be 'incidental', was crucial to Stevenson. In a letter to Henry James, he pleaded: 'Could you pitch the incidents [. . .] in a slightly more emphatic way – as if it were an episode from one of the old (so-called) novels of adventure?' *The Selected Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Ernest Mehew (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 272.

6   Rivière, p. 66.

7   In *Une Amitié littéraire: Henry James Robert Louis Stevenson* (Paris: Payot, 1987), p. 30, Michel Le Bris defines 'the event' as 'le seul talisman contre le credo réaliste'.

8   Marcel Schwob, *Spicilège* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1896; repr. 1960).

9   My translation of 'Sous prétexte de réalisme et de logique humaine, les romanciers français ont exilé du roman l'imprévu, l'imprévu qui est presque toute la vie [...]. Un Defoë, un Fielding, un Dickens, un Stevenson ont la passion de l'aventure: ils y baignent leurs personnages comme dans un réactif vivement coloré' (Henry Ghéon, '*L'histoire de Mr Polly*, par H. G. Wells', *Nouvelle Revue Française*, Jan. 1912, 126.

10 For a further study of the treatment of the motif of the jump in *Lord Jim*, see Nathalie Jaëck, 'Le saut manqué: aventure et imminence de

Sherlock Holmes à Lord Jim', *Aventure(s)*, ed. by Hervé Fourtina, Nathalie Jaëck and Joël Richard (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2008), pp. 131-142.

11 'Le récit n'est plus l'écriture d'une aventure, mais l'aventure d'une écriture' – Jean Ricardou, *Pour une Théorie du nouveau roman* (Paris: Seuil, 1971), p. 43).

12 Alan Sandison, *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Appearance of Modernism* (London: Macmillan, 1996), p. 53.

13 Gilles Deleuze, *Critique et Clinique* (Paris: Minuit, 1991), p. 12.

14 Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux* (Paris: Minuit, 1980), p. 11.

15 'A Humble Remonstrance', *Longman's Magazine*, 5 (Nov. 1884), 139-47; repr. in *Memories and Portraits* (1887). This response to Henry James's 'The Art of Fiction' in *Longman's Magazine*, September 1884, led to a life-long friendship, and a particularly remarkable correspondence on the nature and aims of fiction. The complete letters can be found in *Henry James and Robert Louis Stevenson. A Record of their Friendship and Criticism* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1948).

16 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'A Note on Realism', *The Magazine of Art* 7 (Nov. 1883), quoted and commented on in Oliver S. Buckton, 'Reanimating Stevenson's Corpus', *Nineteenth Century Literature*, 55 (2000), 22-58.

17 Vladimir Jankelevitch, 'L'Aventure, l'Ennui, le Sérieux', *Philosophie morale* (Paris: Flammarion, 1998), p. 818.

18 Emile Zola, 'Les romanciers naturalistes', in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Henri Mitterand, 15 vols. (Paris: Tchou, 1966-70), XI, 92.

19 Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading. A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 22.

20 Iser, p. 64.

21 Gilles Deleuze, in Gilles Deleuze, Claire Parnet, *Dialogues* (Paris: Flammarion, 1996), p 11.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 51 ('Sauter des intervalles, sauter d'un intervalle à l'autre').

23 'L'aventure porte la désinence du futur. L'aventure est liée à ce temps du temps qu'on appelle le temps futur et dont le caractère essentiel est d'être indéterminé, parce qu'il est l'empire énigmatique des possibles', Jankelevitch, p. 828.

Unreliable narration in *The Master of Ballantrae*: an external approach

Burkhard Niederhoff

Introduction

'The full truth' – these are the first words of Ephraim Mackellar, the principal narrator of Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *The Master of Ballantrae.* In fact, the narrator insists twice more within the space of a single paragraph that he will tell the truth and nothing but the truth:

> The *full truth* of this odd matter is what the world has long been looking for, and public curiosity is sure to welcome. It so befell that I was intimately mingled with the last years and history of the house; and there does not live one man so able as myself to make these matters plain, or so desirous *to narrate them faithfully.* I knew the Master; on many secret steps of his career I have an authentic memoir in my hand; I sailed with him on his last voyage almost alone; I made one upon that winter's journey of which so many tales have gone abroad; and I was there at the man's death. As for my late Lord Durrisdeer, I served him and loved him near twenty years; and thought more of him the more I knew of him. Altogether, I think it not fit that so much evidence should perish; *the truth* is a debt I owe my lord's memory; and I think my old years will flow more smoothly, and my white hair lie quieter on the pillow, when the debt is paid.[1]

Evidently, Mackellar protests too much. The repeated emphasis on his veracity is counterproductive. Instead of convincing us

of his reliability, Mackellar raises a suspicion that we will hear something less than the '[t]he full truth of this odd matter'. This suspicion is not allayed when we learn that Mackellar is biased in favour of one of the brothers who are locked in a fatal conflict in this novel. Having served Henry Durie, the younger brother, for many years, he now feels obliged to protect his memory. In view of this bias, phrases like 'to narrate them *faithfully*' or 'the *truth* is a debt I owe my lord's memory' become ambiguous. Will Mackellar be true to the facts or will he be true to Henry? Evidently, the latter reading undermines the former.

The clues to the narrator's fallibility planted in the first paragraph provide a good indication of what awaits the reader in the rest of the novel. *The Master of Ballantrae* is a treasure trove of signals of unreliable narration, which may be distinguished as follows. First, the novel explicitly foregrounds the issues of truth and reliability, as it does in the very first words from Mackellar's pen. Second, it provides a character study of Mackellar which emphasises traits and motives that undermine his authority as a narrator. Third, it contains numerous discrepancies both within Mackellar's narrative and between this narrative and the accounts given by others. The 'many tales' of the first paragraph are not merely referred to; they are woven into the tapestry of the novel in the form of accounts given by narrators other than Mackellar as well as numerous instances of gossip reported by him. The conflict between the brothers is thus echoed in a conflict between a multiplicity of voices and versions that contradict and invalidate each other. Focusing on the three kinds of signals distinguished here may be described as an internal approach to narrative unreliability.[2] It is no doubt a rewarding one, but in the present essay I should like to take a different approach, which may be described as external. To clarify what is meant by this external approach, a brief foray into narrative theory is required.

Internal and external approaches to narrative unreliability

We owe the concept of the (un)reliable narrator to Wayne Booth, who defines it as follows: 'I have called a narrator *reliable* when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author's norms), *unreliable* when he does not.'[3] This definition would appear to be in broad agreement with the internal approach sketched above. While the account of the three kinds of signals tells us how we detect an unreliable narrator, Booth's definition focuses on the effect of such detective work: once we have noticed that a narrator is unreliable, we begin to receive two messages that are not in accordance with each other, an overt message coming from the narrator and a covert one coming from the implied author. At any rate, the standards by which the unreliable narrator is measured and found wanting are supplied by the work itself; the author only enters the scene insofar as he can be inferred from the work.

A thorough revision of Booth's theory of unreliable narration has been proposed by Ansgar Nünning. Drawing on cognitive theory and frame theory, Nünning argues that readers approach texts with a number of frames, i.e. with their views of the world, of normal behaviour, of the rules of literary genres. When the text does not fit into these frames, readers resort to a number of interpretive strategies to solve the problem, one of these being the attribution of unreliability to the narrator. The principal innovation in this theory is the crucial role attributed to the reader. While in Booth's account the text or the implied author provides the standards from which the narrator deviates, in Nünning's view these standards are brought to the text by the reader: '[W]hether a narrator is called unreliable or not does not depend on the distance between the norms and values of the narrator and those of the implied author but between [sic] the distance that separates the narrator's view of the world from the reader's or critic's world-model and standards of normalcy.'[4]

As one might expect, Nünning's theory has been criticized by a number of theorists. James Phelan, for instance, has proposed a tripartite model of unreliable narration in which the implied author, the text and the reader find a place.[5] However, to my knowledge, the relativist consequences of Nünning's theory have not been sufficiently exposed. Consider his statement that a 'pederast would not find anything wrong with Nabokov's *Lolita*' (Nünning, p. 61). In my view, a pederast who is an alert reader of literary texts would find something wrong with the narrator of *Lolita* – assuming that the narrator is unreliable, which the critics are not agreed upon.[6] To use a less complicated example: Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair* is a novel about an agnostic woman who becomes a Catholic and even a kind of saint. Interestingly, the first-person narrator of the novel, the former lover of the woman, is and remains an agnostic. Since I am an agnostic myself, I should, according to Nünning's view of the matter, find this narrator reliable; the agnostic 'frames' that I bring to the text are in agreement with those of the narrator. However, my response to the novel is more complex. (1) I realize that there is a Catholic argument in the novel. (2) I also realize that the narrator stubbornly refuses to accept this argument and ignores all the evidence presented in favour of it, in other words that he is unreliable. (3) Nevertheless, I am not persuaded by the argument of the book, holding on to my agnosticism.

Steps 1 and 2 of my response to Greene's novel are part of understanding it; step 3 belongs to the final evaluation. Of course, our evaluation of a text will colour our understanding of it (and vice versa), but a responsible reader will attempt to keep the two separate. As E. M. Forster once memorably put it: 'Certainly Dante wrote over the gates of Hell that they were made by the power, wisdom and love of God [...] and neither the Middle West nor the Soviets nor ourselves can be expected to agree with that. But there is no reason why we should not under-stand it, and stretch our minds against his, although they have a

different shape.'⁷ There is no room for this kind of stretching in Nünning's theory. However, it is an act of mental gymnastics that we perform all the time. The mere fact that we do not share all of the beliefs held by the narrator of the *Divine Comedy* does not render him unreliable in our eyes. To my mind, the stretching described by Forster is not only a basic hermeneutic obligation; it is also one of the pleasures and rewards of reading.

Despite my disagreement with Nünning, I will follow him halfway by introducing an external standard in my interpretation of Mackellar's unreliability. This external standard is not provided by the reader but by the author – to be more precise, by other texts from the author's pen. Incidentally, this is not an unprecedented idea. In earlier, less theoretically minded ages, critics in search of interpretive standards resorted to the author without thinking twice about it. In the debate about John Dowell, the narrator of Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier*, Arthur Mizener, the author of the standard biography of Ford, argued for the reliability of Dowell by pointing out that his views are in essential agreement with the views of the author who created him.[8] Admittedly, in this day and age an invocation of the author as a standard of interpretation clashes with two critical tenets that command more or less widespread support: the New Critical insistence on the autonomy and integrity of the work, enshrined in the doctrine of 'the intentional fallacy',[9] and the burial of the author performed by Roland Barthes and other poststructuralists who reject him as an authoritarian father figure attempting to check the free play of signification. The external approach suggested here also makes another unfashionable assumption, namely that the author is a relatively stable subject with a coherent vision that extends across several works, not a darkling plain on which ever-changing discourses clash by night.

In view of the considerable theoretical problems that the external, author-oriented approach is fraught with, I will confine myself to a modest proposal. It is not my intention to erect the

author as the ultimate standard of narrative reliability, replacing Booth's implied author or Nünning's reader in this role. Taking other texts by the same author into consideration is introduced – or rather reintroduced – as an additional strategy that helps us in the difficult process of detecting and interpreting unreliable narration. This strategy is not meant to replace but to comple-ment the internal approach, which must remain the central one. My proposal is also pragmatic rather than theoretical. Instead of further justifying my approach, I will practice it, following the belief that ye shall know them by their fruits. Incidentally, this pragmatic approach would appear to be compatible with the views held by the eloquent herald of the author's death. In 'De l'oeuvre au texte', Barthes writes: 'Ce n'est pas que l'Auteur ne puisse «revenir» dans le Texte, dans son texte; mais c'est alors, si l'on peut dire, à titre d'invité; s'il est romancier, il s'y inscrit com-me l'un de ses personnages, dessiné dans le tapis; son inscription n'est plus privilégiée, paternelle, aléthique, mais ludique [...].'[10] It is in this role that Stevenson will be invited into the critical debate about Mackellar, as a contributor to this debate, not as its final arbiter. But before this is possible, we have to take one more look at the novel itself, analysing how Mackellar's narrative is governed by an overriding concern with justification.

Narrative as justification
At one point, Mackellar describes his narrative as 'a memoran-dum written only to justify his [Alexander's] father' (p. 143). This phrase provides the key to Mackellar's narrative. Its main goal is moral justification, in particular the justification of Henry and of Mackellar himself in his role as Henry's staunchest sup-porter. The very first paragraph, quoted above, is a case in point, being nothing but a justification of the narrative itself. Mackellar begins his narrative by presenting his credentials ('there does not live one man so able as myself to make these matters plain'). He cannot tell a story, however interesting, without first providing

a justification for his doing so. The concern with justification also determines the very texture of Mackellar's style, called 'Mackellarese' by Stevenson.[11] The writer was aware that he had created a distinctive style expressive of the personality of his narrator, and he was worried that it would prove inadequate for the more romantic and adventurous portions of the novel: 'How, with a narrator like Mackellar, should I transact the melodrama in the wilderness? How, with his style, so full of disabilities, attack a passage which must be either altogether seizing or altogether silly and absurd?'[12] The 'disabilities' of Mackellar's style stem from his concern with justification. Instead of telling a story in all its colourful detail, he wants to present a moral argument. Thus he prefers summary to scene, the point of view of the narrator to that of the character, and comment to narrative. His favourite forms of comment are psychological explanation and moral evaluation because these two are most conducive to the purpose of justification, to assigning praise or blame, innocence or guilt.[13]

A good example of 'Mackellarese' is the following passage, which describes the narrator's journey to his future employer, Lord Durrisdeer – in other words, his own entrance, as a character, into the story he tells us. Interestingly, this entrance is through a labyrinth of 'ill tales', of legend and gossip:

> I made the last of my journey in the cold end of December, in a mighty dry day of frost, and who should be my guide but Patey Macmorland, brother of Tam! For a tow-head-ed, bare-legged brat of ten, he had more ill tales upon his tongue than ever I heard the match of; having drunken betimes in his brother's cup. I was still not so old myself; pride had not yet the upper hand of curiosity; and indeed it would have taken [= captivated] any man, that cold morning, to hear all the old clashes of the country, and be shown all the places by the way where strange things had

fallen out. I had tales of Claverhouse as we came through
the bogs, and tales of the devil as we came over the top of
the scaur [...]; and along all the road the Duries and poor
Mr Henry were in the first rank of slander. My mind was
thus highly prejudiced against the family I was about to
serve [...]. (p. 19)

The point of view is clearly that of the narrator, not of the
character. While the young Mackellar is fascinated by the tales he
hears, the old Mackellar telling the story disapproves of them. He
uses strongly derogatory terms such as 'ill', 'slander' and 'preju-
diced' to express his disapproval. He also uses a loaded gram-
matical construction like 'who should be my guide but ...', which
indicates his retrospective resentment at having been guided by
Patey Macmoreland, a partisan of James and thus a member
of the enemy camp. In addition to evaluating the characters,
Mackellar also explains their motives. Patey's indulging in gos-
sip and slander betrays the influence of his brother; Mackellar's
eagerness to hear this gossip is due to his youthful curiosity. The
combination of evaluation and motivation results in a defence
of Mackellar's fascination with Patey's tales. The comment at
the end of the passage ('it would have taken any man ...') would
appear to be a psychological generalization, but in the present
context it functions primarily as a justification. Surely, Mackellar
seems to suggest, he cannot be blamed for something that any-
one would have done under the same circumstances. Thus the
principal narrator of the novel feels obliged to justify not only his
telling of stories but also his listening to them.

The obsession with justification in Mackellar's narrative
becomes all the more conspicuous when we read the story which
James tells on board the *Nonesuch*. This tale provides a *mise en
abyme* of the entire novel; it resembles Mackellar's narrative in
its story line as it also describes the fatal conflict between two
men.[14] It differs from Mackellar's narrative, however, in its

method, being characterized by an utter neglect of justification: '*It matters not what was the ground of the count's enmity*; but as he had a firm design to be revenged, and that with safety to himself, he kept it secret even from the baron. *Indeed, that is the first principle of vengeance; and hatred betrayed is hatred impotent*' (p. 160, my italics). The first of the italicized sentences would be unthinkable in the narrative of Mackellar, who is obsessed with motivations. The second sentence in italics is a generalization that superficially resembles Mackellar's 'it would have taken any man …'; but here the generalization does not amount to an apology or a justification. The point that James is making is a purely strategic one – and he is also giving a veiled warning to Mackellar, who has betrayed his hatred of James in more than one way.

Stevenson on justification
If we now turn to other writings by Stevenson, we find that he is highly sceptical about justification. A first example that comes to mind is 'Markheim', a story about a murderer who kills a pawnbroker. When Markheim is still in the pawnbroker's house, looking for money, he is joined by a supernatural visitor of a rather protean kind. The visitor seems to be Markheim's double, but he also assumes the role of the devil, suggesting a Faustian pact that involves support of Markheim in further crimes in exchange for his soul. However, Markheim rejects the offer as he believes himself to be innocent. He gives a lengthy and eloquent self-justification, arguing that the 'giants of circumstance' have dragged him about against his will, and that his actions do not reflect his true nature: '"My life", he argues, "is but a travesty and slander on myself."'[15] The dispassionate replies of his visitor, however, gradually undermine Markheim's belief in his own innocence. Eventually he realizes the hollowness and futility of his self-justification and decides to turn himself in. The double, who responds to this by undergoing 'a wonderful and lovely change', turns out to have been not the devil but rather the devil's

advocate.

Stevenson's scepticism about justification is not limited to the case of murderers conducting ethical debates with their doubles. It is much more general, being partly due to his Calvinist heritage. Protestantism in general, and Calvinism in particular, insist on human sinfulness, on the necessity of divine grace, and on the concomitant impossibility of human beings justifying themselves by their own means. Despite Stevenson's agnostic tendencies, the Calvinist sense of sin survives in his thinking in a secularized version, as a highly developed ethical sensibility which leads to rather sceptical conclusions about our moral standing. Consider, for instance, his exegesis of the commandment 'Thou shalt not steal' in the second chapter of *Lay Morals*. After dismissing the literal reading of the commandment as 'only that least minimum of meaning without which society would fall in pieces' (*Works* XV: 426), he goes on to give a more rigorous reading, discussing, under the guise of 'a friend of mine' (*Works* XV: 427), his own case as the only son of wealthy and loving parents. After comparing himself with a less privileged and more hard-working fellow student, he comes to rather uncomfortable conclusions: 'Had he [i.e. Stevenson himself] not filched that fellow's birthright? At best was he not coldly profiting by the injustice of society, and greedily devouring stolen goods?' (*Works* XV: 428). Here and elsewhere, Stevenson shows a strong conviction of human fallibility, which makes any attempt at justifying ourselves precarious at best.

Stevenson's scepticism about justification is not only fuelled by his awareness of moral fallibility. It is also grounded in epistemological doubts about our ability to recognize and to communicate the truth, especially when it comes to relationships between human beings. In 'Truth of Intercourse', one of the essays from *Virginibus Puerisque*, Stevenson attacks the 'monstrous proposition that it is easy to tell the truth and hard to tell a lie'. He goes on to argue that 'it is easier to draw the outline of a mountain

than the changing appearance of a face; and truth in human rela-
tions is of this more intangible and dubious order: hard to seize,
harder to communicate' (*Works*, II: 329).[16] The epistemological
scepticism expressed in these remarks is applied to the subject
of justification in 'Reflections and Remarks on Human Life'.
This essay, which was drafted in 1880, begins with a passage
that, to my knowledge, is Stevenson's most explicit critique of
justification:

> I. JUSTICE AND JUSTIFICATION. – (1) It is the business of this
> life to make excuses for others, but none for ourselves. We
> should be clearly persuaded of our own misconduct, for
> that is the part of knowledge in which we are most apt to
> be defective. (2) Even justice is no right of a man's own,
> but a thing, like the king's tribute, which shall never be
> his, but which he should strive to see rendered another.
> None was ever just to me; none ever will be. You may rea-
> sonably aspire to be chief minister or sovereign pontiff:
> but not to be justly regarded in your own character and
> acts. You know too much to be satisfied. For justice is but
> an earthly currency, paid to appearances; you may see
> another superficially righted; but be sure he has got too
> little or too much; and in your own case rest content with
> what is paid you. It is more just than you suppose; that
> your virtues are misunderstood is a price you pay to keep
> your meannesses concealed. (3) When you seek to justify
> yourself to others, you may be sure you will plead falsely.
> [...] (4) [...] Justification to indifferent persons is, at best,
> an impertinent intrusion. [...] (5) It is a question hard to
> be resolved, whether you should at any time criminate
> another to defend yourself. I have done it many times, and
> always had a troubled conscience for my pains. (*Works*,
> XV: 391 f.)

The critique of justification rests on a mixture of epistemological and psychological grounds. While we know, or wish to know, very little about the motives and circumstances that count against us, we are fully aware of the motives and circumstances that are in our favour. It may be argued that the passage does not apply to Mackellar as he gives a justification of somebody else, i.e. Henry, not of himself. However, since Mackellar is Henry's closest ally, he also justifies himself in justifying Henry.[17] Furthermore, the two passages quoted above in which Mackellar vindicates his telling of and his listening to stories show that self-justification is a prominent feature of his narrative.

The passage from 'Reflections and Remarks on Human Life' discusses justice and justification in financial terms: 'the king's tribute ... an earthly currency ... rest content with what is paid you ... a price you pay'. Mackellar uses precisely these financial metaphors to refer to his narrative, another indication of how closely it is bound up with Stevenson's views on justification. In the initial paragraph, he writes: 'The truth is a *debt* I owe my lord's memory; and I think my old years will flow more smoothly, and my white hair lie quieter on the pillow, when the *debt is paid*' (p. 9, my italics). He refers to the collection of papers he hands over to Alison at Henry's sickbed as 'my budget' (p. 112), a budget that resembles the novel as a whole in its form, a miscellany of diverse documents, and in its purpose, the justification of Henry and the incrimination of James. Mackellar keeps the books for Henry both in the literal and in the metaphorical sense, seeing to it that the financial and the moral balances will be in his employer's favour.

The bookkeeping mentality that informs Mackellar's narrative echoes Henry's approach to moral matters. When Henry agrees to the sale of a piece of land to finance his brother's plans in India, his aim is to win his father's approbation and to score a moral victory over James. 'He *sold* them his consent at a *dear rate*', Mackellar comments in highly revealing language (p. 85, my italics). The conflict is literally over a sale, but through Henry's

negotiations it becomes part of a more complex transaction. He insists that the financial loss he incurs will be repaid as a moral gain. Earlier on, he responds in a similar fashion to a letter from his brother, in which he is called a 'niggardly dog' and asked for a considerable sum of money: "'But I will not sit down under the imputation [...] I am as good as he, I am a better man than he, I call on God to prove it! [...] I, niggardly? [...] O, you all think so! Well, you shall see, and he shall see, and God shall see. If I ruin the estate and go barefoot, I shall stuff this bloodsucker!'" (p. 62) Even Mackellar recognizes that there is something pathological about this response; he refers to the 'backforemost pleasure' (p. 65) that Henry takes in complying with James' financial requests. Henry wishes to turn financial into moral capital. In other words, he assumes that justification can be bought. Interestingly, James provides an alternative to the accountant mentality of his opponents. When Mackellar attempts to murder him, James does not enter this attempt in his books as proof of his enemies' malice and of his own moral superiority (he keeps no books of this sort). Instead, he tells Mackellar, 'you have risen forty feet in my esteem' (p. 165). The relationship between the two men improves considerably after one of them has attempted to kill the other.

The financial imagery used to describe Mackellar's and Henry's concern with justification emphasizes that they are seeking some kind of gain or reward. This striving for a reward, even if it is only an immaterial one, clashes with a central tenet in Stevenson's moral philosophy, the tenet that virtue will and should not be rewarded in any way. As he writes in 'A Christmas Sermon', 'a man is not to expect happiness, only to profit by it gladly when it shall arise; he is on duty here; he knows not how or why, and does not need to know; *he knows not for what hire*, and must not ask' (*Works*, XV: 346, my italics). It would be an understatement to say that Stevenson no longer believes in a heavenly or secular reward for virtue – he positively resents it. 'But the common, trashy mind of our generation', he writes in the preface to

Familiar Studies of Men and Books, 'is still aghast [...] at any word of an unsuccessful virtue' (*Works*, III: 12). In a letter to Edmund Gosse, he succinctly states that '[t]he soul of piety was killed long ago by that idea of reward'.[18]

Stevenson on the Puritan school

A final piece of external evidence that sheds a critical light on Mackellar's personality, his values and his reliability as a narrator comes from *The Amateur Emigrant*. In the chapter 'Steerage Types', Stevenson argues:

> One thing, indeed, is not to be learned in Scotland, and that is, the way to be happy. Yet that is the whole of culture, and perhaps two-thirds of morality. Can it be that the Puritan school, by divorcing a man from nature, by thinning out his instincts, and setting a stamp of its disapproval on whole fields of human activity and interest, leads at last directly to material greed? (*Works*, II: 44 f.)

These remarks are fairly close to Max Weber's ideas about the Calvinist origins of capitalism. Weber's Calvinist turned capitalist and the graduate of Stevenson's Puritan school share a number of traits. In both, religious zeal survives in a negative morality based on prohibitions and self-denial. The one secular activity in which they engage vigorously is the pursuit of money, more as an end in itself than as a means of purchasing pleasure. Thus their attitude is characterized by what Weber calls 'innerweltliche Askese', a secular asceticism that is not directed towards a mystical communion with other worlds but firmly situated within this world.[19]

Stevenson's remarks on the Puritan school and the personality formed by it have an obvious bearing on Mackellar and on Henry. This becomes all the more evident if we compare them with James, who appears not to have been influenced by this

school at all. One of the 'fields of human activity and interest' that Mackellar fails to cultivate is the opposite sex: a confirmed bachelor, he believes that there is the 'devil in women' (p. 68). As he himself admits, 'I have never had much toleration for the female sex, possibly not much understanding; and being far from a bold man, I have ever shunned their company' (p. 68 ff.). Henry, likewise, takes little interest in women. His marriage with Alison seems to be motivated by her money and his desire for an heir; as soon as Alexander is born, he loses interest in her (p. 124). James, on the other hand, is unfailingly popular with women, including Alison, who marries Henry not for love but out of a sense of duty.

The world of art is another field of interest that is cultivated by James and neglected by Mackellar and Henry. James is a consummate storyteller, as is shown by his tale on board the *Nonesuch*. Mackellar, on the other hand, is not at ease with his role as a narrator. When he does not justify his telling of stories or his listening to them, he condemns these activities: 'I recalled an ancient sailor-man who dwelt in a lone house […] and how the boys would troop out of Leith on a Saturday, and sit and listen to his swearing tales, as thick as crows about a carrion: a thing I often remarked as I went by, a young student, on my own more meditative holiday diversion' (p. 143). As for Henry, he 'could speak of little else but business and was never the best of company' (p. 27).

The repeated references to singing also indicate the gulf between Mackellar and Henry on the one hand, and James on the other. Mackellar reproves a young maid for singing, which characteristically earns him 'the enmity of all the petticoats about the house' (p. 68). On the one occasion on which Henry sings, he displays a complete lack of musical talent and practice. The song is the ballad 'Twa Corbies', or rather two verses from it that express his wish to see his brother dead:

> I was in bed, lying there awake, when I heard him stum-
> bling on the stair and singing. My lord had no gift of music,
> his brother had all the graces of the family, so that when
> I say singing, you are to understand a manner of high,
> carolling utterance, which was truly neither speech nor
> song. Something not unlike is to be heard upon the lips
> of children, ere they learn shame [...]. He took it first in
> the time and manner of a rant; presently this ill-favoured
> gleefulness abated, he began to dwell upon the notes more
> feelingly, and sank at last into a degree of maudlin pathos
> that was to me scarce bearable. (p. 189 ff.)

Consider, by contrast, the episode in which James sings an Irish ballad on his return from his exile in France:

> He sang it well, even as a song; but he did better yet as a
> performer. I have heard famous actors, when there was
> not a dry eye in the Edinburgh theatre; a great wonder
> to behold; but no more wonderful than how the Master
> played upon that little ballad, and on those who heard
> him, like an instrument, and seemed now upon the point
> of failing, and now to conquer his distress, so that words
> and music seemed to pour out of his own heart and his
> own past, and to be aimed directly at Mrs Henry. And his
> art went further yet [...]. (p. 83)

Characteristically, Mackellar can think of James' performance only in a context of duplicity and intrigue. He presents it as a cunning manoeuvre in 'the siege of Mrs Henry' (p. 83), as part of an attempt to seduce her or at the very least to alienate her from her husband. Mackellar has little appreciation of art for art's sake. On the contrary, the word 'art' here is almost synonymous with deception and manipulation.

The theme of 'material greed' mentioned in Stevenson's

account of the Puritan school is all too evident in *The Master of Ballantrae*. I have already touched upon the bookkeeping mentality of both Mackellar and Henry. Their overriding interest is in the making and saving of money. Henry 'took a chief hand, almost from a boy, in the management of the estates'; in doing so, he has acquired 'the reputation of a tyrant and a miser' (p. 11). His brother considers him a 'niggardly dog' (62), and even his loyal supporter Mackellar describes him as 'parsimonious' (p. 65). Mackellar shares Henry's ruling passion; his work as a steward and bookkeeper fits his personality. He reveals his accountant mentality, for instance, when he first sees the Durrisdeer estate. 'The money sunk here unproductively', he comments after a brief description of the house and its surroundings, 'would have quite restored the family; but as it was, it cost a revenue to keep it up' (p. 19). James, on the other hand, has little interest in money itself; he likes to spend it – in considerable quantities – to finance his pleasures and his political schemes. His mentality is as different from an accountant's as possible: "'I must have all or none"' (p. 167), he tells Mackellar during their passage across the Atlantic. Characteristically, the last episode in his life is a treasure hunt, a literary *topos* which reflects this all-or-nothing attitude. It is also revealing that James likes to take a momentous decision by spinning a coin, an action that reflects his lack of prudence but also, on a symbolical level, his indifference to the idea of holding on to money.

In contrasting Henry and Mackellar on the one hand and James on the other, it is not my intention to turn Mackellar's view of the brothers on its head, presenting Henry as villain and James as victim. James is in some ways undeniably evil. However, he is a more complex character than Mackellar makes him out to be. The same is true, in a different way, of Henry and of Mackellar himself. Stevenson's critical remarks elsewhere in his writings on justification and on the Puritan school help us see the problematic sides of their personalities and of their values:

the disapproval of whole fields of human activity and interest, the neglect of joy and happiness, the obsession with money, and a bookkeeping mentality that extends into the moral realm. This bookkeeping mentality also undermines Mackellar's reliability as a narrator. Paradoxically, it is his concern with justification, with establishing the moral balance that makes Mackellar take no account of happiness, missing what Stevenson, in his critique of the Puritan school, describes as 'perhaps two-thirds of morality'.

NOTES

1   Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Master of Ballantrae: A Winter's Tale* (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 9, my italics; henceforth cited in the text. I should like to thank Richard Dury, Alexa Keuneke, Sandra Lee, Pola Rudnik, Henrike Vahldieck and Sven Wagner for their helpful comments on drafts of the present essay.

2   A comprehensive and perceptive reading along these lines is Alexander B. Clunas, '"A Double Word": Writing and Justice in *The Master of Ballantrae*', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 28 (1993), 55-74. See also David M. Craig, 'The Closed Form of *The Master of Ballantrae*', *Interpretations*, 12 (1980), 40-52 (pp. 45 ff.); Douglas Gifford, 'Stevenson and Scottish Fiction. The Importance of *The Master of Ballantrae*', *Stevenson and Victorian Scotland*, ed. by Jenni Calder (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1981), 62-87 (pp. 79 ff.); James F. Kilroy, 'Narrative Techniques in *The Master of Ballantrae*', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 5 (1969), 98-106; Saverio Tomaiuolo, 'Under Mackellar's Eyes: Metanarrative Strategies in *The Master of Ballantrae*', *Journal of Stevenson Studies*, 3 (2006), 85-110 (pp. 90 ff.).

3   *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983), 2nd ed., p. 158 ff.

4   Ansgar Nünning, 'Unreliable, compared to what? Towards a Cognitive Theory of *Unreliable Narration*: Prolegomena and Hypotheses', in *Grenzüberschreitungen: Narratologie im Kontext / Transcending Boundaries: Narratology in Context*, ed. by Walter Grünzweig and Andreas Solbach (Tübingen: Narr, 1999), 53-73 (p. 61).

5   *Living to Tell about It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2005), pp. 66-97. Greta Olson and Per

Hansen argue that Nünning is closer to Booth than his vigorous rhetoric would have us believe; they also make some interesting suggestions about distinguishing different kinds of unreliable narrators. See Greta Olson, 'Reconsidering Unreliability: Fallible and Untrustworthy Narrators', *Narrative*, 11 (2003), 93-109; Per Krogh Hansen, 'Reconsidering the Unreliable Narrator', *Semiotica*, 165 (2007), 227-46.

6   Seymour Chatman, for instance, writes: 'The narrator of *Lolita*, Humbert Humbert, whatever his character is, in my view, reliable.' See *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1978), p. 234.

7   E. M. Forster, *Two Cheers for Democracy* (London: Arnold, 1951), p. 112.

8   Arthur Mizener, '[Ford, Dowell, and the Sex Instinct]', in Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier*, Norton Critical Edition, ed. by Martin Stannard (New York: Norton, 1995), pp. 322-25.

9   W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., and M. C. Beardsley, 'The Intentional Fallacy', *Sewanee Review* 54 (1946), 468-88.

10 Roland Barthes, 'De l'œuvre au texte', *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Éric Marty (Paris: Édition du Seuil, 1994), II, 1211-17 (p. 1215).

11 2 April 1889, *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1995), VI, 277-278; henceforth cited as *Letters*.

12 See Stevenson's 'Note to *The Master of Ballantrae*' in the appendix of the edition cited here, p. 226.

13 Elsewhere, I have a given a more comprehensive analysis of these features of 'Mackellarese' by comparing a passage from *The Master of Ballantrae* with a passage from *Kidnapped*. See Burkhard Niederhoff, *Erzähler und Perspektive bei Robert Louis Stevenson* (Würzburg: Königshausen, 1994), pp. 77-87.

14 On the complexities of this tale, see Jean-Pierre Naugrette, 'Les aventures du roman: en derivant de Ballantrae', *Critique*, 39 (1983), 365-78.

15 *The Works: Pentland Edition*, ed. by Edmund Gosse (London: Cassell, 1906-07), 20 vols., VIII, p. 308; henceforth cited in the text as *Works*.

16 Jenni Calder argues in a recent article that, in contrast to his predecessor Scott, Stevenson is especially sceptical when it comes to reconstructing and narrating history; see 'Secrets and Lies:

Stevenson's Telling of the Past', *Rivista di Studi Vittoriani*, 20 (2007), 11-30. Calder also discusses *The Master of Ballantrae* in this essay, emphasizing the multiplicity and dissonance of voices in this novel (ibid., 21-25), thus following the third of the internal approaches to unreliability outlined in the introduction of the present essay.

17 'Mackellar's identification with Henry' is pointed out by Clunas, p. 59; it is also emphasized by Edwin Eigner, '*The Master of Ballantrae* as Elegiac Romance', *Cahiers victoriens et édouardiens*, 40 (1994), 99-106.

18 *Letters*, 2 January 1886, V, 170-172 (p. 172).

19 Max Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik I: Eine Aufsatzsammlung* (1904-06; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1991), 8th ed.; for secular asceticism, see in particular pp. 134-39.

Stormy nights and headless women: heterosexual conflict and desire in the work of Robert Louis Stevenson

Hilary J. Beattie

R. L. Stevenson has often been seen as an author whose concept of romance excluded realistic treatment of love relations between the sexes and who achieved 'his best effects without the aid of the ladies'.[1] Yet it would be a mistake to neglect heterosexual forms of narrative desire in his work, on the assumption that when present (as they undeniably are, from first to last) they are merely bland and conventional, or elided in favour of a more exciting, if covert, homoeroticism. Here I intend to explore Stevenson's professed ambivalence over the treatment of heterosexual love, by way of the twin images of my title, 'stormy nights and headless women'. These early but recurring fantasy structures suggest a darker subtext to a merely superficial avoidance and also elucidate the meaning of the homoerotic in Stevenson's corpus.

Stevenson himself proclaimed (e.g. to the San Francisco *Examiner* in 1888) that his preferred genre was the adventure romance: 'Women appear but little in my books because they are not important elements in the side of life [. . .] which I myself love most', namely 'clean open air adventure.'[2] In later years he tended to attribute his difficulties to fears of Victorian censor-ship. To Colvin in 1892 he declared: 'This is a poison bad world for the romancer, this Anglo-Saxon world; I usually get out of it by not having any women in it at all.'[3] He later observed: 'As for women, I am no more in fear of them [. . .] but I am a little in fear of grossness [. . .] The difficulty in a love yarn [. . .] is the dwelling on one string [. . .] this all shoves towards grossness, possibly even towards the far more damnable closeness [. . .] If ever I do

a rape [. . .] you would hear a noise about my rape, and it should be a man that did it.'(*Letters*, 7: 284.) This (excerpted) sequence of ideas – women, fear, gross physicality, closeness, violence – is striking, as is Stevenson's stated, not entirely ironic, dislike of his female characters. To his translator, Marcel Schwob, in 1890 he wrote: 'Vous ne détestez pas alors mes bonnes femmes? Moi, je les déteste' – in French in an otherwise English letter. (*Letters,* 6: 400.) To Colvin in 1891 he noted: 'All my other bitches [besides Uma in "The Beach of Falesá"] have been as ugly as sin, and like [the sculptor's] horse, mortes forbye.' (*Letters,* 7: 113.) Striking here is the word 'dead', decorously disguised in French. No wonder that ten years earlier, when starting *Treasure Island*, he had written: 'No women in the story: Sam's orders; and who so blythe to obey? It's awful fun, boys' stories; you just indulge the pleasure of your heart, that's all.' (*Letters,* 3: 225.)

This last sentence could have been the starting point for much recent Stevenson scholarship, which has focused on the homoerotic strain in his writing, as if to imply that disguised homosexuality is responsible for this ambivalence about women. Thus Elaine Showalter analyzed *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* as a case study of male hysteria and homosexual panic, 'the discovery and resistance of the homosexual self [whose] [. . .] romance is conveyed through men's names, men's bodies, men's psyches.'[4] Wayne Koestenbaum actually posited homo-sexual attraction as central in Stevenson's collaborations with his stepson, [Samuel] Lloyd Osbourne, which effectively started with *Treasure Island* and culminated in the all-male, sexually sug-gestive *The Ebb-Tide*.[5] Oliver S. Buckton has proposed that the figure of the re-animated corpse, or the body in the box, which surfaces in many of Stevenson's fictions, from *The Suicide Club* to *The Wrong Box*, also represents secret, homoerotic desire. The corpse (here always a male body) is a reminder of the body 'as a site of illicit pleasure, specifically "unspeakable" sexual practices between men.'[6]

The problem with such readings is that they may overlook the often highly conflicted treatment of heterosexual desire in Stevenson's work, and the ways in which this helps, contrapuntally, to explain the flight to the male love object. The major exception to this trend is Jean-Pierre Naugrette, who has among other things delineated Stevenson's 'maternal' landscapes, peopled with phallic mothers and dangerous seductresses, both actual and symbolic.[7] My title refers to fearful, sexually charged fantasies which are present very early in Stevenson's work. I shall trace their evolution through all types of writing (poetry, fiction, essays and letters), though my most detailed discussion will be of the early poem 'Stormy Nights', a group of letters from the 1870s, and the two horror stories 'Thrawn Janet' and 'The Bodysnatcher'.

I shall also draw on contemporary psychoanalytic theory, to elucidate the relationship of these disturbing heterosexual fantasies to Stevenson's homoerotic themes. Specifically, I propose that the underlying dynamic in these writings is not so much the panicked discovery of homosexual desire, oppressed by female demands. Rather, it is the kind of anxiety described by Lionel Ovesey and Ethel Person in their theory of 'pseudo-homosexuality'.[8] Briefly, they posit that an overly dependent but fundamentally heterosexual male may be insufficiently dis-identified from the powerful mother during his psycho-sexual development, resulting in a fragile sense of masculinity and, sometimes, gender identity. Such a man desires adult women sexually but also fears them as dominating and castrating, and may react with retaliatory rage, or flight, to any perceived threat. He is apt therefore to seek refuge, defensively, in other males, often father figures or admired contemporaries, whose sexual potency can supply his lack. I shall demonstrate that such dynamics can be clearly traced in much of Stevenson's work.

The evolution of heterosexual narratives in Stevenson's opus can be divided into three periods, the first comprising the early

work up to 1880; then the 1880s, which coincided with the begin-
ning of his married life; and finally the 1890s, when he had
escaped into the Pacific. In the early period, I start with 'Stormy
Nights', written sometime after Stevenson's discovery of Walt
Whitman's joyously physical *Leaves of Grass* in 1871. This poem
can of course be situated in Stevenson's numerous accounts of the
night-time terrors he suffered in childhood, in consequence of the
'high strung religious ecstasies' and fears of hell and damnation
inculcated in him by his well-meaning nurse. These inner terrors
were often personified by actual storms raging without: 'the howl
of the wind [. . .] the evil spirit that was abroad; and, above all, the
shuddering silent pauses when the storm's heart stands dread-
fully still for a moment'. And the 'perfect impersonation' of the
storm was a 'horseman riding past with his cloak about his head',
over and over again, 'all night long', while the terrified child cried
and prayed and held his breath, in a 'state of miserable exalta-
tion'. (*Letters,* 2: 66.) These nocturnal storms show up in much
of Stevenson's later prose and poetry, e.g. (in milder form) in the
poem 'Windy Nights' from *A Child's Garden of Verses*. In the
metaphorical 'Stormy Nights', unpublished in the author's life-
time, the opening mood is one of defiant, Whitmanesque zeal, as
the poet both confesses and attempts to exorcise and repress the
troubles of his 'perished childhood'. Then he describes the chief
trouble; how the young boy, in bed, experiments nightly with 'evil
things' and mysterious 'possibilities of sin'.

> And how my spirit beat
> The cage of its compulsive purity;
> How – my eyes fixed,
> My shot lip tremulous between my fingers
> I fashioned for myself new modes of crime,
> Created for myself with pain and labour
> The evil that the cobwebs of society,
> The comely secrecies of education,
> Had made an itching mystery to mewards.

After this barely veiled description of masturbation, that scourge of Victorian boyhoods, there breaks the horrific storm, with its 'cloak-wrapt horseman' repeatedly pounding by, 'Like some one riding with a pardon, and ever baffled, ever shut from passage.' Here the storm-driven horseman seems to represent not only the forces of punishment, or pardon withheld, but also the terrifying compulsion of mounting and ebbing, male sexual excitement, until the child's 'hard breathing' is gradually released in sleep. The following two verses depict escape, first as a solitary Indian, revelling in open-air adventure and his quest for the meaning of life, yet still writhing in terror at night on his bed of leaves; then as an adult, a Greek, seeking peace and safety in the company and talk of his fellow men, 'free from inordinate cravings'.[9]

So what are these 'inordinate cravings', and why are they so dangerous? Stevenson, like his father before him, always used day-dreaming and self-storytelling as an antidote to his night terrors. 'When there was no high wind [. . .] I told myself romances in which I played the hero [. . .] usually these fantasies embraced the adventures of a lifetime, full of far journeys and Homeric battles [. . .] They had no reference to religion [. . .] and as far back as I can remember, they bore always some relation to women, and Eros and Anteros [love and hate] must always equally have divided my allegiance. And lastly they would be concluded always with a heroic, and sometimes with a cruel death. I never left myself till I was dead.'[10] In these still interludes between the storms, sexual terror is mastered in story. Women are the objects of desire, but the romantic, literary quest is one of extreme ambivalence, coupled with the man's inevitable submission in death. This scenario finds gruesome expression in the undated but probably early poem 'The Daughter of Herodias', a defensively comic treatment of the Victorians' favourite femme fatale.[11] This time the night is still and hot, and the voluptuous, murderous Salome (daughter of an equally murderous mother)

is haunted by the vision of her male victim's head. It lies on a salver, at her feet upon her bed, a head 'sallow and horrible and dead [. . .] watching her, horrible and sly'. The hallucination, with its uneasy, mutual seeing, is jokingly attributed to indigestion (the result of greed), but the sexual partners seem doomed to tor-ment each other, sado-masochistically, in perpetuity. The only men who are safe are the three already castrated eunuch slaves who rhythmically labour to pleasure the woman by fanning her. This may be Stevenson's first male corpse, and perhaps John the Baptist points forward to that rash young man later found dead in bed, murdered, the voyeuristic victim of two voluptuous women, in *The Suicide Club* (1878).

This preoccupation with women, sexual desire, beheading (castration) and death surfaces in letters Stevenson wrote in 1874, after being taken by his first love, Fanny Sitwell, to see the Elgin marbles in the British Museum. He reacted with palpable shock to their representation of the Three Fates, the great mother goddesses of love and death. It was the headlessness of the three huge women that most impressed Stevenson, and I excerpt some of the freely associative ramblings (to both his cousin, Bob, and to Fanny Sitwell) that followed: '...the three Fates are unspeakable [. . .] I just cried: these three women are so hellish calm and can see so far away, can't they? [. . .] I'm damned glad to have seen them; and I think I'm glad they've lost their heads, I don't think any faces could be worthy of those beautiful, *meaning* bodies.' (*Letters,* 2: 64-65.) Later, after obtaining a framed photograph of them, he mused: '... those [. . .] draperies are drawn over a wonderful greatness of body instinct with sex; I do not see a line in them that could be a line in a man. And yet [. . .] they are not women for us [. . .] we do not desire to see their great eyes troubled with our passions, or the great impassive members con-torted with any hope or pain or pleasure [. . .] [But at] worst, shall I not be able to lay my head on the great knees of the middle Fate [. . .] great knees that awe me and yet make me mad with desire [.

. .] and go to sleep?' (*Letters,* 2: 70-72.) He later fantasised about these great, deep-breasted women living, austere, rigid and passionless, on some 'lost island in the pagan seas'. And yet 'if one could love a woman like that once, see her once grow pale with passion, and once wring your lips out upon hers, would it not be a small thing to die?' (*Letters,* 2: 76-77.)

These letters (from a series dated late October/early November 1874, to Fanny Sitwell, that also contain the above, anguished description of the hated storms and head-swathed horseman of 'Stormy Nights') seem to evidence both overwhelming attraction and fear with regard to the female body. There is an associated fantasy of sex with powerful women as engulfing and dangerous to the needy, dependent male. Women are self-sufficient, always more 'substantive' than men, and all-seeing (even without heads) whereas men are not men without women (Stevenson cannot think of Hercules without his wife Deianera). Better therefore that such phallic women be castrated or headless, their nakedness draped, safely remote and immobile. Otherwise they may cause the immediate death of the man who even once passionately kisses and arouses them, or who rashly lays his head on their knees, to fall asleep forever. These letters, with their free fall of free associations, also contain noteworthy references to well known cases of deadly women. Deianera was responsible for the agonizing death of the unfaithful Hercules, by sending him a robe impregnated with a love philtre that proved to be poisonous. Stevenson praises here the 'Song of Deborah and Barak' (Judges 5),in which Jael, a married woman, lures Barak's enemy Sisera to her tent, kills him by hammering a tent peg through his temple and afterwards cuts off his head. (*Letters,* 2: 68-69.) And there is the sorceress Medea, with her trail of dismembered or boiled-alive male victims. Stevenson had once addressed Fanny Sitwell as Medea, begging her to kill him or make him young again, but increasingly in this period he called her Madonna or even 'mother of my soul', and cast himself in the safer role of

little child or 'friend and son and priest'. (*Letters*, 1: 374; 2: 94, 96-97, 103, 120.)

Such fear and ambivalence show up repeatedly in Stevenson's work of this early period, in examples too numerous to cite. In 'An Old Song' (1877) the utterly ineffectual, martyred hero is betrayed and spurned by the now-married woman he still loves, a scenario echoed in the early fable 'The Touchstone', where the desired, deceitful woman proves to be 'dead' and empty behind her smiling mask. In 'The Pavilion on the Links' (1879) the inadequate hero-narrator distances himself from his love by emphasizing over and over that she is by now long dead, and depicts his climactic kiss as 'from a man soon to die to a woman already dead'. In 'Will o' the Mill' (1877), the cautious hero renounces love, marriage and life itself, and the rejected woman marries another only to be punished by death in childbirth. Will is rescued finally by his 'only friend' and father, Death. In the essay 'Virginibus Puerisque' (1876), a strangely anxious pontification on marriage coming from a 25-year-old bachelor, matrimony is represented as a 'perilous remedy' for loneliness; a 'grave' and 'terrifying' step, a 'field of battle' that leads only to death. And sometimes fear and resentment explode against the woman. 'A man who delights women by his feminine perceptions will often scatter his admirers by a chance explosion of the under side of man...'[12] In the violent coming-of-age fable 'The House of Eld' (around 1874) Jack kills all three parental figures with his magic sword, but it is the treacherous 'mother' whose body is severed 'through the midst' with a sideways swing of the blade.

This note of retaliatory violence brings me to the second period, the 1880s (perhaps not coincidentally the beginning of Stevenson's married life with Fanny Osbourne). Now there is a sudden eruption of dark and devilish imagery, often around women and sometimes involving gender fluidity and merging, as well as decapitation and dismemberment. All this is true of 'Thrawn Janet' and 'The Bodysnatcher', both of 1881. 'Thrawn

Janet', the Scots tale of a young minister who rashly employs as housekeeper an older woman seen to be a witch, is one of Stevenson's masterpieces, even if he expressed doubt as to its universal significance.[13] 'The Bodysnatcher', about a medical student turned grave robber, was condemned by Stevenson himself as offensive and 'horrid'. Indeed, after its first printing in 1884 he did not include it in any of the collections of short stories published in his lifetime. (*Letters*, 3: 204; 5: 41 n.2, 52.) It has interesting affinities, however, with his recurring adolescent nightmare of the double life, described in 'A Chapter on Dreams' (1888). Here, an Edinburgh medical student witnesses 'the abhorred dexterity of surgeons' by day, and spends every night, in wet clothes, wearily climbing the stairs of his lodgings, brushing past an endless, dreary procession of solitary men and women coming down (surely a sexual dream, as hinted by the word 'wet' repeated three times).[14]

Both these stories (which are in many respects the same story) evidence the sexual fantasies hinted at in 'Stormy Nights' and the musings on the three Fates. Both feature inexperienced, unattached young men, The Revd. Soulis and the student Fettes, who are overconfident, even arrogant, in their dealings with the world. Both are led by an older man or men (Soulis by the local laird, Fettes by MacFarlane and Mr K.) into compromising, sinful or criminal relationships with sexual overtones, and uncanny danger invades their solitary lodgings. The experienced women characters, the licentious Janet McClour and Jane Galbraith, the murdered prostitute, both embody the dangers of unbridled sexuality, and therefore have to die. Yet they both hover uncertainly between life and death. The locals are suspicious of the undead Janet with her twisted neck; and Fettes, who has had sexual relations with Jane only the day before, cannot believe she is really dead. The dead Jane is doubled at the end with the exhumed corpse of the blameless old farmer's wife, but both have their clothing or shrouds pulled off, exposing their naked limbs

to the students' prurient gaze. Janet's clothing is ripped off her back by the local women and the minister takes her home in her 'sark', while her 'duds' are strewn around the room in which he finds her hanging dead. We are reminded of the semi-draped Fates, whose stony bodies are still 'instinct with sex' and whose absent heads can still stare back, Medusa-like, at the shuddering male viewer (Soulis takes a 'cauld grue' as he looks at Janet or the 'black man').[15]

Both stories feature dismemberment and decapitation. The decapitation is implicit in the case of the dissected Jane, but is spelled out in that of her male counterpart, the blackmailing, murdered Gray. His head (like John the Baptist's on a salver) is given for dissection to the covetous, greedy Richardson. Janet's head is almost twisted off her body, her face grimacing like a corpse before laying-out, even before she is found hanging from a thread. (This image is an old one in Scottish folklore, but it also recalls the three Fates, who spin and then cut the thread of Life.)[16] Finally, the climactic scenes of retribution in both stories occur at night, with torrential storms and impenetrable dark-ness, preceded in 'Thrawn Janet' by uncanny heat and calm (as in 'The Daughter of Herodias'). And what terrifies the young men in both stories is the horrific suggestion of gender fluidity and merging, at the very peak of excitement. Janet is revealed to have been inhabited by the 'Black Man' or Devil, while the shrouded body of her counterpart, the farmer's wife, grows and swells like some monstrous phallus, until shown to be that of another 'black man', the dead and dissected Gray, the bodysnatchers' alter ego. And we recall that 'snatch' is a slang term for the female genitalia, wherein men are fatally snared.[17] At the climax of both stories the light is suddenly extinguished and the young men run screaming for their lives through the dark and rain, while the bodysnatch-ers' horse gallops off, its ghastly rider now dead. Both Soulis and Fettes are henceforth effectively dead men, their celibate lives haunted and barren.

It is surely no coincidence that it was in precisely this period that Stevenson found the formula of the all male adventure romance for which he became famous. Coming-of-age quest stories like *Treasure Island* (1881) and *Kidnapped* (1886) banish women to the margins and reinforce male solidarity and identity in the face of the threats they pose, even if the young heroes may still sometimes be ineffectual and the older men treacherous or misled. (Recall that the hapless Fettes tells MacFarlane: 'You and K. between you [. . .] you'll make a man of me', when in fact he is unmanned through their machinations.) By the same token, physicality and sexual excitement could be transposed into the safer male realm, avoiding the highly conflicted sexual scripts around women that bedevilled, so to speak, any close treatment of relations between the sexes. Otherwise, the excluded female body had to be defensively objectified, distanced or mutilated, even if it is the man who sometimes ends up dead. In this context one may recall Stevenson's uneasy fascination with Poe, especially his tales of demonic, dead women resurrected. Stevenson (1875) had explicitly noted that Poe's 'Berenice' (whose demented hero robs his undead cousin's corpse of her teeth) touched a personal 'chord', though one 'that had better be left alone'. He also dwelled on the psychological realism of 'Ligeia', whose final scene (where the shrouded corpse of the fair lady Rowena stirs, grows and is horrifyingly transformed into the hero's lost love, the black-haired Ligeia) is an obvious prototype for the climax of 'The Bodysnatcher'.[18]

Stevenson did attempt love stories, even in the 1880s. He partially coped with ambivalence and sexual anxiety through the device of split female characters. Thus, an older, helpful woman can protect the timid, ineffectual hero against the dangerous, often younger, female. In *Prince Otto* (1883) the prince is aided by the older, sexually experienced Countess von Rosen to master his fear of his domineering young wife, who has reduced him to impotence, both personal and political, such that he describes his

love for her as 'slavish and unerect'. She at one point stabs the virile Baron Gondremark, her ally and lover, and is dubbed 'quite a Judith' in consequence. But the Countess can only declare her own love for Otto in a scene where she is safely disguised as a young man. This motif is also used in *The Black Arrow* (1883), where the heroine, Joanna Sedley, at first allays Dick Shelton's fear and dislike of women (he esteems only the one who was 'burned for a witch and the wearing of men's clothes') by being disguised as a male comrade. After she is suddenly revealed to him as a woman, in a reverse gender transformation, she too has to be doubled with a female helper, the bossy and capable Alicia Risingham. Alicia in turn is at one point disguised as a man, and resolutely takes charge of Dick's love affair as Joanna recedes into the background. And the inept Dick is ultimately dismissed by his virile, if deformed, double, Richard Crookback, in the contemptuous double-entendre: 'He will not rise [. . .] [he] hath a capon's heart.'

Stevenson throughout his career (and life) seems to have been fascinated by paired older and younger women; mother and daughter, aunt and niece, nurse and mother, older and younger sisters. A mother/daughter pair shows up as early as his 1874 essay on the preacher, John Knox, who denounced women but finally married, at a late age, the young daughter of a still married devotee, who came to live with them.[19] Yet the fictional device of doubled women came back to bite him, so to speak, in his Gothic tale, 'Olalla' (1885), probably his least ambiguous venture into the topic of sexual passion but one that he repeatedly wrote off as 'false'. As I have demonstrated in detail elsewhere, 'Olalla' is the repressed, female double of the all-male *Jekyll and Hyde* and, like it, was conceived in a nightmare.[20] Here, as in 'Thrawn Janet', an inadequate (wounded) hero is delivered by an older man (his doctor) into the domain of a sexually licentious older woman with impaired speech, who is tabooed by the locals. She is doubled with her seeming opposite, her beautiful, articulate

and pious daughter, with whom the hero falls passionately in love but who resists his advances. But both women turn out to embody the overwhelming dangers of sexual desire to the hapless male. At the climax the seemingly imbecilic and innocuous mother is suddenly revealed as a ravenous vampire when she bites the hero's bleeding hand (wounded in an act of symbolic defloration), but the virginal daughter declares herself infected with the same atavistic appetites. Note that these revelations are preceded and symbolised by a horrific nocturnal storm, where the howling of the 'black wind', mingling with bestial, savage cries suggestive of some nightmare primal scene, shocks and terrifies the shuddering hero.

In the third period of his career, the 1890s, as well as writing tales with only masculine protagonists, like *The Wrecker* and *The Ebb-Tide*, Stevenson made a conscious effort to overcome his 'fear' of his women characters, though in ways that betray the old, lingering conflicts, especially in stories with Scottish settings. The unfinished *Weir of Hermiston* is essentially a reprise of 'Olalla' in a more mature and realistic vein, with sexual interest divided between the paired characters of aunt and niece, both named Kirstie. Desire is most tellingly depicted in the seductive older woman, another housekeeper, into whose isolated domain the hero, Archie, has been consigned by his tyrannical father. But the niece's dangerousness is suggested by the fact that she was to have been deflowered and impregnated by the hero's evil stand-in (who is then murdered by the hero).[21]

In *David Balfour* (1892), the sequel to *Kidnapped*, the women are again split, and David's love, Catriona, is soon overshadowed by the witty, strong-willed Barbara Grant, who takes over the management of their affair, rather like Alicia Risingham in *The Black Arrow*. Catriona is effectively a heterosexual replacement for the Alan Breck of *Kidnapped*, but she is a stereotypical figure and the scenes between David and Alan here have a poignancy and physical intimacy that far outweigh those between her and

David. Eventually the virile Alan, himself impervious to female charms, has to help the ambivalent, immature David manage the girl, even lending him strength by sharing a single bed with him. Stevenson admitted that the love affair was so 'correct' that it 'might be read out to a mothers' meeting – or a daughters' meeting'. (*Letters*, 7: 284.) Most confusing of all is the episode in Leiden where David, finally alone with Catriona, passes her off as his sister, and is consumed with guilt and fear as he struggles against admitting, let alone acting on, his own desire. The atmosphere of danger and taboo here resembles nothing so much as the 'unmarketable' dream described in 'A Chapter on Dreams' (1888), where a man is left alone with his young step-mother, tortured by love but keeping a distance, terrified that she will denounce him for the murder of his father.[22] Catriona herself wishes repeatedly that she were a man and claims to have become one at the end, when David accidentally wounds her with his sword (another symbolic defloration) while fighting with her father. Their actual marriage is passed over so un-explicitly that one hardly realises it has taken place.

At first sight, 'The Beach of Falesá' (1892), set in the more sexually open and perhaps less class-conscious South Seas, might seem the one instance in which Stevenson was able to transcend the sexual conflicts of his earlier fiction. But on closer inspection it proves to be a reworking of 'Thrawn Janet' in a more benign key. Wiltshire, another over-confident, ignorant newcomer to a superstitious community, immediately allows himself to be married off, by a duplicitous older man, to a local woman who proves to be tabooed. Uma (first seen half naked, in a wetted 'sark') is young and pretty, but she is doubled with her sinister old, black clad mother who mumbles and hums to herself, and the 'wedding' is performed by another 'black man', the fake cleric, Black Jack. Wiltshire, unlike Soulis, successfully defies and outwits the resident 'Tiapolo', Case, in his forest lair with its painted, faked devils. But in the climactic scene, again at night, Wiltshire at first

mistakes Uma for a 'devil woman', and she is hit during his fight with Case (in an echo of *David Balfour*). Now at last the treacherous older man is vanquished, in an utterly orgiastic scene where Wiltshire repeatedly stabs/penetrates Case, fainting on his dead body with his head on Case's mouth. He wakes only to stab him again, a climax that must also owe something to the cannibalistic notion of drawing strength from dead enemies. But Wiltshire remains, in a sense, permanently tabooed, by his union with a non-white woman (who becomes so 'powerful big' that she could vanquish any man).

That Stevenson's fantasies about overpowering females and feminised men pervaded his fiction to the end, can be seen in his other unfinished novel, *St. Ives*. Its hero, a Napoleonic war prisoner in Edinburgh, is given the woman's name, Anne, and is doubled with his evil cousin, Alain, who is an effeminate fop. The action consists of the hero's ambivalent flights away from, and then back towards, the Scottish girl with whom he falls in love, aided by a succession of male helpers. At one point he both reveals and neutralises the overwhelming importance of female caretakers in his early life. After his mother's execution during the Revolution, he was cared for in prison by multiple mothers, a succession of aristocratic 'belles mamans', each of whom was led out in turn, smiling, to the guillotine and decapitated.[23] And, lastly, the 'real heroine' of one planned romance, *The Young Chevalier*, was to have been named Marie-Salomé des Saintes Maries – a name which surely represents the very embodiment of murderous sexuality, protectively sandwiched between multiple, maternal virginities! (*Letters*, 7: 284-285.)

To sum up, Stevenson's treatment of sexuality is too complex and multivalent to be neatly subsumed under the rubric of the homoerotic and the homo-social. It is only by using a historical, contextual method, aided by modern psychoanalytic theories concerning male sexual desire, that one can explicate the evolution of love themes in his work, and more accurately assess the

meanings of his proclaimed ambivalence over tackling them. How successfully he would have done so in his later work, it is impossible to say. What is certain is that Stevenson continued to struggle with conflicts over 'procreation' and 'heredity', social propriety versus 'maenadic' sexuality, and the damning effects of religion on sex education, to the very end of his life. And almost at the moment of his death he claimed to have 'nothing in [his] foolish elderly head but love stories'. (*Letters*, 8: 362, 365, 399.)

NOTES

1   Henry James, 'Robert Louis Stevenson', in *Century Magazine*, April 1888; reprinted in *Henry James: Literary Criticism: Essays on Literature, American Writers, English Writers* (Library of America: New York, 1984), 1231-1255 (p. 1252).

2   Anne Roller Issler, *Happier for his Presence: San Francisco and Robert Louis Stevenson* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1949), p. 160.

3   *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994-1995), 7:231; henceforth cited in the text as *Letters*.

4   Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Viking, 1990), pp. 107-108.

5   Wayne Koestenbaum, *Double Talk: The Erotics of Male Literary Collaboration* (New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 145-151.

6   Oliver S. Buckton, *Cruising with Robert Louis Stevenson: Travel, Narrative and the Colonial Body* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007), pp. 35-66.

7   Jean-Pierre Naugrette, *Robert Louis Stevenson: L'Aventure et son Double* (Paris: Presses de l'École Normale Supérieure, 1987), pp. 41-44, 95-98, 101-102, 155-161.

8   Lionel Ovesey, *Homosexuality and Pseudohomosexuality* (New York: Science House, 1969), pp. 32-51, 56-65; Ethel Spector Person, *The Sexual Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 94-97.

9   *Robert Louis Stevenson: Collected Poems*, ed. by Janet Adam Smith (2nd. Ed., New York: Viking, 1971), pp. 86-88, 462-463; henceforth cited as *Poems*. The ambiguous but potentially transgressive meaning

of the excerpt becomes clearer if the fourth line is read with a pause after 'tremulous'. It should be recalled that Whitman, who 'tumbled the world upside down' for Stevenson in late adolescence, was similarly transgressive. According to Harold Bloom ('The Real Me', *New York Review of Books* April 26, 1984, p.4) 'this celebratory mode of masturbation, whether read metaphorically or literally, remains the genuine scandal of Whitman's poetry'.

10 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Memoirs of Himself' (London: Heinemann, 1924), Tusitala, 29, 145-168 (p. 155).

11 *Poems*, pp. 95-96, 465.

12 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Virginibus Puerisque' (London: Heinemann, 1924), Tusitala, 25, 1-20 (p. 17).

13 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Note for "The Merry Men"' (London: Heinemann, 1924), Tusitala, 8, xv-xvi (p. xv).

14 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'A Chapter on Dreams' (London: Heinemann, 1924), Tusitala, 30, 41-53 (pp. 43-44).

15 Stevenson 'frightened [himself] to death' with 'Thrawn Janet'; see *Letters*, 3: 189. For another discussion of sexual conflict and repression in this tale, see Burkhard Niederhoff, *Erzähler und Perspektive bei Robert Louis Stevenson* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1994), pp. 71-72. The career of the licentious young Janet, the high-kilted temptress of an earlier curate, is touched on in Stevenson's unfinished 'Heathercat' (London: Heinemann, 1924), Tusitala, 16, 143-164 (pp. 149-150).

16 The body of James Hogg's Justified Sinner is similarly found hanging, from a hay-rope too brittle to bear weight. For other examples, see Coleman O. Parsons, 'Stevenson's Use of Witchcraft in "Thrawn Janet"', *Studies in Philology*, 43 (1946), 551-571 (pp. 562-563).

17 The O.E.D. records 'snatch' in the sense of 'female pudenda', in written form only in the 20th century. But as 'trap' or 'snare', as well as a term for a quick, illicit sexual encounter with a woman, it goes back to the late 16th.

18 Robert Louis Stevenson, '*The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*' (London: Heinemann, 1924), Tusitala, 28, 178-185 (p. 181).

19 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'John Knox and his Relations to Women' (London: Heinemann, 1924), Tusitala, 27, 202-244 (pp. 230-233). Stevenson admitted to envying Knox 'his godly females all leaving their husbands to follow after him'; see *Letters*, 2: 69.

20 Hilary J. Beattie, 'Dreaming, doubling and gender in the work of Robert Louis Stevenson: The strange case of "Olalla"', *Journal of Stevenson Studies*, 2 (2005), 10-32.

21 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Weir of Hermiston*, ed. by Catherine Kerrigan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp. xxxii-xxxiv.

22 'A Chapter on Dreams', pp. 47-50.

23 Robert Louis Stevenson, *St. Ives* (London: Heinemann, 1924), Tusitala, 15, pp. 154-155. In the period 1893-1894, when St. Ives was being written, Stevenson was vigorously protesting (in letters to the *Times* and elsewhere) against the 'detestable felony' of taking female heads during the Samoan wars; see Roslyn Jolly, *Robert Louis Stevenson in the Pacific: Travel, Empire and the Author's Profession* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 135-136. Did these events stir up an old obsession?

The rejection of dichotomous thinking in Stevenson's literary essays

Gordon Hirsch

Stevenson's book reviews and essays on authors were written mostly in the 1870s, when he was a young man in his twenties, and before his literary career had taken off – certainly before he had written anything of great note. Nevertheless, a twenty-first century reader, familiar with Stevenson's fiction, readily discovers in these literary essays a Stevensonian cast of mind – balanced in its judgments, critical but at the same time sympathetic, generally able to allow that there are two sides to most important questions and that individuals are an inevitable mixture of positive and negative features. Such qualities of mind in the essays might come as no surprise to a reader who, for example, recognises how problematic Stevenson makes the judgment between the Durrisdeer brothers, James and Henry, in his novel, *The Master of Ballantrae* – how difficult Stevenson makes it for the reader to side unequivocally with one brother against the other, since each has a claim on our sympathies. Or in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, which of the three main characters has the strongest claim on truth-telling? Still, it is notable that this openness and broad-mindedness figure as prominently in Stevenson's early literary essays as in his fiction.

One reason Stevenson's discussions of authors and fictional characters – those created by others as well as those created by himself – are especially interesting stems from his refusal to isolate the bad from the good in these figures, for he clearly is not inclined toward the simplifications of 'dichotomous thinking'. One might, of course, find other 19th-century exponents of notions similar to what I am characterizing as Stevenson's

rejection of 'dichotomous thinking'. For example, it shares some features with Keats's admiration for Shakespeare's 'negative capability', with John Stuart Mill's argument in favour of the generative clash of opposing ideas in a society characterised by freedom of thought and discussion, and with Matthew Arnold's view that his culture required a healthy infusion of Hellenism to counteract its restrictive Hebraism. Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth has argued recently that George Eliot's complex perspectival system in *Middlemarch* so well depicts conflicting systems of discourse that a simple and straightforward choice between opposites is impossible; Ermarth believes that Eliot derived her particular 'nondualist vision' from Feuerbach and Spinoza.[1] I regard Stevenson's rejection of dichotomous thinking as prima-rily a psychological phenomenon, interweaving cognition and emotion, rather than as a purely logical or philosophical one. To describe the phenomenon in Stevenson I employ recent research in cognitive psychology.

Psychiatrists and psychologists whose practice of therapy is informed by cognitive psychology research, such as Aaron T. Beck and his followers, call attention to a particular habit of thought which produces cognitive distortion: 'Dichotomous thinking is the tendency to evaluate experiences in terms of mutually exclusive categories (e. g., good or bad, success or failure, trust-worthy or deceitful) rather than seeing experiences as falling along continua. The effect of this "black-or-white" thinking is to force extreme interpretations on events that would normally fall in the intermediate range of a continuum, since there are no intermediate categories' in dichotomous thinking.[2] Symptoms of psychopathology aside, in ordinary life this sort of cognitive dis-tortion can be highly problematic. Failing to recognise that there are a number of positions in between extremes impedes problem solving, cooperation, and negotiation. It focuses instead on rapid categorization, difference, and opposition rather than facilitating a complex recognition of similarity *and* difference. Dichotomous

thinking is the parent of missed opportunities and inflexibility, and it poisons interpersonal relationships. In the political realm, Americans, in particular, have in the past few years encountered evidence demonstrating just how limiting black-or-white, all-or-nothing thinking, or magnification/minimization can be. Stevenson's reluctance to dichotomise in his discussions of 'men and books' in his early reviews and essays anticipates his own future practice in fiction and makes him a valuable literary critic as well as a complex and insightful author.[3]

In keeping with the 'RLS 2008' conference's emphasis on 'European Stevenson', the discussion that follows focuses on Stevenson's responses to François Villon and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Towards the end of the paper, however, I will briefly discuss some of Stevenson's other treatments of authors and literary characters, where a similar rejection of dichotomous thinking may be observed.

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Originally published in *Cornhill Magazine*, August 1877, Stevenson's paper on 'François Villon, Student, Poet, and Housebreaker' unpacks the ambivalence figured in its title.[4] The essay is a response to the recently published *Étude biographique sur François Villon* written by Auguste Longnon, a biographical study based on official records and documents Longnon found in the national archives.[5] Longnon's was an important project, and it is frequently cited even today by Villon scholars. Stevenson offers this assessment of the impact of Longnon's book: 'A little while ago Villon was almost totally forgotten; then he was revived for the sake of his verses; and now he is being revived with a vengeance in the detection of his misdemeanours' as these were brought to light by Longnon's archival research (*Works*, IV, pp. 204-05).[6]

Stevenson's essay follows Longnon's book fairly closely, hew-

ing generally to the order of the biography, and quoting or para-phrasing bits and snippets freely. He deftly characterises Villon's 'gang' as something more like an association of 'independent malefactors, socially intimate, and occasionally joining together for some serious operation, just as modern stockjobbers form a syndicate for an important loan' (p. 221). Paralleling Longnon, Stevenson recounts a number of Villon's burglaries and thefts, as well as arrests and periods of imprisonment followed by release.

As the title of the essay underlines, Stevenson is fascinated by the idea that Villon was at the same time a student (he repeatedly refers to him as a Master of Arts from the University of Paris), an influential major poet, and a housebreaker and thief. Villon is a 'ragged, blackguard city poet with a smack of the Paris student, and a smack of the Paris street arab' (p. 234), and 'the world to which he introduces us is [. . .] blackguardly and bleak. Paris swarms before us, full of famine, shame, and death' (p. 238).

As is typical of his essays on authors, Stevenson is as much interested in Villon's personality and biography as in his writing, though he certainly recognises Villon's importance in literary history. Attracted to Villon's 'callous pertinent way of looking upon the sordid and ugly sides of life' (p. 238), Stevenson praises his 'writing, so full of colour, so eloquent, so picturesque. [. . .] This gallows-bird was the one great writer of his age and country, and initiated modern literature for France. [. . .] Out of him flows much of Rabelais; and through Rabelais [. . .] a deep, permanent, and growing inspiration' for French literature (pp. 237-38).[7]

Praise and criticism sometimes blur in Stevenson's assessment of Villon's poetry: he notes 'its unrivalled insincerity. [. . .] He comes up with a whine, and runs away with a whoop and his finger to his nose' (p. 239). Villon may first elicit pathos from his reader, but then the *Testament* becomes 'one long-drawn epical grimace, pulled by a merry-andrew, who has found a certain despicable eminence over human respect and human affections by perching himself astride upon the gallows' (p. 240).

The *Testament* is thus both an 'admirable and despicable per-formance' (p. 244). Villon's most sincere emotions are 'a deep and somewhat snivelling conviction of the transitory nature of this life and the pity and horror of death' (p. 241). His writings manifest 'an undisguised envy of those richer than himself', which Stevenson interprets as Villon's attempt to justify theft and wrongdoing (p. 240). In fact, Stevenson writes, Villon repre-sents the kind of unattractive, covetous poor person that Victor Hugo regarded as the '*mauvais pauvre* [. . .], the first wicked *sans-culotte*' (p. 241). Villon might seem 'mighty pathetic and beseeching here in the street, but I would not go down a dark road with him for a large consideration' (p. 241).

Stevenson is fascinated not only by the biographical evidence that Longnon uncovers but also by the mysteries he identi-fies regarding Villon's life – the uncertainties present in the biographical record: 'How or when he died, whether decently in bed or trussed up to a gallows, remains a riddle' (p. 244). Many matters, Stevenson notes, 'still remain in darkness, in spite of M. Longnon's diligent rummaging among archives' (p. 234). Furthermore, the use by Villon and his acquaintances of multiple aliases and pseudonyms surely must be regarded with suspicion: 'A ship is not to be trusted that sails under so many colours' (p. 216). Some of the perplexities and ambiguities noted by Stevenson reverberate in modern readings of Villon, although critics today tend to be still more reluctant to judge the poet. An important recent study by Jane H. M. Taylor describes Villon as 'a highly conscious poet, playing with the fiction of the poet and the pen. [. . .] Villon, in other words, has interwoven levels of discourse in ways which are profoundly self-subverting.'[8] He represents himself, for example, as 'a divided poet-lover, at once infatuated and aware of the absurdities of infatuation' (Taylor, p. 49). Rather than offering certainties, Villon prefers 'to hold the contradictions in suspension' (Taylor, p. 50). It is easy to understand how the construction of such a 'restless, protean self'

as Taylor describes (p. 57), one who is drawn to the playful and ironic, would appeal to Stevenson, who is attracted to this man of mysteries, with his multiple names and identities, uncertain history, and unfathomable – sometimes seemingly contradictory – motives.[9]

❧

In his tantalizingly brief discussion of *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* in the essay on 'Books Which have Influenced Me',[10] Stevenson responds to George Henry Lewes' *The Life and Works of Goethe*.[11] *Werther* is, of course, the story of a sensitive young man who meets and falls passionately in love with a young woman, Lotte, who is already betrothed to another young man, Albert, whom she marries in the course of the novel. Werther's despair at his hopeless situation intensifies, until he eventually kills himself with one of Albert's pistols.

Stevenson, like Lewes and many others before and since, regards *Werther* as a *roman à clef*. A study of critical responses to *Werther* by Bruce Duncan, to choose a recent example, devotes an entire chapter to tracing the antecedents of Goethe's novel to real events connected with Goethe's life.[12] As Duncan notes, 'everyone knew that Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem's shock and suicide in 1772 was the model for Werther's death', and many knew from the time of *Werther*'s publication in 1774 that Goethe's acquaint-ances, Charlotte Buff and Johann Georg Christian Kestner, were the models for Lotte and Albert in the novel (p. 107). Duncan observes that even many modern critics who remain sceptical about a biographical approach to the book admit some 'notion of Goethe's and Werther's overlapping identities' and suggest 'that the author wrote himself out of the very malaise that claimed his hero', basing these inferences partly on Goethe's 1813 account in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* of how he suffered from suicidal think-ing at the time he began *Werther* (Duncan, pp. 113 and 114).

The connection between Goethe's biography and *Werther* was also stressed by Lewes, writing 150 years before Duncan. Quoting extensively from Kestner's complaints that in his novel Goethe had altered many of the facts of the relationship he and his wife had with Goethe (I, pp. 237-38), Lewes argued that *Werther* is 'a book composed out of a double history, the history of its author's experience, and the history of one of his friends', the suicide Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem (I, p. 217). The point Stevenson in his essay draws from Lewes is that 'in that crowning offense of *Werther*', Goethe treated the real-life originals for Lotte and Albert shabbily; Goethe 'seems a very epitome of the sins of genius, breaking open the doors of private life and wantonly wounding friends' (*Works* IV, p. 472). In a more positive vein, however, Stevenson praises Goethe for 'his fine devotion to his art' and 'his honest and serviceable friendship for Schiller' (p. 473). Stevenson concludes that, in the case of Lewes's study of Goethe, 'biography, usually so false to its office, does here for once perform for us some of the work of fiction, reminding us, that is, of the truly mingled tissue of man's nature, and how huge faults and shining virtues cohabit and persevere in the same character' (p. 473).

Stevenson himself does not classify persons into rigid, narrow, poorly descriptive categories that ignore or exclude data. He can recognise and acknowledge contradictory data and arrive at a nuanced evaluation, one that would place the person or thing being evaluated on a continuum anchored at opposing ends by positive and negative poles. Nor in his own reaction to personal disappointments does he fall into the dichotomizing thought patterns that nurture feelings of hopelessness and a sense of one's inability to shape outcomes, patterns which underlie and feed suicidal thinking and behaviour. Biographical information and passages from Stevenson's letters expand and clarify the significance of his brief discussion of Goethe and Werther in 'Books Which Have Influenced Me'.

Following the trail blazed by both Werther and his creator,

Goethe, Stevenson in 1873 had met and fallen hopelessly in love with a married woman. In fact, Frances Sitwell was doubly proscribed for Stevenson. First, she was married to the Reverend Albert Hunt Sitwell – though the marriage had been founder-ing for some time and Mrs. Sitwell had, according to the editors of Stevenson's *Letters*,[13] by then decided to leave her husband, which she did in 1874. Second, Mrs. Sitwell already had a long-standing friendship with Sidney Colvin – dating from 'some time in the late 1860s', according to the editors of Stevenson's *Letters* (I, p. 45), and Colvin was soon to become an important sponsor of Stevenson's literary career. Colvin and Mrs. Sitwell eventually married in 1903.

Despite these complications, Frances Sitwell became Stevenson's chief correspondent and confidante in the letters written in the fall of 1873 and winter of 1874. His letters to her, which are all that survive of their correspondence (hers were destroyed), are alternately playful, rapturous, and anguished. He addresses her as 'my dear' and 'my darling', and uses vari-ous pet names – Claire, Madonna, and Consuelo (which means consolation and is borrowed from George Sand). He reports that he is despondent and wretched when her letters do not come as expected (*Letters* I, p. 335). He sprinkles his letters with German quotations from Heine as well as Goethe, compares himself explicitly to Werther and Goethe, and connects Mrs. Sitwell with Werther's beloved Lotte, as in this remarkable passage:

> These good booksellers of mine have at last got me a *Werther* without illustrations. I want you to like Charlotte [i.e. Lotte]; she is, in some ways, not unlike one you know [presumably, Mrs. Sitwell herself]. Werther himself has every feebleness and vice that could tend to make his suicide a most virtuous and commendable action; and yet I like Werther too – I don't know why except that he has written the most delightful letters in the world. Note,

by the way, the passage under the date June 21st not far from the beginning; it finds a voice for a great deal of dumb, uneasy, pleasurable longing that we have all had, times without number. [The passage in *Werther* describes yearning for an unattainable happiness.] I looked that up the other day for 'Roads', so I know the reference; but you will find it [the book] a garden of flowers from beginning to end. All through the passion keeps steadily rising, from the thunderstorm at the country-house – there was thunder in that story too – up to the last wild delirious interview; either Lotte was no good at all, or else Werther should have remained alive after that; either he knew his woman too well, or else he was precipitate. But an idiot like that is hopeless; and yet, he wasn't an idiot – I make reparation, and will offer eighteen pounds of best wax at his tomb. Poor devil, he was only the weakest[14] – or, at least, a very weak-strong man. (*Letters* I, p. 293; the bracketed comments are my additions)

The passage conveys Stevenson's identification of himself and Mrs. Sitwell with Werther and Lotte, and the very complicated, jocular assessments he offers of the literary characters (perhaps Lotte is an ideal figure, or perhaps 'no good at all'; perhaps Werther is a feeble, hopeless idiot, or perhaps he is a mixture of strengths and weaknesses, remarkable for his passion and longing; but in any case he is – like Stevenson himself, one is tempted to interject in the midst of Stevenson's letter to Mrs. Sitwell – such a wonderful letter-writer!). In his next letter to Frances Sitwell, Stevenson pre-emptively hopes that 'you will not misunderstand this letter and think I am *Werthering* all over the place' (I, p. 296). A few days later Stevenson laments how chill and dreary Edinburgh is, waxes nostalgic about Cockfield, the place he first met Mrs. Sitwell, and boasts a bit by seeming to allude to their own potential for scandal: 'And to look back

out of all this on Cockfield! If I were as unscrupulous as Goethe, I believe I could write a book about some events in my life that would rather tickle the long ears' (I, p. 302). Stevenson certainly seems to feel unhappy and even at times desperate in these let-ters, sensing that things are not going to break in his favour. The ironic tone is complex, but the playfulness and gentle mockery seem telling. He can recognise his own passion, parallel to Werther's, and at the same time cast aspersions on the excesses of the romantic Werther. Stevenson's disinclination for dichoto-mous thought, his ability to distance and meta-cognate about his thinking and feeling, serve him well. Already at a relatively young age, he has the resources he will require for coping with a difficult and challenging life.

If one brings together, then, Stevenson's essayistic treatment of Goethe and his private correspondence with Mrs. Sitwell, con-necting the literary essay with his personal history, Stevenson's attitude toward *Werther* and Lewes's reading of that novel becomes especially interesting: Stevenson is able to put himself in the place of the literary characters (and their author), is able to grasp the similarities between their situations and his own, and comes up with an attempt at some sort of complex assessment which involves both identification and a certain ironic, critical detachment.[15]

❧

In nearly all of his literary essays, not just those dealing with a continental European author, Stevenson strives for a balanced and judicious assessment. In his essay on 'Samuel Pepys', he notes that Pepys represents himself as the 'adored protagonist' of his diary – 'adored not blindly, but with trenchant insight and enduring human toleration' (*Works* IV, p. 305). Stevenson prais-es Pepys's reluctance to understate his own faults and meanness: 'the bald truth about himself, what we are all too timid to admit

when we are not too dull to see it, that was what he saw clearly and set down unsparingly' (p. 305). Pepys communicates not only 'the greatness of his life', but its smallness as well, conveying 'the news that his periwig was once alive with nits' (p. 307). Pepys would buy 'an idle, roguish French book', burn it to avoid disgrace, but then record both the purchase and destruction in his diary, revealing all to his readers (p. 299). Stevenson clearly admires an openness to embrace contradiction in his subjects similar to that which he finds in himself. Another example is Walt Whitman: he praises Whitman precisely because 'the world as it is, and the whole world as it is, physical, and spiritual, and historical, with its good and bad, with its manifold inconsistencies, is what he wishes to set forth' in his poetry (*Works* IV, p. 125). Whitman is in the end cheerful, rejecting the European literature of woe; he wishes, rather, to 'testify to the livableness of life' (pp. 120 and 121); 'his is a morality without a prohibition; his policy is one of encouragement all round' (p. 130).

Stevenson finds Robert Burns a person with a head of gold but feet of clay (*Works* IV, pp. 63-64). He describes Burns as always immersed in love affairs – indeed sinking 'more and more toward the professional Don Juan' (p. 70). Burns again illustrates the potential disjunction between the life of an author and the writing he produces. Stevenson admires Burns's colloquial, intense use of the Scottish language, his 'frank, direct, and masterly utterance' and the way homely subjects 'have been passed through the spirit of so genuine and vigorous a man' (p. 107). But he is troubled by Burns's wenching, his peasant tastes, and his 'downward course' in later years, 'whether as a man, a husband, or a poet' (p. 99). Burns is 'a man, alas! who is equally at the call of his worse and better instincts' (p. 92). We who attempt to 'read' his character must 'be gentle in our thoughts' (p. 109).

When Stevenson writes about fictional characters, the things he notices are also characteristically mixed, composite. In his essay on 'Some Gentlemen in Fiction', he takes up what is surely

as strange a set of 'gentlemen-heroes' in Dickens as one might find: 'the sottish [Sydney] Carton, the effete Twemlow, [and] the insolent [Eugene] Wrayburn' (*Works* XII, p. 320). Wrayburn particularly interests Stevenson, because Dickens has made him 'insolent to the verge, and sometimes beyond the verge, of what is pardonable' (p. 322), especially when Wrayburn abuses and attempts to manipulate the Jew Riah at the end of Book 2, Chapter 15 of *Our Mutual Friend*: 'Dickens, in an hour of irritated nerves, and under pressure of [completing] the monthly number, defaced his Wrayburn. Observe what he sacrifices. The ruling passion [presumably Wrayburn's desire for Lizzie Hexam] strong in his hour of weakness, he [Dickens] sacrifices dignity, decency, the essential human beauties of his hero; he still preserves the dialect, the shrill note of personality, the mark of identification' (p. 323).[16] In other words, although Wrayburn stoops lower here than ever before, the reader can recognise the essential hero even in the base scoundrel. What draws Stevenson's attention is precisely the way in which the ideal falters and 'the gentleman is not genteel' (p. 323), the moment when Eugene Wrayburn attracts and repels at once.

❧

The preface Stevenson wrote for the several earlier essays he collected for the 1882 volume *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* reveals much about Stevenson's attitudes toward his subjects. The preface steps back a bit from the arguments of the individual essays, most of which had initially been published some years earlier, and it offers the plea that the 'short study', as Stevenson calls the genre in which he had worked, is necessarily selective and essentially presents one 'point of view' (*Works* IV, pp. 9 and 10). Given that fact, such a short study may not be entirely accurate or, at any rate, comprehensive and complete. There is in the genre, then, an inherent risk of simplification, 'caricature',

and even 'calumny' (p. 10). Stevenson notes that 'the moral bias' of Thomas Carlyle, whom Stevenson sees as his predecessor in the short study, did indeed lead Carlyle to be too judgmental toward his subjects: 'The "point of view" was imposed by Carlyle on the men he judged of in his writings, with an austerity not only cruel but almost stupid. They are too often broken outright on the Procrustean bed; they are probably always disfigured' (p. 11). Clearly, in preparing his preface Stevenson wondered whether he had also occasionally been too frank and had erred on the side of severity in some of his original periodical essays – those on Burns, Villon, and Whitman, in particular. Stevenson's prefatory remark is probably intended both to ward off any anticipated criticism and to indicate that individuals cannot properly be judged in dichotomous terms.

If anything, then, the preface underlines the fact that in his literary essays Stevenson is remarkable for his efforts to be even-handed, for the complexity and balance of his judgments, and for seeing his subjects as mixtures of virtues and shortcomings. That seems to have been his fundamental cast of mind, and certainly a twenty-first century reader would be unlikely to fault him for partiality or excessive criticism in spite of the anxiety on that score he expresses in the preface to *Familiar Studies*. As Stevenson sympathetically and shrewdly observes there, 'all have some fault', and all of us are likely to persevere in it (pp. 13-14). The real problem arises when one calls someone else 'bad, with a self-righteous chuckle' (p. 14). Of the subjects of these 'familiar studies', however, Stevenson contends 'these were all men whom, for one reason or another, I loved; or when I did not love the men, my love was the greater to their books' (pp. 24-25).

NOTES

1   Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, 'Negotiating *Middlemarch*,' in *'Middlemarch' in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Karen Chase (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 107-31 (p. 117).

2   Aaron T. Beck, Arthur Freeman & Associates, *Cognitive Therapy of Personality Disorders* (New York: Guilford, 1990), p. 187. See also Judith S. Beck, *Cognitive Therapy: Basics and Beyond* (New York: Guilford, 1995), pp. 118-19.

3   How and why Stevenson achieved this complexity of thought is an interesting question, though a difficult one to answer with certainty. Perhaps this cast of mind was largely a function of his innate temperament or his intelligence. It might also have developed as he matured and came to challenge the 'black-or-white' thinking of his sternly Calvinist father and his fiercely religious childhood nurse, Alison Cunningham. All of Stevenson's biographers discuss the impact of this exposure to Scottish Calvinism on his thinking. Glenda Norquay's recent study of *Robert Louis Stevenson and Theories of Reading: The Reader as Vagabond* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007) takes an especially thoughtful approach to this Calvinist background, showing how it led Stevenson to consider not only evil and sin but also, partly in the way of a response, the *pleasures* of reading, as expressed by his attraction to the aesthetic and to romance forms (as opposed to realism).

4   In the October 1877 issue of *Temple Bar*, Stevenson also published a story about Francis Villon under the title 'A Lodging for the Night', which became one of the first of his stories to appear in print. Stevenson was obviously greatly attracted to this scandalous medieval poet.

5   Auguste Longnon, *Étude biographique sur François Villon* (Paris: Menu, 1877).

6   Stevenson's essay on Villon was first collected in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1882), along with eight other essays that originally appeared in periodicals, primarily *Cornhill Magazine*, between 1874 and 1881. I take the word 'familiar' in the volume's title to mean something like everyday, plain, informal. A preface, which is discussed later in this paper, was added for the collection. All quotations in this paper from Stevenson's literary essays are taken from *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson: Vailima*

Edition, 26 vols (New York: Scribner's, 1922), and page citations are included parenthetically in the text.

7 In the later 'preface' to *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, Stevenson more specifically identifies Zola, the Goncourts, and 'the infinitely greater Flaubert' as those contemporary French writers in whom 'the spirit of Villon is still living'. Stevenson also insists that Villon, 'while similar [to these writers] in ugliness [i.e. brutal realism], still surpasses them in native power' (p. 21).

8 Jane H. M. Taylor, *The Poetry of François Villon: Text and Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 47.

9 For Stevenson's own playful style, see Matthew Kaiser 'Mapping Stevenson's Rhetorics of Play' in this issue.

10 'Books Which Have Influenced Me' was first published in *The British Weekly*, 13 May 1887, pp. 17-19.

11 George Henry Lewes, *The Life and Works of Goethe: With Sketches of his Age and Contemporaries, from Published and Unpublished Sources*, 2 vols (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1856).

12 Bruce Duncan, *Goethe's 'Werther' and the Critics* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005).

13 *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew, 8 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994-95), vol I, p. 46.

14 In Goethe's novel, Albert and Werther debate whether an act of suicide should be deemed an expression of strength or of weakness, '*eine Schwäche*'. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, ed. E. L. Stahl (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), p. 52.

15 Cf. Stevenson's essay on 'Some Aspects of Robert Burns', where he notes: 'to write with authority about another man, we must have fellow-feeling and some common ground of experience with our subject' (*Works* IV, p. 61). In the essay on Burns, in fact, Stevenson devotes considerable attention to Mrs. Agnes M'Lehose, a married woman who had been deserted by her husband and with whom Burns carried on a flirtatious correspondence, as between Clarinda and Sylvander (pp. 86-87). Stevenson notes Clarinda's familiarity with *Werther* (87), and in writing of Burns and Mrs. M'Lehose betrays his personal knowledge of the risks of such a correspondence: 'It is hardly safe for a man and woman in the flush of their years to write almost daily, and sometimes in terms too ambiguous, sometimes

too plain, and generally in terms too warm, for mere acquaintance'
(p. 87). Stevenson also seems to have harboured the idea of turning
his own correspondence with Mrs. Sitwell into an epistolary novel,
requesting that copies of his letters be returned for this purpose. See
Claire Harman, *Myself and the Other Fellow: A Life of Robert Louis
Stevenson* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), pp. 91 and 167.

16 Stevenson is self-consciously vague in discussing the example he has
chosen – 'in this scene, and in one other (if I remember aright) where
it is echoed', he writes (p. 320) – and it is possible that he has conflated
Riah's scene with another a few chapters later (Book 3, Chapter
10) in which Eugene despicably plies Jenny Wren's father with
rum and money in order to discover the location of Lizzie Hexam's
country hideaway. Like Riah, Jenny Wren's father is another elderly
man, nicknamed 'Mr. Dolls' by Eugene, just as Eugene slightingly
re-names Riah 'Mr. Aaron'. Eugene's friend, Mortimer Lightwood,
who is present at the interview with Jenny Wren's father, protests and
underlines Eugene's degradation at this moment: 'Eugene, Eugene, [.
. .] can you stoop to the use of such an instrument as this?' – Charles
Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998),
p. 539.

Stevenson and Conrad: colonial imagination and photography

Rosella Mallardi

The present contribution investigates the contact zone with the Other in 'The Beach of Falesá' (1891) and *Heart of Darkness* (1899), highlighting the associated narrative strategies that inform this reorientation, specifically the visual modalities and, in particular, those inspired by photographic, and proto-cinematographic representation.

Both texts adopt the vision of a first-person narrator recounting his own experiences, and present a sophisticated use of perspective, varied perspective and the control of distance, in the representation of the self in confrontation with the other. More importantly, both texts focus on those moments in which the direct perception of what surrounds the I/eye stirs unexpected, surprising and disturbing responses, glimpses of the 'latency' of the self. The discourse of the 'I' fits 'these changing lights', giving voice to the emotional response of the viewer, to interior *durée*, and to the multiple dimensions of consciousness. It is a modern, fluid, polyphonic, and suggestive vision often accompanied by either an immediate, or, more interestingly, a delayed awareness of the fallacy of subjective judgement and prejudice, and, in any case, of the limits of natural vision. This limitation demands a redefinition of the relation between visible and invisible, substance and appearance, social mask and hidden inclinations and desires. Ultimately, it is an approach that breaks definitively with the Victorian epistemic system founded on objective vision, and with a realism based on the Narrator's reliability and authority.

In the elaboration of this world-view, photographs, daguerreotypes and the magic lantern play a primary role. Both authors

make frequent implicit and explicit reference to these visual media and to their specific terms, forms and procedures, using key words and phrases such as 'pose', 'manipulation of light and pose', 'moonshine spectrality', 'phantom show', 'apparitions', 'particularised impressions', 'latency', 'the mirror with memory'. In addition, they adopt techniques of narration that can be seen as equivalent to framing, to moving or rolling panoramas, zoom shots, dissolves, superimposition, and phantasmagorical and spiritualistic photographic effects.

Photography, the new art of the century, from its birth, and up to the nineties, charmed literature not only for its realism but particularly on account of the peculiarly *spectral-spiritistic-spiritualist* quality of its images.[1] The unprecedented way of looking at reality that resulted, played its part in the formation of Stevenson and Conrad's colonial imagination. By interposing a mechanical diaphragm between the eye and reality, photography discovers an unpredictable and incoercible temporality, which inevitably outdoes or betrays the photographer's intention. In addition to this, it creates a magical effect of time spatialisation, in that the photographic image, while evoking in the observer a past moment inexorably lost, is at the same time capable of creating the illusion of restoring that past to the present, of 'resuscitating' the dead, or even of including future projections. Precisely because photography is capable of assigning to the subject the illusion of a condition of reality and truth, its utilization in a magic lantern performance adds a novel fascination to the spectacle of shadows and demons – to us proto-cinematographic – to the extent of encouraging the perception of that phantasmagoria as reality itself, blurring the boundary between fiction and truthfulness. It is also clear that the new visual art, while necessarily linked to reality, confers on the image an unprecedented autonomy and power: since the photograph is separated from the referent, decontextualised from present, past and future, it stirs the mental and emotional responses of the individual

observer, and assimilates the projection of his/her ideologies and imagination.

Stevenson's Polynesian works, from the historical chronicles, to the travelogues and tales, all display a marked scopic structure: Stevenson, while still only superficially acquainted with Polynesian history, beliefs and languages, explores the significance of the signs of the Other, relying partly on local mediators and interpreters, but above all on his own careful observation of the relational dynamics with the Other. In *In the South Seas*, Stevenson reads between the lines with his natural eye, studies the gestures, facial and body language, notates tones, pauses and silences, and, more often than not, utilises optical instruments, like the spy-glass, after which he had named the famous tavern in *Treasure Island*, as well as the camera and the magic lantern. They are all tools that are perfectly adapted to his need for a new positioning of the observer in the face of reality, all useful for demonstrating the limits of natural vision and for shifting attention to the invisible, towards those latent inclinations, emotions, dynamics, which nonetheless control our perception of things.[2]

This physical proximity which is often accompanied by the irresistible seduction of the places, the fantastic dresses and the tattooed bodies, by the dance and song of the natives, sometimes seizes him with disturbing sensations, especially when he realises that he himself is the object of the more-or-less hidden gaze of the natives, and even of their 'supervision'. Often, the uneasiness of being stared at by the Other turns into sudden fear when he sees himself as the possible victim of, or prey to the 'latent', incontrollable cannibal instincts of the natives. He also adds that only his later acquisition of those culture-specific phenomena showed him the groundlessness of his fears:

> It chanced one day that I was ashore in the cove, with Mrs. Stevenson and the ship's cook. Except for the Casco lying outside, and a crane or two, and the ever-busy wind

and sea, the face of the world was of a prehistoric empti-
ness; life appeared to stand stock-still, and the sense of
isolation was profound and refreshing. On a sudden, the
trade-wind, coming in a gust over the isthmus, struck and
scattered the fans of the palms above the den; and, behold!
In two of the tops there sat a native, motionless as an *idol*
and *watching us*, you would have said, without a wink.
The next moment the tree closed, and the glimpse was
gone. This *discovery of human presences latent* overhead
in a place where we had supposed ourselves alone, the
immobility of our tree-top *spies*, and the thought that per-
haps at all hours we were similarly *supervised*, struck us
with a chill. Talk languished on the beach. As for the cook
(whose conscience was not clear), he never afterwards set
foot on shore, and twice, when the Casco appeared to be
driving on the rocks, it was amusing to *observe* that man's
alacrity; death, he was persuaded, awaiting him upon the
beach. It was more than a year later, in the Gilberts, that
the explanation dawned upon myself. The natives were
drawing palm-tree wine, a thing forbidden by law; and
when the wind thus suddenly revealed them, they were
doubtless more troubled than ourselves.[3] (My italics.)

In *In the South Seas*, the contrast between visible and invis-
ible, light and shadow, tangible manifestation and disturbing
latency, becomes more significant when Stevenson recounts the
use of a camera or the mounting of a magic lantern performance.
The camera usually takes in the landscape, the gatherings, the
representative events and people of the Polynesian community,
even magical practices and the local 'devil work', but Stevenson
is particularly keen to report and comment on those moments
that go beyond the ordinary expectations of the traveller-photog-
rapher. During a photographic reportage in the Marquesas, he
records an amusing and intriguing situation when the centre of

the photograph was being contended by the former and the current chief of the village, an unexpected spectacle for both whites and natives. The result was, to the photographer, a particularly suggestive portrait, in that the rival in his 'ill-omened array' and the new chief 'in his careful European dress', captured side by side in the limited space of the photograph, seemed to resuscitate the far and near past of the island. An image that, according to Stevenson, might have been more complete if the backdrop had portrayed a graveyard with its crosses, 'the aptest symbol of the future' (*South Seas*, pp. 136-37).

Another unforgettable moment occurs in the Gilbert Islands when Stevenson, inside the church taking photographs, is startled by a piercing cry coming from the road, goes to the main entrance and from that perspective stares at two women who are savagely fighting, the first locks her teeth in the adversary's face, shaking her like a dog, while the other counterattacks and scratches:

> In the church, where we had wandered photographing, we were startled by a sudden piercing outcry. The scene, looking forth from the doors of that great hall of shadow, was unforgettable. The palms, the quaint and scattered houses, the flag of the island streaming from its tall staff, glowed with intolerable sunshine. In the midst two women rolled fighting on the grass. The combatants were the more easy to be distinguished, because the one was stripped to the ridi and the other wore a holoku (sacque) of some lively colour. The first was uppermost, her teeth locked in her adversary's face, shaking her like a dog; the other impotently fought and scratched. So for a moment we saw them wallow and grapple there like vermin; then the mob closed and shut them in. (*South Seas*, p. 238.)

It is too sudden a scene for the camera to take, but the image

is indelibly imprinted in his mind, in fact he visualises it later as a 'photograph' and interprets it as a manifestation of 'beastly latency'. That image is a deep shock, a sort of evolutionary chemical developer, which reminds him of similar forgotten scenes and sensations, experienced in a more familiar context, in highly civilised London, and which he will never forget:

> The night was exquisite, the silence enchanting; yet as I lay in my hammock looking on the strong moonshine and the quiescent palms, one ugly picture haunted me of the two women, the naked and the clad, locked in that hostile embrace. The harm done was probably not much, yet I could have looked on death and massacre with less revolt. The return to these primeval weapons, the vision of man's beastliness, of his ferality, shocked in me a deeper sense than that with which we count the cost of battles. There are elements in our state and history which it is a pleasure to forget, which it is perhaps the better wisdom not to dwell on. Crime, pestilence, and death are in the day's work; the imagination readily accepts them. It instinctively rejects, on the contrary, whatever shall call up the image of our race upon its lowest terms, as the partner of beasts, beastly itself, dwelling pell-mell and hugger-mugger, hairy man with hairy woman, in the caves of old. And yet to be just to barbarous islanders we must not forget the slums and dens of our cities; I must not forget that I have passed din-nerward through Soho, and seen that which cured me of my dinner. (*South Seas*, p. 239.)

The use of the magic lantern is especially interesting when it gathers Stevenson's group and the natives in front of a proto-cinematographic performance as in the Gilbert Islands. He accu-rately records a performance in a church at night, during which the natives are charmed and seduced by the play of biblical and

entertainment pictures projected onto the wall:

> While the magic lantern was showing, I skulked without in the dark. [. . .] Presently a distant sound of singing arose and approached; and a procession drew near along the road [. . .] the little band of the heathen paused irresolute at the corner, and melted before the attractions of a magic lantern, like a glacier in spring. The more staunch vainly taunted the deserters; three fled in a guilty silence, but still fled; and when at length the leader found the wit or the authority to get his troop in motion and revive the singing, it was with much diminished forces that they passed musically on up the dark road.
>
> Meanwhile inside the luminous pictures brightened and faded. I stood for some while unobserved in the rear of the spectators, when I could hear just in front of me a pair of lovers following the show with interest, the male playing the part of interpreter and (like Adam) mingling caresses with his lecture. The wild animals [. . .] were hailed with joy; but the chief marvel and delight was in the gospel series. [. . .] [T]he exposure of these pious 'phantoms' did as a matter of fact silence in all that part of the island the voice of the scoffer.
>
> 'Why then,' the word went round, 'why then, the Bible is true!' And on our return afterwards we were told the impression was yet lively, and those who had seen might be heard telling those who had not, 'O yes, it is all true; these things all happened, we have seen the pictures.' The argument is not so childish as it seems; for I doubt if these islanders are acquainted with any other mode of representation but photography; so that the picture of an event [. . .] would appear strong proof of its occurrence. (*South Seas*, pp. 258-60.)

The natives appropriate the western culture-specific products and interpret them according to their individual sensibility, a

source of singularly surprising aesthetic pleasure and/or docu-
ments of Biblical truth. On his part, Stevenson is delighted to
view the irresistible magical power of photography to fabricate
reality itself. But even more intriguing is the varied perspective
adopted by Stevenson during the performance, in fact, while
directing the magic lantern performance itself, he also observes,
compares and enjoys the phantasmagorical play of the individual
responses of the occasional viewers standing outside and of the
people inside the church, actually another visual and aural spec-
tacle within the spectacle.

'The Beach of Falesá' foregrounds this empowered vision, and
though there is no direct reference to photography and the magic
lantern, the visual strategies in the story recall these two popular
arts. This Polynesian tale provides a new stage to explore the
complex interaction between shadows of the whites and of the
natives, it gives voice to Stevenson's awareness of the complex
dynamics that regulate understanding and knowledge, as subtly
manipulated by cultural, racial prejudices, or overpowered by
the emergence of 'latent' pulsions.

The opening image focuses on the far distance of Wiltshire from
Falesá at dawn and under the moonshine: he explores the horizon
with his glass, finally identifying his station and the natives' small
houses hidden under the tangle of the woods. Retrospectively,
that image supporting the westerner's scopic power also encap-
sulates an effect of dramatic irony, since Wiltshire himself is to
become the object of the controlling gaze of others.

The exercise of power through the eye and language, which the
initial image thematises, is temporarily suspended at the land-
ing, since Wiltshire chooses Case as mediator, a cunning inter-
preter who manipulates natives and gets Wiltshire ghettoised. It
is now Wiltshire's turn to become the object of the scopic power
of the natives. To get rid of the insolent supervision of those eyes,
whose fascination, he will later find out, is based on the fact that
he has married Uma, the native woman tabooed because she has

the 'evil eye', Wiltshire must break Case's magic spell on the community. He has to explore the most obscure and deserted area of the island, by the natives significantly named 'eye', home to local demons and the dead, a place from which his white enemy, through magic and sorcery, draws his power. As he penetrates the forest, he realises that it closes in behind him, he feels surrounded by weird and menacing sounds, until he perceives it as a living body, with a soul and a piercing eye, as if the Other, and his/her beliefs and more or less horrid 'superstitions' were inextricably and absolutely tied to the place:

> We laugh at the natives and their superstitions; but see how many traders take them up, splendidly educated young men, that have been bookkeepers (some of them) and clerks in the old country! It's my belief that a superstition grows up in a place like the different kinds of weeds; and as I stood there, and listened to that wailing, I twittered in my shoes.[4]

This first 'voyage of discovery' leads him to a sort of temple where some repugnant idols and masks are on show, but the high point of Case's witchcraft is the theatrical shrine around a 'shining face', glowing with 'luminous paint'. This trick, which in the dim light 'dwindles and waxes and at times smokes', reminds him, and us, of the magic lantern performances of demons and shadows, in fact he haughtily calls these tricks 'bogies [. . .] as fresh as toys out of a shop':

> I went in as far as the bend, and looking round the corner, saw a shining face. It was big and ugly like a pantomime mask, and the brightness of it waxed and dwindled, and at times it smoked.
>
> 'Oho,' says I, 'luminous paint!' ('Falesá', p. 356.)

During his second journey into the wilderness, this time at night, it is the light of his own lantern that makes 'the whole place, or all could be seen of it', 'a kind of a puzzle of turning shadows', a frightening phantasmagoria haunted by the hidden presence of the 'devil-women' of the local stories told by his wife, and the 'man-pigs' of cannibal tales, to such an extent that he mistakes his wife Uma for a demon, the real personification of the woman with the evil eye. Another perspectival shift informs us that Uma, for love's sake, has been able to overcome her 'superstitious' ancestral fears of the demons' 'eye', in order to tell her husband that Case is on his track. The lens is now directed at the forest, which soon shakes with Wiltshire's explosion of the shrine, pieces of wood fall down onto the earth to illumine this ominous phantasmagoria: the two rivals fight with a ruthless violence, recalling that of the two women of the Gilbert Islands. When Wiltshire wakes up, all wet with his enemy's blood, he repeatedly hits Case's dead body, assuaging, through sight, a cannibalistic thirst for blood and hunger for meat:

> and every time I looked over to Case I could have
> sung and whistled. Talk about meat and drink! To see
> that man lying there dead as a herring filled me full.
> ('Falesá', p. 369.)

The powerful 'eye' of Falesá, like the spy-glass of the opening scene, highlights the dark side, 'develops' the latent dimensions of the white hero: his 'voyage of discovery' plunges the reader into Wiltshire's self, capturing his bestial instinct to exterminate or cannibalise the enemy, white but still Other. In this limited space, both literal and symbolic, Stevenson has rehearsed his hero's visible and invisible self: his present condition as a civilised British citizen and his original brutal past, his obstinate repugnance for and discrimination against local superstitions and rites while at the same time being possessed by them, his

superior distance from cannibalism while satisfying his thirst for blood and vengeance.

When at dawn light awakens him, Wiltshire looks for Uma and finds her shocked and weeping silently, not far from him, having possibly witnessed everything. 'It appears she was afraid to cry out loud, because of the aitus', briefly comments Wiltshire. Here Stevenson adopts dramatic irony to underline the hero's hypocritical reaction: Wiltshire haughtily stigmatises his wife's superstition, shifting the reader's attention from the fear, evil and terror caused by himself and Case to those raised by the 'demons' living in the area, forgetting that Uma had overcome her fears to come to his aid. He might even believe that the forces of evil have returned to the 'eye', but to the critical reader-spectator of all that horror, the story has clearly revealed that the 'Double' is only removed into the hero's subconscious.

The epilogue underlines Wiltshire's sense of racial superiority: only after hearing the news about Black Jack's horrible death, the last survivor of Case's gang, can he finally feel himself 'left alone in [his] glory':

> the nigger was turned out of the island for stealing from white men, and went off to the west, where he found men of his own colour, in case he liked that, and the men of his own colour took and ate him at some kind of corroborree and I'm sure I hope he was to their fancy! ('Falesá', p. 370.)

Despite his prejudices against the natives, he will remain in the South Seas, devoted to his excellent Uma, and only worried about the difficulty of finding white husbands for his half-caste daughters.

Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is also structured around discourse, varied perspective and the control of distance. Conrad performs two acts of enunciation, in that Marlow's discourse is framed in the first narrator's diegetic level. Marlow's discourse as Narrator,

doubles into Marlow's perceptions as protagonist, in that the story, from Brussels on, is centred on the most significant moment-fragments of that experience. This perception is based on single visual and aural impressions that seem to emanate from bodies and places,[5] and which maintain their vividness thanks to dialogues and to free direct and indirect discourse:

> From behind that structure came out an impression of pale plumpness in a frock-coat. The great man himself. He was five feet six, I should judge, and had his grip on the handle-end of ever so millions. He shook hands, I fancy, was satisfied with my French. *Bon voyage*. (*Heart of Darkness*, p. 14.)

Marlow collocates the Africans at a remote temporal distance, setting their consciousness at the dawn of history, but the spatial, spectacular, dramatic structure of the narrative, which displays his direct contact with the natives, reveals unexpected, surprising and destabilizing feelings and thoughts. The journey unfolds as a sequence of pictures: particularly impressive is the 'picture' of the natives in the 'outer station'. Taking shelter in a grove and almost deafened by the uninterrupted, rushing noise of the rapids, he suddenly realises that the soil is scattered with black shapes. They are the natives dying slowly. A mine goes off – a clear sign of the whites' presence and of their determination – the earth trembles, and he is now fully aware that these Africans are victims of the conditions imposed by progress coming from the sea: these phantoms have been deprived of their land and freedom and are consumed by disease and starvation, they are 'bundles of acute angles, [. . .] in every pose of contorted collapse. As in some picture of a massacre or a pestilence' (*Heart of Darkness*, pp. 20-21). His understanding can only rely on essential gestures, details, traces, he stares at one of them, their eyes meet, he offers him a biscuit, the black fingers close slowly on it;

but a small detail, a bit of white worsted round that African neck, so incongruous in that context, suddenly reverses his perspective: Marlow feels puzzled because it is now he that is 'alienated' from the meaning that familiar sign has acquired on the body of the other.

As he sails up-river, in the deep silence of the still image of that unfathomable nature, the disappearance of any familiar signs to which he could anchor his identity, might perhaps hollow out Marlow and all the other whites on board into phantoms, but, then, the sudden glimpse of a scene animated by natives, with their gestures, acts, expressions, and human tones, discloses another unthought-of perspective. Though Marlow is prone to interposing an unbridgeable distance between civilised and primitive man, the immediate contact brings to light a common hidden reality. Though the natives' sighs, laments, invocations, passionate gestures cannot be verbally decoded, they yet speak a universal language. Marlow is aware of an original, 'latent feeling of fellowship'[6] that suddenly revives, contrasting with the futility of 'principles', or, perhaps, in this case it might be more correct to call these principles superstructural 'rags', 'acquisitions, clothes, pretty rags – rags that would fly off at the first good shake' (p. 38). Of that truth 'stripped of its cloak of time', the reader too gets a faint trace, a luminous, evanescent glimpse. It is with this truth that he has to reckon, but this makes him uneasy and a pause is needed. It is now the turn of the first narrator to introduce a new perspective: in the darkness now enveloping the ship, he portrays Marlow like a daguerreotype spectre that appears and disappears in the dim light of a match, an effect that likens Marlow to the other phantoms in the story, but, at the same time, this first narrator, from the reader's point of view, is just a voice. The story is shaped like an optical illusion regulated on distance and on varied perspective, fitting infinitely different discourses, reflecting an echo of discourses, verbal traces, the words/simulacra of a lost Referent.

But the invisible hides, for Marlow, an even more disruptive force: to the false and rotting spectre of the white 'slaves', worshippers of the god ivory, Marlow opposes the secret and silent 'intention' of the African wilderness. Africa is portrayed like a surface impression that refers back to an invisible reality, like the staring eye of an inscrutable entity patiently waiting for the passing of the pilgrims' 'fantastic invasion' (p. 26), fantastic because unreal, and charged with false ideologies. Perhaps, Kurtz, who is at the culminating point of his journey, has the key to that great enigma. It is remarkable that, when he has to represent the allusiveness and stillness of that impression, Conrad uses 'spectral' images, bathed in the 'silvery moonshine':

> Beyond the fence the forest stood up spectrally in the moonlight, and through the dim stir, through the faint sounds of that lamentable courtyard, the silence of the land went home to one's very heart – its mystery, its greatness, the amazing reality of its concealed life. [. . .] The moon had spread over everything a thin layer of silver [. . .]. All this was great, expectant, mute, while the man jabbered about himself. I wondered whether the stillness on the face of the immensity looking at us two were meant as an appeal or as a menace. [. . .] Yet somehow it didn't bring any image with it – no more than if I had been told an angel or a fiend was in there. (*Heart of Darkness*, p. 28.)

These images recall another at the beginning of the novella, used by the first narrator when describing the missing centre or the unstable referent in Marlow's speech 'in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine' (p. 9). This missing centre is now Africa's heart, and its invisible heart is latency itself, the imponderable enigma of life, an epistemic and linguistic

enigma, in that the core of its intention cannot be grasped. They are images that recall the photographic forms of representation and, more specifically, the silver plate of the daguerreotype. The daguerreotype, like the photograph, is a mirror requiring a real body, which, then, in the final product is missing, in that it belongs to a different and fatally lost dimension on the threshold of the invisible, and bearing the seal of death.

The entrance to the 'inner station' is like a macabre cinematic pan-shot taken by an eye potentiated by binocular lens: in the midst there is Kurtz's ruined station-home. Marlow stares at the house – a metaphor of Kurtz's soul – now almost within reach of his hand, then, a nearer view shocks him: the fence posts are topped by natives' heads, killed, or possibly exterminated in the name of that progress that cannot be delayed. To Marlow, this is the tangible proof of the destructive force of the wilderness, which, seducing the white man to its evil heart, takes vengeance on the white man for his invasion. Marlow leans over the edge of that macabre and grotesque abyss, staring at that house of the person who, during the voyage had gradually attracted his attention and sympathy, becoming a sort of alter-ego, but now this last image reveals him as his possible Double: he immediately starts back, pushing that image into an 'inaccessible distance'. His first encounter with Kurtz is also mediated by binoculars, which recall some cinematic techniques, in that, after a rolled panorama, Marlow zooms in on Kurtz's bodily details. Kurtz is perceived as a spectre, an 'apparition', a 'phantom', a 'grotesque' spectre, 'the animated image of death', 'a shadow on the point of disappearing' (p. 59).

Back in Europe, Marlow is left with Kurtz's letters and the photograph of his 'Intended'. It is after looking at the portrait of the girl that Marlow decides to 'give her back her portrait and [Kurtz's] letters [him]self'. Marlow keenly observes her features and expression, fully aware that 'the manipulation of light and pose' (p. 71) can alter a photographic subject. But he is sure this

is not the case: her beauty strikes him with all her innermost truthfulness, her ingenuity, candour, generosity, as if that image reflected also his model of a woman, a woman deprived of any sensual or erotic appeal. In fact it is this angelic beauty, so imbued with that spiritualism that early photography interpreted so perfectly, that drives him towards 'the nightmare of [his] choice', actually towards another 'scroll of lighted pictures' centred on the return of the dead man. Assuming that Kurtz belongs to the natural graveyard of memory, he goes to the woman's house, but just in front of the house the images of the dead man return.

Finally he sees Kurtz's image reflected in the glass panel of the main entrance: his Double emerges as if out of a daguerreotype mirror with all its vital spirits. The Other claims his right to belong to him, as if they were the same flesh and blood:

> I rang the bell before a mahogany door on the first floor, and while I waited he seemed to stare at me out of the glassy panel – stare with that wide and immense stare embracing, condemning, loathing all the universe. I seemed to hear the whispered cry, 'The horror! The horror!' (*Heart of Darkness*, p. 72.)

During his encounter with the woman, it is the gloomy expression of her eyes, foregrounded by her 'pure brow', 'her pale visage', that again evokes the latent image of Kurtz, until Marlow views him 'in the very moment of his death', and her in her deep sorrow, and even hears their voices together: a vivid magic lantern phantasmagoric effect:

> For her he had only died yesterday. And, by Jove! the impression was so powerful that for me, too, he seemed to have died only yesterday – nay, this very minute: I saw her and him in the same instant of time –his death and her sorrow – I saw her sorrow in the very moment of his

death. Do you understand? I saw them together – I heard them together. (*Heart of Darkness*, p. 73.)

The last moment of this encounter creates another spiritistic effect: in the 'fading and narrow sheen of the window', Marlow remembers the last pose of the woman 'stretching her arms after a retreating figure', and on her Marlow superimposes Kurtz's African woman:

> She put out her arms as if after a retreating figure, stretch-ing them black and with clasped pale hands across the fading and narrow sheen of the window. Never see him! I saw him clearly enough then. I shall see this eloquent phantom as long as I live, and I shall see her too, a tragic and familiar Shade, resembling in this gesture another one, tragic also, and bedecked with powerless charms, stretching bare brown arms over the glitter of the infernal stream, the stream of darkness. (*Heart of Darkness*, p. 75.)

In this vision, which recalls such proto-cinematographic tech-niques as dissolve and superimposition, exploited in spiritistic photography, in magic lantern performances, and in early films, Marlow spectacularises his inner self: while his double blurs into the background and is delivered to death, the 'tragic and familiar shade' of the Intended is superimposed by the sensual black woman of the infernal stream, her charms finally neutralised.

Marlow's speech closes with this optical illusion which suggests the multiple dimensions of consciousness, and the intriguing fascination of the invisible to modern man. Though he hates tell-ing lies, Marlow lets the European fiancé of Kurtz live under the illusion of Kurtz's final declaration of love. The return to Europe means restoring former convictions with the confirmation or complicity of his own community: he still projects the heart of

darkness into that 'ghastly nowhere', but in the awareness of the proximity of that wilderness and still haunted by the return of his Double. Africa and the South Seas make a special observatory which has helped the white to bring to light his paradoxes: his Double, and his 'latent feeling of fellowship which binds together all humanity'.

In both Stevenson and Conrad, the optical presentation of the confrontation with the Other illuminates the fragmentariness, precariousness and subjectivity of representation, but, whereas in Stevenson the visual sensibility informed by the new visual arts is developed within the particular context of the anthropological Other, in Conrad it opens to even more advanced experimental forms and procedures.

NOTES

1   For another study of Stevenson in the South Seas in relation to photography and knowledge, see Ann C. Colley, 'Lighting Up the Darkness', in *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Colonial Imagination* (Aldershot: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 99-131. This deals with photography, magic lantern shows and also descriptions of intermittent and discontinuous light, that 'suggest the incompleteness and discontinuity of knowledge' (p. 130). For a fuller account of the influences of visual entertainment on Conrad's work, see Stephen Donovan, *Joseph Conrad and Popular Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2005).

2   In *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde,* Utterson presents Enfield's tale of the horrid encounter with Hyde as a proto-cinematic sequence of pictures, 'a scroll of lighted pictures' – R. L. Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (London: Dent, 1980), p. 11 – reminiscent of a magic lantern entertainment. This particular presentation highlights that reality effect tainted by a sort of spectral evocation of death which early photography created, in this case also adding novel strength to Hyde's violence, and 'enslaving' Utterson's heart and mind. Photography, daguerreotype as 'the mirror with memory', and the magic lantern phantom show, are here associated with the emergence of latency, with the 'apparition' of the invisible creature par excellence recalling the Double and death. Hyde haunts and defies the scopic power of

Law, as represented by Utterson and by the portrait of Jekyll's father: he does not let the lawyer get possession of his physical features, in fact Utterson complains that he has to rely only on the confused descriptions of few witnesses, whereas a photograph would have been invaluable (p. 21) (even more invaluable would have been fixing Hyde's image in the mirror in the laboratory as viewed by Jekyll himself). In the end, Hyde gets rid of the gaze of the paternal authority by destroying Jekyll's father's portrait (p. 61). The magical function of the magic lantern is pushed to the extreme in the wonderful spectacularisation of the battle of phantoms and devils against the living in 'The Isle of Voices', brilliantly combining the realistic and spectral effect of a cinematic western eye with the marvellous of Polynesian folklore.

3   R. L. Stevenson, *In the South Seas* (London: Kegan Paul, 1988), pp. 21-22, hereafter cited in the text as *South Seas*. See also pp. 101-2.

4   R. L. Stevenson, 'The Beach of Falesá' in *R. L. Stevenson: The Complete Short Stories*, ed. by Ian Bell (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing 1993), vol 2, pp. 353-354, hereafter cited in the text as 'Falesá'.

5   Particularly cinematic, and photographic, is Marlow's first encounter with Kurtz, in that the impressions, like early photography, seem to capture and fix the body's spectre or emanations, in this case a sequence of moving pictures freezing on the last one: 'Suddenly round the corner of the house a group of men appeared, as though they had come up from the ground. They waded waist-deep in the grass, in a compact body, bearing an improvised stretcher in their midst. Instantly, in the emptiness of the landscape, a cry arose whose shrillness pierced the still air like a sharp arrow flying straight to the very heart of the land; and, as if by enchantment, streams of human beings – of naked human beings – with spears in their hands, with bows, with shields, with wild glances and savage movements, were poured into the clearing by the darkfaced and pensive forest. The bushes shook, the grass swayed for a time, and then everything stood still in attentive immobility' – Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. by R. Kimbrough (London: Norton, 1988), pp. 58-9, hereafter cited in the text.

6   Joseph Conrad, 'Preface to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, in J. Conrad, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, ed. by R. Kimbrough, Norton Critical Edition (New York: Norton, 1979), p. 145.

Stevenson's 'little tale' is 'a library': an anthropological approach to 'The Beach of Falesá'

Sylvie Largeaud-Ortega

Since its origins with Bougainville in 1771, traditional South Sea literature's sole purpose had been to make the fantasies of the West come true: witness Melville's *Typee* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847), Stoddard's *South Sea Idylls* (1873) and Loti's *Marriage de Loti* (1880). The first writer who permanently settled in the Pacific, R. L. Stevenson was also the first writer who broke away from this tradition and practised extensively what anthropologists some 30 years onward were to name 'participating observation'.[1] For this reason, I suggest that his later South Sea fiction – namely 'The Bottle Imp' (1891), 'The Isle of Voices' (1893), 'The Beach of Falesá' (1893) and *The Ebb-Tide* (1894) – should be viewed as examples of 'anthropological fiction'.[2]

During the six and a half years he spent in the Pacific (1888-1894), Stevenson, like an anthropologist, was eager to mix with the natives: he learnt the Polynesian languages – which all have a common basis from Hawai'i to Tahiti, New-Zealand, Easter Island and Samoa – and he researched into Polynesian social customs, sacred rites and mythology. His long stays with native cultural informants like Donat-Rimarau in Fakarava, or King Kalakaua in Hawai'i resulted in an extensive knowledge of Polynesian lore, which he continued to study when he became a resident in the Samoan archipelago, keeping constant company with the native staff in his large homestead, with the many island chiefs whom he strongly supported, and with the Samoan visitors who daily flocked to his home, Vailima. By modern standards, Stevenson can be called a pioneering anthropologist of the Pacific, as Ashley

argues:

> the work of ethnographic *flâneurs* like [. . .] Stevenson,
> living among the people about whom they wrote over a
> space of years, learning the language, hoping for some
> kind of understanding from the inside, should be incor-
> porated within the histories of anthropology, or the rich
> cultural context in which the discipline was founded risks
> being thinned.[3]

Stevenson identified one thing that was fundamental to pre-European Pacific societies: originally, everything was sacred. Each individual could relate to the gods and to cosmogony, so that there was no such notion as individualism in Polynesia of old. Each and every one belonged to an extended family, or group, which belonged to a larger group or village, which in turn belonged to a still much wider group that eventually reached back to the divine origins of time. Echoes of all this may be found in the author's later South Sea narratives.

This paper focuses on 'The Beach of Falesá', presenting it as an anthropological novella written with the aim (among others) of showing the West how to acquire a better knowledge of the South Seas. As Stevenson rightfully boasted in a letter to Colvin, 'You will know more about the South Seas after you have read my little tale, than if you had read a library'. I will attempt to show that 'The Beach of Falesá' can be seen as an 'anthropological library' of the South Seas. I suggest browsing through different shelves of this library, from a new reading perspective that incorporates some of the anthropological knowledge Stevenson acquired. It includes a study of the onomastics of Polynesian character-names and considerations of social customs and sacred rites. I aim to show there is much more to 'The Beach of Falesá' than meets Western eyes: a Polynesian tale closely interwoven with a Western one.

First, onomastics: much is conveyed by the meanings and con-notations of the Polynesian names in the story.[4] Consider for instance the heroine's name, Uma. In Tahitian, *uma* as a noun refers to 'a discreet signal, a secret warning'. Uma indeed guides her British husband, the narrator Wiltshire, through the South Seas, in order to initiate him to that area. This metaphorically appears from the start of the novella: '[she] ran ahead of me, and stopped and looked back and smiled and ran ahead of me again, thus guiding me through the edge of the bush, and by a quiet way to my own house'.[5] Uma's role as a guide is confirmed throughout till the final climatic action when she rushes up the taboo moun-tain at night – '[she] lit right out to come and warn me' (p. 63) – and gives her husband a 'secret warning' which saves his life.

As a verb, *uma* means 'to dig' in Tahitian. Uma's role may be said to metaphorically dig the Polynesian soil to try and root her rootless husband who has come from the sea, all the more so as Wiltshire's name pronounced the Polynesian way is 'Vilivili' (p. 57), and in Hawaiian, *vilivili* designates very light wood to make canoes with, or seeds that are adrift. In Polynesia, the metaphor of the drifting seed is often derogatively applied to foreigners who have no roots in the islands. Uma-the-digger's task is to help drifting Vilivili take root in Polynesia. In Samoan, *vilivili* also sig-nifies 'to spin, to wheel', but also 'to strive or compete', which, as Kramer remarks, 'quite aptly describes Wiltshire's behaviour'.[6]

The verb *uma* in Hawaiian also means 'to fight, to struggle', which is precisely what Uma does, following Wiltshire's foot-steps, when she bravely fights her way up the taboo mountain – 'she was all knocked and bruised' (p. 63) – in order to try and secure her husband's future in Falesá.

In Hawaiian, the noun *uma* means 'chest', 'breast', and figura-tively, 'heart' and 'generosity'. This underlines Uma's symbolic role as the nourishing mother – Wiltshire's cherished 'A 1 wife' (p. 71) and the mother of their large half-caste family, so generous 'she would give the roof off the station' (p. 70). Taken literally, 'A'

and '1' suggest that Uma stands for the beginnings of Creation – she embodies nourishing Mother Earth.

This is confirmed by the Samoan meanings of *uma*: 'whole', 'entire', as in the expression *'O Sāmoa uma,* which designates 'the whole Samoan archipelago'; as a verb, an adjective or an adverb, *uma* means'to end' and 'final(ly)' or 'eternal(ly)' – as a noun, it means 'the infinite'.[7] It may be inferred once again that Uma symbolises all Polynesian women, *'O vahine uma*,[8] she is the primal South Sea woman, Mother Earth incarnated. By choosing this name for his heroine, Tusitala provided a major clue, prodding Western readers into following Wiltshire's steps in order to try and 'know more about the South Seas'.

A selective study of onomastics in 'The Beach of Falesá' contributes to a small part of a first shelf in Stevenson's anthropological 'library'. Other shelves are occupied by commentaries on Wiltshire and Uma's wedding scene, which centres on the following marriage contract:

> This is to certify that Uma daughter of Fa'avao of Falesa island of -----, is illegally married to Mr John Wiltshire for one night, and Mr John Wiltshire is at liberty to send her to hell next morning.
>
> > John Blackamoor
> > Chaplain to the Hulks
>
> Extracted from the register
> > By William T. Randall
> Master Mariner.
>
> > > (p. 11)

At first sight, this key passage is bound to be read from a Western point of view, and may be introduced in this way. Wiltshire is a white trader who has just arrived in Falesá. Upon his landing, he is greeted by a rival trader, Case, who immediately urges him to pretend to marry an island girl, Uma, taking great care to hide from him that she is tabooed and that, consequently,

Wiltshire will be tabooed too and unable to trade with the villagers. Wiltshire is only too eager to agree, complies with the fake wedding ceremony, and obligingly signs the marriage contract. The girl, for her part, believes the wedding ceremony is genuine, as she can neither read nor understand the certificate that states that she is 'illegally married to Mr John Wiltshire for one night'.

This notorious marriage contract can be compared to other legal-sounding instruments used by colonial powers to appropriate land and resources, for example the infamous agreement on a much larger scale which was signed between British administrators and Polynesian chiefs in New Zealand in 1840, namely, the Treaty of Waitangi. That contract was unashamedly presented in their own language to the Maori of the time as 'Queen Victoria's act of love to you'.[9] The British signatories were eager (like Case) to exclude rival Western trading powers from the island in the context of fierce colonial competition, and (like Wiltshire) to lay an exclusive claim on the object of their pursuit – in that instance, the riches of the island. And (like Uma) the island chiefs could neither read nor understand English, so they signed the so-called 'love contract' blindly.

A Western reading of the wedding scene will clearly be in terms of the hypocrisy and injustice of colonialism. It greatly shocked Stevenson's contemporary readers, as the marriage contract unmistakably gave the lie to the civilising mission the West claimed to carry out among benighted islanders: 'the empire existed to civilise and uplift its subjects, or so its champions claimed'.[10] Although Stevenson had actually been a witness to the very same kind of fraudulent marriage contract on his South Sea wanderings[11] the contract he presented in his fiction was totally disbelieved, wildly criticised at the time, and bowdlerised by the publishers.

Nevertheless, what Western readers generally failed to grasp in this emblematic passage was the anthropological information it conveys, which is at least as important as its anti-imperialist

message, and which calls for a Polynesian reading of the scene. This standpoint reveals that there is much more to Uma than the obvious *clichés* of the beautiful bare-breasted *vahine*[12] and of the Noble Savage who 'carried it the way a countess might, so proud and humble' (p. 12). Because Uma believes the wedding ceremony is genuine, she and her mother dutifully perform the necessary Polynesian wedding rituals. To start with, marriages were prearranged by the bride's parents; so Case, true to typically colonialist conduct, sets himself up as a father figure: 'I'll make it square with the old lady' (p. 7). Uma's mother, Fa'avao, thereupon makes her appearance:

> a strange old native woman crawled into the house almost on her belly. [. . .] She said no plain word, but smacked and mumbled with her lips, and hummed aloud, like a child over a Christmas pudding. [Then] she slipped into a kind of song [. . .]; the song rose into a cry, and stopped; the woman crouched out of the house the same way she came in. (pp. 9-10)

Newly-arrived Wiltshire is dumbfounded at what he terms the old woman's 'rum manners' (p. 10). Had the bridegroom been Polynesian, however, Fa'avao's behaviour would have seemed only natural. First, crouching in and out of a room was completely in keeping with Polynesian customs, which considered it offensive to be standing inside a house or even when moving in and out of it. One had to bend down to show respect to the others. Second, those 'manners' were actually the first stages of a Polynesian wedding ritual. In Tahitian, *fa'ava'o* means 'orator, master of ceremonies'. So Fa'avao dutifully chants the bride and bridegroom's genealogy, as was the custom, and as is perceived by the owner of the house, a long-standing South Sea resident: 'the captain told me she was making up a quantity of poetry in my praise because I was to marry Uma' (p. 10).

Fa'avao's appearance – 'her face was tattooed, which was not the practice in that island' (p. 9) – informs the reader about the status of herself and Uma as out-islanders in Falesá: '[Uma] was born in one of the Line Islands' (p. 30), north-east of Samoa.[13] There is another woman coming from an outer island in the novella: Case's wife. 'She was a Samoa woman [. . .]; and when [Case] came to die [. . .] she went off home in the schooner *Manu'a*' (p. 5). Because she sails home in a schooner named *Manu'a*, it may be inferred that Case's wife comes from the island of the same name, Manu'a, Samoa's easternmost island. These three native women were born in the East – hence the question: what do eastern origins imply in terms of Polynesian history and mythology? In Polynesian migration history, the East was the direction of new conquests from when, around 2,000 B. C., the Polynesian people started their exploratory voyages from South-East Asia and gradually expanded eastwards in the uncharted Pacific.[14] The East was 'the direction of a renewal, of life, and [. . .] consequently a direction that [was] worth exploring. The "land of light" might be there'.[15] So, from a historical point of view, the three women from the East symbolise a new birth, the call of the wild and of new promising perspectives.[16]

In addition, in Polynesian cosmogony, the East was the place of divine origins. In Samoa, the island Manu'a is known as the very first island the primal god Tagaloa created on earth, and the place where he decided to make his sacred home.[17] It follows that from a mythological point of view, women from the East symbolised primal women, the bearers of creation, the divine solar principle. 'Sacred home' translates in Samoan into *fale sā* (with a macron on the *a* to indicate a long vowel).[18] There is no place named *Falesā* in Polynesia: it's a nonexistent place, a utopia in the etymological sense, whose name Stevenson composed from Samoan words. So one can imagine that *Falesā*-the-sacred-home, is a replica of Manu'a, Tagaloa's sacred home on earth, which itself is a replica of the primal god's original sacred home in heaven. In other words,

Falesā represents primal sacred Polynesia. It is the original island, a metonymy of the South Seas, a symbol of all Polynesian islands. *Falesā* is *ō fanua uma*, 'all the islands', 'the whole of Polynesia' – a geographical and cultural equivalent to Uma herself. As an epitome of the South Seas, it is very probably what Stevenson had in mind when he wrote to Colvin, 'You will know more about the South Seas after you have read my little tale, than if you had read a library.'

Uma's role, as a woman coming from the East, the area of Samoan origins, is to help her foreign husband build their new home in *Falesā*. Their house is 'the last house to the east', a fit place for life to start anew. As a consequence, their home can be viewed as a new sacred home, a *fale sā*, for a hybrid Western and Polynesian couple. The whole novella 'The Beach of Falesá' can thus be read – or heard – as the genealogical chant of a new hybrid family being born in the South Seas. It combines in its title 'the beach', which represents the profane white community,[19] and *fale sā*, the sacred Polynesian community. It therefore offers a hybrid and very much true-to-life picture of the South Seas at the end of the 19th century.

In the context of Polynesian wedding rituals, Uma conforms to tradition through ceremonial adornments and gifts, which I now propose to analyse. First, she makes a display of flowers: '[s]he was scented [. . .]; her bust, [. . .] she wore bare only for some half a dozen necklaces of seeds and flowers' (p. 11). In ancient Polynesia, fragrance was a privileged means to communicate with gods. The flowers' scent gave access to the *mana*, or spiritual power, and Uma's wedding flowers were a compulsory ritual endowment, a perfumed prayer addressed to the gods of fecundity. Uma's second ceremonial contribution is tapa: 'her kilt was of fine tapa, looking richer in the folds than any silk' (p. 11). Tapa is a piece of bark-cloth, ritually beaten by women into a cloth-like thinness, which was only exhibited on ceremonial occasions.[20] When Uma adorns herself with tapa, she certifies the cultural validity of her wedding.

Anthropologist Marcel Mauss calls tapa 'a mana object':[21] as Uma's tapa marks the sacredness of the event, grants Wiltshire the right to possess her and allows him into her whole family line, down to the origins of times. Not unlike a Western family tree – though on a much larger scale – tapa symbolises genealogy: its fine fibres stand for ancestry lines and their descendants. In the words of Young Leslie, tapa denotes genealogical wealth: 'The cloth wealth stands in, analogically and metonymically, for the maternal kin, and represents the potential fecundity of her line, for many future generations'.[22] Stevenson was well aware of the symbolic values of Polynesian cloth, as can be noted in his presentation of a former pretender of Uma's: 'He was a small chief, and had some fine mats and old songs in his family' (p. 31). Traditionally, tapa, together with 'fine mats and old songs', were used conjointly to extol one's genealogical wealth. Vegetal strands and lines of oratory inter-wove to pay tribute to successive genealogies. Bearing in mind that, in Polynesia of old, there was no such thing as an individual, and that everyone was related to primal gods, Uma's gorgeous tapa represents the history of her ancestry as far back as original times, down to primal gods. Since Uma comes from the East, her genealogy is highly sacred, hence the outstanding beauty of her barkcloth, 'richer in the folds than any silk'. Wiltshire could hope for no better gift of introduction to the South Seas.

At this point we may make a fleeting comparison with Kirstie in the unfinished *Weir of Hermiston* (written in Samoa):

> [she] knows the legend of her own family, and may count kinship with some illustrious dead. For it is the mark of the Scot of all classes: that he [. . .] remembers and cherishes the memory of his forefathers, good or bad; and there burns alive in him a sense of identity with the dead even to the twentieth generation. [. . .] They were all, and Kirstie the first of all, ready and eager to pour forth the particulars of their genealogy.[23]

Scottish Stevenson in Samoa knew that tracing their roots was fundamental to both Polynesians and Scots. Anthropologist Mauss compares tapa to a European coat-of-arms[24] since, like a coat-of-arms, tapa bears the history and the symbols of a clan or an extended family. As a writer of anthropological fiction, Stevenson could thus draw attention to what Lévi-Strauss calls 'the unconscious structure'[25] of diverse cultures, and in a pioneering way point to a closeness between the peoples from both sides of the earth.

Uma's third appropriate ceremonial contribution consists of a gift of herself: offering herself up as a pig, 'I belong you all-e-same pig!' (p. 13), she cries to Wiltshire in Beach la mar.[26] In ancient Polynesia, pigs were an incarnation of a minor god, Kamapua'a, who was himself a representative on earth of the god of fertility, Lono. Kamapua'a was half human, half pig, as his name indicates – proto-Polynesian *kama* or *tama* meaning 'human child' and *pua'a*, 'pig' – so that sacrificing a pig had connotations of human sacrifice. By offering herself as a pig to Wiltshire, Uma offers 'a part of [her]self' to the god of fertility.[27] The implied prayer is: may the god grant her husband be a father of an island progeny in return. Moreover, the gift of pigs is also connected with a passage from darkness to light: in order to be offered, pigs were brought from the pigsty to the front of the house, namely from darkness to light.[28] This passage from darkness to light was the axiom of Polynesian cosmogony: it re-enacted primal Creation.

> The source of the darkness that made darkness
> The source of the night that made night
> The intense darkness, the deep darkness [. . .]
> Darkness slips into light [. . .]
> Child of the night of black darkness is born
> The night gives birth.[29]

Uma offers herself as a pig at the moment when the couple reach

their nuptial home, to which she has guided her husband through the night. It may be said that the newly-weds are thus brought from darkness to light: 'her shadow went all the way up behind her into the hollow of the iron roof; she stood against it bright, the lamplight shining on her skin' (pp. 12-13). Aggrandised by a huge black halo, with her dark skin illuminated, primal Uma may be seen as the sacred night, the *Pō*, from where light originated according to Pacific cosmogony. Through her wedding gifts, Uma repeats this genesis, persistently encouraging her husband to root himself in Polynesia.

All these ritualistic messages are lost on Wiltshire – just as they are lost on Western readers ignorant of Polynesian ways. For these Western readers, the wedding scene may be summed up as follows: we have, on one side, a bridegroom who is familiar with Western wedding rituals and therefore knows he is the signatory of a fallacious marriage contract, and on the other side, a native bride who is starkly ignorant of those rituals and cheated into believing that her wedding ceremony is genuine. For Polynesian readers, however, the summary could run thus: an island bride dutifully performs the local rites pertaining to a genuine Polynesian wedding, while the Western bridegroom fails to realise that he is being earnestly implicated in an authentic South Sea wedding ceremony. Fundamentally, this major scene is based on a mutual cultural misunderstanding. On the one hand, Uma cannot read the marriage certificate. But on the other hand, Wiltshire cannot read Uma's cultural signs either: his mother-in-law's prayers, his wife's flowers, tapa and gift of a pig – all are a closed book to him. So in actual fact, both characters are just as uneducated as the other, both are equally ignorant of the other's culture. Exactly like the Western hero, Wiltshire, the Western readers who are not informed about Polynesian rites and customs may prove as uneducated, and may fail to grasp an important aspect of this scene.

I suggest that Stevenson's key purpose in this scene from 'The

Beach of Falesá' was to provide those readers who wished to 'know more about the South Seas' with an extremely powerful image: a metaphor of the act of reading South Sea fiction. It stresses the necessity of a hybrid approach: both Western and Polynesian. Such may be Stevenson's most solemn message in all his later South Sea writings: each one of us needs to be instructed in the Other's culture. The wedding scene in 'The Beach of Falesá', as part of Stevenson's anthropological 'library', actually contains two texts. One text which proclaims itself openly to the West: it tells a plain tale that can be instantly and easily recognised – a kind of Jekyll text (to make an easy and therefore summary comparison based on a popular opposition). And one text that lurks underneath, a text that lies in the shadow of the obvious one, one that needs to be ferreted out but is nevertheless of paramount importance – a Hyde text, I might say (if I am very careful to suppress the negative connotations conveyed by this expression). The more accessible first text exhibits Uma's ignorance and gullibility. The more cryptic second text unveils Wiltshire's equivalent ignorance and gullibility[30] – there is anti-imperialism and cultural relativism with a vengeance for late 19th century Western readers. To those who might patronisingly feel inclined to scoff at native Uma because she cannot read, Stevenson slyly addresses the question: 'Are you quite sure *you* can read?' To be able to better decipher this wedding scene, as well as the whole novella, one needs to have access to both cultures, Western and Polynesian. In other words, one needs to be acquainted with some of the anthropological knowledge Stevenson had enthusiastically acquired about the South Seas.

My last point in the study of the wedding scene is this: because the wedding is, quite strikingly, situated at the beginning of the novella, it proves to be only one first stage in Wiltshire's – and the readers' – rites of passage to Polynesia. Under the guidance of Uma, the ceremony is but a stepping stone to the hero's apprenticeship in Falesá. The autobiographical narrative subsequently

takes hero and readers along successive 'voyage[s] of discovery' (p. 51), and those subsequent rites of passage supply Stevenson's anthropological 'library' with a substantial number of additional volumes. At the end of the novella, both cultures no longer stand parallel and unbeknown to each other, but ultimately join in the narrator's persona.

The fact that 'The Beach of Falesá' is a first-person narrative makes this point even more striking, as readers are called upon to mark the difference between Wiltshire's narrated-I – the way he perceived things in the narrated past – and his narrating-I – the way he perceives things in the narrating present. Wiltshire as the narrating character who tells his tale some twenty years after the events is definitely, although grudgingly, more aware of and more amenable to Polynesian lore than he was as a newly-arrived narrated character. He has, then, more or less successfully, gone through all his successive rites of passage. While Wiltshire depicts the natives as the Others, he himself, as a white man, has also unwittingly become somewhat Other. Given access to the core of Polynesia, the narrator tells a tale which allows his fellow Western contemporaries to learn, in their turn, about the Pacific. Stevenson's most earnest wish may have been that Western readers might follow in Wiltshire's footsteps, and likewise become somewhat Other. This wish is clearly expressed in a letter to Sydney Colvin:

> Please remember that my life passes among my 'blacks or chocolates'. [. . .] You must try to exercise a trifle of imagination, and put yourself, perhaps with an effort, into some sort of sympathy with these people, or how am I to write to you? I think you are truly a little too cockney with me. [31]

Wiltshire's narrative turns out to be a symbolic return, or counter-gift, to the Pacific, a fundamental notion in pre-European Polynesian societies. True to South Sea traditions,

Stevenson makes the hero deliver a story which is meant to start a dialogue between the West and the Pacific, in search of mutu-ally significant Others. The novella concludes with Uma and Wiltshire being doubly blessed by a Polynesian high chief and a white Protestant missionary who have conjointly taught them – and Western readers – how to read hybrid late 19th-century secular and sacred, written and oral, South Sea texts. In return, Wiltshire tells the couple's own tale so that the rest of the world will know better the South Seas. Their half-caste children are a potent symbol of the South Seas' future which, tellingly enough, may all be contained in the novella's concluding question mark. As a ground-breaking anthropological novelist, Stevenson would not impose his own views as a white man on either Western or Polynesian communities. The question is left open for the future, engaging others to try and 'know more about the South Seas after you have read my little tale'.

To conclude, I have consistently been asked if Stevenson really acquired as much anthropological understanding as I am claim-ing. My answer is yes, as most Stevenson biographers testify: he did collect an immense amount of information about Polynesian beliefs and traditions from all over the South Seas. What's more, his foremost intent in the Pacific was to write a vastly ambitious piece of anthropological work, against the advice of his wife and most of his Western advisors from Britain and the States. Witness this letter from his wife Fanny to Sydney Colvin:

> Louis has the most enchanting material than anyone ever had in the whole world for his book, and I am afraid he's going to spoil it all. He has taken into his Scotch Stevenson head, that a stern duty lies before him, and that his book must be a sort of scientific and historical impersonal thing.[32]

A difficult task was lying ahead of him, as he confided to Henry

James as early as 1890: 'Think of writing books of travels on the spot, when I am continually extending my information, revising my opinions, and seeing the most finely finished portions of my work come part to part in pieces'.[33] Sadly, Stevenson died before he had a chance to finish even taking down notes. Only a few of those are left to modern day readers, collected under the post-humously published title *In the South Seas*. Had this vast book been completed, it would have been a significant further contri-bution to Stevenson's anthropological 'library'. What readers do have, though, is 'The Beach of Falesá': an outstanding piece of anthropological fiction about Polynesia, to help Westerners and islanders alike to try and build a multicultural world, according to Stevenson's wishes. The novella is like 'Uma', meaning in Tahitian, we remember, 'a discreet signal, a secret warning': it signals to the West there is a whole 'library' waiting to be read, and continued, in the Pacific.

NOTES

1   Bronislaw Malinowski, *Les Argonautes du Pacifique Occidental* (Paris: Gallimard, 1922).

2   I suggest a distinction between Stevenson's *The Wrecker* (1892, but started as early as summer 1889; see Roger Swearingen, *The Prose Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson*, (London: Macmillan, 1980), p. 130) and later, more anthropologically sensitive works listed in the text.

3   Scott Ashley, 'The Poetics of Race in 1890s Ireland: an Ethnography of the Aran Islands', *Patterns of Prejudice* 35.ii (2001), 5-18 (p. 18).

4   For a previous study of names in 'Falesá', see Jürgen Kramer, 'The Strange/r Case of 'The Beach of Falesá': a reading of R. L. Stevenson's first realistic South Sea story', in *Neue Brennpunkte des Englischunterrichts*, ed. by Dieter Buttjes *et al.* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992), pp. 80-83.

5   Robert Louis Stevenson, 'The Beach of Falesá' in *South Sea Tales*, ed. by Roslyn Jolly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 12. Henceforth cited in the text by page number only.

6   Kramer, p. 80.

7   G. B. Milner, *Samoan Dictionary, Samoan-English – English-Samoan* (Auckland: Pasifika Press, 2003), p. 300.

8   *'O vahine uma*: in Samoan means 'all women', or 'the whole female principle'.

9   Claudia Orange, *The Story of a Treaty* (Wellington, New Zealand: Bridget William Books, 2005), p. 18.

10 Lawrence James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (London: Abacus, 1997), p. xiv.

11 Robert Louis Stevenson, *In the South Seas*, ed. Neil Rennie (London: Penguin, 1998), p. 200.

12 Vahine: 'woman' in Proto-Polynesian.

13 'The Line Islands', now the Kiribati Republic, lie astride the Equator, hence their former name.

14 Matthew Spriggs, 'Archéologie Insulaire', in *Le Pacifique ou l'Odyssée de l'Espèce. Bilan Civilisationniste du Grand Océan*, ed. by Serge Dunis (Paris: Kliencksieck, 1996), 19-37 (p. 28).

15 Serge Tcherkézoff, *Faa Samoa, une Identité Polynésienne*.

L'Anthropologie comme Dialogue Culturel (Paris: L'Harmattan, Connaissance des Hommes, 2003), p. 39.

16 Ben Finney, 'De l'Océan à l'Espace', in *Le Pacifique ou l'Odyssée de l'Espèce*, 39-59 (p. 46).

17 Tcherkézoff, p.360.

18 In the 19th century, accented vowel letters were used to indicate long vowels, so, in accordance with the common usage of the time, Stevenson uses an accented-a in 'Falesá' (My thanks to Richard Dury for this information). Nowadays long vowels are indicated by a macron over the vowel, so 'Falesá' would be spelt 'Falesā'.

19 Roslyn Jolly 'Notes', in Robert Louis Stevenson, *South Sea Tales*, ed. by Roslyn Jolly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 259.

20 Tcherkézoff, p. 341.

21 Marcel Mauss, 'Essai sur le don, forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques', *Année Sociologique* n.s. 1 (1923-1924), reprinted in *Sociologie et Anthropologie*, Paris, Quadrige / Presses Universitaires de France, 1950, transl. W. D. Halls, *The Gift: Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London: Routledge 1990), p. 157.

22   Heather Young Leslie, 'Bons Baisers de Samoa: les bonites de Hina et le Tu'iha'angana de Tonga', *Bulletin de la Société des Études Océaniennes*, 303/304 (2005), p. 116.

23 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Weir of Hermiston* (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 53.

24 Mauss, 161.

25 Claude Lévi-Strauss, 'Introduction à l'Œuvre de Marcel Mauss', in Marcel Mauss, *Sociologie et Anthropologie* (Paris: P. U. F.. 1950), ix-lii (p. xxvii).

26 Beach la mar: Pacific island pidgin.

27 Valerio Valeri, *Kingship and Sacrifice, Ritual and Society in Ancient Hawaii* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 48-49.

28 Tcherkézoff, p. 46.

29 Martha Warren Beckwith (transl. and ed.), *The Kumulipo, a Hawaiian Creation Chant* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1972), p. 77.

30 Wiltshire is not gulled by Uma, but by Case, who knows as well as she

does that her wedding rites are in earnest

31 24 or 25 April 1994, *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1994-95), VIII, 281. 'Blacks or chocolates' is a quotation from Colvin's letter to Stevenson dated 21 March 1894: 'for three letters or more you have not uttered a single word about anything but your beloved blacks – or chocolates – confound them; beloved no doubt to you; to us detested, as shutting out your thoughts, or so it often seems, from the main currents of human affairs' (qu. in *Letters* VIII: 279 n 1).

32 21 May 1889, qu. in *Letters* VI, 303-304.

33 29 December 1890, *Letters* VII, 65-66.

Stevenson's anthropology of the Pacific Islands

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In 1888, Robert Louis Stevenson undertook a writer's tour of the South Seas, with the aim of producing a book that combined ethnological information collected from the region with his own reflections, to form a kind of 'hydrographical memoir'.[1] The production of this work broke down in the following two years and scholars have continued to study the reasons as to why this happened; in addition to the biographical and literary historical uses of the knowledge gained from their enquiry, Stevenson's failure to write a 'Big Book' about the South Seas also helps to clarify some of the limitations of anthropology, both in the nine-teenth century as well as today. In particular, his work expresses familiarity with, and hesitancy towards, the emergent science of evolutionary anthropology, which would come to ground modern theorizations of historical and social change. He was by no means an advocate of the strictly teleological view of human development, and regarded the entry of positivist thought into the study of culture with caution. In addition to adopting a criti-cal perspective with regard to contemporary scientific anthro-pology, his aesthetic portrayals of islander life and the intimate observations of his encounters with people living in the Pacific, expresses a strong affinity with a different orientation of research into the nature of humankind, which can broadly be understood as 'philosophical anthropology'.

   Although there was a powerful progressive discourse of cul-ture in Europe during the later nineteenth century, which was principally motivated by the work of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, many writers nevertheless questioned its philosophical

and moral foundations, and it is here that Stevenson's work on the South Seas must also be situated. Though he was interested in the ethnological theories of the time, Stevenson nevertheless developed his own anthropological outlook intuitively and without obvious debt to any particular scientific theory. All the same, it is undeniably clear that as an author he expressed an existential understanding of human life that was based on continental philosophy and phenomenological study. In this respect, the questions that remained important to Stevenson during the later years of the nineteenth century were moved by the same spirit of wonder at the human condition that illuminated the thought of Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche, and which may be expressed in terms of a turning away from positivist and enumerative methods of research, towards a poetic renewal of the study of existence. Given the subtle weight of these concerns within his work, it is with characteristic sincerity and insight that Stevenson claimed to find 'man most interesting' in the South Seas.[2]

The focus of the present paper will be three-fold: to examine Stevenson's research into the contradictions and contrariness of life, both through the study of art and of human societies; to explore his rejection of the anthropological category of survivals as a way of explaining historical progress; and to understand his grounding of anthropological research in the encounter between people and their surrounding world.

The nuanced and reflective style of the South Seas writing was the product, not only of years of aesthetic refinement, but more importantly of a lifetime of study into the metaphysical questions that animated Stevenson's interest in the phenomenal world. From a youthful age he demonstrated an equivocal reading of natural phenomena and he was fascinated by the sometimes fragmented, kaleidoscopic forms that he found there. In the significant early essay, 'Pan's Pipes' (1878), he explained how in the figure of Pan – 'the god of Nature' – the ancient Greeks had

'uttered the last word of human experience.'[3] This strange rural deity could be seen 'now terribly stamping his foot, so that armies were dispersed; now by the woodside on a Summer noon trolling on his pipe until he charmed the hearts of upland ploughmen.' He links Hellenic myth with psychology by then adding: 'What experience supplies is of a mingled tissue, and the choosing mind has much to reject before it can get together the materials of a theory.' Pan is therefore seen to express the contradictions that are a part of everyday human life, and in the appropriation of this being from the netherworld, Stevenson displays a creative interest in the workings of consciousness.

The deployment of aesthetic means to express philosophical ideas is a central feature of his work, and it can be found again in the important 1883 essay entitled 'San Francisco'. There is a sign of his later portrayals of beachcomber locales in the description of this modern Pacific capital, in which he notes, 'everywhere the same tumble-down decay and sloppy progress, new things yet unmade, old things tottering to their fall'.[4] As with many of his landscape interpretations, the impression received is one of the town being simultaneously in a developing and deteriorating state. The philosophical richness of this insight is gained at the expense of an unqualified optimism, since his writing is motivated by an inner conflict between growing and declining things. The author's later glimpses into the hybridity of modern life in the Pacific are similarly characterised by dissatisfaction with merely celebrating contemporary societies, and it is fruitful to examine the moments of hesitation and uncertainty contained in this work, to try and represent such moments within the history of his time.

Stevenson's concerns with developments in the academic study of anthropology are informed by a Hegelian view of the material world, and in his constructive response to the philosophy of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) he aligns himself with some of the most important thinkers of nineteenth

century Europe. Even without the intervention of Hegel, how-
ever – as noted in the essay on Pan – Stevenson understood
how the observation of oppositions in interpreting the world,
relate to the observer's process of reconciling new information
within an existing world-view. To be sure, early in his life he had
been dismissive of Hegelian philosophy: in a letter to his cousin
of 6 September 1868, he even claimed that Hegel was 'a most
egregious ass.'[5] But later, in 1883-84, an exchange of letters
between Stevenson and his father reveals a change in his views.
To Thomas Stevenson he wrote on 20 Dec 1883 that Hegel 'got
the best word of all philosophy with his antinomies', explaining
that, "the contrary of everything is its postulate. That [. . .] gives
a hint of the idea, which contains a great deal of the mysteries of
religion, and a vast amount of the practical wisdom of life.'[6] To
which his father replied, on 23 Dec 1883:

> As to Hegel and his 'secret' I really know nothing but
> the only prescription I know for black views of life is the
> Gospel of Jesus Christ and when that doesn't light up the
> scene I fear Hegel is not likely to do so.[7]

The tacit reference in Thomas Stevenson's letter to Hegel's
'secret' is a book by J. H. Stirling, entitled *The Secret of Hegel*
(1865), an influential work of the time, in which the Scottish phi-
losopher had attempted to explain Hegel to a perplexed British
reading public.[8]

Hegel's philosophy was earliest and most enthusiastically sup-
ported in Britain by Scottish thinkers.[9] James Frederick Ferrier
(1808-64), who read and admired Hegel's work, had taught the
folklorist Andrew Lang moral philosophy and economics at St.
Andrews in 1861, and was the father of Stevenson's friends,
James Walter and Elizabeth. William Wallace (1844-97), who
was also a student of Ferrier's at St. Andrews, went on to become
professor of moral philosophy at Oxford. Wallace is chiefly

remembered for having translated Hegel's *Logic* as the first part of his *Encyclopaedia of the Human Sciences* (1874). In addition to being regarded as the advent of British Hegelianism, this was also the first English translation of Hegel's discussion of the antinomies of reason, to which Stevenson had referred in the letter to his father. The other possibility is that Stevenson, who read German, had studied Hegel in the philosopher's mother tongue.

In his discussion of the antinomies, Hegel disputes the findings of Immanuel Kant by stating that the categories of thought are the same as those of reality: 'every actual thing involves a coexistence of opposed elements. Consequently to know, or, in other words, to comprehend an object is equivalent to being conscious of it as a concrete unity of opposed determinations.'[10] For Hegel, contra Kant, the fact that the world is composed of 'a coexistence of opposed elements' means that it reflects the state to which the human mind is led in its pursuit of antinomies drawn from classical philosophy.[11] Stevenson understood from Hegel's argument that the antinomial nature of human reason points to the conclusion wherein the truth about the self is to be found in the world created by the mind. Anthropology and scientific discovery, thus take on a responsibility distinctly different to that identified by Darwin and Spencer, and move in the direction not of teleological species, but existential experience. More precisely, it is this shift from the objective study of species to the experience of the phenomenal world that marks the tradition of philosophical anthropology and also Stevenson's writing on the Pacific Islands.

If the Hegelian influence in his thinking is followed, then it will be possible to see in what way Stevenson's writing throughout the pages of *In the South Seas* is also characterized by contradiction and provisionality. The island landscape is presented as a continuously shifting movement of tones, which progresses with the passage of the observer through space. Such an aesthetic compels Stevenson one night, on Fakarava in the Paumotus Islands, to describe the 'vigorous and scattered lights' of the

moon shining through the palm canopy (*South Seas*, pp. 152-3). He takes delight in depicting the break-up of colour, not only to emphasise contrast, but in order to assert it as a pattern that is filled with dynamic vigour. The pure moonlight is shown actually to be frangible as it breaks through the palm canopy to scatter into fragments of light. Clear perception of form is arrested by kaleidoscopic colour. To take another example: while in the Marquesas Islands, Stevenson describes a mountainous scene looking in from the bay of Anaho. 'In every crevice of that bar-rier [of "shattered mountains"]', he writes, 'the forest harboured, roosting and nesting there like birds about a ruin; and far above, it greened and roughened the razor edges of the summit' (*South Seas*, p. 7). Once more the author's eye is drawn toward formal oppositions, so that he notes the equivocal presence of forest, at once softening and eroding the mountainous wall.

  Not only the natural but also the human landscape of the South Seas is composed of mutually opposing ideas. The chapters on the Gilbert Islands, which were among the last to be written by the author, comprise the point at which his reflections on mate-rial culture reach their most decisive form. His description of the diversity of housing on the island of Butaritari is characteristic, since he writes of these dwellings:

> The houses were of all dimensions, from those of toys to those of churches. Some might hold a battalion, some were so minute they could scarce receive a pair of lovers; only in the playroom, when the toys are mingled, do we meet such incongruities of scale. Many were open sheds; some took the form of roofed stages; others were walled and the walls pierced with little windows. A few were perched on piles in the lagoon; the rest at random on a green, through which the roadway made a ribbon of sand, or along embankments of a sheet of water like a shallow dock. One and all were the creatures of a single tree; palm-

> tree wood and palm-tree leaf were their materials; no nail
> had been driven, no hammer sounded, in their building,
> and they were held together by lashings of palm-tree sin-
> net. (*South Seas*, p. 207)

The houses of Butaritari are joyfully irregular, of various shapes, situated almost everywhere in the landscape, and Stevenson notes all of the unique improvisations that contribute to the diversity. Many of the houses contain a natural opening; even those that are walled on all sides are 'pierced with little windows': it is a feature that reflects the accessibility and potential for adaptation of the people.[12] Gilbertese creativity is further emphasised by the fact that all of the buildings are made from the same species of tree and are held together using materials gathered from it.

On another Gilbert island, Apemama, King Tembinok' builds a settlement for Stevenson's family called 'Equator Town'. Stevenson writes that after the lamps are lighted one night:

> our dinner-table (lent, like all our furniture, by the king)
> must be enclosed in a tent of netting, our citadel and
> refuge; and this became all luminous, and bulged and
> beaconed under the eaves, like the globe of some mon-
> strous lamp under the margin of its shade. Our cabins, the
> sides being propped up at a variety of inclinations, spelled
> out strange, angular patterns of brightness. (*South Seas*,
> p. 293)

The settlement at Equator Town is therefore entirely incongruous. The tent, their protection against mosquitoes, 'bulged and beaconed', the lamplight throwing irregular shapes into relief. Stevenson notes all of the contortions with a painterly eye; grounding experience in contradiction means that the perception of pure light and pure form must also be provisional.

The German sociologist Max Scheler, writing years after Stevenson with the same intuition, described the 'contrariness' of things as the basis of sensory experience, and to the finding of this experience he gave the name philosophical anthropology.[13] In a similar way, Stevenson tried to express an anthropology of the South Seas that identified and worked with the contrariness of things. Such notions were far removed from the academic 'science of culture' that had acquired the title of anthropology through the collaborative efforts of evolutionary theory and objective research.

During the nineteenth century, anthropology was characterized by an antagonism to theology, so that it became frozen into two opposed views of humankind. On the one hand there were theologians who, following orthodox Christianity, believed that humans were beings uniquely created in the image of God, and on the other hand there were evolutionists who, following Darwin, believed that humans were essentially animals and descended from the monkey. Whatever the respective bases for these beliefs, the two views were regarded by nineteenth century science as being antithetical. The evolutionary view restricted human beings to the sphere of zoology and aimed to study them as animals in their history as a race.[14] The decisive moment in the shift from 'theological' to 'scientific' anthropology in Britain was the publication of Edward Burnett Tylor's *Primitive Culture* in 1871.[15] In Tylor's study the development theory of culture, represented as the inevitable material progress of all human societies from barbarism to civilization, was fused with the theory of natural selection expounded by Darwin and others.

Stevenson knew of Tylor and the new anthropology: his correspondence with Andrew Lang enabled him to appreciate the intellectual setting in which Tylor worked, and he was also familiar with George Turner's Samoa a *Hundred Years Ago and Long Before* (1884), a book whose preface had been written by Tylor.[16] However, he differed from Tylor in his approach in sig-

nificant respects. We have already mentioned his philosophical anthropology; another, more specific way in which he differed from contemporary scientific anthropology was in his critical examination of assumptions of cultural phenomena as 'survivals' from an earlier epoch.

Stevenson critiques Tylor's concept of survivals in his South Seas writing through the form of ironic reversals and by the discovery of paradoxes in contemporary Pacific Islands cultures, which cannot simply be explained in Tylorian fashion as the residue of a former condition of belief.[17] There are examples of this critique throughout the writing, such as in the inability of Hawaiian judges to administer trusts, the view of King Tembinok of the Gilberts as 'the last erect vestige of a dead society' (*South Seas*, p. 275), and the Marquesan tendency towards suicide in the wake of widespread depopulation. Far from being primitive 'survivals' or outmoded beliefs and customs, he claims that all of these seemingly perplexing phenomena of modern culture are actually direct outcomes of the destructive Western involvement in the Pacific Islands.[18]

However, Stevenson was not concerned with simply formulating a systematic anthropology along the lines that had been developed earlier in the nineteenth century by Tylor and also by Lewis Henry Morgan in the United States. Instead, as is evidenced by his letters of 1888-9, he conceived of his research in the Pacific Islands as a subject without borders – 'out of the shadow of the Roman empire' (*South Seas*, p. 9), as he described his new-found geographical and psychological situation. His anthropology was to be experientially enriched through the human encounter, thus free from the ideological restrictions that guided the researches of evolutionary anthropologists. Since his plans were disrupted by the criticism of his editor as well as by others, it is necessary to search for the rudiments of this anthropology within a text, *In the South Seas*, that is composed of fragments that are often either altered or amended by others.

Furthermore, in trying to locate Stevenson's anthropology of the Pacific, the scholarship of his contemporaries is only of limited use. The kinds of questions that are normally reserved for studies in scientific objectivity do not help to clarify his intentions, because the distinction between object and subject that is crucial to the former does not belong to the milieu of the encounter: the existential opening in which Stevenson's observations take place. It is rather, as Martin Heidegger wrote, an anthropology in which others are encountered in the 'surrounding world', since in this phenomenological space the 'I' does not distinguish itself, and 'the others' describes 'those among whom one is, too'. Understood existentially, 'the world is always already the one that I share with the others', and 'being-in is *being-with* others.'[19]

An anthropology that is based on categorical reasoning does not permit the thinking identified by Heidegger, and begins to understand human existence only after prioritizing formal language as the vehicle of expressive being. By contrast, as Stevenson notes almost as soon as he sets foot in the Pacific, 'The impediment of tongues was one that I particularly over-estimated' (*South Seas*, p. 10). What he tries to relate in the subsequent account of his first meeting with Marquesan people is the primacy of an alingual world, a world without spoken language, in which other people are sympathetically understood.[20] In this situation, communication by means of gesture and the tone of voice is more important than the language of speech and modified sound. After spending his first day on the Islands, Stevenson sits in the evening writing his journal in a cabin filled with Marquesan people watching him 'in silence with embarrassing eyes.' Confessing that he fell into a kind of despair and even rage at the thought that 'they were beyond the reach of articulate communication', he nevertheless affirms that 'all were to become our intimates' (*South Seas*, pp. 9-10). Indeed, he proceeds to give an insight into the way that the decline of their number has affected these people. He writes that the Marquesan 'lives and breathes under a shadow of mortality

too awful to support; and he is so inured to the apprehension that he greets the reality with relief'. Of the shrivelling of their cultural activity, he observes that 'with the decay of pleasures, life itself decays' (*South Seas,* p. 25).

Stevenson's anthropology of encounter, of meeting and dialogue, follows a conception of the human person that is not merely biological or physiological but also intertwined meaning-fully with an existential commitment towards life. In the words of Heidegger, 'the "*substance*" of human being is not the spirit as the synthesis of body and soul, but *existence*' (Heidegger, p. 155). As with the work of thinkers such as Heidegger and Martin Buber, Stevenson's anthropology is not grounded in the figure of the corporeal person, whether as an individual or as a member of a group, but in the relationship between people and the world that they inhabit, their surrounding world. To this extent, he appreciated the value of the missionary R. H. Codrington's dis-covery that Melanesians perceived no basic difference between man and beast, but recognised a defining antipathy distinguish-ing man from ghost (*South Seas*, p. 28). Without once venturing to comment on their scientific credibility, Stevenson remained acutely sensitive to Pacific Islanders' nocturnal fear of the dead, which he relates through stories that were handed down genera-tionally as well as communicated directly by people he had met while on his travels.

Martin Buber stated that the essence of the person that is special to them 'can be directly known only through a living rela-tion', and that 'the anthropologist can have nothing to do with a division of consciousness'. The science of evolutionary anthro-pology, which was still young but growing in authority during Stevenson's time, achieves what it does for thought precisely through 'objectification', which in Buber's judgement is identical to 'de-humanization'.[21] The enquiry of philosophical anthropolo-gy, on the other hand, begins with encounter at the level of ontol-ogy, in which it is not possible to reify existence into objective

categories such as race. Only by participating in what is felt to be most essentially and intimately bound to the human encounter can anthropological work be sheltered from its own powers of distancing and clinical detachment. With this danger in mind, in the opening pages of *In the South Seas* Stevenson writes that 'the first South Sea island', like the first love and the first sunrise, 'touched a virginity of sense' and cannot be repeated (*South Seas*, p. 6). He thereby relates an anthropological perspective in which the observer does not remain unaffected by his encounter with the observed. Whether moved by a young Marquesan mother's 'tranquil despair' at the rapid extinction of her people, or capti-vated to recite Emerson at the sight of a steersman sailing alone at night under the stars, Stevenson is always implicated as a participant in these moments (*South Seas*, pp. 22, 110). He does not separate himself from the questions that trouble the people whom he encounters, but rather works through them within a province of mutual feeling.

Anthropology, as with all science, is a human creation. No divine observer is responsible for recording the facts, only the person in a world of others, and because of this, anthropological knowledge has a relative value. Stevenson held the information provided by local inhabitants in higher regard than he did those of foreign authorities on the islands, even if the latter were gener-ally reliable. 'I should prefer the statement of an intelligent native [...] to the report of the most honest traveller', he writes (*South Seas,* p. 35). The diary form of anthropological record, linking *In the South Seas* with Claude Levi-Straus' *Tristes Tropiques* and Bronislaw Malinowski's *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, provides a living record of the author's commitment to his research. By contrast, the ordered and systematic arrangement of the scientific anthropological treatise abstracts and objectifies information that was itself gathered from and made possible through numerous encounters.

The apparently limited forms of travel extant in Stevenson's

time also served to provide a better balance between the pre-conceptual and the mathematical spaces through which the world is humanly perceived.[22] Rather than entering the islands by aeroplane and through the filter of maps, Stevenson's crossing of the Pacific by boat and his subsequent travels on foot brought him closer to the psychological landscape in which the islanders themselves dwelt. In this way, the character of his anthropology is determined by his mode of travel. The balance between lived space, which is traditionally ascribed to the indigene, and the objective space utilised by science, is here negotiated through the human experience of journeying, which allows the traveller to access a more immediate kind of sensing than is normally acknowledged by the anthropological researcher. It is this found-ing practice that enables Stevenson to express an anthropology of encounter, uniting the aesthetics of being in the world and the ethics of becoming attuned with life in the Pacific.

In his perception of contradictions in the appearance of phe-nomena, in the analysis and rejection of the Tylorian concept of survivals, and in the grounding of his understanding of the human in the encounter between beings and their environment, Stevenson gives support to a philosophical anthropology that has today been largely forgotten or discarded, at least in the English-speaking world. Far from being an approach tied to modern scientific notions of life and the progress of culture, philosophi-cal anthropology describes an orientation toward existence that does not presume to know what the human being is, but studies him both as the end of a long development and the beginning of a new one.[23]

NOTES

1   The expression 'hydrographical memoir' is used in reference to Alexander Findlay's self-description of his *A Directory for the Navigation of the South Pacific Ocean*, Fifth Edn. (London: R. H. Lurie, 1884), which was Stevenson's constant companion during his travels in the South Seas.

2   Robert Louis Stevenson, *In the South Seas* (London: Penguin, 1998), p. 5, henceforth cited in the text.

3   Robert Louis Stevenson, *Virginibus Puerisque*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1921), pp. 181-2.

4   Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Amateur Emigrant, The Silverado Squatters and the Silverado Diary* (Kessinger Publishing, 2005), p. 174.

5   *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994-), I, pp. 142-3.

6   *Letters*, IV, p. 221.

7   *Letters*, IV, p. 221 n.

8   James Hutchinson Stirling, The *Secret of Hegel: Being the Hegelian System in Origin, Principle, Form, and Matter*, 2 vols. (London: Longman, 1865).

9   See Norbert Waszek, *The Scottish Enlightenment and Hegel's Account of 'Civil Society'* (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), p. 230.

10 *Hegel's Logic: Being Part One of the 'Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences'*, trans. by William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975 [1873]), p. 78.

11 The four antinomies, which Kant uses, are: (i) Is the world limited in space and time, or is it not? (ii) Is matter endlessly divisible or does it consist of atoms? (iii) Is there freedom or is everything determined by necessity? (iv) Is the world as a whole caused or uncaused? By taking up each of these questions from either side of the argument, Kant shows how it is possible within the terms set by the question to disprove the other. *Hegel's Logic*, pp. 76-77.

12 According to John Hockings, the Gilbertese capacity for adaptation is many centuries old. See Hockings, *Traditional Architecture in the Gilbert Islands: A Cultural Perspective* (Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1989). It is also notable how these and other

descriptions of the landscape of the South Seas presented by Stevenson, in their concentration on irregularity, disorder, and provisional appearance, resemble his memories of his childhood home, Edinburgh's Old Town.

13 See Martin Buber, 'The Philosophical Anthropology of Max Scheler', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 6, no. 2 (Dec., 1945), pp. 307-321 (p. 317).

14 See Erwin Straus, 'The Upright Posture', in *Phenomenological Psychology* (London: Tavistock, 1966), p. 139. See also Laavanyan Ratnapalan and David Reggio, 'Erwin Straus and the Pathic', (forthcoming).

15 Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom* (2 vols., London: John Murray, 1871), I, pp. 99-100.

16 'Belle [Strong, Stevenson's stepdaughter] is deep in work on Samoa: she reads Turner, and sniffs at his superficiality, and talks comparative mythology with extraordinary boldness.' Stevenson, letter to his mother, [15?] August 1893, *Letters*, VIII, p. 149 and n. In a footnote to this letter, Booth and Mehew confirm that Stevenson was referring to George Turner. See Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years Ago and Long Before; together with Notes on the Cults and Customs of Twenty-Three Other Islands in the Pacific* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1884). Among many other correspondences and notes to Tylor in his published work, it was Lang who wrote the introductory essay to the collection entitled *Anthropological Essays Presented to Edward Burnett Tylor: In Honour of his 75th Birthday*, by H. Balfour et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), in which he claims that he had first met Tylor in 1872 (p. 1).

17 Stevenson's critique of Tylor bears a resemblance to the contemporaneous studies of the German art historian Aby Warburg, who also made creative use of Tylorian survivals with his formulation of the *nachleben*, or 'after-life', of works of art. See George Didi-Huberman, 'The Surviving Image: Aby Warburg and Tylorian Anthropology', *Oxford Art Journal* 25.1 (2002), pp. 59-70.

18 See Laavanyan Ratnapalan, 'Robert Louis Stevenson and Cultural Survivals in the South Seas', *Journal of Stevenson Studies* 3 (2006), pp. 69-84.

19 Martin Heidegger, *Philosophical and Political Writings*, ed. by Manfred Stassen (London: Continuum, 2003), p. 157.

20 See Ilaria Sborgi, '"Home" in the South Seas', *Journal of Stevenson Studies* 4 (2007), pp. 185-198, in which she explains how the notion of sympathy is 'central to Stevenson's theories of reading and writing' (p. 194).

21 Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, trans. by Ronald Gregor Smith (London: Kegan Paul, 1947) pp. 122-5.

22 See the discussion of Erwin Straus in *The Primary World of Senses: A Vindication of Sensory Experience* (London: Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1963), pp. 318-328.

23 To paraphrase Erwin Straus in his essay, 'The Upright Posture', p. 140.

'A phrase of Virgil speaks of English places': Classical and European literature in R. L. Stevenson's *South Sea Tales*

Tania Zulli

In 1889 the town of Apia, in Samoa, witnessed the arrival of R. L. Stevenson. After a journey that had lasted more than a year, he had finally reached the site he would soon decide to settle in. Even if his first impression of the Samoan islands had not been astonishing, he was fascinated by places he had dreamed of since he was a child and whose descriptions he had read and listened to throughout his life. These faraway tropical islands had nourished his imagination when in Europe and America; and his curiosity was now fulfilled. Stevenson's enthusiasm included the people and the culture of Polynesia. Every island was a new and unique experience, a new world to be discovered, not only in geographical terms, but especially in its social and cultural expressions.

More than one reason convinced Stevenson to remain in Apia:

> There was not only good communication with the Western world but the climate had proved to be ideal as far as Louis's health was concerned. In a January letter to Sydney Colvin Fanny revealed that in the six weeks they had been in Apia RLS had experienced no cough, no haemorrhaging, no fever and no night sweats. Not only could he spend long hours writing without exhaustion, but it was not unusual for him to spend entire days in the saddle exploring the island in spite of occasional tropical showers which drenched him to the skin.[1]

Favoured by his improving health and fascinated by new dis-

coveries apt to nourish his narrative imagination, he decided to accept S. S. McClure's suggestion to look for inspiration in the South Seas.[2] Stevenson had declared he was going to Polynesia to grow old and die, but when there his literary production was prolific and his writings in the South Seas made a substantial contribution to his already well-established fame. In the six years spent in the Pacific he wrote many narrative and non narrative works, whose topics were the islands and their population: *The Wrecker* (1892) and *The Ebb-Tide* (1894) both together with Lloyd Osbourne; two non-fiction pieces: *In the South Seas* (1896) and *A Footnote to History* (1892); and a collection of short stories *Island Nights' Entertainments* (1893): 'The Beach of Falesá,' 'The Bottle Imp,' and 'The Isle of Voices.'[3] These works show a deep concern for the places and peoples of the South Sea islands and also an interesting approach on Stevenson's part towards them. His aim to depict the Pacific world as a lively and complex reality, contemporary yet alien, is clearly expressed in *In the South Seas*:

> I must learn to address readers from the uttermost parts of the sea. […] No part of the world exerts the same attractive power upon the visitor [as the Pacific islands], and the task before me is to communicate to fireside travelers some sense of its seduction, and to describe the life, at sea and ashore, of many hundred thousand persons, some of our own blood and language, all our contemporaries, and yet as remote in thought and habit as Rob Roy or Barbarossa, the Apostles or the Caesars.[4]

By spanning spatial and temporal dimensions, Stevenson wished to present a kind of writing in which exotic elements and European heredity could coexist. If for nothing else, he wanted to provide 'familiar' stories to his reading public – which he still regarded as European. As a result, he often compared Polynesian

culture with Scottish history and culture and, writing his South Sea stories, always kept in mind his European literary background.[5] Western life and literature were so far from Polynesian folklore, but at the same time crucial in claiming the author's sense of belonging to the European milieu, that the natural result was a series of multilayered narratives. As Julia Reid has pointed out, an anthropological reading of *In the South Seas* requires the difficult but necessary reconciliation of conflicting interpretations about Stevenson's treatment of Scottish and Polynesian tradition. Such an interest in both worlds 'was the mark of a deeper intellectual preoccupation, a concern with the evolution of cultures and religions, with the relations between past and present, savagery and civilization.'[6] Therefore, behind Stevenson's advocated link between European and Polynesian literature lies an interest in a broader cultural and social connection.

Stevenson's note before the text of 'The Bottle Imp' is an example testifying to how European and South Sea literatures are linked in his thought:

> Any student of that very unliterary product, the English drama of the early part of the century, will here recognize the name and the root idea of a piece once rendered popular by the redoubtable O. Smith. The root idea is there and identical, and yet I hope I have made it a new thing. And the fact that the tale has been designed and written for a Polynesian audience may lend it some extraneous interest nearer home. – R.L.S.[7]

Stevenson adapted the Victorian melodrama, a 'very unliterary product,' to the literary interests of the Polynesians, and then re-presented the work to readers 'nearer home' hoping that the familiar plot might gain interest from a more unfamiliar, and therefore appealing and seductive setting. The process of 'trans-

lation' back and forth assumes a communion between Europe and Polynesia to be looked for in history, traditions, and also in literature; a shared interest in themes and 'stories' can be established, in spite of a different degree of intellectual refinement. In order to find a space for himself between the two cultures, Stevenson started adapting Polynesian to European literary genres and vice versa:

> he started collecting and translating Polynesian myths and folk-tales, and fashioned out of them ballads and long poems for the 'civilized' readers at home. Then, reversing the process, he went back to the 'barbaric' origins of Western culture, and adapted Northern European sagas and folk-tales to the Islanders' 'savage psychology' (*Letters,* 7: 187): for 'The Bottle Imp,' he transposed to Hawaii a German folk-tale; with the help of a British missionary, he started writing in Samoan 'Eatuina,' a tale set at the times of the Saxons; and 'The Waif Woman' was inspired by a collection of Nordic sagas. In all these cases, he was positing a reading-model based on the 'recapitulation theory,' according to which 'primitive cultures' correspond to earlier stages of Western civilization (Tylor 1873).[8]

By locating the two cultures on different levels, Stevenson was actually questioning the possibility of a straight correspondence between them; common points and mutual reception were, after all, not easy to achieve; they are more easily detectable for the modern reader than they could have been for the late Victorian public.[9] However, an attentive reading shows how the author's exotic tales imply the merging of the two cultures in their plots, character presentation, and literary references. Typically, a white protagonist, more or less adapted to the life of the Pacific islands, refers to his European background for consolation from a sense

of nostalgic longing, or as a way to cope with natives.[10]

The meeting of two cultures – the European and the Polynesian – through a literary blending is ideally reproduced in one of Stevenson's most complex South Sea narratives, *The Ebb-Tide* (1894). This relation has to be analyzed in connection to the European *fin de siècle* cultural background of anxiety and discontent, which the novella transposes into a new setting. The initial quotation in *The Ebb-Tide*, taken from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* ('There is a tide in the affairs of men'), despite its use in its original context, hints at the alternation of fortune and misery in the life of men or even, (remembering the title's reference to 'ebb') to an inevitable end of fortune, or an instability in the affairs of men.[11] Transposed into a wider axiological setting, it thus suggests the apprehension of the social and epistemic instability felt by intellectuals in the late Victorian period. Torn between the ideal representation of a world founded on progress and wealth on the one hand, and the profound sense of distress resulting from the loss of faith and the Darwinian fear for regression on the other, writers could not avoid transferring this state of doubt to their work.

Matthew Arnold had given voice to this anxiety in his poem 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartereuse' years before:

> Wandering between two worlds, one dead
> The other powerless to be born,
> With nowhere yet to rest my head
> Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.[12]

Economic growth and scientific innovations had not supplied the expected inner tranquillity, and metropolitan areas lost their characterization of places where happiness might be sought. In this context, exotic narratives excited interest as 'an imaginative escape from the drabness of an overwhelmingly grey and rationalised world.'[13] Such an escape, however, was not to be found in

Stevenson's novella. In *The Ebb-Tide*, he investigated the typically Victorian individual fears relocating them in the conflicting and degraded individuality of white colonisers in the South Seas, where immorality was more evident due to the situation of physical and existential precariousness. In such a context, Western literature acquires special functions and values.

In this story, literary references work on a double level; there is a personal level regarding the specific existence of individuals, and a universal one in which these individuals come to embody general truths. The link to European culture is presented in the first part of the narration through the protagonists, whose frequent references to disparate literary works – from Horace, Virgil, and the Bible to Shakespeare, Burns, Defoe, Goldsmith, music-hall songs, popular ballads – make the novella itself an articulate collection of narrative genres and literary forms. Living at the fringes of society, three white beachcombers, 'the three most miserable English-speaking creatures in Tahiti,' find themselves sitting on the beach under a *purao*-tree (*South Sea Tales*, p. 124). Desperate, starving and hopeless, at the beginning of the narration they seem to possess a single treasure: their literary reminiscences. They are, in one way or the other, supported by their 'artistic' vein, be it under the form of Herrick's educated literary quotations, Huish's music hall songs, or Davis' whistled popular ballads. Art, in its multifarious shapes, is occasionally a way to cheerfulness, sometimes a moral support, more often an instrument for provoking recollections of past life.[14] It is, moreover, a way to meditation:

> To and fro he paced like a caged brute; his mind whirling through the universe of thought and memory; his eyes, as he went, skimming the legends on the wall. The crumbling whitewash was all full of them: Tahitian names, and French, and English, and rude sketches of ships under sail and men at fisticuffs.

> It came to him of a sudden that he too must leave upon
> these walls the memorial of his passage. He paused before
> a clean space, took the pencil out, and pondered. (*South
> Sea Tales,* p. 142)

Apart from serving as a marker of class difference, the works quoted by the three beachcombers stand for a peculiar personal condition which then becomes representative of broad consid-erations on man's existence.[15] The essential bond of the artistic element with memories and past life works on an intradiegetic level – specifically that of Herrick's youth – and on an extradi-egetic one, pointing at Stevenson's longing for his Scottish cul-tural roots.

One of the main characters of *The Ebb-Tide*, Robert Herrick, shows a particular affection towards the 'tattered Virgil in his pocket' (*South Sea Tales*, p. 124); he reads his favourite passages, studies the new ones, and lingers on memories of his schooldays brought about by the *Aeneid*:

> the busy schoolroom, the green playing–fields, holidays at
> home, and the perennial roar of London, and the fireside,
> and the white head of his father. For it is the destiny of
> those grave, restrained and classic writers, with whom
> we make enforced and often painful acquaintanceship at
> school, to *pass into the blood and become native in the
> memory*; so that a phrase of Virgil speaks not so much
> of Mantua or Augustus, but of English places and the
> student's own irrevocable youth. (*South Sea Tales*, p. 125,
> my emphasis)

The gift of literature is that of 'passing into the blood and becoming native in the memory;' classical and European culture belong therefore to a sole heredity that refers to Herrick's past youth, whose melancholic memories at least bring consola-

tion to his destitute state ('Virgil [...] had often consoled him in his hunger': *South Sea Tales*, p. 124). According to Richard Ambrosini, Herrick, by reading Virgil, tries to project his own existential failure on a universal dimension, since he is not able to tackle his sad destiny.[16] And yet, he is also aware that Virgil does not provide a practical way out of his miserable life. The role of literature is all interior; the quotations by Virgil, Heine, and Beethoven are centred on Herrick's individuality and are seen in relation to his personal life. Literature has 'passed into Herrick's blood,' and has become an intrinsic part of him, it therefore works on general existential problems seen from an individual perspective. Herrick's oscillation between a state of desperation and the will to react to it with the help of poetry,[17] resembles Stevenson's personal discomfort in the years after writing *The Ebb-Tide*, years of artistic de-motivation countered by the will to escape his depression through writing.[18] Moreover, Herrick's getting consolation from literature equals Stevenson's early optimism towards the curative power of art: 'When I suffer in mind, stories are my refuge; I take them like opium; and I consider one who writes them as a sort of doctor of the mind' (*Letters,* III, 61).

Several critics have underlined the unrealistic nature of Herrick's quotation of such an extensive set of literary texts;[19] more than a destitute beachcomber ended up on a tropical island in search of fortune he resembles 'a Marabar cave of literary echoes' or an eminent scholar from his Oxford college (Sandison, p. 327). If on the one hand, Stevenson sacrifices the realistic vein in the story, on the other hand Herrick's condition is the epitome of a broader, general state: in presenting Herrick as a cultured man, Stevenson is anticipating a literary season that would combine the figure of the adventurer with the man-of-letters as typified by Joseph Conrad (Ambrosini, pp. 391, 262). Robert Herrick is not a miserable voyager washed up in the South Seas; he is a sort of 'everyman' whose existential problems go beyond the geographical boundaries of the Pacific island, or those of Europe,

and become the symbol of the general disruption and instabil-
ity felt in the last years of the nineteenth century. In addition,
he is the intellectual trying to fill an existential gap that exists
independent of exact location in space and time. The inability of
the three beachcombers to accomplish any literary act adds to
their personal and existential failure, but the uselessness of their
'shallow creative endeavours' is counterbalanced by the symbolic
value of their literary memories.[20]

Quotations in *The Ebb-Tide* trace Herrick's moral route, driv-
ing him towards death and despair; art does not seem to help
the intellectual who is sinking into the existential sickness of
life. Herrick goes through different phases of artistic composi-
tion: first he repeats to himself passages he remembers from his
schooldays and that have accompanied him throughout his life,
then he writes a letter to his girlfriend, and finally he decides to
'carve' memorable sentences on the walls of the old calaboose.
Before accomplishing this final act, in the excitement of artistic
composition, he foresees change: 'From his jarred nerves, there
came a strong sentiment of coming *change*; whether good or
ill he could not say: *change*, he knew no more – *change*, with
inscrutable veiled face, approaching noiseless' (*South Sea Tales*,
p. 144, my emphasis). The change alluded to – also introduced
by Beethoven's quotation 'Destiny knocking at the door' –
anticipates the adventures about to start, but is also, inevitably,
a general prediction of a changing future viewed with both trepi-
dation and curiosity. From a narrative point of view, Herrick's
culture does not convey, in concrete terms, either his salvation
or his elevation to a privileged level; his knowledge provides
some support ('consolation'), but gives no definite solution to his
state. The value of literature is to be found elsewhere; first, in
its linking Europe to the South Seas, secondly in its building a
bridge between past and present through memory, and thirdly
in association with an anticipated new life: the adventure on the
Farallone and, from a more general perspective, the uncertain

future of mankind.

In terms of the author's artistic development, change has to be understood as a step ahead for the traditional adventure novel; *The Ebb-Tide*, in fact, not only distances itself from the genre of romance, but anticipates a new departure in Stevenson's writing made towards psychological introspection, with a direct correspondence in the analysis of human destiny. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Stevenson's fiction was going through a shift from traditional Victorian writing – that of the adventure novel – to a more complex and demanding kind of narrative. Commenting on *The Wrecker* (1892), he had declared that it was 'in quite a new vein for me' (*Letters*, VI, 375-6). A changing perspective in his South Sea writing has been pointed out by various critics; Roslyn Jolly defines 'The Beach of Falesá' 'a study of manners in a mixed society' and focuses on how Stevenson abandons the adventure genre in favour of a kind of domestic fiction set in exotic places, introducing groundbreaking issues such as miscegenation.[21] Jolly concludes that: 'although the age of innocent imperial adventure ended for Stevenson when he began to encounter the realities of empire, during and after the writing of 'The Beach of Falesá' he expresses no regret for this, but looks forward enthusiastically to what was, for him, the combination of new subject matter with a new fictional mode' (Jolly, p. 477). According to Julia Reid, *The Ebb-Tide* marks the end of the 'curative value of romance' (Reid, p. 52) in Stevenson's fiction, while Roger Ebbatson argues that '*The Ebb-Tide* may be read as a symptomatic text of the *fin de siècle* from historical, literary, and theological perspectives.'[22]

The presence of literary references in *The Ebb-Tide* points to two crucial themes which testify to the research of a different kind of writing, associated with Stevenson's growing artistic maturity. Both memory, which we have seen associated with Herrick's literary allusions, and the past are connected to the relationship between European and Polynesian culture. It is

memory, the melancholic reappearance of the past, to re-activate one's own historical, cultural, and personal identity. Herrick's attitude towards literature has affinities with Stevenson's longing for his roots when confined in the South Seas. The revival of identity-affirming memories would be central in his last unfinished masterpiece, *Weir of Hermiston* (1894), in which the value of Scottish origins proves vital to Archie Weir when in Hermiston.[23] With regard to this, Francesco Marroni argues that *Weir* attempts to 'explore the theme of memory on a more complex level, not only as a nostalgic return to his historical and cultural roots, but also as a powerful fusion of the many historical and legendary voices that made up the heart and essence of Scotland.'[24]

Significantly, the themes of exile, past roots, memories and artistic composition are introduced in the novel right from the author's dedication:

> I saw rain falling and the rainbow drawn
> On Lammermiur. Hearkening I heard again
> In my precipitous city beaten bells
> Winnow the keen sea wind. And here afar,
> Intent on my own *race* and place, I wrote.[25]

Writing can control and give voice to man's inner conflicts and moral frailties. Stevenson was perfectly aware that 'the fears and vulnerabilities of the South Sea islanders were little different from those of men and women everywhere;' he knew that his interest in man's mind and morality (an interest he had transposed in his narratives since *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*) now exceeded geographical – and temporal – boundaries.[26] European and Polynesian cultures were both embedded in his (later) literary identity and they played a crucial role in giving a form to the existential dilemmas characterizing the Victorian and late Victorian epistemic mood.

Stevenson's wonderful declaration: 'I refuse the offering of life without my art. I am not but in my art; it is me; I am the body of it merely' must have meant more than a simple, if absolute, fusion of body and literature (*Letters*, IV, 252-3). In these words one can read the hint at art – and literature – as a vital element for the development of one's own inner life. However, the former optimistic and light-hearted vision of literature as a cure to human pain was lost in Stevenson's later writing in the name of a prose dealing with unresolved historical and individual conflicts in which the fear for man's destiny became central, together with the awareness that literature was the means to explore it.

Notes

1   Lowell D. Holmes, *Treasure Islands, Cruising the South Seas with Robert Louis Stevenson*, (New York: Sheridan House, 2001), p. 184.

2   See Robert I. Hillier, 'In the South Seas', *Studies in Scottish Fiction* 23 (1988), p. 105.

3   Stevenson died in 1894 and had settled at Vailima in 1890, but before arriving there he had travelled for two years in Hawaii, Australia, Marquesas, and Marshall Islands, leaving from San Francisco on 28th June 1888.

4   Robert Louis Stevenson, *In the South Seas*, ed. by Neil Rennie, (Harmondsworth and London: Penguin, 1998), pp. 5-6, henceforth cited in the text.

5   'When I desired any detail of savage custom, or superstitious belief, I cast back in the stories of my fathers, and fished for what I wanted with some equal trait of barbarism [...] what I knew of the Cluny Macphersons, or of the Appin Stewarts, enabled me to learn, and helped me to understand, about the Tevas of Tahiti' (R. L. Stevenson, *In the South Seas*, p. 13).

6   Julia Reid, *Robert Louis Stevenson, Science, and the 'Fin de Siècle'*, (Basingstoke and London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 108.

7   R. L. Stevenson, *South Sea Tales*, p. 72. About the inspiration for this short story, Roslyn Jolly writes that 'the source for Stevenson's story was 'The Bottle Imp', a melodrama by Richard Brinsley Peake (1792-1847), first performed at Covent Garden in 1828 featuring the

actor Richard John 'Obi' Smith (1786-1855), commonly known as 'O. Smith'; Smith's performance in this piece sealed his reputation as a player of demons, monsters, and other villainous roles. Peake's play was itself based on a German folktale, and although Stevenson seems not to have encountered the prose source directly he acknowledged the story's generic origins when he spoke of 'The Bottle Imp' as 'the centre-piece of a volume of *Märchen*' he planned to write' (Roslyn Jolly, Introduction to *South Sea Tales*, p. 270).

8   Richard Ambrosini, 'The Four Boundary-Crossings of R. L. Stevenson, Novelist and Anthropologist', *R. L. Stevenson, Writer of Boundaries*, ed. by Richard Ambrosini and Richard Dury, (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), p. 33.

9   See Roslyn Jolly, 'Robert Louis Stevenson and Samoan History: Crossing the Roman Wall', *Crossing Cultures: Essays on Literature and Culture of the Asia-Pacific*, ed. by Bruce Bennett, Jeff Doyle, Satendra Nandan, (London: Skoob Books, 1996), pp. 113-114.

10 This is the case of the 'scattered men of many European races' alluded to in *The Ebb-Tide* (*South Sea Tales*, p. 123), among which are the three protagonists of the story; also of Wiltshire and Case in 'The Beach of Falesá.' Stevenson may have transferred onto his characters a veiled personal longing for Europe which he usually tried to hide by repeatedly saying Samoa was a place he preferred to the continent.

11 In Shakespeare's text, the words of Brutus are also an incitement to 'seize the day.' Alternation of fear and renewed hope can be found in many Victorian and Late Victorian authors (Matthew Arnold in 'Dover Beach', for example).

12 Matthew Arnold, 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse', *Matthew Arnold*, (London: Everyman, 1998), p. 80.

13 Simon Dentith, *Society and Cultural Forms in Nineteenth-Century England*, (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 171.

14 Art also stimulates action: only after quoting, reading, and writing (that is, after performing literary efforts) the characters start 'acting' – the first three chapters of the novel are in fact characterised by inactivity, the protagonists are totally inert.

15 Each character quotes according to his class provenance and culture. Herrick, the most cultured of the trio, quotes from Beethoven, Virgil, Horace, Heinrich Heine, von Matthisson; Davis whistles popular ballads ('The Irish Washerwoman,' 'Auld Lang Syne,' 'The Beautiful

Land,' 'Dandy Jim of Carolina'); and Huish experiments with music hall songs such as those by G. W. Hunt (1868).

16 See Richard Ambrosini, *R. L. Stevenson. La poetica del romanzo*, (Roma: Bulzoni, 2001), p. 384.

17 *'*Had he no rights? – only the obligation to go on, without discharge or furlough, bearing the unbearable? *Ich trage unertragliches*, the quotation rose in his mind; he repeated the whole piece, one of the most perfect of poets; and a phrase struck him like a blow: Du, stolzes *Herz, du hast es ja gewol*t. Where was the pride of his heart? And he raged against himself, as a man bites on a sore tooth, in a heady sensuality of scorn*'* (*South Sea Tales,* p. 144).

18 A number of Stevenson's letters of this period testify to this. See, for example, the letter written to Sidney Colvin on 6th October 1894 in *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Bradford Booth and Ernest Mehew (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), VIII, 603-604, henceforth cited in the text.

19 Alan Sandison, '*The Ebb-Tide*, A Modernist in the South Seas', *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Appearance of Modernism*, (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 317-367; Alistair Fowler, 'Parables of Adventure: the Debatable Novels of R. L. Stevenson', *Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction: Critical Essays*, ed. by Ian Campbell, (Manchester: Carcanet, 1979), pp. 105-29; Richard Le Gallienne (see Ambrosini, p. 389).

20 Vanessa Smith, *Literary Culture and the Pacific: Nineteenth-Century Textual Encounters*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 160.

21 Roslyn Jolly, 'Stevenson's 'Sterling Domestic Fiction': 'The Beach of Falesá'', *Review of English Studies* n.s. 50 (1999), pp. 471.

22 Roger Ebbatson, '*The Ebb-Tide*: Missionary Endeavour in the Islands of Light', *Figures of Heresy*, ed. by Andrew Dix and Jonathan Taylor, (Brighton, East Sussex: Sussex Academic Press, 2006), p. 91.

23 However, in *Weir of Hermiston*, the cultural evocations attain a new fusion rather than remaining, as in Herrick's case, a heap of fragments.

24 Francesco Marroni, 'Memory and Mortality in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Weir of Hermiston*', *RSV* 20 (July 2005), p. 150.

25 R. L. Stevenson, *Weir of Hermiston*, ed. by Catherine Kerrigan, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), p. 4. Italics in the

text.

26 Jenny Calder, Introduction to *Island Landfalls: Reflections from the South Seas*, (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1982), p. xiii.

The Calvinistic romance: Nathaniel Hawthorne and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

Nancy Bunge

Robert Louis Stevenson acknowledges that Nathaniel Hawthorne's work has influenced him in a variety of ways.[1] He includes Hawthorne in the list of authors whose writing style he mimicked in an attempt to complicate and improve his own.[2] Twice, Stevenson attributes to Hawthorne the observation that nature sometimes demonstrates its power by taking over places: in a letter of 1869 and again in an essay of 1875, when he writes 'even the waste places by the side of the road were not, as Hawthorne liked to put it, "taken back to Nature" by any decent covering of vegetation.'[3] But Stevenson most provocatively confesses Hawthorne's influence when he discusses what he calls the 'epical value' of romance in his essay 'Victor Hugo's Romances.' This essay suggests that Stevenson sees 'the artistic result of a romance' as a synonym of 'the epical value': it is a trace 'left upon the memory' like that left by contemplating a painting. This 'impression [. . .] left with us' is an essential element of romance (something which 'it is the function of that form of art to create') or a 'really powerful and artistic novel.'[4]

Stevenson argues that literature with 'epical value' has richness theories and words cannot capture. Moreover, he believes such work often inspires others to produce new analyses of the world:

> Those predilections of the artist he knows not why, those irrational acceptations and recognitions, reclaim, out of the world that we have not yet realized, ever another and another corner; and after the facts have been thus vividly

brought before us and have had time to settle and arrange themselves in our minds, some day there will be found the man of science to stand up and give the explanation. ('Victor Hugo's Romances', p. 34.)

But, Stevenson goes on to assert that the interpretations this literature inspires can never adequately capture what the work suggests because 'what is left upon the memory by any really powerful and artistic novel, is something so complicated and refined that it is difficult to put a name upon it; and yet something as simple as nature' ('Victor Hugo's Romances' p. 36).

Stevenson's analysis here coordinates well with Hawthorne's claim in the 'Author's Preface' to *The House of the Seven Gables*, that the romance 'sins unpardonably, so far as it may survive aside from the truth of the human heart.'[5] And like Stevenson, Hawthorne argues that the romance conveys its message indirectly:

When romances do really teach anything, or produce any effective operation, it is usually through a far more subtle process than the ostensible one. The Author has considered it hardly worth his while, therefore, relentlessly to impale the story with its moral, as with an iron rod – or rather, as by sticking a pin through a butterfly – thus depriving it of life, and causing it to stiffen in an ungainly and unnatural attitude. (*Seven Gables*, p. 2.)

Stevenson maintains that 'at the present moment we can recall one man only, for whose works it would have been equally possible to accomplish our present design: and that man is Hawthorne' ('Victor Hugo's Romances', pp. 37-8). And so, as Honor Mulholland notes, Stevenson declares Hawthorne 'the major romance writer of the age.'[6] Even beyond that, Stevenson suggests that the 'supreme artistic intention,' 'the unity, and

unwavering creative purpose' embedded in Hawthorne's fiction 'impresses itself on the most indifferent reader,' and presumably even more so, on an appreciative and attentive reader like Robert Louis Stevenson ('Victor Hugo's Romances', pp. 37-8).

Although Stevenson acknowledges the influence of Hawthorne's artistic achievement, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* suggests that Stevenson also recognized in Hawthorne's work awareness of the lethal arrogance that Calvinism's insistence on purity could nourish. James Hogg in *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of an Justified Sinner* also portrayed this psychological phenomenon in 1824, before either Stevenson or Hawthorne published anything and, according to Eric Massie, Stevenson read Hogg in 1881, before composing *Dr. Jekyll and My Hyde*.[7] But Stevenson categorizes Hogg with 'quaint, unwholesome authors,' while in Hawthorne, he apparently found a model for making the romance a vehicle for the concern with human evil that Stevenson, Hawthorne and their cultures shared.[8]

For the 'epical truth' at the centre of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is the double nature of human beings. Sigmund Freud's notions about the perpetual conflict between consciousness and the unconscious make it enticing to try to explain the psychological dynamics of Stevenson's story with them. Richard Dury summarizes what this approach yields:

> In a psychological approach that is also clearly encouraged, Jekyll symbolises a part of the human personality, what Freud (and his translators) would later call the ego (the conscious part of the mind), with Utterson and his paternal attributes as the superego (the part of the mind that regulates conduct according to society's norms), and with Hyde as the id (the instinctive and selfish mental force that seeks satisfaction of desires, suppressed or 'hidden' by civilization).[9]

But this analysis does not successfully explain the model of personality suggested by the work; for instance, while in Freud's theories, the ego knows nothing of the id, Jekyll has complete awareness of Hyde. Nathaniel Hawthorne's fiction offers a much more convincing account of the notions central to Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

Stevenson acknowledges that Hawthorne shares his interest in people's determination to disown inconvenient aspects of themselves, a characteristic central to Jekyll's problems. In *Edinburgh, Picturesque Notes*, Stevenson spins a tale of two Edinburgh sisters who squander their lives in mutual hatred, guessing that Hawthorne could write a telling account of their enduring anger: 'Here is a canvas for Hawthorne to have turned into a cabinet picture.'[10] Stevenson imagines how Hawthorne would have presented them to us, guessing that the tale would conclude with their reconciliation: 'One fine day, at a word, a look, a visit, or the approach of death, their hearts would melt and the chalk boundary be overstepped for ever' (*Picturesque Notes*, p. 404).

Stevenson's assigning this story to Hawthorne makes complete sense given characters like Dimmesdale and Chillingsworth in *The Scarlet Letter* whose conflict ultimately resolves into a shared purpose when Dimmesdale admits that without Chillingsworth's persistent reminders, he never would have made his saving confession. But those Hawthorne tales, like 'Young Goodman Brown,' that set out the general principles of human nature that manifest themselves as a result of hypocrisy provide even fuller insight into Hawthorne's and Stevenson's common perspective.

'Young Goodman Brown' offers a stark parable of what happens when human beings refuse to own their flaws. The Puritan Brown considers himself completely good, but when he goes into the woods to fulfil an 'evil purpose,' he encounters a man resembling him whose devilish nature becomes apparent when his walking stick transforms itself into a snake. As Brown's

depraved double urges him towards the witches' meeting, Brown resists, arguing that in doing so he would betray his ancestors, his community and his wife. Eventually Brown gives into 'the instinct that guides mortal man to evil,' rushing through the forest towards the witches' Sabbath.[11]

The ceremony itself celebrates human unity through ownership of sin. Not only does the whole community attend, they enjoy a fellowship inaccessible to them in conventional society:

> Irreverently consorting with these grave, reputable, and pious people, these elders of the church, these chaste dames and dewy virgins, there were men of dissolute lives and woman of spotted fame, wretches given over to all mean and filthy vice, and suspected even of horrid crimes. It was strange to see, that the good shrank not from the wicked, nor were the sinners abashed by the saints. Scattered, also, among their pale-faced enemies, were the Indian Priests. ('Young Goodman Brown', p. 88.)

The figure conducting the service urges his parishioners to accept that corruption binds them together: "'Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness. Welcome again, my children, to the communion of your race!'" ('Young Goodman Brown', p. 89).

At the last moment, Brown refuses to participate and urges his wife to do the same. Rather than redeeming his life, this act of 'goodness,' isolates him from everyone, including his spouse, Faith. Because he believes himself pure, Brown cannot stand to associate with the impure. Thus, Brown's so-called piety ruins his life, making him 'a stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man' ('Young Goodman Brown', p. 89). This double bind situation and lack of final consolatory solution is reminiscent of Jekyll's predicament for, like Brown, Jekyll suffers whatever he does.

Hawthorne's tale 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux' suggests that the lessons of 'Young Goodman Brown' apply to virtually everyone, for most people, like Brown, hide their flaws behind a thin veneer of civility that easily wears off, exposing the ugly reality beneath. The central character, Robin Molineux, sees people who had earlier asserted their propriety joyfully giving themselves over to gratuitous malice. He witnesses an episode in the American revolution, where people who would later characterize their actions as idealistic acts of protest behave like 'fiends that throng in mockery round some dead potentate, mighty no more, but majestic still in his agony. On they went, in counterfeited pomp, in senseless uproar, in frenzied merriment, trampling all on an old man's heart.'[12] Robin thus learns 'one man [may] have several voices' ('Major Molineux', p. 226).

Freud linked the less desirable aspects of human nature to sexuality and aggression. While Stevenson and Hawthorne also acknowledge the power and attraction of both sex and violence, both suggest that human corruption has much a much more innocuous and obvious source. Their stories argue that the simple and common refusal to acknowledge one's flaws can destroy one's life. Stevenson makes the point that this is the central message of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* in a letter to John Paul Bocock: 'The harm was in Jekyll, because he was a hypocrite – not because he was fond of women [. . .] Bad and good, even to our human eyes, has no more connection with what is called dissipation than it has with flying kites. But the sexual field and the business field are perhaps the two best places for the display of cruelty and cowardice and selfishness. That is what people see; and these they confound.'[13]

Hawthorne makes the connection between evil and an arrogant refusal to own one's defects explicit in 'Fancy's Show Box' where Mr Smith looks back on his life and recalls instances when cruel thoughts passed through his mind, but he resisted acting on them. Still, the tale's narrator refuses to declare Mr. Smith

innocent, instead insisting that Smith's attempt to reassure himself by noting that he didn't realize these fancies in fact condemns him: 'There is reason to believe, that one truly penitential tear would have washed away each hateful picture, and left the canvass white as snow. But Mr Smith, at a prick of a Conscience too keen to be endured, bellowed aloud, with impatient agony [. . .] His heart still seemed to fester with the venom of the dagger.'[14] The narrator concludes the tale by warning everyone of the importance of owning and repenting the slightest failings:

> Man must not disclaim his brotherhood, even with the guiltiest, since, though his hand be clean, his heart has surely been polluted by the flitting phantoms of iniquity. He must feel, that, when he shall knock at the gate of Heaven, no semblance of an unspotted life can entitle him to entrance there. Penitence must kneel, and Mercy come from the footstool of the throne, or that golden gate will never open! ('Fancy's Showbox', p. 226.)

Similarly, Stevenson does not attribute Dr. Jekyll's decision to disown part of himself to any large sin. Jekyll simply strives to appear more impressive than he truly is; in his final confession, he reports: 'The worst of my faults was a certain impatient gaiety of disposition, such as has made the happiness of many, but such as found it hard to reconcile with my imperious desire to carry my head high, and wear a more than commonly grave countenance before the public' (*Jekyll and Hyde*, p. 58). When he grows older and reflects on his life, Jekyll realizes that

> I stood already committed to a profound duplicity of life [. . .] It was thus rather the exacting nature of my aspirations than any particular degradation in my faults, that made me what I was and, with even a deeper trench than in the majority of men, severed in me those provinces of good

and ill which divide and compound man's dual nature.
(*Jekyll and Hyde*, p. 58)

And in separating off his flawed side, Jekyll allows it to grow monstrous. Indeed the more Jekyll works to eliminate Hyde from his life by behaving impeccably, the more Hyde's power and evil grow.

Hawthorne not only writes parables about the importance of owning faults, he examines this issue in a variety of particular contexts some of which find echoes, however briefly, in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. For instance, Hawthorne wrote a number of tales about scientists, 'The Birth-mark,' 'Dr Heidegger's Experiment,' and 'Rappacini's Daughter,' all warning against the arrogance that scientific achievement encourages. Aylmer in 'The Birth-mark' believes that he can perfect human life, even though the notebooks recording the results of his experiments testify to the limits he refuses to recognize in himself: 'It was the sad confession, and continual exemplification, of the short-comings of the composite man – the spirit burdened with clay and working in matter – and of the despair that assails the higher nature, at finding itself so miserably thwarted by the earthly part.'[15]

Dr Jekyll is a scientist who, like Aylmer, thinks he can create and use potions to eliminate imperfection from human life, although Jekyll hopes to separate where Aylmer hopes to suppress the evil part:

> I learned to recognise the thorough and primitive duality of man; I saw that, of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both; and from an early date, even before the course of my scientific discoveries had begun to suggest the most naked possibility of such a miracle, I had learned to dwell with pleasure, as a beloved daydream, on the thought of

the separation of these elements. (*Jekyll and Hyde*, p. 59.)

Jekyll succeeds no better than Aylmer: Jekyll's notebook, discovered by Lanyon, like Aylmer's, records a series of failures.

In 'The Birth-mark,' Aylmer aspires to free his wife, Georgiana, from the birthmark he believes contaminates her with frailty. Surely, as Aylmer experiments with the solution he will give to Georgiana, he has some understanding of the danger it presents to his wife. Indeed, she discovers when she steps into his lab that despite the bravado and confidence that pervade his interactions with her during the experiment, he frantically struggles to control it: 'He was as pale as death, anxious, and absorbed, and hung over the furnace as if it depended upon his utmost watchfulness whether the liquid, which it was distilling, should be the draught of immortal happiness or misery. How different from the sanguine and joyous mien that he had assumed for Georgiana's encouragement!' ('The Birth-mark', pp. 50-1). Fear fighting with desire similarly infects Jekyll as he prepares a transforming potion:

> I knew well that I risked death; for any drug that so potently controlled and shook the very fortress of identity, might by the least scruple of an overdose or at the least inopportunity in the moment of exhibition, utterly blot out that immaterial tabernacle which I looked to it to change. But the temptation of a discovery so singular and profound, at last overcame the suggestions of alarm. (*Jekyll and Hyde*, p. 60.)

Because neither Jekyll nor Aylmer can resist the lure of attempting to achieve a perfection incompatible with their humanity, Jekyll destroys himself and Aylmer kills his wife. To further underline the parallels between the two works, some specifics from *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* recall details from 'The

Birth-mark.' For instance, Aylmer's assistant, Aminadab, like Hyde, is short and hairy. Also the hand motif associated with the animalistic Hyde is reminiscent of the hand-shaped birthmark representing human imperfection in Hawthorne's tale.

Parallels also exist between *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and the circumstances that surround Hawthorne's other wayward scientists. For instance, in 'Rappacini's Daughter,' Rappacini, like Jekyll is a renowned doctor who has a garden reminiscent of Jekyll's courtyard. Also, Rappacini's garden, like Jekyll's cabinet, is a mysterious place with a private entrance. Baglioni in 'Rappacini's Daughter,' resembles Lanyon in that he declares Rappacini's experiments as beyond the boundaries of the medical profession. Giovanni, after being infected, like Jekyll, looks at his reflection with, first, satisfaction and, then, horror and like Jekyll rejects what he first desired. 'The Birth-mark,' 'Rappacini's Daughter,' and 'Dr Heidegger's Experiment,' all have scientists with laboratories in their homes, transforming potions and mirrors.

Hawthorne also ties the search for perfection to religion, suggesting that the religious, like scientists, may also be inclined to deny their faults, and, as a result, discover themselves overwhelmed by them. In 'The Gentle Boy,' for instance, the righteousness of both the Puritans and the Quakers destroys themselves and those sharing their lives. In 'Young Goodman Brown,' Brown catches a shocking glimpse of the reality that even the pious have shortcomings when Goody Cloyse, the woman who taught him his catechism, searches for her witch's broom. Similarly in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Utterson discovers 'a copy of a pious work' in Jekyll's library 'for which Jekyll had several times expressed a great esteem, annotated, in his own hand, with startling blasphemies' (*Jekyll and Hyde*, p. 49).

When Hyde commits his most egregious act, he batters Sir Danvers Carew to death with a cane. Similarly, in 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux,' if the young Robin were to give way to his

impulses, he would let loose with his staff. First he is tempted to hit a 'distinguished gentleman,' then a 'courteous innkeeper' and finally, all the 'grinning rascals' he meets in the city ('Major Molineux', pp. 211-15). When Robin wants to beat people with this cudgel, when Aylmer kills his wife, when Dr. Rappacini infects his daughter, when the bickering Quakers and Puritans destroy the gentle boy, they all manifest the consequences of arrogance. In Hawthorne's fiction, only those who own and confess their faults like Roderick in 'Egotism or the Bosom Serpent' or Dimmesdale in *The Scarlet Letter* can find serenity. Although Jekyll never finds peace, he does write a kind of confession, fearing that Hyde will tear it up.

Although, on the surface, some similarity exists between the eternal human alienation described by Freud and that presented by Robert Louis Stevenson in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, there are differences. Perhaps the most significant is that Freud traces evil to an unconscious seething with such malignant impulses that we choose to deny them; Freud considers his view of human nature so horrifying that he expects others to begin 'arguing that after all it is unlikely that such a large space should be given to evil in the constitution of human beings.' Freud challenges them to face the truth:

> Consider the Great War which is still laying Europe waste. Think of the vast amount of brutality, cruelty and lies which are able to spread over the civilized world. Do you really believe that a handful of ambitious and deluding men without conscience could have succeeded in unleashing all these evil spirits if millions of followers did not share their guilt?[16]

On the other hand, Stevenson and Hawthorne suggest that the slide towards evil has apparently innocuous beginnings: one need only give in to the universal human impulse to avoid fac-

ing one's imperfections, which the intolerance of misbehaviour common to Calvinistic cultures can reinforce. Evil starts with a smallest act of arrogance. As one's view of oneself becomes more inflated and the gap grows between one's self image and reality, the need to destroy anything that recalls reality can become large enough to inspire violence. Hence, one day, the mere sight of a person who has retained their innocence or goodness can cause murderous rage, as it does in Mr Hyde.

When one compares Freud's dramatic explanation of evil with the familiar psychological patterns Hawthorne and Stevenson set out, it validates Stevenson's judgment that artists, not theorists, best capture human realities by rendering 'something so com-plicated and refined that it is difficult to put a name upon it; and yet something as simple as nature' ('Victor Hugo's Romances', p. 36).

NOTES

1   My sincere thanks go to Richard Dury for his generous help with this article. I could not have written it without his aid. He helped me locate the references to Hawthorne in Stevenson's work and then, after I drafted it, he kindly read it and offered many helpful additions. Thanks also to Laurence Davies for his good suggestions.

2   Robert Louis Stevenson, 'A College Magazine,' *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, Vailima Edition, 26 vols (New York: Scribner's, 1921-3), 12, 49-50:

'Whenever I read a book or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in the style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality [. . .] I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne, to Defoe, to Hawthorne, to Montaigne, to Baudelaire and to Obermann.'

3   Robert Louis Stevenson, 'On the Enjoyment of Unpleasant Places,' *Works*, 24, 334-5. Stevenson may be relying on his memory for this quotation, for although Hawthorne describes nature reclaiming locations a few times, I cannot find this particular phrasing in

Hawthorne's work. It definitely does not come from any of Hawthorne's novels since it does not appear in *A Concordance to the Five Novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne* edited by John E. Byers, Jr. and James J. Owen (New York: Garland, 1979). Stevenson also alludes to Hawthorne's idea in a letter: 'The whole place looks dreary and wretched; for here, nature, as Hawthorne would have said, has not sufficient power to take back to herself what the idleness and absence of man has let go' – *Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Bradford A Booth and Ernest Mehew, 8 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), I, 186.

4   Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Victor Hugo's Romances,' *Works*, 4, 36-7.

5   Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*, *The Centenary Edition*, 23 vols (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1962), 2, 1.

6   Honor Mulholland, 'Robert Louis Stevenson and the Romance Forms' in *Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Andrew Noble (London: Vision and Barnes & Noble, 1983), p. 96.

7   Eric Massie, 'Robert Louis Stevenson and *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*,' *Studies in Hogg and His World* (1999), vol. 10, p. 74.

8   Letter from Robert Louis Stevenson to George Saintsbury on 17 May 1891, *Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, VII, 126. Quoted by Eric Massie.

9   Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, ed. by Richard Dury (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), pp. xxcii-xxix.

10 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Edinburgh, Picturesque Notes*, *Works*, Vailima Edition, 1, p. 404. A cabinet picture is 'a small and generally highly finished picture, suitable for a small room and for close inspection' (http://dict.die.net/cabinet%20picture/).

11 Nathaniel Hawthorne, 'Young Goodman Brown,' *The Centenary Edition*, 10, 83.

12 Nathaniel Hawthorne, 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux,' *The Centenary Edition*, 11, 230.

13 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Letters*, 6, 56-7.

14 Nathaniel Hawthorne, 'Fancy's Show Box,' *The Centenary Edition*, 9, 225.

15 Nathaniel Hawthorne, 'The Birth-mark,' *The Centenary Edition,* 10, 49.

16 Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton, 1966), pp. 179-180.

The case of the missing detective: detection, deception, and delicacy in *Jekyll and Hyde*

Andrew De Young

Although *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is not often classified with the detective novels of the Victorian era, it shares many characteristics with the novel of detection.[1] Primary among these is a narrative structure that deliberately withholds from its audience the information that is necessary to interpret the narrative's central action, fully revealing this information only at the end – a narrative structure that has come to be known as *mystery*. That the mystery in *Jekyll and Hyde* also concerns a crime – specifically, a murder – only strengthens the connections between the text and the Victorian detective story. Yet there is one crucial genre convention the novella does not adopt that prevents it from being classified as a detective novel: it lacks a detective, professional or habitual amateur.

This absence may at first seem peculiar, especially given the well-documented popularity that the detective story enjoyed during the era in which *Jekyll and Hyde* first appeared. The omission may have had something to do with Stevenson's attitude toward the detective genre. Writing late in his career on the composition of *The Wrecker*, Stevenson declared that he 'had at long been at once attracted and repelled by the modern form of the police novel or mystery story.'[2] Yet, the detective's absence also has roots in the broader forces of history and culture. Although many Victorian writers portrayed the detective as a hero and the practice of detection as a positive force in British society, there was a coexisting tradition that figured the detective as a low, criminal, and foreign Other, and detection as an activity tainted by elements of duplicity, prurience, and the invasion of privacy. This

portrayal had an implied class component: although detectives might be necessary figures in the urban slums, the thinking went, the middle and upper classes were self-policing, and so had no need for the indelicate profession of detection.

In the context of a middle-class desire to be self-policing, the absence of the detective in *Jekyll and Hyde* begins to make some sense. The novella, after all, concerns a crime commit-ted by a member of the middle class, and Stevenson's original middle-class audience might be reasonably expected to feel some discomfort at the notion of a detective investigating one of their own. The absence of the detective, thus, creates a sense of comfort as it advances the notion that the members of the middle class do not need a detective, that they can 'take care of their own.' However, this proves to be a short-lived comfort, as another middle-class figure – Mr. Utterson – is forced to become a detective and perform the very activities that had caused so much discomfort in the first place. Ultimately, then, the effect of the detective's absence in *Jekyll and Hyde* is paradoxical: it points to the need for a detective to be present.

Of course, this argument must first contend with the fact that the professional detective in *Jekyll and Hyde* is not, strictly speaking, absent at all. The text has a detective in Inspector Newcomen, who appears in the novella's fourth chapter, titled 'The Carew Murder Case.' It is in this chapter, which follows Mr Edward Hyde's murder of Sir Danvers Carew, where the text comes closest to being not just a novel of detection, but a true detective novel. Stevenson's treatment of Inspector Newcomen, however, is peculiar: in the first place, he seems to avoid describ-ing the detective. The text tells us, for instance, that a nearby wit-ness 'called for the police' after the murder had taken place, but it does not describe the policemen who respond to the call, nor what they do after they arrive on the scene of the crime. Instead, Stevenson lapses into the passive voice, telling us that a 'purse and a gold watch were found upon the victim' and that the evi-

dence 'was brought to [Mr. Utterson] the next morning' (p. 22). Stevenson thus *implies* the presence of a detective rather than stating it outright, almost as if hesitating to grant Newcomen entry into the text. By contrast, more traditional Victorian detective novels tend to dwell on descriptions of the central detective's appearance and personality; Dr Watson's detailed description of Sherlock Holmes in the first and second chapters of *A Study in Scarlet* is a perfect example. In the Victorian detective novel, the detective himself is precisely the point; in *Jekyll and Hyde*, he is a nonentity.

We first find an acknowledgement that a detective is even present after Mr Utterson, the lawyer who will become the novella's central figure, identifies the victim's body as that of MP Danvers Carew. Newcomen replies with shock: "Good God, sir,' exclaimed the officer, 'is it possible?' And the next moment his eye lighted up with professional ambition' (p. 22). The first portrayal of the figure of the detective in the text is thus a negative one: it casts the detective as a hack more interested in career advancement than in the sensitive treatment of the victim's friends or the capture of a dangerous criminal. From here, the text further establishes the detective as a negative figure by casting him as incompetent. After a perfunctory investigation, Newcomen brashly declares that 'I have [Hyde] in my hand,' but then fails to follow through on his boast (p. 24).

To characterise the detective's place in *Jekyll and Hyde* as *absence,* then, is not too strong but too weak. The text's treatment of Newcomen – initially refusing to describe him, then deigning to describe him only in negative terms – suggests not passive *omission*, but active *rejection.* D. A. Miller has argued that in the Victorian novel 'the police never quite emerge from the ghetto in which the novel generally confines them' (p. 3). Miller's assertion is clearly true in *Jekyll and Hyde*, for after first refusing to describe Newcomen and then describing him as a negative figure, the text quite literally ghettoises the detective. Together,

Utterson and Newcomen go to a 'dismal quarter of Soho,' where Edward Hyde shares a neighbourhood with a 'gin palace, a low French eating house, a shop for the retail of penny numbers and twopenny salads, many ragged children huddled in the door-ways, and many women of many different nationalities passing out, key in hand, to have a morning glass' (p. 23). Newcomen never emerges from this ghetto, and his ultimate failure to cap-ture Hyde can be seen as a result of this. While the detective is forced to remain in Soho, Hyde is allowed to metamorphose into the respectable Henry Jekyll, and to take refuge exactly where the detective cannot follow him: the respectable neighbourhoods of the middle class.

As I have suggested, the banishment and ghettoization of the detective that we see in *Jekyll and Hyde* is not surprising given the negative portrayal of detectives that was common in many texts of the 1870s and 1880s.[3] Of these texts, a good example is 'Vidocq and French Detectives,' an article appearing in an 1872 issue of *Once a Week*. Whereas other negative portrayals often focused on one or two of the detective's negative characteristics at a time, 'Vidocq and French Detectives' is a virtual catalogue of the strategies Victorian writers had used to 'other' the detective since the 1820s. The article purports to chronicle the history of the detective profession, and ultimately identifies French detec-tive Eugene Francois Vidocq as the 'father of the detective system' (p. 276). In claiming Vidocq as the first detective, the article was treading on firm and well-travelled ground. The British public had first been introduced to the figure of the detective, after all, in Vidocq's *Memoirs*, which were published in 1828 and quickly translated into English. Subsequent portrayals of the detective drew on the *Memoirs* – nonfictional articles about detectives frequently mentioned Vidocq by name, and Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin was loosely based on him.[4]

Establishing Vidocq as the progenitor of detection allows 'Vidocq and French Detectives' to establish detectives as Other

on several fronts simultaneously. Firstly and perhaps most obviously, it establishes detection as an intrinsically French profession. The association of detectives with France was a longstanding Victorian stereotype – in fact, it had played a major role in the public debate surrounding the 1842 establishment of London's first official detective agency. The French detective system simultaneously encapsulated Victorian hopes and fears for their own detective agency: the French police were known for their efficiency and effectiveness, but Victorian audiences often assumed that French detectives acted as a 'secret police' on behalf of a totalitarian government. In 1843, one year after the establishment of the detective agency, *Chambers's Journal* claimed, 'the Frenchman is under a constant supervision, hampered in all his comings and goings by a system of police'.[5] Later articles frequently described French detectives as 'Secret Police' or 'spies'.[6]

In 'Vidocq and French Detectives,' the writer brings up the issue of the detective's Frenchness by mentioning suggestively that Vidocq was born 'in a house adjoining that in which Robespierre was born' (p. 276) and reporting that subsequent French detectives acted as *agents provocateurs* 'whose office it was to lead the unwary to commit themselves to words and acts which might be construed into treason' (p. 277). Compared to other Victorian texts, however, this article spends relatively little time on Vidocq's Frenchness. For our purposes, Vidocq's Frenchness is important only insofar as it others the detective. For Francophobic readers, the mere mention of the French heritage of detection made the detective a dangerous figure. There were, however, other means of othering the detective.

Vidocq, in addition to being French, is also a member of the lower, 'criminal' classes.[7] 'Vidocq and French Detectives' tells us that Vidocq grew up in 'the lowest street in the town' of Arras, an area the text identifies as a 'continental St. Giles's [*sic*]' (p. 276). That St. Giles was one of the most notorious London slums only

backs up Miller's claim that the Victorians found it necessary to confine the detective to a ghetto. Miller further argues that Victorian discourse figures the world of crime and detection as an '*enclosed* world from which it is all but impossible to escape'.[8] In this formulation, detectives have more in common with the criminals they are tasked to capture than with the upper- and middle-class citizens it is their duty to protect. 'Vidocq and French Detectives' uses this formulation, tracing Vidocq's path from poverty to detection by way of the intermediate step of criminality:

> We find [Vidocq], as a mere child, robbing first the till at a neighbouring fencing-room, and next his father's – his elder brother having been previously sent about his busi-ness for similar weaknesses. Antecedents such as these could only lead to one sort of career. He fled the paternal roof, and joined a band of the most reckless vagabonds to be found in any civilised country. He was everything by turns, and nothing long. In prison and out again, with the most certain regularity; until, being treated to a longer spell of 'durance vile' than was to his taste, he assumed the *rôle* of the penitent. (p. 276)

In its description of Vidocq's career as a detective, the text focuses on the detective's dubious motives and methods. We are initially told that Vidocq became a detective because 'he was dis-gusted with crime and criminals' (p. 276), but the text also labels him 'a common informer' and suggests that he did his detective work not for the good of society, but for personal gain (p. 276). The writer chooses to mention, for instance, that Vidocq 'had a salary of four pounds a-month, and a premium for each arrest, it may be imagined that he took care that the number should not fall short' (p. 275). So much for the detective's motives; his meth-ods, meanwhile, prove to be methods primarily of deception – he

befriends his 'victims' (p. 275), as the text calls them, before betraying them to police, adopts disguises so convincing 'that his own brother could not recognise him' (p. 276), and his successors 'fabricated evidence without scruple, when convenient' (p. 277).

'Vidocq and French Detectives,' as we have seen, focuses on the detective's negative characteristics – his Frenchness, his origins in the criminal classes, his dubious motives, and his deceptive methods – but this does not mean that the detective was always seen as a negative figure in Victorian society. Articles on the detective appearing at intervals throughout the nineteenth cen-tury suggest that Victorian audiences tolerated the detective if he stayed in the ghetto in which they had mentally confined him. When practiced in the slums, the detective's French methods of surveillance and control were a comfort, not a threat; for exam-ple, in an 1870 article in *Chambers's Journal*, the writer speaks approvingly of the detective's familiarity with the criminal classes: 'His cunning is not exceeded by that of the acutest rascal that ever polluted the earth; he is up to every trick and dodge that ever sharper knew or dicer played.'[9]

This observation – that the detective, although he was figured in Victorian texts as Other, was not threatening when he was con-fined to a ghetto – brings us back to *Jekyll and Hyde*, a novel of detection in which the detective, Inspector Newcomen, has been discredited and ghettoised. This expulsion makes sense in light of the othering of the detective that we have seen in 'Vidocq and French Detectives.' *Jekyll and Hyde*, after all, does not take place in the enclosed ghetto of the criminal classes but in the world of bourgeois Victorian professionalism.[10] In response to middle-class preferences, the elusive narrator of the first eight chapters cannot allow Newcomen to remain in the text; the detective must stay in his ghetto. But *Jekyll and Hyde* is still, crucially, a novel of detection, and regardless of the presence or absence of a detective, detection in one form or another must take place. *Jekyll and Hyde* can banish the detective, but it cannot dispense

with the detective *function*.[11] The text is thus caught in a bind between detecting otherness – that is, detecting Henry Jekyll's literal Other, Edward Hyde – and othering detection.

The ambiguity of the approach to law-enforcement in *Jekyll and Hyde* is evident early on, in the novella's first chapter. This chapter begins with Enfield's story, told to Utterson, of a time when he was walking the dark, abandoned streets of London, 'till at last I got into that state of mind when a man listens and listens and begins to long for the sight of a policeman.'[12] (Immediately after Enfield expresses this longing, however, his narrative shifts focus to demonstrate that such a longing is, in some sense, misplaced – for even after Mr Hyde arrives on the scene and way 'tramples over' a young girl, the private citizens on the scene do not turn to the police but reveal themselves to be competent *amateur* policeman. Enfield, for instance, says that he immediately 'took to my heels, collared my gentleman, and brought him back to where there was already quite a group about the screaming child.' (p. 9). The people who have gathered around Hyde's victim also perform a policing role; as Enfield puts it, 'We told the man we could and would make such a scandal out of this, as should make his name stink from one end of London to the other.' (p. 9). Hyde, in response to this threat of scandal, agrees to pay the victim and her family for their silence. Thus, although this group of private citizens lacks the official power to enforce order, its *unofficial* methods of enforcement prove equally effective.

Like the episode in which Inspector Newcomen was introduced only to be banished from Stevenson's text, Enfield's narrative in the first chapter of *Jekyll and Hyde* marginalises the police. By portraying regular citizens led by the gentleman Enfield successfully enforcing order on Hyde, passing as a gentleman, without the help of the police, the narrative suggests that the middle and upper classes are self-policing. However, by the end of Enfield's story, even this notion is called into question – for while Enfield and the other bourgeois professionals are able to *police*, they are

not, crucially, able to *detect*. This becomes clear late in the first chapter, when Utterson inquires further into Hyde's identity and Enfield strenuously demurs by declaring:

> I feel very strongly about putting questions; it partakes too much of the style of the day of judgment. You start a question, and it's like starting a stone. You sit quietly on the top of a hill; and away the stone goes, starting others; and presently some bland old bird (the last you would have thought of) is knocked on the head in his own back garden and the family have to change their name. No, sir, I make it a rule of mine: the more it looks like Queer Street, the less I ask. (p. 11)

As it relates to detectives and detection, this passage simultaneously accomplishes several things, some of them contradictory. It associates one of the primary activities of the detective – asking questions – with a lack of 'delicacy' (p. 11). In this way, it justifies the marginalization of the detective by defining detection in opposition to bourgeois values: gentleman do not ask questions, but detectives do; therefore, the gentleman is defined in part by the fact that he refuses to take on the role of a detective, and the detective is defined in part by the fact that he is not a gentleman. However, Enfield's discourse on the indelicacy of asking questions would suggest the need for someone else to take on this function, that is, the need for the detective *not* to be marginalised, but to be given free rein to investigate the supposedly self-policing middle class. Enfield can police, but he cannot detect; he can capture and punish Hyde, but he cannot save Jekyll but he cannot solve the mystery that connects him with Jekyll; he can curb and contain deviance, but he cannot correct or resolve it – because he does not wish to when it involves someone of his own class.

Enfield's narrative in this first chapter, moreover, provides

a kind of template for the entire novella. The text banishes the detective, but it cannot banish the detective function. Rather, the detective's othered characteristics are dispersed throughout the text, and taken up by the very bourgeois figures who sought to reject them in the first place. For the most part, these character-istics come to rest on Mr Utterson, the lawyer who becomes the novella's amateur detective.

The lack of a professional detective figure places Utterson in the uncomfortable position of having to investigate his client and friend, Dr Jekyll. As in 'Vidocq and French Detectives,' Utterson must become an informant if he is to fill the role of detective. In truth, Utterson appears to be well placed to fill this role, for we are told that 'it was frequently his fortune to be the last reputable acquaintance and the last good influence in the lives of down-going men' (p. 7). However, other elements of Utterson's character make him ill equipped to be a detective. Especially dis-qualifying is Utterson's permissive attitude toward the misdeeds of his peers, described in the first chapter: 'he had an approved tolerance for others; sometimes wondering, almost with envy, at the high pressure of spirits involved in their misdeeds; and in any extremity inclined to help rather than to reprove.' (p. 7). This passage, it should be noted, does not question Utterson's ability to detect; rather, it questions his motives. An ascetic with a tendency to live vicariously through the misdeeds of others, he is more likely to accept Jekyll's crimes than to curb them.

Even as it calls Utterson's motives into question, moreover, the passage echoes similar Victorian questions about the motives and methods of detectives. The history of the London Metropolitan police offers many instances when the practice of detection prob-lematised the relationship between policeman and criminal. The most famous example is perhaps the so-called 'Popay Incident' of 1831, in which a police officer infiltrated a political rally, incited the members to violence, and then arrested the guilty parties – but it is by no means the only example. In 1877, for example,

four police inspectors were found to have been using their positions to run a fraudulent betting ring.[13] Philip Thurmond Smith, moreover, writes of an incident in the 1860s in which 'a constable hid behind a tree to watch 'indecent acts' being committed in Hyde Park. The constable arrested the parties only afterward, instead of preventing the liaison.'[14] These incidents of police malfeasance offered vivid examples of the means by which the supposedly virtuous detection of crime might actually lead the detective to a kind of complicity in crime – ranging from provoking crimes in order to detect them, detecting in order to satisfy a prurient curiosity, or even using one's position as a detective as a front for criminal enterprise. In the context of these incidents, Stevenson's original readers may have harboured similar doubts about Mr Utterson: was his investigation of Dr Jekyll motivated by a concern for his friend's well-being, or by a desire to observe his illicit pleasures and experience them vicariously?

When Utterson does adopt the role of detective, he does so half-heartedly and with little success. Initially, his curiosity drives him to behave as a detective; even after Enfield has frustrated his inquiries, Utterson discovers a mention of Hyde in Jekyll's will and utters the famous phrase: 'If he be Mr Hyde, I shall be Mr Seek' (p. 15). However, Utterson's determination is short-lived, for only a few pages later he declares, 'Ay, I must put my shoulder to the wheel – if Jekyll will but let me' (p. 19). Here, far from being driven by an insatiable curiosity to discover the truth, Utterson shows that he is only willing to fully adopt the role of the detective if Jekyll willingly *submits* himself to detection.

Jekyll is most certainly not willing to submit himself to detection, and for the remainder of the novella it is often he who arrests Utterson's attempts at discovery. Jekyll's method of arresting detection demonstrates that the same bourgeois values that gave rise to effective unofficial policing methods in Enfield's narrative are equally effective at thwarting policing methods. For example, when Utterson initially questions Jekyll about Hyde,

Jekyll appeals to his own authority, saying, 'I do not care to hear more,' and from the same authority accuses Utterson of breaking an agreement: 'This is a matter I thought we had agreed to drop.' He goes on to declare, 'It is one of those affairs that cannot be mended by talking,' and 'this is a private matter, and I beg of you to let it sleep' (p. 20). After Hyde's murder of Sir Danvers Carew renews Utterson's interest in the case, Jekyll once more rebuffs his inquiries by assuring him that 'I have had a lesson' but that the threat is now gone (p. 26).

Utterson later appears to internalise the message that his efforts at detection are unwanted, and in the book's closing chapters he no longer requires Jekyll's resistance to give up detecting. This is especially evident in a chapter called 'The Last Night,' in which Poole, Jekyll's servant, asks Utterson to intervene on behalf of his employer. Jekyll, it appears, has been locked his chambers for days – but it is Hyde's voice, strangely, that Poole hears coming out of the sealed room. To get to the bottom of the mystery, Utterson must perform an act of detection: he must break down the door and see what is inside. However, he is reluctant to do this, and initially attempts to justify his inaction by coming up with a non-threatening interpretation of the available evidence. Utterson speculates that Jekyll is 'seized with one of those maladies that both torture and deform the sufferer,' and assures Poole that this theory, if correct, 'delivers us from all exorbitant alarms' (p. 36). In spite of Utterson's theory – which is, readers will observe, at least partially correct – Poole insists that his master has been killed. Utterson, for his part, almost immediately admits that he agrees with Poole (p. 37), revealing that his initial interpretation was disingenuous; he had suspected the worst all along but wished to avoid performing the act of detection necessary to confirm his suspicions.

It is not just the characters of *Jekyll and Hyde* who experience the discomfort of being thrust into the role of detective; the novella's bourgeois audience is made to feel discomfort as well,

as readers themselves are forced to become detectives. To a certain extent, all detective stories cause readers to act as detectives, and thus all Victorian detective stories dealing with middle- or upper-class crime can be said to inspire feelings of discomfort as they ask readers to investigate their peers or social betters. However, more traditional detective stories assuage this discomfort through the presence of a professional or amateur detective primarily responsible for penetrating the mystery, which allows readers to disavow the active practice of detection – the detective is doing all the work, while the reader is passively watching the results.[15] In *Jekyll and Hyde*, by contrast, the lack of a strong detective figure offers readers no such solace, for given Utterson's failure to fully adopt the role of detective, if the mystery is solved at all it must be the reader who performed the indelicacy of solving it. The text assists this discomfort by calling attention to elements of detection inherent in the activity of reading. Most of Utterson's breakthroughs of detection result from reading: he first discovers the connection between Jekyll and Hyde by rereading Jekyll's will, later notices a 'singular resemblance' (p. 36) between the handwriting of the two, and ultimately discovers the truth by reading Jekyll's written account of the case.

This account, which stands as the last chapter of the novella, would seem, at first, to require no readerly acts of detection. The chapter's title, for instance, advertises a 'Full Statement of the Case,' creating the expectation that the audience will be allowed to passively watch as Jekyll performs a voluntary act of self-disclosure. His account, however, conceals as much as it reveals, forcing readers to continue acting as detectives as they filter through Jekyll's obscure writing. The most blatant omission, perhaps, is the text's unwillingness to reveal exactly the nature of Jekyll's crimes. Jekyll admits early on that he is guilty of 'a certain impatient gaiety of disposition' (p. 47), a vague phrase that, according to Katherine Linehan could have referred to anything from prostitution to a 'soul-endangering levity' opposed to

the 'self-disciplined moral earnestness' of 'the Evangelical cast of Victorian Christianity.'[16] Throughout the rest of the chapter, Jekyll refers frequently to his 'pleasures' (p. 52), which he characterises as 'undignified' (p. 53) – but again, he declines to explicitly describe them.

   This uncertainty surrounding Jekyll's crimes also extends to the criminal who committed the crimes – given the fluidity of the dual character of Jekyll/Hyde, it is difficult to determine precisely who the guilty party is. Early in his narrative, Jekyll writes that 'man is not truly one, but truly two,' before going on to guess that his discovery of humanity's double identity is actually a conservative estimate: 'I hazard the guess that man will ultimately be known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens' (p. 48). The subsequent narrative proves Jekyll's guess right, for the narrating 'I' of this chapter is an extremely inconsistent persona. For the most part, the 'I' attempts to occupy the figure of Henry Jekyll and keep a strict separation between himself and Edward Hyde, at one point declaring, 'He, I say – I cannot say, I' (p. 59). Even as the 'I' attempts to separate himself from Hyde, however, he inadvert-ently separates himself from Jekyll as well, as in the following passage where the narrative persona refers to Jekyll in the third person: 'It was Hyde, after all, and Hyde alone, that was guilty. Jekyll was no worse; he woke again to his good qualities seemingly unimpaired; he would even make haste, where it was possible, to undo the evil done by Hyde. And thus his conscience slumbered' (p. 53). Sometimes, moreover, the 'I' is clearly Hyde, as in this passage describing the murder of Danvers Carew: 'Instantly the spirit of hell awoke in me and raged. With a transport of glee, I mauled the unresisting body, tasting delight from every blow' (p. 56). In order to come away from this concluding chapter with any reliable sense of what has occurred in the narrative, readers must act as detectives, piecing together the truth from available clues. Though readers only metaphorically act as detectives, the

textual interpretation uncovers the crimes and hypocrisies of a middle-class character and so may be supposed to involve the probable middle-class reader with a deep sense of ambivalence.

When contextualised within the history and development of the detective genre in Britain, the effects of the absence of a detective in *Jekyll and Hyde* may seem, at first, to be nothing but a footnote. To adherents of the Victorian detective story, Stevenson's text is easily overshadowed by Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet*, which appeared only one year after *Jekyll and Hyde*. As Ian Ousby would have it, 'one finds it difficult to resist the impression that authors [writing in the 1870s and 1880s] were merely marking time until the publication of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories.'[17] However, upon further analysis, *Jekyll and Hyde* deserves a more prominent place in the story of Victorian detective fiction. Stevenson's text may begin with the banishment and marginalization of the detective, but it ends by proving the detective's necessity, for the bourgeois figures who take his place as amateur detectives are unable to adequately uncover the crime. *Jekyll and Hyde* ultimately reveals the figure of the detective in late-Victorian England to be neither hero nor villain, but scapegoat, a figure who is simultaneously admired and vilified for his ability to perform the task that mainstream society is unwilling to perform: that of detection.

Notes

1   The relationship of *Jekyll and Hyde* to the detective story has been a question of debate. Alan Sandison says that JH is (among many other things) 'an extraordinarily interesting and sophisticated detective-story.' —*Robert Louis Stevenson and the Appearance of Modernism* (New York/London: St. Martin's Press/Macmillan,1996), p. 218. For Pamela M. Price-Anisman (in a 1997 document at www.yale.edu/ynhti/pubs/A4/price-anisman.html) 'Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is an excellent introduction to detective fiction'. Richard Scholar argues that the plot of *J&H* is principally that of a detective case, in '*Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. A Case-

Study in Translation' *Translation and Literature* 7 (1) (1998), pp. 42-55; but his thesis is refuted by Jean-Pierre Naugrette who claims it only 'pretends to be such' – '*The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* est-il un roman policier?' *Confluences* 20 (2002), 85-111. Richard Dury identifies plot and detective-figure as the two elements most in common with the genre, but points out that the last chapter in particular go beyond its conventions by the introduction of supernatural elements. – *The Annotated Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde,* 2nd ed. (Genoa: ECIG, 2005), pp. 43-4.

2   Quoted in A. E. Murch, *The Development of the Detective Novel* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1958), p. 14.

3   E.g. 'Detectives as They Are', in *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts* 341 (July 1870). 'Vidocq and French Detectives', in *Once a Week* 9:221 (March 1872). 'French Detectives', in *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts* 1:3 (Jan. 1884). 'Our Detective Police', in *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts* 1:22 (May 1884); all articles anon.

4   T. J. Binyon, *The Detective in Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 5.

5   Anon., 'The Police of Paris.' *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* 576 (1843: Feb.), 28.

6   'French Detectives', p. 48; and 'Our Detective Police', p. 339.

7   During this period, the 'criminal class' was largely conceived on naturalistic terms, and many envisioned the 'habitual offender' as being a particular *species* of human. According to Martin Weiner, 'The writings of medical men and physiologists merged in the general middle-class mind with Darwinian images to establish a picture of most repeat offenders as, indeed, habitual and of their illegality, like the inebriate's drinking, as not freely chosen and thus not responsive to rational deterrents' (p. 300).

8   D. A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 276.

9   'Detectives as They Are.' *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts* 341 (1870: July), 445.

10 For more on the significance of bourgeois professionalism in *Jekyll and Hyde*, see Stephen Arata, 'The Sedulous Ape: Atavism, Professionalism, and Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*', *Criticism* 37.2 (1995), 233-59.

11 In *The Novel and the Police*, (p. 42) Miller makes a similar argument about Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*, which also introduces a detective character – Inspector Cuff – only to banish him from the text later on.

12 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, ed. by Katherine Linehan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company), p. 7; henceforth cited in the text by page number only.

13 Ian Ousby, *Bloodhounds of Heaven: The Detective in English Fiction from Godwin to Doyle* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976) p. 130.

14 Phillip Thurmond Smith, *Policing Victorian London: Political Policing, Public Order, and the London Metropolitan Police* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1985), p. 71.

15 I make this same point at greater length in '"A Worthy Man and a Rogue": Detectives and Detection in Two Late-Victorian Novellas', MA Essay, University of St. Thomas, 2008.

16 Stevenson, p. 47-48, n2. Dury, however, says 'it is legitimate to infer' that Hyde's activities 'involve sexual excess: he is created to deal with Jekyll's 'impatient gaiety of disposition' and his concealed 'pleasures' [...] and the first transformation is accompanied by 'a current of disordered sensual images running like a mill race in my fancy' [...], after which Jekyll habitually changes into Hyde 'for his pleasures', at first merely 'undignified' but later sadistic. Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, ed. by Richard Dury (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), pp. xxix-xxx.

17 Ousby, *Bloodhounds of Heaven,* p. 136.

Maps, treasures and imaginary lands: Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* as a response to Stevenson's *Treasure Island*

Nicoletta Brazzelli

1. Personal and literary relationships

Henry Rider Haggard claimed, during a conversation with one of his brothers, that he could write a better and more success-ful adventure story than the immediately popular Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island.* When Stevenson's masterpiece appeared in 1883, Haggard did not think much of it and, accord-ing to a well-known anecdote, made a five-shilling bet that he himself could write a best-seller for boys and adults alike. In six weeks, he wrote *King Solomon's Mines*, the narrative story of a treasure hunt accomplished by three English gentlemen, search-ing for a legendary diamond mine in a lost land in South Africa.[1] Published in 1885, this self-declared adventure romance was an instant success; it has never gone out of print since then.

In my essay, I will focus firstly on the literary relationships between the two writers and on their re-evaluation of the fic-tional form of romance; and secondly on the textual connections between their works, especially related to recurring themes of late nineteenth century adventure stories, such as maps charting imaginary lands and masculine quests for hidden treasures. On the whole, Stevenson and Haggard belonged to the same cul-tural and ideological climate, based on the deep fascination for a mythical past springing from the English tradition of sea voy-ages in Stevenson's case, or for the mysterious heritage of a lost humanity, inhabiting the inner wilderness of Africa in Haggard's fiction.

In *The Days of my Life* Haggard writes: 'I read in one of the

weekly papers a notice of Stevenson's *Treasure Island* so lauda-
tory that I procured and studied that work, and was impelled by its
perusal to try to write a book for boys.'[2] Although the two authors
never met, the relationship between their families is well known.
The Scottish writer had been in touch with one of Haggard's
brothers, Alfred, when *King Solomon's Mines* was published;
Stevenson's letter addressed to Alfred on 1 April 1885 does not
seem to consider Rider Haggard's romance a remarkable literary
achievement: 'The worst work so often succeeds better than the
best; financial success so often accompanies relaxation of instead
of increase of vigour.'[3] Stevenson's mixed reaction after receiving
King Solomon's Mines includes a fair amount of substantially
critical remarks. Thus, the Scottish author writes to Haggard:

> You should be more careful; you do quite well enough to
> take more trouble, and some parts of your book are infi-
> nitely beneath you. But I find there flashes of a fine weird
> imagination and a fine poetic use and command of the
> savage way of talking: things which both thrilled me (*The
> Letters*, V, p. 134).

However, the 'weird imagination' of his rival is enthusiastically
praised by the author of *Treasure Island*, in a following letter,
when Stevenson even suggested the opportunity of a literary
partnership.[4] It is worth remembering that Bazett Haggard,
another of Henry's brothers, became Stevenson's last great friend
in Samoa, and thanks to such a friendship we have a few records
of Bazett's eccentric life in the South Seas. It is not by chance that
Stevenson described him warmly as his 'companion in arms' and
felt that he knew Henry Rider through Bazett.[5]

Haggard's plan to outdo Stevenson and the supposed spirit
of competition underlying his first literary success need to be
related to his biography: born in Norfolk in 1856, Haggard went
to Natal in 1875 and worked as a colonial administrator in that

area during the Zulu War and the first Boer War.[6] To construct his own brand of romance and write *King Solomon's Mines*, he decided to dig into his own experiences, employing the typical devices of adventure stories.[7] South Africa, in his imagination, combined the features of a familiar ground and, at the same time, of a dark 'terra incognita'.

2. The revival of late Victorian romance from literary theory to fictional practice

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, an extensive debate on the social role and aesthetical values of fiction took place in Great Britain.[8] The theory and practice of romance became a crucial question in a period characterised by the emergence of adventure stories set in the colonies conveying imperial ideology through the figures of explorers and treasure seekers to a large public of boys and grown up men.[9] Writers such as Stevenson and Haggard created a new space for adventures set in uninhabited islands, jungles, swamps, 'uncivilised' and perilous places; the rewards for their heroes, affirming the ideal British values all over the world, were material wealth and the taming of wild nature.

Stevenson's contribution to the debate is well-known, but Haggard took part in the debate too: in 1877 he published a short essay in the *Contemporary Review*, entitled 'About Fiction', and developed a series of theoretical reflections on romance.[10] Haggard associates romance with basic instincts and primary human passions, highlighting its universal character; as the harbinger of a fantastic world, romance seems to have no relationship with contemporary reality. Stevenson himself had celebrated the centrality of romance in high art in several writings, such as 'A Gossip on Romance' (1882), based on the idea that fiction is to the adult man what play is to the child, and 'A Humble Remonstrance' (1884), which conveys the belief that the work of art is characterised by its immeasurable difference from life.[11]

Both Stevenson and Haggard underlined the imaginative and ethical role of fiction; yet at the same time their romances imply an ideological vision and a hierarchical construction of the world. Through the pattern of the quest narrative,[12] both historical and contemporary, the search for buried treasures plunged the readers into uncharted territories; conventional masculine codes, together with the principles of law and order, guided choice in a context where the supreme value of duty and personal courage could justify and reinforce a rigid social structure.

Treasure Island, opening in the English countryside, before moving to the Atlantic and then to a wild imaginary island, emphasises the hierarchical structure of eighteenth century society, where the clash between the middle-class masters and the pirates involves a clear definition of good and evil, even though a closer examination reveals ambiguities. Haggard's rival work, drawing on contemporary events and characters, changes and simplifies the development of the British Empire in South Africa by reshaping it into an exciting tale of adventure. Despite the different perspectives in space and time, it is worth noticing that the dark continent does appear in the last page of Stevenson's work, through the reference to the 'old Negress', with whom the one-legged pirate Long John Silver probably lives in comfort.

The conventions of children's literature mark both texts.[13] Though the dedication of *King Solomon's Mines* is addressed 'to all the big and little boys who read it',[14] the explicit sexual imagery seems to take craftily into account an adult audience. The most significant difference between the two adventure stories lies certainly in their narrators: Jim Hawkins is a boy in search of a father figure, and Stevenson's work follows the pattern of a Bildungsroman, whereas Allan Quatermain is a fifty-five-year-old man, an elephant hunter and ivory trader, an unprepossessing character, not at all an intellectual but certainly an experienced British explorer. *King Solomon's Mines* unfolds the African adventures of the narrator, who teams up with Sir Henry Curtis,

an aristocrat, and Captain John Good, a retired naval officer, on a quest initiated by a fifteenth-century Portuguese map. After crossing a desert and a mountain range, they reach the valley where the mysterious diamond mines are located, and where the Kukuana tribe is ruled by a vicious native king. The 'white men' support the rightful ruler of Kukuanaland and after a bitter war they are allowed to secure a fair amount of the coveted diamonds and return home. The transformation of masculine identities in their relation to otherness is a central theme in Haggard, and it is also a crucial issue in *Treasure Island*. Jim learns and develops through a growing understanding of the principles of justice, the values of social order and the significance of life and death. In a sense, Stevenson's Jim learns much more, yet, at the same time, he is to some extent a passive tool in the hands of the adults who assume the role of father figures towards him.

3. Cartographies of the Empire

A strange, dragon-like map shapes the very beginning of *Treasure Island*, as Stevenson remarks in 'My First Book: "Treasure Island" ', first published in *The Idler* in 1894. Here he tells his readers of how, during a rainy August holiday in Scotland, spent with his twelve-year-old stepson, he drew a map:

> I made the map of an island; it was elaborately and (I thought) beautifully coloured; the shape of it took my fancy beyond expression; it contained harbours that pleased me like sonnets; and with the unconsciousness of the predestined, I ticketed my performance 'Treasure Island'.[15]

Stevenson observes that the characters of the book began to appear to him among imaginary woods and seas, adding: 'The map was the chief part of my plot. I might almost say it was the whole' ('My First Book', p. 127). Thus, the work of imagination is

stimulated by the drawing, and leads to the vision of characters moving in a landscape.

Though the topography and landscape features of Stevenson's island were apparently borrowed from California scenery (the Monterey peninsula and Silverado) it is also clearly connected with Gothic sensibility in its association with night, darkness, mist and fear. At the same time it evokes a paradise of palm trees and sapphire seas, white beaches and exotic birds; an equatorial space to be explored and appropriated.[16] The island is the object of the quest,[17] but Jim is immediately repelled by it: 'From the very first look onward, I hated the very thought of Treasure Island.'[18] The island constitutes a stage where deceptions are performed, not unlike Shakespeare's island in *The Tempest*. The island is also unwelcoming and dangerous:

> Where Silver stood with his lieutenant all was still in shadow, and they waded knee deep in a low, white vapour that had crawled during the night out of the morass. The chill and the vapour together told a poor tale of the island. It was plainly a damp, feverish, unhealthy spot (*Treasure Island*, p. 78).

The signature of captain Flint on the map connects the drawing with the ancient and cruel world of buccaneers. The physical features and their names stimulate the reader's imagination and in the plot the sheet of paper containing the map is crucial, and clearly connected with the various clues on the ground in the final phase of the search.

The fascination of maps, the blank spaces filled by the colonial imagination, is even more remarkable in Haggard's romance. The Empire had been created by mapping, naming, classifying the unknown, and the attraction of the colonies lay in their mystery and apparent blankness. As in *Treasure Island* the map is a central plot device in *King Solomon's Mines* and embodies the myth

of a seemingly empty and mysterious landscape. In addition, Haggard's map is a bodyscape of Africa portrayed as a woman.[19] Henry Rider Haggard was very proud of this invention and the effect of realism it created – even greater than in *Treasure Island* because the map is actually inserted in the text rather than preceding it like a frontispiece. His satisfaction is revealed when he relates an amusing episode in the London underground, while taking the original map to the Cassell publishing house:

> In the carriage of the Underground Railway I perceived an old lady engaged in a close, indeed an almost ferocious study of the map printed at the beginning of the printed volume which rested on her knees. Drawing the original map from my pocket, I placed it on my knee and began to study it with like attention (*The Days of My Life*, I, p. 234).

The map is both inside the space of the text yet also outside it (as paratext), and so captures the imagination of the reader by its ambiguous status and its apparent reality – attesting documentary status in what is known to be a fictional narrative. Haggard playfully increases the ambiguity by producing the 'real' map and mirroring the readers' imaginative fascination. Haggard invents an ancient map, the copy of a chart drawn by a Portuguese trader, Josè da Silvestra, dying of hunger on a mountain named Sheba's Breast, somewhere in Southern Africa. The narrative techniques aim at engaging the faculties of interpreting spatial representation; the picture printed in the first pages of the text gives credibility to the whole plot.

The map represents a motivation and tool of colonial power, because the exotic territory appears mysterious but, at the same time, knowable and open to the white domination.[20] First of all, it is a symbol of conceptual appropriation that validates the white man's power and therefore his exploitation of the earth's

resources. However, Haggard's map is also charged with a personal, erotic meaning. Haggard's Africa embodies the colonial fantasy of the virgin territory.[21] At the centre of Haggard's map lie two breast-like mountain peaks, Solomon's road leads to the 'koppje', the navel, while the stone idols called 'Three Witches' mark the threshold leading to the mouth of the treasure cave, a kind of vaginal entrance where the heroes are led by the treacherous Gagool.

The maps are crucial to both romances, as they mark the beginning and the end of the two stories, and both are explicitly associated with the appropriation of huge treasures. Moreover, the charts apparently give their owners a right to the colonial exploitation of the land, so validating the dreams and fantasies of Britain's colonial power. The device of the map reproduced directly in the first pages of the text, like an artefact in its declared objectivity, helps create the illusion of a real territory inhabited both by the adventurers and by the fascinated readers.

4. The quest for wealth

The goal of the hero's adventurous quest, both in *Treasure Island* and in *King Solomon's Mines*, is the achievement of wealth. The search for riches, in the shape of money, gold and diamonds, is romanticised, providing an idealistic representation of the mechanisms of the capitalist profit. In the heyday of Victorian imperialism, *Treasure Island* retrieves an eighteenth-century period of colonial expansion and consolidation, the recreation of a lost past, where the pirates are objects of admiration and fear. Stevenson's operation suggests both a displacement from contemporary high capitalism, and it represents, in an idealised and more innocent world, the need for economic production in the contemporary world.

The material interests of the pirates and of the gentry financing the sea voyage seem identical.[22] The romance of fabulous wealth is emphasised at the opening of the chest, when Jim exclaims:

'doubloons and double guineas and moroides and sequins, [. . .] strange Oriental pieces stamped with what looked like wisps of string or bits of spider's web, round pieces and square pieces, and pieces bored through the middle' (*Treasure Island*, p. 199). The words suggest far-away places, buccaneering enterprises and also the hoards from the world of the *Arabian Nights*; the illusion created by the words ushers another kind of fancy: when the map is traded to the pirates, they finger it as if it were the treasure itself, as if a piece of paper may create an illusion of wealth, which is actually what happens with bank notes.

For his part, Rider Haggard reshapes the biblical myth of Solomon's treasure, although in the industrial age that legend has lost significance. In *King Solomon's Mines* the space where the treasure is buried is ghostlike and hellish, the domain of savagery.[23] Haggard's mines reflect contemporary South Africa and the diamond and gold rushes, which took place in the last decades of the nineteenth century.[24] In Haggard's romance, wealth is removed from the savage world, where it lay motionless and did not produce any useful profit, to be transferred to the civilised world, and transformed into circulating capital.[25]

When the witch Gagool traps the British explorers in the treasure chamber, she mocks the white men's greed for the precious stones and yells: 'There are the bright stones ye love, white men, as many as you will; take them, run them through your fingers, *eat* of them, *hee*! *hee*! *drink* of them, ha! ha!' (*King Solomon's Mines,* p. 278). But, after the killing of Gagool, Quatermain and his friends, gaping at the huge treasure, finally satisfied, do not seem impressed by the witch's curse and reason like accountants: 'We had got them; there before us were millions of pounds' worth of diamonds, and thousands of pounds' worth of gold and ivory, only to be taken away' (p. 279).

Both in Stevenson and Haggard the treasure is depicted in quantitative terms, as coins and precious metals and stones that are literally brought back to life, released from their long

inactivity in the island's caves or in the mines of Kukuanaland.[26] In Stevenson, once the brutal and chaotic strategies employed by the pirates are defeated, the colonial order and laws are finally firmly established. While on the *Hispaniola* the Union Jack replaces the Jolly Roger, Quatermain, Curtis and Good, after restoring order and appropriating the diamonds, embody the superiority of British power in themselves. Haggard builds up a more contemporary narrative background: not the pirate expeditions of a pre-industrial world, but more directly a present and future colonial expansion. Jim Hawkins, who returns home apparently more haunted than joyful as a victor, will become Allan Quatermain, a simplified version of the traditional man of action. Haggard's mapping of his story onto the Empire is much clearer than Stevenson's. The 'young and old' readers of Haggard's romance cannot, as Stevenson had suggested, devote themselves to 'daydreaming' any longer, but must become men of action themselves, faithful servants of the Queen.

5. Exotic landscapes

The exotic and the mysterious atmosphere, a crucial part of nineteenth-century romance, is present in the depiction both of the island in the Spanish Main and of the dark heart of Africa. Traditionally, great treasures are buried in inhospitable places. Revisited in the light of Victorian perspectives, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* constitutes a powerful subtext to both as the myth of the coloniser resurfaces in a different context, together with the idea of nature mastered by reason.[27]

The topography of Stevenson's island is associated with dreams, even nightmares, in the crucial twists of the narration; the places Jim explores seem imbued with a strong symbolism, involving even the colours and the shape of the island:[28]

> Grey-coloured woods covered a large part of the surface.
> [...] The hills ran up clear above the vegetation in spires

> of naked rock. All were strangely shaped, and the Spy-
> glass, which was by three or four hundred feet the tallest
> on the island, was likewise the strangest in configuration,
> running up sheer from almost every side, and then sud-
> denly cut off at the top like a pedestal to put a statue on
> (*Treasure Island*, p. 80).

While symbolically female (the treasure is located in Ben Gunn's cave), it is also associated with the search for manhood, freedom, and independence. The father figures are certainly relevant, and especially Long John Silver fulfils such a role when, immediately after landing, he describes the island as a 'sweet spot', enthusiastically emphasizing its pleasures to a boy like Jim. It is a nurturing land, where Jim will finally grow up.

The island's physical and vegetational forms construct a space of the other: uninhabited, unknown, its inhospitable nature is also revealed by its smell, indicating the presence of corruption and death. When the final hunt begins, through 'heavy, miry ground', the discovery of a skeleton strikes a harsh note, and the seekers become acutely aware of visual and audible clues. At last, the island has become a world of physical perceptions and a living organism in itself, offering the treasure to the invaders in order to preserve its inner mysteriousness:

> Before us, over the tree-tops, we beheld the Cape of
> the Woods fringe with surf; behind, we not only looked
> down upon the anchorage and Skeleton island, but saw
> a great field of open sea upon the east. Sheer above us
> rose Spy-glass, here dotted with single pines, there black
> with precipices. There was no sound but that of the dis-
> tant breakers, mounting from all round, and the chirp of
> countless insects in the brush. Not a man, not a sail upon
> the sea; the very largeness of the view increased the sense
> of solitude (p. 187).

At the same time, in both Stevenson's and Haggard's works, the landscape of Otherness is considered a stage fit for masculine actions. Thus, the land in *King Solomon's Mines* is feminised, portrayed as a naked woman to be penetrated; the adventures must cross and 'touch' Sheba's breasts to find the coveted treasure, as if to achieve a sexual fulfilment:

> There, not more than forty or fifty miles from us, glittering like silver in the early rays of the morning sun, were Sheba's breasts; and stretching away for hundreds of miles on each side of them was the great Suliman Berg. Now that I, sitting here, attempt to describe the extraordinary grandeur and beauty of that sight, language seems to fail me. I am impotent before its memory. [. . .] These mountains standing thus, like the pillars of a gigantic gateway, are shaped exactly like a woman's breasts (*King Solomon's Mines*, p. 85).

The achievement of the treasure is perceived as a male violation of the African land.[29] Haggard's African topography implies the naming of the main geographical features: the image of Sheba is expanded into an icon of the African continent, while in Haggard's romance its fertility is constantly associated with male violation.

The march into the desert discloses vistas of vast expanses of untamed wilderness, rearranged by the imperial gaze, but the wide Solomon's road leads to a kind of Eden:[30]

> The brook, of which the banks were clothed with dense masses of a gigantic species of maidenhair fern interspersed with feathery tufts of wild asparagus, babbled away merrily at our side, the soft air murmured through the leaves of the silver trees, doves cooed around and bright-winged birds flashed like living gems from bough

to bough. The magic of the place, combined with the overwhelming sense of dangers left behind, and one of the promised land reached at last, seemed to charm us into silence (p. 109).

Haggard's Africa is the space of the wilderness, a primitive world that generates anxiety and fear, but also a place of enchantment, because the Edenic quality of its landscape, its lovely countryside and rivers, cattle and meadows are continually celebrated. This emptiness and its characteristics as a 'promised land' can be seen as a justification for predatory colonialism.[31] The site of King Solomon's Mines, in imaginary Kukuanaland, is located where the ancient stone ruins near Victoria, called Great Zimbabwe, were discovered in 1871 by the German explorer Karl Mauch. To realistic, historical and geographical details, Haggard mixes elements of folklore and myth, in an amazing *mélange* of literary ingredients, present-day mining activity and biblical antecedents; the place of death, where the Kukuana kings are petrified, resembles the Valhalla of the German tradition.

In conclusion, by suggesting that the English gentlemen have the right to keep for themselves what they have discovered and fought for (discovery by those 'without the law' having no validity) both *Treasure Island* and *King Solomon's Mines* offer a purified, 'rose-colored' vision of the Empire and of the capitalist enterprise,[32] justifying the English dominance of a world represented as a 'treasure house' waiting to be plundered.[33] The difference between the two lies in the fact that Stevenson relies on his aesthetic integrity and his fascination for a past in which the pirates are displaced by a more disciplined and respectable middle-class, while Haggard wants to encourage and seduce his readers, reminding them that the riches of Africa are still open to robbery and conquest to incorporate a new jewel into the British Crown.

NOTES

1   Lilias Haggard, *The Cloak That I Left* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951), p. 121.

2   Henry Rider Haggard, *The Days of My Life. An Autobiography* (London: Longman, 1926), 2 vols, I, p. 220.

3   *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew, *The Letters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 8 vols., V, p. 99.

4   Haggard, *The Days of My Life,* I, p. 220. The suggested literary partnership never occurred.

5   Victoria Manthorpe, *Children of Empire. The Victorian Haggards* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1996), p. 166 and p. 171. Stevenson joined other expatriates in Samoa to write a little humorous book on Bazett Haggard: Robert Louis Stevenson, *An Object of Pity or the Man Haggard* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1900).

6   The main biographical and critical works on Henry Rider Haggard are: Morton Cohen, *Rider Haggard. His Life and Work* (London: Macmillan, 1968); D. S. Higgins, *Rider Haggard. The Great Storyteller* (London: Cassell, 1981); Peter Berresford Ellis, *H. Rider Haggard. A Voice from the Infinite* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987); Wendy R. Katz, *Rider Haggard and the Fiction of Empire. A Critical Study of British Imperial Fiction* (Cambridge - New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Tom Pocock, *Rider Haggard and the Lost Empire* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993).

7   On the adventure narrative pattern see John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance. Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976). Cf. also Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).

8   Cf. Carlo Pagetti, *La nuova battaglia dei libri. Il dibattito sul romanzo in Inghilterra alla fine dell'Ottocento* (Bari: Adriatica, 1977).

9   Cf. Laurence Kitzan, *Victorian Writers and the Image of Empire. The Rose-Colored Vision* (Westport - London: Greenwood Press, 2001). On the relationship between culture and imperialism, see Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1993).

10 Henry Rider Haggard, 'About Fiction', *Contemporary Review* (February 1887), 172-180. Two articles by Haggard on the relationship

between art and life had appeared the year before: Henry Rider Haggard, 'Fact and Fiction', *Athenaeum*, 3063 (July 10, 1886), 50; and Henry Rider Haggard, 'Fact and Fiction', *Athenaeum*, 3066 (July 31, 1886), 144. Cf. David H. Jackson, '*Treasure Island* as a Late-Victorian Adults' Novel', *Victorian Newsletter*, 72 (1987), 28-32 (p. 28).

11 'A Gossip on Romance' and 'A Humble Remonstrance' are reprinted in Robert Louis Stevenson, *Memories and Portraits* (Glasgow: Richard Drew Publishing, 1990, 1st ed. 1887), pp. 172-190 and pp. 191-207. On Stevenson's aesthetics, see Richard Ambrosini, *Stevenson: la poetica del romanzo* (Bulzoni: Roma, 2001).

12 See Robert Fraser, *Victorian Quest Romance: Stevenson, Haggard, Kipling and Conan Doyle* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1998).

13 Claudia Nelson, *Boys Will Be Girls. The Feminine Ethic and British Children's Fiction, 1857-1917* (New Brunswick - London: Rutgers University Press, 1991), pp. 128-132. On children's imperial literature, see also John Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World* (London: Harper Collins, 1991).

14 Henry Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines*, ed. by Denis Butts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 1st ed. 1885), see the dedication.

15 'My First Book', Robert Louis Stevenson, *Essays in the Art of Writing* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1905), 111-131 (p. 117).

16 Brian Gibson, 'One Man Is an Island: Natural Landscape Imagery in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*', *Victorian Newsletter*, 101 (2002), 12-21 (p. 12). On Treasure Island as a 'meta-island', see Margaret Elphinstone, 'An Island is a Piece of Land Entirely Surrounded by Texts', *Études Écossaises*, 9 (2003-2004), 149-161.

17 Julia Reid, *Robert Louis Stevenson, Science, and the 'Fin de Siècle'* (London: Macmillan, 2006), p. 37.

18 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, with a new introduction by R. H. W. Dillard (New York: Signet Classic, 1998, 1st ed. 1883), p. 76.

19 Linda Stiebel, 'Imagining Empire's Margins. Land in Rider Haggard's African Romances', in *Being/s in Transit. Travelling, Migration, Dislocation*, ed. by Liselotte Glage (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), pp. 125-140 (p. 134). Cf. also William J. Scheick, 'Adolescent Pornography and Imperialism in Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*', *English Literature in Transition*, 34, 1 (1991), 19-30.

20 Nicholas Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the 'Fin de Siècle'. Popular Fiction and British Culture 1880-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 54.

21 Gail Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins, Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 40.

22 Naomi J. Wood, 'Gold Standards and Silver Subversions: *Treasure Island* and the Romance of Money', *Children's Literature*, 26 (1998), 61-85 (p. 63).

23 Elio Di Piazza, 'The Quest for Values: Traditional Sources in Two Late Nineteenth-Century Novels of Adventure', in *Metaphors of Economy*, ed. by Nicole Bracker, Stefan Herbrechter (Amsterdam - New York: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 164-165.

24 Anne McClintock, 'Maidens, Maps and Mines: The Reinvention of Patriarchy in Colonial South Africa', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 87, 1 (1988), 147-192 (p. 148).

25 Elio Di Piazza, *L'avventura bianca. Testo e colonialismo nell'Inghilterra del secondo Ottocento* (Bari: Adriatica, 1999), p. 143.

26 Cf. Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature. Migrant Metaphors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 37.

27 Diana Loxley, *Problematic Shores: The Literature of Islands* (London: Macmillan, 1990), p. 143.

28 Alan Sandison, *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Appearance of Modernism. A Future Feeling* (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 70-71.

29 Richard F. Patteson, 'Manhood and Misogyny in the Imperialist Romance', *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*, 35, 1 (1981), 3-12.

30 Linda Stiebel, *Imagining Africa: Landscape in H. Rider Haggard's African Romances* (Westport: Greenwood, 2001), pp. 57-58.

31 Gerald Monsman, *H. Rider Haggard and the Imperial Frontier. The Political & Literary Contexts of His African Romances* (Greensboro: ELT Press, University of North Carolina, 2006), p. 71.

32 Jeff D. Bass, 'The Romance as Rhetorical Dissociation: the Purification of Imperialism in *King Solomon's Mines*', *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 67 (1981), 259-269.

33 Kitzan, *Victorian Writers and the Image of Empire. The Rose-Colored Vision*, pp. 167-177.

Graphic visions of Dr Jekyll

Sara Rizzo

In 2008 and 2009 two graphic novel adaptations of *Jekyll and Hyde* were published in Great Britain, part of the recent explosion of interest in 'graphic novels'.[1]

The first graphic novel came out last summer for UNESCO's second 'One Book – One City' series of events held in Edinburgh,[2] created by what was called the Scottish comic-book 'dream team': a scriptwriter for DC's superhero Batman, Alan Grant, and the gifted illustrator Cam Kennedy,[3] both masters of the comic-book requiring no further presentation. Their version of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was actually produced in one version with texts close to Stevenson's and three derived versions – in Scots, Gaelic and in simplified English ('modern text') – following the warm reception of their multiple-version adaptation of *Kidnapped* the year before.

The second work reviewed here, published in May 2009, is by two Anglo-Polish artists: Andrzej Klimowski and Danusia Schejbal. Klimowski has an international career designing film and theatre posters, book jackets, illustrations and TV graphics and animations, plus some recent graphic novels, while Schejbal is a well-known stage designer, as well as a collaborator with Klimowski on a praised earlier graphic-novel adaptation of *The*

Master and Margherita (2008). Now they have collaborated again on this adaptation of Stevenson's text (the 'script') and then split the artwork: Klimowski takes the first half cover-ing Utterson's investigations while Schejbal takes the second half chronicling Jekyll's terrible discovery.
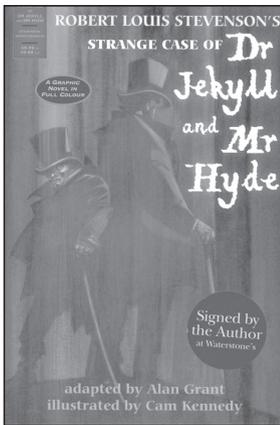
Though only a year separates these two versions, their very different approaches are immediately visible. Grant and Kennedy's version is a full-colour adaptation with a cover showing two standing figures: Jekyll conceals his face while Hyde, behind him, looks into the reader's eyes, a disturbing and also original choice, as it avoids the cliché laboratory scene, often with Hyde emerging from the potion.[4] Inside, there is no fixed grid: pages are often divided in three bands of varying width or with four or five panels (single images) per page, with an almost constant presence of elements breaking through the frame. Additional variety is given to the graphic structure by unframed scenes, usually marking high points in the story (the trampling scene, the murder of Carew, the first transformation, Jekyll at the window, and Utterson's nightmare, distributed in a series of circles as in the depiction of a nightmare in the same authors' *Kidnapped*).[5]

In contrast, Klimowski and Schejbal's version is a black-and-white (or rather, greyscale) version, the cover of which skips the usual idea of showing human dichotomy to show a close-up of the lean and shocked face of Jekyll, white-faced and dark-eyed, reminiscent of the exaggerated expressions of John Barrymore in Robertson's 1920 silent film adaptation.[6] This choice is even

more unconventional than that of Grant and Kennedy, for the covers of most other comic-book versions tend to show either the doctor with his double, or give prominence to a monstrous Hyde.[7] The inner graphic structure is characterised by austere pages with only two or three panels, framed and rectangular, with very few examples of figures breaking through the frame. This serves to depict a succession of single scenes rather than a flowing sequence,[8] with key moments marked by single- and double-page panels. Most of these large panels occur in the second half of the story (there are only two before 'The Last Night'
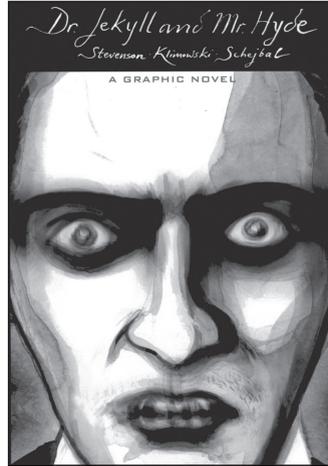
episode) and this marks a shift of perspectives from Utterson's investigation, illustrated by Klimowski, to Schejbal's darker, more ambiguous, naïf style that suits Jekyll's memories, the confession of his nocturnal adventures, the discovery of his dark side and his evil actions.

On the level of narrative structure, the divergence between these two versions is even more evident. Grant and Kennedy's adaptation follows the 10 chapters of the original (like Classics Illustrated 1953, 1990) as faithfully as possible, and almost all the words are from Stevenson's text. This faithfulness to the original is due in part to the educative aim required by the UNESCO committee, who wanted to involve young readers, and in part to a respect for the original author, as Grant, half-joking, confessed in an interview: 'With an original story you can just go for it: there's no invisible Robert Louis Stevenson looking over your

left shoulder saying, 'You bastard! Don't touch my work!".[9] This decision to remain close to the original text (though some aspects of Stevenson's novella do not fit easily in comic-book format, as Grant admits), keeps this version distinct from the majority of film versions, which are based on the last the last three chapters of the original, and also from earlier comic book adaptations such as Classic Comics 1943,[10] which borrows heavily from ver-

sions of the story in older media (theatre and cinema), as well as from more recent Italian comic-book versions by Battaglia, Sclavi and Mattotti, equally dependent on the last chapters, but which also abandon many of the con-ventions of the stage/Hollywood tradition to give a freer, more personal interpretation as a way of recovering aspects of the original.

Klimowski and Schejbal have adopted this last approach, privileging the suggestive power of illustrations, using captions and dialogues that derive from Stevenson's text without (for the most part) quoting it directly. At the same time, however, they keep the structure of mystery by foregrounding enigmatic ele-ments: Carew carrying a letter addressed to Utterson (p. 28); the search in vain for Jekyll in the dissection room block (pp. 60-1); the inspection of the study and the mirror (pp. 62-3); the waking-to-find-himself-Hyde episode (an uneasy half-face beneath the bedclothes and then the close-up on the hand of Hyde, p. 101), the sequence of Hyde wandering around London before meeting Lanyon at midnight to drink the potion (pp. 114-5) – all of these are actually omitted from the Grant and Kennedy

version. Schejbal translates Jekyll's confession in long sequences accompanied by sparse texts about Jekyll's early life, with images relating to transcendental studies and the realization that man is really two, and a sequence of him walking across the silent house to see himself in the mirror as Hyde (pp. 90-3), while Grant and Kennedy for the same episodes create pages covered by captions. Here the 'isolated' panels more easily suggest an enigmatic reality than the captions and constantly changing page-design and panel-type of Grant and Kennedy's version.

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This is not to say that Grant and Kennedy's version does not have illustrative solutions of its own that give back energy to the translated story and create visually enigmatic elements to translate those of the text. There are some interesting graphic translations of the narrative, for example, such as the doubled and mirrored images of Hyde facing Utterson (p. 10) and of Enfield alongside Utterson (p. 1-2, 5, 26-7). But one of the most interesting techniques is their use of significant colours. Certain repeated colours acquire an association with elements of the narrative, like the bright (almost phosphorescent) yellow for lamps in the dangerous street (first in pairs, then multiplied, and even associated with the lamp of the police-station). The colour is then associated with the light of interiors (thus translating the changing associations of exterior and interior of Stevenson's text, when the originally safe interior becomes dangerous). This 'semanticised' yellow (also associated with the potion, p. 23) is then used to frame characters
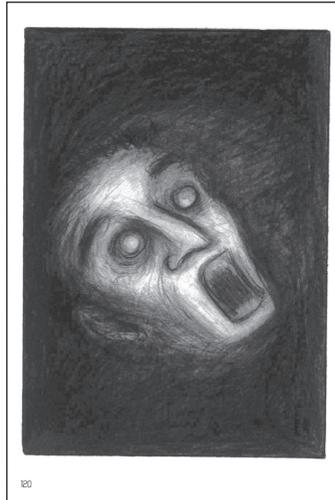
and associate them as doubles of each other: Utterson, Poole and Jekyll (though never Hyde).[11] Green is associated with the coats of Jekyll and Hyde and with both potion and poison, suggesting that   b o t h h a v e   s a m e l e t h a l   e f f e c t . G r a n t   a n d
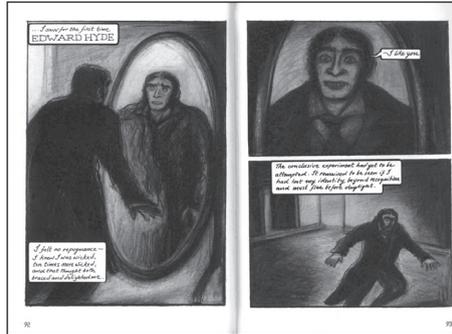
Kennedy also use sophisticated coding to indicate the story-in-the-story sections (narratives of Enfield and Lanyon) by means of captions boxes of a different colour (light blue in comparison with light yellow).

   Among Klimowski and Schejbal's graphic translations of the narrative perhaps the most interesting are the wordless panels. (This is particularly appropriate to a text where 'the narrative involves many phenomena that are ineffable, indescribable, or unnameable').[12] The buildings behind Hyde as he approaches the back door (p. 19) and the courtyard of Jekyll's house (pp. 90-1) look like starkly contrasted Expressionist backdrops, recalling all the contrasting symbolic values connected with Jekyll's house. And although there's only one mirror in the original text, in this graphic novel they appear frequently, underlining the idea of doubling. Jekyll, surrounded by a halo of sanctity and goodness in the film tradition (and to a certain extent in Grant and Kennedy's noble, good-looking Jekyll with firm jaw), here regains all his hypocrisy and middle-class arrogance, while Hyde's figure is no more a horror-movie monster but inspires sympathy with

his youthful and almost-innocent smile (pp. 92-3); Grant and Kennedy's figures, in contrast, are all like massive, muscular action-men with very few facial expressions.

Another important point in adaptations of *Jekyll and Hyde* is how the conclusion is treated. The Hollywood tradition created a consolatory end with Hyde turning into the good doctor as he dies and early American comic-books followed this; but the freer Italian sequential-art adaptations find different and original ways to celebrate the central silence of Stevenson's narrative in their closures.[13] Grant and Kennedy's version finishes with a stoical Jekyll awaiting the end, with a rather banal penultimate panel showing a bottle of green poison (to accompany the caption 'Will Hyde die on the scaffold?') and the last image shows the still-noble and firm-eyed Jekyll with a wild, teeth-baring Hyde behind and to the right of him. Klimowski and Schejbal's ending, in contrast, presents a blank-eyed screaming face against a dark background, uttering a silent cry (reminiscent of Munch), and facing this, on the final page, the handwritten text ending with 'I bring the life of the unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end' followed by two blots. It is possible to see an artistic analogy here with Mattotti who ends his version with a series of images of a diminishing and ever-changing twisted figure, a distorted face finally engulfed by the dark background and then a desk with sheets, ink-bottle and pen but no writer. Like the Italian versions, then, Klimowski and Schejbal's ending emphasises the central silence of the original text and at the same time (in the image facing the page of hand-

written text) doubles, visually and graphically, Jekyll's end in an uncertain and disturbing way.

Grant and Kennedy's faithful version avoids being a pedantic literal adaptation, thanks to some interesting enigmatic elements and to its multi-shaped graphic structure, which allows a dynamic reading and perhaps suggests hysteria and disorientation, making this graphic novel appealing above all to an intended youthful audience, who will be familiar with this style from action and super-hero comic-books. Klimowski and Schejbal, though less famous in the comics world, manage to create an intriguing and more sophisticated version (at least for Stevenson scholars) with a peculiar style of naïf drawings mixed with Expressionist art and large-size panels, many of them unaccompanied by speech or captions, emphasizing the indeterminate, basically irresolvable nature of Stevenson's text.

NOTES

1 For more on the subject see Giovanni Bruner, 'Sulla (benefica?) esplosione del graphic novel' in *Annuario del fumetto* 14 (2009), pp. 6-8 (in a section with the interesting title 'Dr. Fumetto & Mr. Graphic Novel').

2 http://www.cityofliterature.com/ecol.aspx?sec=6&pid=215.

3 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Ag4yI3Nmrk 'Jekyll & Hyde: Graphic Novel Launch', from Scotland on TV.

4 See the Classic Illustrated versions of 1949 and 1953 (Jekyll in the lab and Hyde coming out from potion's vapours), and the Marvel Classics Comics version of 1976 (Jekyll drinking the potion and doubling faces showing the transformation).

5 Alan Grant (script) and Cam Kennedy (art), *Robert Louis Stevenson's Kidnapped –The Graphic Novel* (New Lanark: Waverley Books, 2006), p 57.

6 *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1920) directed by John Stuart Robertson with John Barrymore in the title roles. Utterson's nightmare (pp. 16-7) with Hyde opening the bed curtains, also reminds us of the sequence of the tormented night of Jekyll in Robertson's film with a terrified Barrymore sitting up in bed trying to resist the approach of a huge spider.

7 See the covers of the versions published in the magazine series *Classic Comics* (1943), *Pendulum Illustrated Stories* (1991), and the Italian *Dylan Dog* (1994), the cover of the 'Robert Louis Stevenson' number of *Graphic Classics* (2004), and the graphic novel volume by Mattotti and Kramsky (2002).

8 In a similar way, Dino Battaglia's version (1974) also condenses the story in 'single, memorable pictures'.

9 http://www.list.co.uk/article/6362-dr-jekyll-and-mr-hyde-interview-with-alan-grant-and-cam-kennedy/

10 Nevertheless, some elements from Hollywood tradition are retained, like the 'heroic' young Jekyll, and the stooping ape-man Hyde with hat, bat-like cloak and stick.

11 Jekyll is associated with the colour on pp. 13 (Jekyll's face, Hyde's shadow plus yellow background), 19 (Jekyll's face, yellow background, twice), 20 (Jekyll surrounded by yellow halo of fire), 35 (a departing Jekyll framed in yellow doorway) and 39 (again near the fire).

Utterson is associated with the colour on pp.11-13, 21 (in a yellow halo of fire like Jekyll on the facing page), 23, 30. On p. 13 the handshake of Jekyll and Utterson shows the same yellow shining below their hands. Poole is associated with the colour on pp. 11, 23, 29-30.

12 Richard Dury (ed.), *The Annotated Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Geonoa: ECIG, 2005), pp. 22-23.

13 See the brilliantly compressed version by Battaglia for the comics magazine *Linus* (1974), and the full-scale graphic novel by Kramsky-Mattotti (2002), which could be considered as French, since Mattotti lives and works in Paris and this version was first published by the famous *bande-dessinée* publisher of Casterman). See also the 1994 episode in the *Dylan Dog* (a series admired by Umberto Eco and now finding some recognition in English-speaking countries).

Eileen Dunlop, *Robert Louis Stevenson:
The Travelling Mind* (National Museums Scotland:
Edinburgh, 2008) with illustrations, bibliography, and index,
160 pp., £8.99. ISBN 978-1-905267-217

Eileen Dunlop's *Robert Louis Stevenson: The Travelling Mind*
is a concise history of Stevenson's life. Not an academic work,
the biography aims instead to tell the story of how Stevenson
lived, who his parents and friends were, and what influenced his
writing. As an introduction to Stevenson studies, *The Travelling
Mind* is a strong work, offering an evocative account of
Stevenson's ancestry, his life, and his legacy. It is Dunlop's evoca-
tion of events, however, which sometimes frustrates the reader,
since she often hints at tantalising aspects to Stevenson's life and
beliefs (such as his ideas about sexual relationships, class, and
his sense of national identity) while stopping just short of giving
her own interpretation of them. Although offering an insight into
Stevenson's personality, Dunlop's reluctance to express her own
views on his life means that some of the richness of this other-
wise lively text is lost.

   Dunlop begins her biography with a discussion of Stevenson's
ancestry, examining in particular the family lighthouse busi-
ness, in which Louis himself would never take an active inter-
est. She writes about Stevenson's life chronologically, focusing
on the influences on his early childhood like his nurse Alison
Cunningham, 'Cummy', and her religious obsessions, his early
relationship with his (also religious) parents, and how his con-
stant illnesses fuelled his imagination and later his writing. She
goes on to discuss how his sporadic attendance at school may
have explained his difficulties in making friendships as a child.
His loneliness and anxieties about his friendships, as well as his
strained relationship with his parents are themes that Dunlop
shows to have marked his entire life. As a teenager, he struggled
with his parents against becoming an engineer and joining the

lighthouse business, against making law his career and most importantly, against their wishes that he abandon his desire to make a career out of writing. Later, Dunlop shows how he also struggled with them in his choice of wife, Fanny Osbourne, a divorced American who was ten years Louis's senior. She also explores the turbulent relationship he shared with his friends, examining in particular his falling out with William Ernest Henley and his feelings that his friends could not be relied upon to give him the support that he desired. *The Travelling Mind* also concentrates on Stevenson's lifelong struggle against illness, his many travels, and the problematic domestic life he shared with his wife Fanny and her children. Finally, the biography examines how Stevenson, once out of critical favour, is returning as an important figure in literature and for Scotland.

Dunlop's work is at its strongest in its discussions of Stevenson's changeable character. She portrays him as mischievous, moody, lonely, ambitious, and simultaneously hopeful and despairing, offering anecdotes to give the reader a sense of the man behind the writing. For example, she describes him as a child 'run[ning] 'impishly' through flowerbeds and then deliberately enlarg[ing] his small footprints so that an older child could be blamed' (p. 20). We also get evidence of his vanity, when, for example, he would storm out of Professor Alexander Fleeming's house after Fleeming voiced his disapproval of Louis's lax attitude to education and flippant remarks. Indeed, Dunlop's characterisation of the Stevenson family, particularly Louis's father, Tom, is fascinating. She gives the reader a sense of the triumphs and disappointments of the small family, and their attempts to overcome old arguments and frustrations (for example Stevenson's abandonment of the Christian faith which his parents found devastating). Dunlop's work is also successful in highlighting Stevenson in the Scottish context, giving the reader a clear picture of life in Edinburgh during the second half of the nineteenth century.

While Dunlop certainly makes Stevenson, and particularly

Stevenson in Scotland, come to life, she often stops short of taking some of her more suggestive observations further. In a discussion of his introduction to university life, she hesitates to draw conclusions about Stevenson's 'sordid and squalid' experiences (she hints at sexual relationships and alcoholism) and neatly sidesteps the issue, arguing 'what matters less is the effect of his moral innocence than the enrichment of his imagination' (pp. 38, 39). She also avoids speculating on Stevenson's beliefs about class. Although she does argue that descriptions of the Scottish University system 'give[ing] the lie to the proud boast that Scotland has, or ever had, a classless society', she is reluctant to comment on Louis's own examples of classism (such as his treatment of Henley), instead calling attention to his 'good-humoured appreciation of people of all ranks and conditions' in his writing (pp. 30, 31). Furthermore, while Dunlop often discusses Stevenson in relation to his Scottish national identity, remarking on his longing for 'a country of the imagination, one gone for over a century before he was gone, the Scotland of honour and loyalty to chieftain and family', she avoids discussing in depth how Stevenson might have felt about this nostalgic identity while living in Samoa (p. 128). Finally, Dunlop's intriguing title, taken from lines Louis wrote in a letter to his friend Sidney Colvin, is not addressed in the text, and the reader must decide what Dunlop means by the 'travelling mind' and the phrase's literal and metaphorical implications.

Although a stronger authorial presence would enrich this biography, *The Travelling Mind* is nevertheless a stimulating text, particularly useful for young scholars and those interested in learning more about Stevenson. Dunlop's enthusiasm about her subject will certainly encourage readers to revisit Stevenson's writings, and to investigate further into his life.

Hilary Grimes

Damian Atkinson, ed., *The Letters of William Ernest Henley to Robert Louis Stevenson* (High Wycombe, Bucks: Rivendale Press, 2008), 400 pp., £40 / $75. ISBN 1-904201-11-3

There is no best way to present a correspondence, whether of an author, a philosopher, a scientist, or anyone else, celebrated or not, who wrote memorable or at least significant letters. A full-scale collected edition can be invaluable to a dedicated scholar, despite or even because it must include texts whose significance does not make them jump off the page, but the sheer bulk of such a collection makes it costly, difficult to consult, and likely to deter most lay readers and all but a few publishers. A selection of letters, preferably in one volume, is more readable, and may still give some idea of the range and variety of a writer's voices and obsessions, but the reader is always at the mercy of the selector and has to be willing to follow several narrative threads at once. A volume of letters to a single correspondent (or intimate group of correspondents) cannot give us the entire quiddity of a writer, but has the virtue of concentration. Damian Atkinson has already given us *The Selected Letters of William Ernest Henley* (Aldershot, Hants and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000), which picks, from the surviving corpus of 2,500, 150 letters, 38 of them to Stevenson. Bradford and Mehew's wonderful *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson* provides an extensive selection of relevant Henley letters, and some of them reappear in their *Selected Letters*. Yet in spite of these and other appearances, Damian Atkinson's edition of all surviving letters to Robert Louis and Fanny Stevenson is amply justified in interest, scope, and editorial quality.[1] The introduction is succinct and helpful, the annotations are obviously the result of hard archival work, and the look of the volume is congenial.[2]

Like 'collected', 'surviving' is an unstable term. The instability is twofold. New letters may surface after an edition has gone

to press, rendering any claim to comprehensiveness unwise. Surviving letters, moreover, may not be the most extraordinary ones. Documents are subject to fire, flood, and the improvisational energies of such practical people as Warburton's cook and John Stuart Mill's maid. The most provocative letters are the most likely to be thrown away by their recipients, their heirs, or executors. Fanny Stevenson destroyed some letters because they were 'too personal and intimate'.[3] Others are fragmentary; the letter on p. 165, for example, begins in mid sentence, and consists of the last two of 34 pages.[4] We may be missing something particularly outrageous, therefore, but can't be sure of it. What we do have holds all kinds of fascinations.

Until Mr Atkinson started his work on the Henley correspondence, the main interest for biographers, critics, and literary historians has been the quarrel. The *Selected Letters* include several items relevant to this sad affair, and the rest may be found in the sixth volume of Bradford and Mehew. Given the nature of the project, it was inevitable that they also had to be included in the present volume. When read in this context, and in this sequence, however, they appear in a different perspective. Now they are only part of a much longer story, and in some ways less important in terms of Stevenson's life than earlier letters, but this broader perspective also makes them more moving.

On 12 November 1884, Henley wrote to Stevenson announcing the imminent arrival of a birthday present, an expensive set of Molière, bought with the encouragement of Anna Henley and probably far more generous than they could afford. The second paragraph begins:

> Next February, or January, we shall have been friends for ten years.... Ten years, dear boy, & all that in them is! – In ten years from now, I hope we shall have done a few good plays, & you'll be seeing your way to that new & true life of John Silver which of course it will be yours & nobody else's

to write. You are a high-nosed classic, sipping your wine (good wine!) & talking Molière to me, a disemboweled romantic; it may be in that very house which we are going to build on the site of the old semaphore station you wot of with the Mediterranean at our feet, & the Estourelles a bow shot off. What think you of that for 1894! I see it very plainly; & I believe. (p. 268)

For all his deeply needed stoicism, Henley was indeed a romantic, dreaming among the pea-soup fogs of Shepherd Bush (a not particularly glamorous suburb in West London) of life in the southern sun, its conviviality funded by a series of theatrical hits. In fact the friends fell out in the spring of 1888, and long before 1894, the year of Stevenson's death, they were divided by what the old song calls 'a waste of seas'. Stevenson, whose literary temperament was mercurial and inventive, had broken away from writing plays and boys' books. In the last extant letter, however, written on 22 May 1894, Henley is still talking about *Macaire*, and although he passes on Kipling's 'golden words' about *The Ebb-Tide*, 'the thing you published in *To-Day*', he has nothing to say about it on his own account. In his Pacific island stories, Stevenson was anything but the 'Shorter Catechist of Vailima' of Henley's imagining.

Among the revisions to the standard narrative prompted by this edition, we find that Katherine de Mattos's writing had already caught Henley's attention well before the letter about Fanny's supposed plagiarism of her story became the immediate cause of the quarrel (20 January, 2 July 1886, pp. 312, 320). Again, some of the letters to Fanny are warmer than the assumption that Henley was simply jealous of her might lead one to expect, and even the references in letters to her husband take delight in her fits of passion.[5] In the allusion above to 'the house which we are going to build?' the identity of the 'we' remains a puzzle – a bachelor retreat or a refuge for both couples? As Jenni Calder

observes, with characteristic insight, 'it is clear that Henley was, in a sense, in love' with his friend,[6] but some elements of the correspondence suggest that Henley's real anguish was not so much over jealousy of Fanny as over what he feared was Stevenson's inconstancy. Reproaches about absence and unanswered letters echo through the correspondence. In its tone of aggrieved jocularity, this passage from 19 September 1882 is typical:

> Then, I consider it scandalous of you not to have taken Margate on your way to Dover, or – failing that – to have bidden me up to town for the night. This, as you're away for the winter, and we shall meet no more on this side of '83. Which I think beastly....
> However, you always were a dam heggoist; & a dam heggoist you always will be. *Voilà*! (p. 172)

The anxiety about change extends, too, to Stevenson's artistic development. Henley, for example, deplored the shift in mode and tone from *Travels with a Donkey* to *The Amateur Emigrant*: 'I could have done the *Emigrant*; I couldn't the *Donkey*, not to be made a postmaster. The one's art, the other's journalism.' (p. 123) It is striking that Henley, who was so original in his own early poems, notably the 'In Hospital' sequence, who would rather have written *Leaves of Grass* than Ruskin's *Modern Painters* or 'the moral works of T. Carlyle' (p. 102), and who, as an editor, would later nurture such diverse talents as Kipling, Yeats, Conrad, and Wells, should be so inclined to curb Stevenson's urge to make things new.

We underestimate the importance of this friendship to both men, though, if we concentrate on Henley's obsession with preserving the *status quo ante*. The two of them were capable of great generosity to each other, as with Stevenson's gifts of books, money, and tobacco, or Henley's tireless concern for Stevenson's health or his equally tireless efforts to promote his friend's work

and find just the right editor or illustrator, or subject for an essay.[7] They endured a great deal of physical suffering, yet for long stretches, especially if we read through this edition with the appropriate letters in Bradford and Mehew to hand, they make an impression of sheer energy and will-power.

Nevertheless, since Stevenson is the better-known figure, the peculiar interest of Mr Atkinson's collection is the opportunity to see and hear Henley in full flood, without the mediation of biographers.[8] Gossip, literary politics, imprecations, jokes and judgements sweep by amidst the verbal torrent. Here is just a sample from a letter of 3 July 1882. It refers to John Morley, then editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, a man of letters and (no doubt to Henley's disgust, a Liberal politician), introduced in the preceding paragraph as 'that preposterous Shitehouse Morley', the historian A. W. Ward, Sidney Colvin, Edmund Gosse (usually called, with a jab at his homosexuality and his talents as a social climber, 'Becky', as in Becky Sharp), and Alfred Egmont Hake, editor of the *Overland Mail*.

> Talking of Morley, I had a rare rap at his fancy man, Ward, & his fancy man's monograph on Charles Dickens. I rather think, my Louis, that I butchered that poor old dummy in good style & with good discretion & judgement. Man, but I enjoyed it! The Lord delivered him into my hand. Every page was addled. The only difficulty was, what to choose? The heart of Becky rejoiced within him when he read, & Colvin wept on my neck after reading, & Hake reprinted two thirds of the butchery. When I think what I could have done with that book, had not Morley been the Patent Digester he is, I feel sorry that the butchery wasn't real, and that I'm not writing this from the Condemned Cell in Newgate – for a double murder of the Celebrated Editor & his not less illustrious but – not quite-so-intellectual contributor. (p. 168).

In the following paragraph, Henley weighs into Wagner and all those in England who favour German art at the expense of French. We have very good reason to thank Mr Atkinson's annotations for keeping us up to date on the dramatis personae of this savage pageant.

At times, making his way through all this literary swashbuckling must have exhausted Stevenson, even before facing the challenge of a fit reply. Henley could be cruel, but he never lacked conviction. He took the self-esteem of the aesthetes as a personal insult, and famously despised gentility. His sense of decorum was that of the sixteenth rather than the nineteenth century, he was a considerable authority on eighteenth century thieves' cant, and his letters are a trove of late Victorian slang. In addition, he read voraciously, feverishly, and became one of the few English champions of Japanese graphics and Impressionist painting. In other words, in that first decade of friendship, his company, in ink or in the flesh, must have exhilarated Stevenson, who thrived on everything indecorous.

Between them, certain other bonds, and other tensions stayed unspoken. Henley never expresses envy of Stevenson – only an occasional wistfulness, and Stevenson never condescends, but their existence in the world, bohemian society excepted, was marked by social distance. Health aside, the world was more difficult, even perilous, for Henley. An occasional shortage of funds notwithstanding, Stevenson could afford to travel, and Henley could not. Worse, he lacked connections. Early in the friendship, he observed: 'I am so far away from the world of journalism that I cannot keep myself in people's minds.' (p. 75) Stevenson had an extensive network of family members and family friends who could be relied on for encouragement and support. Henley had three brothers in modest circumstances and a theatrical fourth whose erratic behaviour became a public nuisance. He had had the good fortune to be taught at the Crypt Grammar School by one of the great Victorian dominies, the poet T. E. Brown, but

if Gloucester lacked the sternness of Edinburgh it also lacked the intellectual ferment. In his early London years, Henley read and read not only because he loved books, but because, in order to make some sort of living, he had to review them. In terms of survival, he sometimes lived like a character in Gissing – and with a much loved wife and daughter to support. In these circum-stances, it is noteworthy that Henley gladly acted as Stevenson's unpaid but indefatigable agent.[9] The very insistence on writing more plays (even operas) that became so tiresome for Stevenson was essentially a dream of making lots of money (pp. 263, 275). Although the friendship was to wear out, it was for a while a triumph of affinity over difference. The ninth poem in Henley's vivid and often wrenching sequence 'In Hospital' is titled 'Lady Probationer'. The quiet demeanour of this trainee nurse, a late vocation, is gentle and genteel. The poet becomes 'Absorbed in her, as in a pleasant mystery', concluding with the line 'Somehow, I rather think she has a history.' So did Stevenson and Henley.

Laurence Davies

Notes

1	For a list of other appearances of Henley letters, see Atkinson's Introduction, p. 11. This edition also includes several revealing letters to Charles Baxter, written at moments of crisis.

2	To cite the few editorial problems in the body of the review would be out of proportion to this edition's general merits. It would have been worthwhile to justify each conjectural dating (e.g. pp. 216, 303) in a footnote. There are some misprints that look like compositorial rather than editorial flaws, for example, '*Erocia*' on p.128 and 'Soma' on p. 343 – and Samoa is not just one island. On p. 133, l. 7, perhaps 'moidores' would be a better reading than 'mandores'? Occasionally, a note should be longer. For example, the gloss on Lyonesse (p. 97, n. 119), might also mention its association with the story of Tristan and Iseult; and on page 185, note 293 might refer to Morley's connection with 'the bloody Radicals' as well as his editorship of the *English Men of Letters* series. For one other minor lack, see n. 4.

3   Letter to Anna Henley, Atkinson, p. 11.

4   There is no editorial comment on these gaps. Are we to take it that they are Fanny's work, and did Henley number all his pages?

5   See, for instance, the letter to Fanny of 12 December 1885, praising her courage, and describing Henley's efforts to place her story 'The Shadow on the Bed' (p. 310). Writing to Louis, she is often called the 'Simoom' (a hot desert wind), or 'the Bedlamitish Woman', or 'the Wild Woman' (pp. 210, 244, 252); it is tempting to claim that Henley saw in her something of his own blustery spirit, if only as an unconscious projection.

6   *RLS: A Life Study* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1980), p. 95.

7   For instance, Henley was determined that *A Child's Garden* should have the finest illustrations possible – preferably by Caldecott, or Greenaway, or Walter Crane (pp. 144, 269. Again, Henley seems to have come up with the idea for 'A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured' (p. 146). For Henley's solicitude for the well-being of Stevenson's parents, as well as for RLS himself, see the letter to Charles Baxter of [?16 May 1884], p. 235.

8   This is not to disparage the work of John Connell or Jerome Hamilton Buckley (whose analysis of Henley as a 'counter-decadent' has kept its vigour), or Ernest Mehew's fine entry in the new *DNB*. These biographers offer a different sort of experience.

9   Witness his activities on behalf of *A Child's Garden* (p. 275).

Robert Louis Stevenson and Joseph Conrad. Writers of Transition, ed. by Linda Dryden, Stephen Arata and Eric Massie (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2009), 288 pp., $55.00. ISBN 978-0-89672-653-6

Stevenson's work crosses both geographical and generic borders, and indeed this was the theme of the 'Writer of Boundaries' collection of critical essays edited by Ambrosini and Dury in 2006. Conrad, too, can be said to challenge categories, not least as writer of what might be called adventure stories with equal claims to be seen as a proto-modernist. A moment's comparison with Kipling or Rider Haggard will show how much further these two authors took their work from genre fiction to the exploration of the psychological and moral complexities of modernity. And yet Stevenson has not always been given as much credit in this context as the author of *Heart of Darkness,* nor should his standing depend solely on that late masterwork *The Ebb-Tide.* The essays in this valuable volume take up these issues by tracing links between the two authors and their mutual status as 'writers of transition', in order to rethink how they have been perceived in the past, and in fact to re-examine the whole question of how critical paradigms can guide and misguide us at the same time. In this respect alone, this volume of essays has a contribution to make over and above the many valuable things its writers have to say about Stevenson and Conrad along the way. It also has a substantial bibliography and an effective index.

Linda Dryden's introduction sees both Conrad and Stevenson as 'itinerants and exiles' and notes that early reviews of Conrad drew comparisons with the Scot – seven years his senior – even as Conrad wanted to distance himself from a man he took to be rather too 'superliterary, a conscious virtuoso of style' (p. 4). This latter was, of course, a critical misapprehension of Stevenson (albeit based on his own dandyish pronouncements) that was to

be sustained well into the twentieth century. In fact one of the main virtues of this excellent volume is that it consistently challenges critical categories and previous judgements, to throw new light on the nature of what we take 'modern' writing to be, as it emerges from those other rather too porous categories the 'fin de siècle' and the late nineteenth century.

Part One of the collection deals with the concept of writers and more especially of *writing* in transition. Richard Ambrosini's essay sets the context by tracing the critical reception of the two authors and the pitfalls of an old-style periodisation that refused to see the modernity of Stevenson while being equally blind to Conrad's ambition to reconcile his art with a wide readership. To this end Conrad drew on the popular appetite for exotic tales in the 1890s and then on the vogue for spy stories in the 1900s, and in doing this he was in fact 'developing prototypes' already created by Stevenson. Ambrosini argues that even Frederic Jameson, who identified a 'fault-line' in Conrad between 'high' and 'low' art ('"floating uncertainly between Proust and Robert Louis Stevenson"' (p. 20), could not quite reconcile himself to a marriage between the two in either writer. In the same vein, Ambrosini points to the still burgeoning critical impact of Conrad's complex engagement with colonialism and the English subject (by way of Marlow, for example, that shadiest of narrators) but goes on to argue that this status is usefully challenged and clarified if it is compared to the more immediate and anthropologically formulated accounts of Stevenson's non-fictional *In the South Seas*, too long forgotten in previous accounts of the literature of the time. Eric Massie also reflects on the complex fault line between the critical paradigms of what have come to be seen as 'nineteenth century' and 'modernist' writing, not to mention the misreadings of Stevenson as an 'English' author by John McClure or as a writer of 'adventure' fiction by Cedric Watts. Massie goes on to reflect on Conrad and Stevenson's equally complex national and cultural situatedness as both 'insiders'

and 'outsiders' in British imperial society, with special reference to what they had to say about that society in *The Ebb-Tide* and *Victory*.

Nathalie Jaëck's witty and theoretically grounded essay on the symbolic resonances of the sea for both Conrad and Stevenson's fiction goes further. She makes a case for the sea as a Barthean place of transit, 'multiplicity' and 'indeterminacy', 'an open blank space ordered by no paradigm' (p. 40), which is a 'natural metaphor' for their own literary position 'between realism and modernism'. She sees this as equally evident in the fragmented, unfinished or transitory nature of the many texts that inhabit their own texts, as in Kurtz's journal, or Jekyll's repressed manuscript, or Captain Flint's logbook, or Mackellar's memoirs or the French lieutenant's testimony in *Lord Jim*, or Marlow's shadowy oral narratives. This goes beyond simply destabilising the reliable or omniscient nineteenth century narrator / narrative. Indeed it signals a new conception of the nature of writing itself whereby these 'inner doubles' (p. 48) 'board' the main text to call the whole literary project into question, much more in keeping with how the French post-structuralists came to view the liminal and elusive nature of writing and textuality. Jaëck cites the description of a chart in *Lord Jim* as a metaphor for this insight: 'The sheet of paper portraying the depths of the sea presented a shiny surface under the light of a bull's-eye lamp lashed to a stanchion, a surface as level and smooth as the glimmering surface of the water' (p. 44). Seen in this light, level, smooth, totally open (and no doubt inscribed with arcane signs), the chart, or rather how Conrad describes it here, becomes for Jaëck a striking trope for the blank and superficial surface of literary realism and the nature of writing itself. In one of a number of happy links across topics that this volume offers, Robbie Goh, in Part Two of the collection explores the more literal role of the sea as a liminal place in the writings of Conrad and Stevenson, both of whom were much more alert than their contemporaries to what we

would now see as the geopolitical implications of this far-flung and unstable locus.

Laurence Davies closes the 'transitionary' theme of Part One with an essay on the doubling of the social self in Stevenson and Conrad, reflecting on the taxonomy of 'the double' and tracing the appearance of doubling and reversal (not always necessarily 'Gothic' or transcendental) in the writing of Mark Twain, Dickens, Wilde and James. Davies recognises the multiple, protean and modern dimension to duality in such writing, far beyond any simplistic Manichaeism, but he argues, too, for a complex socio-political dimension to these uncanny tales, and for seeing them, not least in 'The Secret Sharer', but also even in *Jekyll and Hyde*, as a kind of bonding and collusion with the unspeakable whereby 'the hairline fractures of society multiply' (p. 64) to generate a new kind of Gothic materialism and a species of existential nausea before its time.

Part Two of the collection takes 'writing the Empire' as its theme, starting with *Jekyll and Hyde* again, as Andrea White compares it to Conrad's 'A Smile of Fortune', and reflects on how the fractured human subject is replicated in, and an inescapable part of the great metropolitan centres, home to material acquisitiveness and the alienation of our hidden selves, haunted by repressed difference and the repressed 'others' of imperial conquest. Monica Bungaro compares the different ways in which Stevenson and Conrad write about the cross cultural encounters between 'civilisation' and the colonised other. Homi Bhabha's concepts of mimicry and hybridity are brought to bear on what the two authors find. They each recognise the essential hypocrisy of the imperial project, and neither is prone to idealise the native, but Bungaro notes that Stevenson in particular *engages* with South Sea culture (in both his fiction and his essays) seeking to understand it by way of his own Scottish identity, thus reversing an 'unequal relationship'. Conrad, on the other hand, withdraws from the encounter, objectifying the African other as that heart

of darkness, as something finally unknowable. And yet Conrad's case has its integrity, too, in that he refuses what Robert Young called the ontological imperialism of presuming to know the Other by '"appropriating and sublating the Other within itself"'(p. 97). And what may finally be revealed in these imperial encounters is European civilisation's fear of itself and of the 'other' within – the source, no less, of Conrad and Stevenson's greatest insights. Ann C. Colley continues the theme of such encounters by tracing the references to cannibalism in Stevenson and Conrad. This offers a useful case study of Western culture's morbid fascination with that particular taboo, and how native cultures have in their turn exploited or confected tales to feed that fascination. Colley goes on to suggest a significant difference between our two authors in the end, for Stevenson remains irreducibly disturbed by the literal proximity of such practices in the near past of his Samoan home, while Conrad's response is to promote (or sideline?) the concept into the much more symbolic realm of an encompass-ing 'darkness' that reaches from the Thames at night to Kurtz's voracious appetite for domination. Robert Hampson closes the 'imperial' section of the volume with a series of striking connec-tions between *Treasure Island* and Conrad's *Victory*, which is seen as a 'counterversion' of Stevenson's romance (p. 149). Yet Hampson's analysis shows that both books can be seen to deal with and problematise questions of class, authority, legitimacy and sexuality, this preparing the way for Part Three of the collec-tion, on 'social and psychological contexts'.

Deaglán Ó'Donhaile opens Part Three with an essay on 'the imagination of urban chaos'. This takes us, not surprisingly to *The Dynamiter* and *The Secret Agent*, but these works are set in the context of the Clan na Gael bombings that terrorised Britain in the cause of Irish separatism between 1883 and 1885, giving rise to a spate of popular 'dynamite' novels and stories. In fact *The Dynamiter* was conceived as just such a penny dreadful, reminiscent of the genesis of *Jekyll and Hyde*, which was soon

to follow. Starting with this social context Ó'Donhaile's fascinat-
ing essay theorises the aesthetics of terrorism via Guy De Bord's
Society of the Spectacle in a setting of ultimate modernity which
is to say a dark metropolis 'overflowing with secrets, affections,
and private despairs' (p. 165). With its insights into the popular
undergrowth of bomb fiction this essay takes us back to the cru-
cially 'transitional' nature of Conrad's and Stevenson's writing as
it moves into modernism from a grounding in popular fiction.

Martin Danahay's essay also deals with the city as an index of
modernity, via the theme of the double. Stevenson's 'Markheim'
describes an alienating urban environment while Conrad's 'The
Secret Sharer' has moved from 'the city to the sea' to portray a lit-
tle universe of its own, in which some sort of communion with the
self is made possible, like '"the perfect communion of a seaman
with his first command"' (p. 186). Isolation is the theme in both
texts, even if Stevenson returns his protagonist to conscience
and community judgment in the end, with a strong admixture
of social and religious feeling. Danahay identifies a fundamental
difference here, even in the Conrad novels that also deal with the
city. Stevenson's tendency is to see 'the urban environment as a
network of social bonds that are threatened by antisocial forces,
but [. . .] resilient'. Whereas for Conrad 'the city is populated by
atomistic individuals' (p. 188), who are alone just as any skipper
is alone at sea, both physically and psychologically, with only
himself to rely on. The city is also the key to Jane Rago's essay on
symbolic geography in Conrad and Stevenson as she traces the
then contemporary discourses about race and degeneration, evo-
lution and national identity and their application to *The Suicide
Club* and *Heart of Darkness* to recognise that Marlow's 'blank
spaces' and 'dark places' may indeed be '*everywhere*' (p. 207).

Those 'blank spaces' are traced again, according to the maps
of both Freud and Jung in Nancy Bunge's analysis of how evil is
portrayed and understood in *Heart of Darkness* and *Jekyll and
Hyde*, and her essay also takes us back to the opening essays on

what it is to be a writer. Conrad may see the authorial impulse (like Freud) as 'fundamentally narcissistic' (p. 215), whereas Stevenson's unconscious (the 'Brownies' of 'A Chapter on Dreams') leads him 'into a moral dimension totally incompatible with Freud's amoral stance but entirely consistent with Jung's notion that the unconscious can help human beings discover absolute values' (p. 216). Yet Bunge recognises that the novelists always understood that their works were shaped, in the end, 'by their respective temperaments and expereinces', and she closes by noting that 'Jung and Freud would probably have profited from a touch of the same humility' (p. 221).

Beyond the uncanny and beyond the ripples of the unconscious, there may yet be something that 'lies without', and Stephen Donovan's entertaining last essay in the collection discusses these aspects in the fiction of Stevenson and Conrad with regard to the vogue for spiritualism that was so prevalent in their time. Conrad had absolutely no truck with such things and saw 'ghost stories and superstitions' as 'a facile and debased mode of representation' (p. 231), whereas Stevenson's fascination with the supernatural (and not just in metaphorical terms) is clearly evident in his own work. Conrad continued his opposition to all such matters in the Author's Note to *The Shadow-Line,* and yet Donovan points out that his account of his own creative experience (in a letter to Ted Sanderson) is suffused with spectral imagery describing a 'strange state' in a 'land of mist peopled by shadows' (p. 233). The final paradox may be that while Conrad's fiction sought to '"render the highest kind of justice to the visible universe"', his own prose, like Stevenson's, continues to haunt us from beyond the grave.

Roderick Watson

Contributors

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Gordon Hirsch is professor of English at the University of Minnesota. He is co-editor of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde After One Hundred Years* (1988) and is currently writing about the col-

laboration between Stevenson and his stepson Lloyd Osbourne. He is also reading cognitive neuroscience and considering its applications to the study of nineteenth-century literature, one example of which is his essay in this volume of *JSS*.

Nathalie Jaëck is a senior lecturer at Bordeaux University, France, specializing in late nineteenth-century fiction and the adventure novel. After a PhD on Arthur Conan Doyle and the Sherlock Holmes Stories, she has published several articles on Doyle, Stevenson, Dickens, and Conrad, as well as two books: *Charles Dickens. L'écriture comme pouvoir, l'écriture comme résistance* (2008) and *Les Aventures de Sherlock Holmes: une affaire d'identité* (2008).

Matthew Kaiser is Assistant Professor of English at Harvard University, where he teaches courses in Victorian literature and gender and sexuality studies. His essays have appeared in a variety of collections and journals, including *New Literary History*, *ELH*, and *Victorian Literature and Culture*. The editor of the two-volume *Crime and Horror in Victorian Literature and Culture* (2009-10), he is completing two books: *The World in Play: A Portrait of a Victorian Concept* and *Feeling Historical: A Poetics of Sensation*.

Sylvie Largeaud-Ortega was born in Senegal and has spent most of her life in Africa, France and the Pacific islands. She got her *agrégation* in English in 1987. Since 1999, she has been a tenured lecturer in English at the University of French Polynesia, Tahiti, which has earned her some insight into Pacific culture. Her PhD dissertation at Paris III, Sorbonne Nouvelle (2008), proposes a literary and anthropological approach to Robert Louis Stevenson's South Sea tales.

Rosella Mallardi is Associate professor of English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures of the University of Bari. Her research interests range from Elizabethan and Victorian literature to translation

theory. She has published monographs: *Il nuovo 'romance' di R. L. Stevenson* (1996) and *Lewis Carroll, scrittore-fotografo vittoriano, le voci del profondo e l''inconscio ottico'* (2001). She is currently investigating the influences of photography on literature and culture in Europe and America during the 19ᵗʰ century, and the significance of the English translations of Manzoni's *I promessi sposi* in the English and American contexts.

Burkhard Niederhoff is Professor of English Literature at the University of Bochum (Germany). He is the author of two books, *Erzähler und Perspektive bei Robert Louis Stevenson* (1994), a revised version of his PhD thesis, and '*The Rule of Contrary*': *Das Paradox in der englischen Komödie der Restaurationszeit und des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts* (2001). In addition, he has published articles on the modernist novel and narrative theory, on various aspects of the long eighteenth century, and on contemporary Canadian Literature. He is also co-editor of *Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate*.

Laavanyan Ratnapalan teaches history at Goldsmiths College, London. He researches on the history of anthropology and psychiatry and is currently working on a study of Viktor von Weizsäcker. He has written and published works on Stevenson, E. B. Tylor, and Erwin M. Straus.

Sara Rizzo recently received an MA level 'laurea' at Milan State University with a thesis on comic-book versions of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and gave a paper based on this at the 2008 RLS conference in Bergamo on which is based a chapter in the forthcoming *European Stevenson* volume to be published by Cambridge Scholars. She is a strong believer in the artistic potentialities of the comic-book/graphic-novel medium as well as being interested in the life and works of Robert Louis Stevenson.

Tania Zulli is a Lecturer at the University of Roma Tre, Italy. Her present studies concern nineteenth-century colonial literature and the post-colonial novel. She has published extensively on

nineteenth and twentieth-century writers, and she is the author of a monograph on Nadine Gordimer. She is currently working on a study of colonial fiction in the late Victorian Age. She is part of the Editorial Team of *Merope*, the journal of the Dipartimento di Scienze Linguistiche e Letterarie of Pescara University.
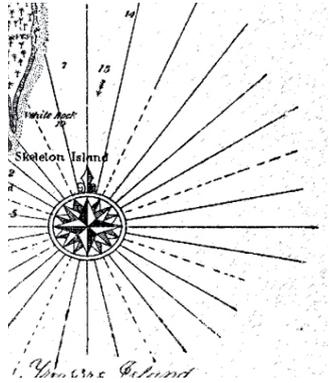
Locating Stevenson
6th biennial
Stevenson conference
Stirling University
8-10 July 2010

You may go all over the States, and … you shall scarce meet with so marked a difference of accent as in the forty miles between Edinburgh and Glasgow … local custom and prejudice, even local religion and local law, linger on into the latter end of the nineteenth century – imperia in imperio, foreign things at home.— RLS, 'The Foreigner at Home'

The sixth biennial Stevenson conference will be held from 8-10 July 2010 at the University of Stirling (scene of the first conference in 2000). This return to a Scottish starting-point may invite attention to origins and locality, but the restless motion of Stevenson's writing exerts a different pressure. Our conference theme of 'Locating Stevenson' is concerned with charting this motion rather than fixing Stevenson's co-ordinates; with orientating, rather than merely positioning, his work within the fields of literary genre, period, movement and genealogy, for example, and within debates about nation, tradition, place and identity. This shift from the map to the compass seems suited to

the mobility of Stevenson's own writing and life.

Viewed from another angle, the trope of 'location' recalls us to Stevenson's own attention, as a critic, to the specificity of the reading scene. How does the reader or critic's own located-ness (historical, cultural, rhetorical, theoretical), condition Stevenson?

We welcome papers responding to the theme of location in as wide a sense as possible. For example, Stevenson might be 'located' culturally, politically, stylistically, linguistically, and geographically, as well as with regard to period and or genre. Equally interesting is Stevenson's orientation with regard to Scottish literature, or to American writing; to late Victorians/belle-lettrism or to modernism; to colonial/anti-colonial discourse, or to the debates about realism, literary aesthetics, popular culture, or writing as a profession.

Further details on plenary speakers, a call for papers, the conference fee, and the social programme are posted on the Stirling website at www.rls2010.stir.ac.uk

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The New Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Robert Louis Stevenson

General Editors: Stephen Arata, Richard Dury, Penny Fielding and Anthony Mandal (electronic editor)

Latest News

After the publication of five volumes of *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, Edinburgh University Press decided that the time was right for a parallel print and electronic edition and that the most satisfactory solution would be to abandon the *Centenary Edition* and to start anew with the *New Edinburgh Edition*.

One important difference with the *Centenary Edition* is the decision to use as base-text the most authoritative early edition—from the period, that is, when the author worked with greatest concentration and effort and was still involved in the process of creation. In contrast, the *Centenary Edition's* policy statement had opted for 'final intentions'. The important variations between early and later versions will still be presented in a clear way so that readers will get a good idea of the evolution of the text over time. In addition, policy in the choice of copy-text will be flexible and will to some extent be influenced by what is discovered from the collation of variants and of course by what is known about the transmission of the text from author to publisher and printer. This important decision will be made after consultations between the volume editor, general editors and the editorial board.

The new edition is planned to extend to 38 volumes and associated electronic resources. The texts will be prepared by scanning of the potentially interesting lifetime editions, double-conversion to readable text (using two different conversion programs),

sight-proofing of the copy-text and then collating them all using an electronic collation program. It is hoped that the scanning can be undertaken partly in collaboration with institutions such as the National Library of Scotland and the University of Virginia Library.

The physical centre of the Edition is the University of Edinburgh, where it is planned to have an office with dedicated computer and to employ a research assistant, but the University of Virginia could well have a satellite centre in the future too.

Electronic publication will be in two parts: an Archive of the plain text transcriptions to be deposited in a national Scottish institution (and this archive will be the source of all the texts used in collation), and Electronic Resources based on a site at EUP or the University of Edinburgh. The Electronic Resources for each volume will be divided into Basic and Additional Resources. The former (to be published contemporaneously with the respective printed volume) will include (i) the full collation of variant read-ings, (ii) diplomatic manuscript transcriptions, (iii) additional notes and corrections. The Additional Resources will include (i) elaboration of text presentation (hypertext presentation to show the development of the text, for example), (ii) images and illustra-tions, (iii) auxiliary texts (e.g. reviews) that have been acquired by the volume editor. As the Additional Resources are a compli-cated project on their own they will be concentrated on the texts that will most benefit for this additional presentation. Anthony Mandal will be starting with a series of small pilot projects in the next year or two before moving on to a major work.

With the full collation available in the Basic Resources of the electronic publishing, this will not be included in the print edi-tion, which will contain only the list of emendations. Any manu-script transcriptions in the volumes will also probably 'reading versions' with interesting cancellations in the notes, since the diplomatic transcription will be available on-line.

Introductions and Textual essays will provide a useful source of information concerning the composition, production and early reception of the texts in each volume and the Explanatory Notes will identify quotations, explain obscure vocabulary and historical and cultural phenomena, indicate mistakes and incon- sistencies in the text etc.

Appendices could include transcriptions of manuscripts, lists of editions and translations and illustrations planned or included in early volumes plus samples from other illustrations. If the copy text was illustrated, then the illustrations will be placed in the text.

While the basic edition will be scholarly and documentary, the Additional Resources and spinoff paperback volumes should provide stimulating and attractive reading and visual materials for a wide range of users.

Stevenson: Notes and Queries

With the launch of the *New Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Robert Louis Stevenson* the *Journal of Stevenson Studies* invites brief essays, bibliographical information, and/or Notes and Queries, relating to any of the following:

- The whereabouts of uncatalogued material
- Unpublished biographical information
- Supplementary material and emendations to Swearingen's *The Prose Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*
- Information on Stevenson's collaborations
- Details of Stevenson's relations with publishers, both financial and personal
- Distribution and sale of Stevenson's work in Britain and the USA
- Archive collections and printed guides relating to the magazines in which Stevenson published
- Information and opinions on different editions published during Stevenson's lifetime
- The production of illustrations
- Early reception of individual works (reviews not collected in Maixner's *Critical Heritage*
- Mentions of Stevenson's works in letters or diaries of contemporaries, etc.

Alternatively, information not intended for publication may be sent directly to any of the General Editors, who would be grateful for any such material:
Stephen Arata: sda2e@cms.mail.virginia.edu
Richard Dury: richard.dury@t-r.it
Penny Fielding: penny.fielding@ed.ac.uk

RLS
WEBSITE

www.robert-louis-stevenson.org

Funded by a grant from the Carnegie Trust,
this new website will be launched in November 2009.

Dedicated to the life and works of Robert Louis Stevenson, making texts and information about his life and works freely available worldwide, www.robert-louis-stevenson.org will be the primary online resource for students, scholars and enthusiasts alike. Galleries of images of places and people associated with Stevenson, and of RLS, himself are a particular feature of the website. It also situates Stevenson firmly in Edinburgh, focusing on the city's, and on Scotland's influence on his writing. At the same time it will recognise the international dimension to his work and readership.

Listing past and current scholarly work on RLS, as well as the full texts and a significant proportion of all the available photographs and images, this site will reach a world-wide audience, many of whom could not travel to the places where such items are located. Back numbers of the *Journal of Stevenson Studies* will also be posted on this site in full-text format.

The site is established at the Centre for Literature and Writing (CLAW) at Edinburgh Napier University with support from Edinburgh and Stirling Universities, literary trusts like the Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature, the Writers' Museum of Edinburgh, and Stevenson enthusiasts, museum curators and academics around the globe. It will make a significant contribution to the growing reputation of RLS as an important literary figure and personality of the late nineteenth century.

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Volume One 2004, contains essays by Richard Ambrosini, Steven Arata, Oliver S. Buckton, Liam Connell, Richard Dury, Vincent Giroud, Douglas S. Mack, Sudesh Mishra, Glenda Norquay, Olena M. Turnbull, Richard J. Walker, Roderick Watson.

Volume Two 2005, with essays by Hilary J. Beattie, Sara Clayson, Richard Dury, Liz Farr, William Gray, Gordon Hirsch, Jürgen Kramer.

Volume Three 2006, with a poem by Jim C. Wilson and essays by Giuseppe Albano, Katherine Linehan, Wendy Katz, Katherine Linehan, Laanvanyan Ratnapalan, Roger G. Swearingen, Saverio Tomaiuolo.

Volume Four 2007, contained essays by R. L. Abrahamson, Richard Ambrosini, Hilary J. Beattie, Jenni Calder, Dennis Denisoff, Cinzia Giglioni, Gordon Hirsch, Mary B. Hotaling, William B. Jones Jr, Wendy R. Katz, Jürgen Kramer, Ilaria B. Sborgi, Marilyn Simon, Robert Benjamin Stevenson III, Roderick Watson.

Volume 5 2008, was the special 'Stevenson and the Writers' edition with reflections, memoirs and creative contributions from Ron Butlin, Alan Grant, Diana Hendry, David Kinloch, Patrick McGrath, Donal McLaughlin, Barry Menikoff, Cees Nooteboom, James Robertson, Suhayl Saadi, Louise Welsh, Hamish Whyte.

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