

RLS 2004: *Picturesque Notes*

by Richard Dury

By great good luck I was sitting on the left-hand side of the plane from Stansted, and so was able to enjoy the approach to Edinburgh as the plane, after reaching the Firth of Forth, swings left to reveal first an extensive landscape of sun-splashed patches of greens and browns, from estuary shore to Pentland Hills, then Leith and Edinburgh, while (if you arrive in the late afternoon) the Firth becomes a sheet of golden light, silhouetting the bridges at Queensferry. An hour later I was sitting comfortably in the bar of the Pollock Halls with Linda Dryden, the conference organizer, and her husband David, talking about the conference and the inevitable emergencies and last minute-changes of such events. According to the Arab proverb, one becomes an adult only after building a house and having a child—to which one might add: after organizing a conference.

Apart from sitting on the left hand of the incoming plane, my other piece of advice to those visiting the Scottish capital is to spend some time in the Elephant House Coffee Shop. The luminous back room is provided with newspapers on the window ledge, furnished with a variety of wide wooden tables, and enlivened by an equally heterogeneous group of customers, all intently busy at different things, so that they form a gallery of pictures—and since everyone is close together and you have to sit at the same table as others, you cannot help feeling part of the picture too: three people chatting over there, a girl working on her portable computer, a student at the same circular table as you reading and making notes, one student explaining something to another with the help of diagrams, a mother with a baby in a push-chair, a newspaper-reader with raised cup of tea, a visiting Stevensonian observing the scene...

Tuesday was 'a day off'—a rarity in modern life. A saunter across the Meadows and reading the paper in the Elephant House was an excellent start. A morning call on Elaine Greig at the Writers' Museum took me to lunch-time and made me feel the compleat man-about-town—after which I didn't manage my

idler's image so well and ended up, after the National Gallery of Scotland, and searching for somewhere to have an economical lunch along the waste land of Princess Street, corporeally conscious that my elegant sauntering had become more like traipsing. We need practice in idling. But a pleasant day nevertheless: and I brought home a book to read from Waterstones.

Wednesday

Wednesday was cool, with light grey clouds forming a background to the rust-coloured Salisbury Crags, not far from the foot of which are the Pollock Halls and the nineteenth-century St. Trinnean's Centre, a sizeable Victorian house in a historical style I didn't pause to identify as I was in a rush (I was throughout the conference—the programme was packed, I was staying a brisk 15 minutes walk away, and in the first couple of days I had to solve a problem of changing money). We gathered with a pleasant buzz of anticipation and greeting of old friends, in a square room with a tall bay window in front of an elaborate fitted console sideboard with mirrors, pediment and miniature balustrade. Through the windows we could see the concrete panels and glazing of modern student residences and beyond them the green slopes and craggy top of Arthur's Seat. Linda (in pale green silk slacks and sandals of red leather) introduced the conference expressing amazement that it was actually all happening (indeed, there is always something magical about a number of people coordinating their complicated lives to make their trajectories all cross at one time in one place).

Richard Ambrosini, tall, tawny-bearded and in a blue suit with pale green tie, had rightfully been chosen as the opening speaker, since he has published extensively on both Conrad and Stevenson. He started his talk ('History, Criticism, Theory, and the Strange Case of R. L. Stevenson and Joseph Conrad') by proposing Stevenson as Conrad's 'Secret Sharer'—a writer who he disparaged perhaps for his ability to do what he himself couldn't do, both stylistically and in the successful manipulation of popular genres. Conrad's choice of setting and genres belies his studied indifference to Stevenson (we need only think of his *Romance* in relation to *Kidnapped* and *Treasure Island*, and his *Victory* to *The Ebb-*

Tide). We can also see the desire to appeal to common feelings in his prefaces to the *Nigger* and *Chance* as a clear continuation of the views in Stevenson's theoretical essays. Critics see the continuity between the two writers but typically place Conrad higher (in an unconvincing argument) 'because he is a Modernist'. Such critics forget that Stevenson played a vital part in the evolution of Conrad's views on colonialism and in his rejection of the glamour of adventure. Yet Conrad retains an ambiguity towards imperialism (Marlowe is 'one of us'), while Stevenson in 'Falesá' depicts a successful mixed-race marriage and actually sided with the native inhabitants of the South Pacific. Thanks to his ethnographic approach, Stevenson's late works are more useful than Conrad's in examining many aspects of the colonial situation.

The conference model of plenary talks sandwiching paired parallel sessions was undoubtedly necessary but several times forced difficult choices and means that I can only apologise to Elayne Fitzpatrick and Mary Leighton (and all the others in later sessions) as I was in the other room when they were speaking. In Room Two, Wendy Katz, who combines a neatness of appearance and manner with a constant humorous view of life, started with Stevenson's idea of the 'gentleman' (centred on 'decency' and found in any social class), which he recognised as a more difficult ideal now that rigid social rules had broken down. A symptom of such a crisis can be seen in the discussions about 'what is a gentleman' that were common in this period, from Trollope to the vulgar mariners of *The Nigger of the Narcissus*. We then moved on to a fascinating parallel reading of *Treasure Island* and *Lord Jim* from the point of view of this problematic definition, with interesting comparisons between Silver and 'Gentleman Brown', both of whom aspire to the status of gentleman and deceive a character called Jim. One Jim is encouraged to 'Jump!' (from the fort) and so break his word of honour but refuses, while the other does jump and loses his honour.

Next came Deaglan O'Donghaile, a PhD student at Trinity College Dublin, slightly burly yet quiet-spoken, with a small beard and moustache, who spoke first about *The Dynamiter* and its historical background in the 1884-5 Irish-American terrorist campaign in London ('Conrad, the Stevensons, and the

Imagination of Urban Chaos'). He then went on to show how terrorism, a popular topic of late 19th-century fiction, is interconnected with the modern city, urban chaos and hence Modernism. Even non-terrorists are involved in these crimes as the imagination slips easily into the contemplation of destruction (as Challoner easily becomes involved in the dynamiter adventure), and terrorism has a poetic aesthetic. In *The Secret Agent*, Conrad then updates Stevenson's idea of London reverberating with the noise of battle.

Marialuisa Bignami, moving with delicate dignity following an unfortunate encounter with a bicycle in the urban chaos of Edinburgh the week before, gave a talk with the title 'Satan or Accomplice? The Double in Stevenson and Conrad'. The question-mark in the title marked the doubt and uncertainty associated with the double, and its uncertain status since double and protagonist are always to be seen as two contrasting aspects of one essence, with the 'better' half often gripped by an obsessive opposition (as in Conrad's 'The Duel'), or colluding with the double (as the captain in 'The Secret Sharer' protects the runaway murderer). One difference between the writers is that Conrad's doubles no longer seem to be influenced by the idea of the secularised Satan, though the double derived from theories of the unconscious are present in both.

Lunch was an excellent cold buffet which we ate in the conference rooms. I found myself at a large round table in the luminous bay window of one of the rooms with Martin Danahay and Ann Colley already talking about the next conference, while catching up with news from other friends around the table as the conversation moved back and forth.

Robbie Goh, quietly smiling with short hair and gold-rimmed glasses, started off the afternoon session with 'The Geopolitics of Criticism: The Sea as Liminal Symbol in Stevenson and Conrad'. While the Romantics had written much of sea travel, Victorian literature places sea journeys off-stage—and this strangely in the very period of colonial and mercantile expansion. At the end of the 19th century, however, the world had become

completely occupied by competing blocks, with mainly sea-borders, colonized by Europeans in liminal sites far from home. This is the situation used by both writers in their narratives: the white man is typically established at the water's edge, isolated and impermanent as the flowing water (in *The Ebb-Tide* the ship's name sounds like 'Far-alone' and the representative of colonial power is 'At-water'). Here, their cultural certainties are overturned (in *The Ebb-Tide* the wine turns to water). While for Conrad the sea is associated with a redeeming professionalism, for Stevenson it remains a shifting and marginal space, somehow beyond empires. (Nathalie Jaëck was later to take up the central symbolic importance of water from a different point of view.)

Jane Rago, at present completing a PhD at West Virginia University, next took the stage (with high trees outside the window undulating in a rising wind) in a loose black suit, to give an impressively confident and intelligent talk on 'Affairs in Different Places: Symbolic Geographies in Stevenson and Conrad'. Late 19th-century narratives set in unexplored far-off places (e.g. *Heart of Darkness*) have an affinity with contemporary popular tales that described adventures in the secret spaces of the East End of London (as in 'The Suicide Club'). Such narratives refer to a 'symbolic geography' in which the unknown is 'dark' and associated with the primordial (and degenerate) and in which the explorers are trying to read and map a part of their own identity. The exploration is associated with anxiety that comes from formlessness and the questioning of human agency, masculinity and civilization.

Jürgen Kramer from Dortmund (loose light grey jacket and black shirt, speaking with a pleasant German accent) began his talk ('Unity in Difference—A Comparative Reading of Stevenson's "Beach of Falesá" and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*') by going over the areas of convergence of Stevenson and Conrad: both explore the experience of exile, Empire and the exotic, in romances of adventure that also question the presuppositions of the genre. Their fictions should be seen as complementary, not competing efforts. Both *HoD* and 'Falesá' question Imperial ideology, in narratives by (not totally reliable) white males who make geographical and personal discoveries, and confront an alter ego

(Case and Kurtz, both eloquent multi-national, ruthless colonizers). One difference is that Marlowe (whose African experience is dominated by unease and fear) keeps the Africans at a distance, while Wiltshire crosses the boundaries of 19th century morality by falling in love and marrying a non-European woman. Both narratives also end with a lack of resolution of the dysfunctional colonial situation: Marlowe lies to Kurtz's 'intended' about his last words partly to save the cultural order of things, partly to keep women in their socially restricted position, while the last paragraph of 'Falesá' shows that the basic colonial situation continues. Comparing the texts allow us to read Wiltshire's falling on the mouth of the dead Case against the dying Kurtz opening his mouth wide as if he wanted to swallow everything: the true cannibals are the competing traders.

After coffee, Gail Houston (standing at the lectern at the corner of the bay window) talked about the 'bankerization of identity' following the dominant economic position assumed by banks in the second half of the nineteenth century. Freud interestingly uses a model of capitalist exchange in his 1900 interpretation of dreams (daytime thought is an like an 'entrepreneur' who takes the initiative and produces a dream but only thanks to the 'capital participation' of a wish from the unconscious). Stevenson's account of authorship in 'Chapter on Dreams' demystifies the writer ('the man with the variable bank account') and exposes the economic dynamics of writing, that even his subconscious 'Brownies' are aware of. The model of money (where signs were increasingly divorced from physical reality) seems to go hand in hand with a late Victorian detachment of linguistic signs from the depicted world, as we see in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, a 'proto-cubist text' where the reader is left to decipher an appropriate meaning. The search for Hyde significantly involves two visits to a bank and Hyde who has the power to produce Jekyll's signature (a detached sign) acts as an 'entrepreneur' ('money's life to the man'), while those who want to find him just have to 'wait for him at the bank'.

Stephen Donovan (youthful, bespectacled, droll) ended the day with a look at Stevenson's relations to spiritualism: his interest in the subject and also the special appeal which he held for

spiritualists in the years following his death. First, he told us of Conrad's stance between a general dismissal of the phenomenon (the theme of his first short story, 'The Black Mate') and a reluctant fascination. Stevenson on the other hand was the Secretary of Edinburgh's 'Psychological Society' (a forum for those interested in spiritualism) for some times and corresponded with Myers of the 'Society for Psychical Research'. The apparition of the mysterious stranger in 'Markheim' also has something of a spiritualist phenomenon, even though the narrative is grounded in the material world of murder and stock-market speculation. Spiritualist ideas, though now discounted, were a way used by Stevenson (and others at the time) to investigate non-unitary consciousness. The second half of the paper consisted of a fascinating account of the many appearances of Stevenson to mediums in the years immediately following his death (I wonder where he discovers this information), an interesting aspect of the history of Stevenson's 'reception'.

That evening, the banquet was in the second conference room (differing from the first by having an interesting frieze of coloured and carved birds, all different, among the band of foliage running round the top of the walls), now magically transformed with a series of round tables. I was sitting next to Robert Louis Abrahamson and learnt during the meal about his experiences helping a friend in the second-hand book trade in Edinburgh some years before. Of the menu I only recall that it didn't include haggis (I would have remembered that) and that it ended with Edinburgh fog (cream, vanilla and chopped almonds). At the appropriate point John Cairney gave a fascinating Stevenson recitation in which he lends a voice to RLS (without impersonating) in comments taken or adapted from the writings. The range of voices used in the different assembled texts helped produce the idea of a many-sided personality. Particularly moving was the reading of 'The Land of Counterpane'.

Thursday

Thursday started grey and breezy (the dominant note for the weather throughout) and the programme began in the second

room with Stephen Arata (droll, relaxed and assured) on ‘Observing *The Wrecker*’. Stevenson lived in a period when writers were aware of the shades of meaning revealed by etymology; we can see this in the play on economic and moral meanings of words like ‘appreciate’, ‘value’ and ‘interest’ in *The Wrecker*. A word of central importance in the same work is ‘observe’, three meanings of which—‘notice’, ‘comment’ and ‘follow a rule’—correspond to three approaches of Stevenson to writing: as word-painting, as conversation, and as play of generic manipulation. (i) Scenes are explicitly called ‘pictures’, stored in a ‘mental gallery’, searching for a solution is ‘ciphering with pictures’ and trying to make a narrative is searching for a ‘creditable arrangement’ of them. Yet narrative remains elusive and much is inexplicable. ‘Tableaux’ are often used (as elsewhere in Stevenson) to sum up the essence of a situation (stabbing at seagulls) or encourage narrative speculation (the telephone falling from the shocked ear). (ii) For Stevenson, literary texts, like conversation, require collaboration and like conversation the narrative line is full of breaks, departures on a tangent and lost lines, allowing the reader to assemble and reassemble *The Wrecker* into different configurations. (This seems to link with the characterization of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* as ‘cubist’ by Gail Houston and ‘kalaidoscopic’ by myself.) (iii) Genre is also foregrounded, explicitly referred to, shifted in order to shape experience, encouraging us to see how we interpret events through generic filters and expectations. Stevenson creates texts open to many readings; he is interested in pattern, not finish, in narrating, not closure.

As I had to go out to the bank and solve my money problems (the bankerization of Dury! I hadn’t brought enough cash to pay for registration or accommodation), I unfortunately missed Gordon Hirsch’s paper on the amazing world of commercial dealings of all kinds depicted in *The Wrecker*, and all except the end of Ralph Parfect on Stevenson’s varied and partly unconventional presentation of America and Americans in his writings. Pity. Naturally I blame this on the crowded programme, but others may well see it as somehow more connected with my failure to make adequate financial arrangements. Let’s say a fatal concurrence of the two factors. The last talk of the morning was

on *The Dynamiter* by cool, RP-speaking Susan Barras, who unusually came to university teaching after business experience. Though many critics (e.g. Eigner) see nothing of merit in the text, it is in fact an interesting satirical critique of late-Victorian England. The three strands of dedicated to Mormons, voodoo and the Fenians have many affinities (in oath-taking, 'enslavement', violence, fanaticism) and, since they are shown as impinging on the Imperial capital, reveal a fear of colonial resistance that might result in cultural contamination, 'reverse transculturation'. At the same time, Londoners are also exposed to another form of brainwashing and enslavement, advertising and consumer culture: we live in 'the age of the sandwich-man, of Griffiths, of Pears' legendary soap, and of Eno's fruit salt'.

In the last quarter of an hour of the lunch-break, EUP supplied wine and some discounted copies of their new *Dr Jekyll* and I said a few words about what I thought was new and interesting in it, while very aware that I was also building on what a lot of other people had done. I was happy that publication day came during the conference, yet I didn't want to take too much of the limelight, as other people had written books too.

The plenary talk after lunch was given by Laurence Davies, editor of the Conrad letters, a good-humoured, large yet active man with a clear voice (sometimes used to comic effect, as in calling for silence for the guest speaker at dinner). During the talk he referred to Hogg's *Justified Sinner* and was able to point out of the window at Arthur's Seat where an important scene in the story takes place. In his comparison of *Dr Jekyll* and 'The Secret Sharer', he observed that the apparent greater good-v-evil simplicity of the former applies only to the 'folk version' of the tale, the text itself being full of ambiguities and suggesting that human personality may not be double but multiple. One common context of both stories is the increasing emphasis in the nineteenth-century on the 'social Double' (Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper*, 1882; Ansey's *Vice Versa*, 1882; Hope's *The Prisoner of Zenda*, 1894) with protagonists actually or imaginatively crossing divisions of generation, gender, class or race: here seen in Jekyll's alternation

and identity with social-outcast Hyde, and in the perception by Conrad's narrator of the violent fugitive as his other self. Both tales also have a professional protagonist, of the class therefore that Weber sees as responsible for modern 'disenchantment', in narratives that, with their Double themes and general uncanny atmosphere, are attempting to re-activate enchantment.

After coffee, we divided again into parallel sessions and I went to hear Hilary Beattie. I here must pause to offer sincere apologies to Hilary for a long-held delusion that her name was Helen—long enough, aaagh!, to get into the acknowledgements section of my edition of *Dr Jekyll*, the first mistake I found there and a dagger through the heart of the proud author. Perhaps the confusion is an interesting symptom of weakening mental faculties (but none the less annoying to both concerned), aided by a belief—modelling the world on oneself—that all names are composed of two trochees. Trying to forget all that for the moment, it was a pleasure to hear Hilary's talk on 'Dreaming, Doubling, and Gender: The strange case of "Olalla"', as it is always fascinating to hear the contribution of someone from a different professional background, in this case that of a psychoanalyst (perhaps she could give me help with my problem about names...). 'Olalla', though often dismissed as a failure, is an interesting distillation of Stevenson's desires and anxieties concerning women and sexuality, which we can see in many of his works, in his life history, and in the dreams that he describes in 'A Chapter on Dreams'. In the latter, his description of the nightmare involving an uncanny 'old brown dog' seen with terror from a window of a dusty hill-farm seems to have affinities with the arid and isolated setting of 'Olalla', as well as with the scene when Jekyll looks down to the court at 'dusty' Utterson from the window of his lonely cabinet. 'Olalla' is also interesting because the doubles are, unusually, women and of different generations, a situation that has affinities with Stevenson's life in Samoa (when his affections seem to have been the object of rivalry between Fanny and Belle), and with his last work, *Weir of Hermiston*, where we find the same strong women doubled across generations, the same 'injured' hero and the same isolated farm. *Weir*, ending abruptly at the same point as 'Olalla', suggests that the latent

'dream thoughts' that inspired *Jeekyll* and 'Olalla' were being worked over right up to the end.

R. L. Abrahamson, elegant in a white linen suit, next re-examined Stevenson's *Fables*, starting with a consideration of different generic types within the collection: the modernist dialogue between two characters in the interval between two chapters (anticipated in a similar humorous philosophical dialogue in *Reflections and Remarks on Human Life*, 1880), the sixteen fables proper, and the final three fairy-tale like stories. Helped by a useful summary of the twenty short narratives, animated by some excellent readings (with dramatic pauses), he illustrated the ambiguity, absurdity, self-reference ('The Reader and the Book') and lack of any clear meaning of these texts, which all work together as variations on related themes. Other features that unite them are their brevity, vague setting and their strange language, just unusual enough to disconcert us.

Next came Bill Gray, quiet and serious, with a neat short beard, to tell us about Stevenson's interest in the literary fairy-tale ('Stevenson and the Literary Fantastic'), and his plan to write 'a volume of *Märchen*'. Stevenson's interest in the genre can be seen from the three fairy-tale like Fables mentioned by the previous speaker, and Gray now examined the longer 'Waif Woman', 'The Bottle Imp' (to be the centrepiece of the planned volume) and 'The Isle of Voices'. Fanny's dislike of the first of these may be related to its unsympathetic treatment of the wife. All these tales have a similar juxtaposition of the real world with magical elements.

Then it was my turn to talk, about the 'Strange Language of *Dr Jeekyll and Mr Hyde*'. Standing at the lectern and speaking from notes (but feeling rather nervous), I looked at the way that variation of 'grammatical words' like prepositions and of idioms is familiar to us from our experience of similar variation in historical and geographical dialects, so that Stevenson's variations here give the reader the philological pleasure of interpreting a strange but perfectly understandable text. Stevenson's unusual use of single 'lexical words' adds another pleasure: participation in the creation of meaning. Unlike Pater, who sees the ideal reader as a scholar and encourages the exploitation of the precise etymological

meanings of words, Stevenson, rebelling against language fixed by authority, creates new meaning freely and poetically through context. We can see his approach as related to socio-cultural theories of language, such that embodied in Wittgenstein's idea that 'The meaning of a word is its use in language'. In *Dr Jekyll* we have an added complication: participation in the creation of meaning is deliberately impeded in many cases, creating the ambiguous or opaque language that gives the disoriented reader moving through the text an experience similar to that of Utterson as he tries to interpret and understand events in the story.

The day ended with Liz Farr, reserved yet giving the impression of observing the imperfections of life with a sustaining wry sense of humour. Her talk dealt with Stevenson's interest in 'popular literature' and how he combines this with an interest in style and form ('Towards an Aesthetecist Stevenson'). The two interests both derive from a desire to produce pleasure in the reader by stimulating romantic daydreams through the activation of culturally-shared images, many of them from popular artistic forms like the toy theatre. The images become part of our way of seeing and understanding (and so Stevenson is happy to admit borrowing characters and narrative elements in *Treasure Island*). And the daydreams are similar to those he remembers as a child in front of the shop window, observing the penny-paper illustrations and the toy theatre sheets and imagining stories from them. Stevenson, then, even in his romantic adventure stories, had a serious aesthetic project and a constant interest in form and style in a way that makes his texts resistant to allegorical interpretation.

In the evening Linda led a small group on a walk from Old to New Town taking in a few points of Stevensonian interest, ending at the Jekyll and Hyde pub where the group split up for dinner and I found myself with Wendy Katz and Kathie Linehan and R. L. Abrahamson. The latter is to be recommended as a gastronomical guide as he took us just round the corner to an excellent Thai restaurant, where he either knew the people or struck up an immediate friendly relationship with them. I remember my roast duck with lime and mango—accompanied by white wine and much Stevensonian chatter.

Friday

On Friday morning (weather still cool and grey), Nathalie Jaëck (curly hair, charming accent, intelligent yet simple and easy-going) gave us a stimulating contribution on the sea as a model for the fiction of both Stevenson and Conrad (“Stevenson and Conrad’s “logbooks” and “paperboats”: attempts in textual wreckage”). It is a model both for their literary-historical position, a deliberately undefined transitional cultural space, and also for their fictional world-view: their view of phenomena as infinite surface, of progress as random, of identity as unfixed. The texts of both writers are unstable, avoid conclusion and constantly wink at fortuitous progress and other ways the narrative could have taken. Like the sea and Barthes’ concept of ‘le neutre’, these texts are ‘horizontal’ (lacking the higher viewpoint of realist texts), with blank spaces of interpretation (as in Mackellar’s epitaph for the two brothers in *Ballantrae*), and characterized by random, unstable utterances (as in the mixed discourse of the French lieutenant in chapters 12 and 13 of *Lord Jim*). This talk was like an exhilarating trip in a boat, ably guided across choppy seas, with sails cracking and coloured flags blowing in a lively breeze: lots of things going on, difficult to summarize, but you definitely learn something and you feel better for the experience.

Nancy Bunge, an American literature specialist, next turned our attention to *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (“Explaining Evil: *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *The Heart of Darkness*”). This was a Jungian reading, and I was interested to discover that Jung actually refers to Stevenson’s novella (where Freud surprisingly does not). In this approach, Hyde is Jekyll’s ‘shadow’, which he initially accepts (“this, too, was myself”) but then virulently disowns in a process of repression in the self accompanied by rejection of the same aspects of personality in others, which in this case, of course, is unfortunately represented by Hyde seen as ‘other’.

One great thing about conferences is that you meet people whose books you have read, so it was nice to see Roslyn Jolly from Sydney University, whose name had been associated with books and articles on Stevenson and the South Seas and find that she is a pleasant person, young-looking and with shoulder-length wavy

hair, slightly 1940-ish in style (like Rita Hayworth). Another pleasure is to hear a paper with a simple and original thesis ('that *The Ebb-Tide* is a rewriting of *The Coral Island*') convincingly demonstrated in the 20-odd minutes available. Ballantine's trio of Anglo-Saxon adventurers is paralleled in Stevenson's later story: the leader (Jack, Davis), the thoughtful, bookish middle character and main point-of-view (Ralph, Herrick), and the joker (Peterkin, Huish), with both books concluding via a gentleman-missionary. In Stevenson, however, all are savage except the so-called 'savages', there is no opposition of civilization and barbarism, and Attwater (who combines gentleman, missionary and trader) is a deeply ambiguous character. Ballantyne's masculine romance of empire is converted into a corrupt world of racism, crime and oppression. By casting off the authority of the older writer (previously accepted as a model for *Treasure Island*) and destroying his own image as a romance-writer, Stevenson creates a new kind of fiction that was to influence the colonial narratives of Conrad.

The conference was brought to a close by Katherine Linehan. After listing (in true last-speaker style) what seemed to have been some dominant threads of contributions at the conference (genre destabilisation, social reference of Doubles, intertextual studies and studies of Stevenson's language), she moved on to her talk on biblical allusions in *Jekyll and Hyde* ('The Devil Can Cite Scripture: Intertextual Hauntings in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*'). We can see apparent allusions to tragedy (Oedipus, Lear and Hamlet) and the Bible as a way of aligning the reader to the side of Jekyll as hero undone by a tragic flaw or as a soul struggling valiantly against sin, so that then a suspicion that Jekyll is neither of these brings the different image of the hypocrite into the mirror held up to the reader. Most of the Biblical allusions originate from Jekyll himself and a close examination shows that they are perverted from their original uses to a mitigating, self-justifying function, throwing a veil of piety over his self-indulgence and breaking of divine bounds. The 'pious work' found by Utterson annotated in Jekyll's hand with 'startling blasphemies' can therefore be seen as a double of Jekyll's part of the text.

And so it ended. Linda Dryden made some closing remarks and then was presented with three books by or about

Stevenson as a token of thanks from the participants, the presentation being made by R. L. Abrahamson (who had obtained them from his friend in the Edinburgh second-hand book trade). A small steering committee then met to decide future developments: the proposal by Ann Colley and Martin Danahay to hold RLS2006 at Saranac lake was accepted, and Linda Dryden agreed to help with editing of the *Journal of Stevenson Studies*, which had been launched during the conference, in order to see it over possibly difficult period following the publication of the first issue.

I then walked into town with Richard Ambrosini: we sat for a time comparing notes on a bench in George Square before going for tea at the Elephant House (where we met Dan Balderston checking his email), and then on to the last appointment: the reception at The Writers' Museum. We crowded into the space between the glass cases in the ground floor room of the museum, wine was provided, everyone was very convivial and chatty. Then Claire Harman stood on the turning of the stairway to the first floor and instead of reading passages from her biography (to be published in January 2005) took us through some of the difficulties of writing a biography of Stevenson and then answered our questions (what was her opinion of Lloyd? What did she think was in the fateful telegram that called Stevenson to California?). Humorous, sprightly and intelligent, I instinctively placed her in the class of people with whom I wouldn't mind sharing a long train journey.

After the reception a large-ish group found ourselves standing outside an Indian restaurant on Nicholson Street waiting for a table (the Edinburgh sky still light and streaked with grey clouds). After some time we were sitting along five tables pushed together. I was opposite Hilary Beattie and was fascinated to learn that she had done a PhD in oriental studies and taught Chinese history at Yale before moving on to the study and teaching of psychology and psychoanalysis—all this and carrying out Stevenson studies, an impressive achievement.

As a coda to the evening, six of us went to nearby Drummond Street, read the very moving plaque put up on the corner of the street thanks especially to the enthusiastic involvement of Karen Steele and of Don Boulter, and then went

into Rutherford's, the pub associated with Stevenson. It was perhaps the most untrendy Edinburgh backwater on this Friday night when other watering holes were heaving: the only customers there were four quietly-sipping regulars perched on bar stools who looked slowly round at our entrance, while two barmen gave the appearance that the request for a pink gin would open gulfs of silent incomprehension. One of our number had been there a year before and the landlord had given her a copy of a Stevenson text so now to return the favour, being Italian, she presented him with a copy of Richard Ambrosini's Italian translation of *Treasure Island*. The barman blinked several times, seemed silently moved, then on an impulse leaned over the bar, put his arms around to hug the donor and kissed her on both cheeks. And then on a Friday night when it looked as though takings could not cover the wages of his assistant, he wouldn't let us pay—he gave us our drinks on the house.